

Karbala: An Inspiration of Life

- Syed Nadeem Ahmed Jafri

The New Islamic year 1436 has just set in, and Muslims have started greeting each other. There is no problem if we exchange greetings on a new year but ironically the new year starts with Moharram, the saddest month of Islamic Calendar. The month in which Imam Hussain (as) - the grandson of the holy Prophet (pbuh) was brutally martyred along with his family members on the 10th day of Moharram - Ashura. This event of Karbala and wishing a new year does not go well with certain sections of Muslim brethren. In order to understand their point of view let us try to understand the event of Karbala and its importance in our lives.

Ashura, the 10th of Moharram has a great historical significance as mentioned in *Sahih-e-Muslim*. On this day the repentance of **Adam (as) was accepted by Allah (SWT)**; The ark carrying Nuh (as) and his companions was **saved**; Allah **extinguished the fire** in which **Ibrahim (as) was thrown by Nimrod**. On the 10th of Moharram **Ayub (as) got relief** from his illness of 18 years; Musa (as) received **the Commandments**. **Yusuf (as) was re-united** with his father Yaqub (as). **Yunus (as) was out from the belly of the fish**. On this day the river Nile **was divided** and its water drowned Pharaoh along with his army. **Isa (as) was raised to the sky** and Sulaiman (A.S)'s kingdom was restored.

In the light of the above incidences one tends to wonder that why such atrocities was afflicted upon Imam Hussain (as) on this day when Allah chose to relieve most of His chosen Prophets from their individual atrocities and hardships. But looking at the condition of Islam we realize that the hardship was on Islam and not on any individual. The tyrant Yazid had claimed for Caliphate and it was the resistance of Imam Hussain (as) that saved Islam from the clutches of Banu Ummayy and tyrants like Yazid. So while Allah (SWT) helped His Prophets and saved them from their hardships, it was Imam Hussain (as)'s selfless sacrifice that saved Islam and helped the cause of the Almighty Allah. This makes it important for every Muslim to remember the selfless sacrifice of the grandson of our beloved Prophet (pbuh) and strive to follow the path shown by him.

The lovers of Imam Hussain (as) irrespective of any religion, caste or sect mourn and weep and remember his sacrifice by organizing gatherings like Majlis for 10 days. This is done to reinforce their love for him and to express their solidarity with the Imam (as) to the world that they are true followers of Imam Hussain (as) and they have shunned the ideology of tyrant like Yazid. They stand for truth, justice, Kindness, tolerance, co-existence, patience and above all love for humanity.

There are prophetic traditions that confirm that mourning and crying on the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (as) is natural and there is no biddat as we are made to understand by some section. I am mentioning the few:

- The Prophet said: "Just now Gabriel has left me. He has forewarned me that Hussain would be slaughtered in Karbala, and he asked me, 'Would you like to smell the dust of that place?' When I replied in the affirmative, he extended his hand and handed it over to me. At this I burst into tears." – (Ref: Selections from Kanz ul Ammal, p 111)

- Salami Records:

“I paid a visit to the Prophet’s wife Umme Salma and saw her crying with grief. When I asked her what made her weep she said, I just dreamt that the Prophet had come with his beard and head covered with dust. When I asked him what had made him so full of grief, he told me that he had just returned after seeing his Hussain butchered.” – (Ref: Jama Tirmizee P 466, Mishkat Vol., 8, P. 139., Mustadrak Vol 4, P 19)

The tragedy of Karbala gives us true lessons of life and it is a great inspiration to many thinkers and philosophers. I hope as **a new year resolution** if we all try to learn the way these people have been inspired and strive to make this world a peaceful place we might become an inspiration for the coming generations. And it would make more sense than mere exchange of greetings. I am ending my note by mentioning following quotes by prominent scholars and thinkers:

- “I learned from Hussain **how to be wronged and be a winner.**” —Mahatma Gandhi
- “ Of that gallant band, male and female knew that the enemy forces around were implacable, and were not only ready to fight, but to kill. Denied even water for the children, they remained parched under the burning sun and scorching sands, yet not one faltered for a moment. **Husain marched with his little company**, not to glory, not to power of wealth, but to **a supreme sacrifice, and every member bravely faced the greatest odds without flinching.**” – Dr. K. Sheldrake
- “The best lesson which we get from the tragedy of Karbala is that Husain and his companions were rigid believers in God. **They illustrated that the numerical superiority does not count when it comes to the truth and the falsehood.** The victory of Husain, despite his minority, marvels me!” – Thomas Carlyle
- "In a distant age and climate, **the tragic scene of the death of Husain will awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader.**” – Edward Gibbon
- “**A reminder of that blood-stained field of Karbala**, where the grandson of the Apostle of God fell, at length, tortured by thirst, and surrounded by the bodies of his murdered kinsmen, has been at anytime since then, **sufficient to evoke, even in the most lukewarm and the heedless, the deepest emotion, the most frantic grief, and an exaltation of spirit before which pain, danger, and death shrink to unconsidered trifles.**” - Browne’s History of Persia

Labbaik Ya Hussain (as)