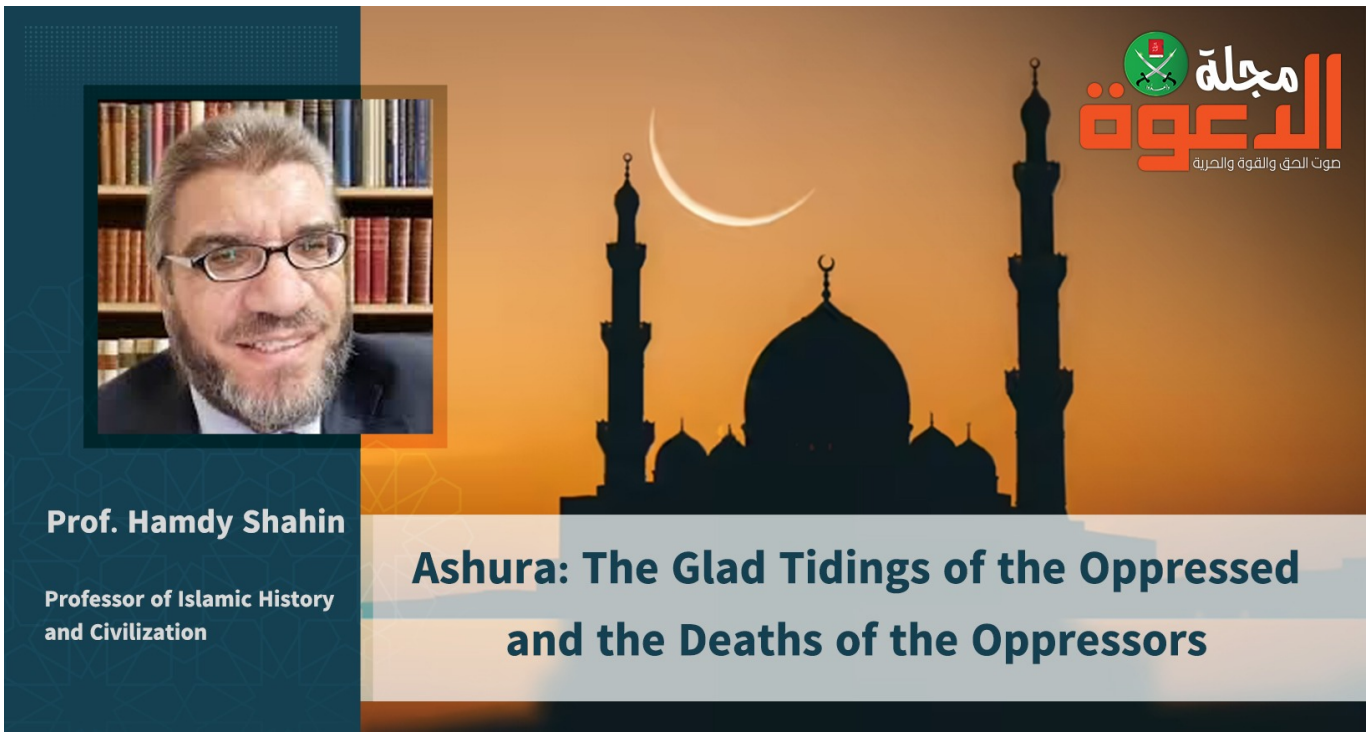
Ashura: The Glad Tidings of the Oppressed and the Deaths of the Oppressors



The blessings of the seasons of goodness keep flowing. After Ramadan and the Night of Power comes the Hajj season, followed by the scene of Arafat, and then the remembrance of the Hijra and the founding of the Islamic State. The remembrance of Ashura follows this. And what do you know about it?

It combines the glad tidings of victory for the oppressed with the downfall of the oppressors in their adornments. It is a lesson like tyranny and its crimes against humanity, as it strips people of the most precious gift God has bestowed upon them: dignity and freedom ("And We have certainly honored the children of Adam") [Surat Al-Isra: 70]. It is a reminder of the identity of this Muslim nation and its eternal message.

The Pharaoh's end was monumental in every sense of the word. He could have died a natural death among his people or been killed in palace conflicts or political battles. Few eras are free of such events. But God Almighty decided that he should die while clinging to his falsehood and drowning in his tyranny until his last breath. He saw the greatest sign of God as the sea split before him, and Moses and those with him walked right before his eyes. He did not fear, nor was he deterred. God had sealed his heart, so he insisted on pursuing the oppressed who fled from his injustices. He was too proud to utter the testimony of truth with a haste befitting the onslaught of death, so he twisted it in the worst viable way, and said: ("I believe that there is no god except that in whom the Children of Israel believe). What benefit did the words 'choking him in his throat, heavy on his tongue' have? He was told, "Now you believe ? But you always disobeyed and were one of the corruptors. Surah Yunus: 90-91, and the sea spits it out, (Today We will preserve your corpse so that you may become an example), it is unlikely that signs and warnings will help the bald and hard-hearted. A new Pharaoh has succeeded him, continuing to enslave a people who have accepted humiliation and disgrace. He has lowered his yoke so that tyrants may rise from above him. (And so he fooled his people, and they obeyed him. They were truly a rebellious people.) Surah Az-Zukhruf: 54,

and he leads an army like himself, full of ignorance and heedlessness. The death of their Pharaoh before their eyes did not awaken their conscience nor move their minds.

A generation of humiliation is not raised by miracles, but by education:

And how astonishing is a decisive miracle that did not benefit the unjust or the oppressed! "And what will the signs and warnings avail a people who do not believe?" (Surah Yunus: 101). If the signs were of no avail to Pharaoh and his forces, neither did they admonish those saved from drowning. The Great Quran depicts their state in His words: "And We brought the Children of Israel across the sea, and they came upon a people devoted to their idols. They ¯said, 'O Moses, make for us a god just as they have gods.' He said, 'You are indeed an ignorant people.'"(Surah Al A'raf: 138). No sooner had Moses left for his appointed time with his Lord than they worshipped the calf in his absence, even threatening his brother Aaron with death if he stood between them and their new idol!*

This is the state of a nation raised under the rule of tyrants! They denied the atmosphere of freedom and only endured a few days of dignity! The revelation of the Torah (which contains guidance and light) did not benefit them, nor did the efforts of two noble messengers—Moses and Aaron—together. Neither God's promise that they would enter the Holy Land nor His command to wage jihad moved them. They told their prophet, "So go—both you and your Lord—and fight; we are staying right here." But when he despaired of them, he said, Moses pleaded, "My Lord! I have no control over anyone except myself and my brother. So set us apart from the rebellious people.' Allah replied, "Then this land is forbidden to them for forty years, during which they will wander through the land. So do not grieve for the rebellious people" (Al¯Ma'idah: 25¯26). Still, it did not help them. The dazzling miracle—indeed, their extended education over forty years benefited them until the generation of weakness and humiliation was wiped out, clearing the way for a new generation deserving of victory.

God's will for them was fulfilled four decades later. This will was announced at the beginning of the story of Moses and Pharaoh in Surat Al¯Qasas: "But it was Our Will to favour those who were oppressed in the land, making them models of faith as well as successors; and to establish them in the land; and through them show Pharaoh, Ham n, and their soldiers the fulfilment of what they feared." (Al¯Qasas 28:5¯6). The ending of the story was mentioned before its beginning to speed up the good news for believers everywhere, so that the messengers would be reassured. And the supporters of truth are guided to the outcome of their struggle before they start. It is no surprise that Surah Al¯Qasas was revealed in Mecca, to establish beliefs that would remain unchanged.

The Alienation of Reformers from Their People:

One challenge for reformers is that they are sent with their messages to people who do not believe, and even if some of them do believe, they do not try to live according to the truths of faith. This is the alienation that Moses, peace be upon him, encountered among his people when they said, "They complained, "We have always been oppressed—before and after you came to us with the message ." He replied, "Perhaps your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you successors in the land to see what you will do." (Al¯A'raf: 129). When the calamity struck them and Pharaoh and his soldiers pursued him, he found no way to defend himself, no strength to be patient, and no certainty in the truth.

Instead, their hearts soared like lightning as they cried out, "Indeed, we are [now] steadfast in our faith." (We are overtaken for sure), so his response was: "No, indeed, my Lord is with me. He will guide me." His speech was in the first-person singular pronoun (Absolutely not! My Lord is certainly with me—He will guide me), so how does that compare to the saying of the Prophet, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, to Abu Bakr (Indeed, God is with us)? The story continued with Moses after the Children of Israel abandoned him, so he said: "My Lord, I have no control over anyone but myself and my brother."

Our Prophet is more deserving of Moses, and we stand with him.

When the migration took place, the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, saw the Jews fasting on the day of Ashura. The Arabs and Quraysh held that day in high regard, inheriting its significance, perhaps without understanding the reason behind it. The Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, asked them about the reason for their fasting, and they replied, "This is a righteous day; this is the day on which God saved the Children of Israel from their enemy, so Moses fasted on it." The Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, said, "I am more deserving of Moses than you, and more deserving of fasting on it." So he fasted on it and commanded that it be fasted." Agreed upon Hadith.

"I am more deserving of Moses than you," is a true statement that reflects a deeper truth. The nation of the Prophet, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, has inherited the prophets and has been entrusted with their legacy. as God Almighty said: "We have revealed to you O Prophet this Book with the truth, as a confirmation of previous Scriptures and a supreme authority on them" (Al-Ma'idah: 48). This is a right that predicts the historical growth of the Nation of Islam, which has truthfully carried the origin of the religion and its doctrine that has remained unchanged since Adam, Noah, and those who came after them. He has ordained for you, believers , the Way which He decreed for Noah, and what We have revealed to you, O Prophet , and what We decreed for Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, commanding: "Uphold the faith, and make no divisions in it.} (Ash-Shura: 13)

Ashura served as a gateway to Hijrah.

Ashura was a crucial event in the migration of the Children of Israel from the land of oppression. They did not understand the duty of migration and its costs, nor did they recognize the obligation of jihad to establish religion and state. Migration is not a flight for security's sake, and then they settle down. Instead, it is a stage in a lengthy journey aimed at dedicating the religion entirely to God and fulfilling the mission of succession for which God created humanity. These are the verses of God that clearly reaffirm this truth: {And those who later believed, migrated, and struggled alongside you, they are also with you} [Al-Anfal: 75], {Those who have believed, emigrated, and strived in the cause of Allah with their wealth and their lives are greater in rank in the sight of Allah. It is they who will triumph.} (At-Tawbah: 20) {As for those who emigrated after being compelled to renounce Islam , then struggled in Allah's cause , and persevered, your Lord O Prophet is truly All-Forgiving, Most Merciful after all.} (An-Nahl: 110)

Ashura will continue to be a symbol of good news for the oppressed; that Allah's victory is imminent, and a

reminder to tyrants that His punishment is severe and painful, and that His promise to His struggling servants will never be broken. {We certainly help Our messengers and the believers, both in this worldly life and on the Day the witnesses will stand forth for testimony . the Day the wrongdoers' excuses will be of no benefit to them. They will be condemned, and will have the worst outcome.} (Ghafir: 51–52). So, O Allah, be with our brothers in Palestine and everywhere that rises up against its oppressors.