

## **Weeping on Imam Al Hussein as Catharsis:**

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### **Abstract:**

The present paper attempts to put an answer to a big question that it is "why does the reader or the listener read or listen to the tragic story of Imam Al Hussein and what can he get from that real tragic story?"

Thus we try to put a spiritual answer when we the term "catharsis" as a point start in order to get a reply to that big question.

The reason of the selection of the topic for this study is to understand the meaning of weeping on Imam Al Hussein.

Also when we speak about the Tragedy of Imam Hussein in the Battle of Karbala and the relation with catharsis, we should know who is Imam Al Hussein (A. S)? ....And what is catharsis? .....Then we can get the relationship between them.

**Key words:** Imam Hussein, Catharsis, The Battle of Karbala, Aristotle, Elegies, Weeping.

### **Who is Imam AL Hussein?**

Al Hussein Ibn Ali Ibn Abi Talib was born on (10 October) (3 Sha'aban AH 4 (in the ancient (intercalated) Arabic calendar) and died (10th Muharram AH 61), also spelled as Husain, Hussain or Hussein, he was the son of Ali Ibn Abi Talib (fourth Rashidun Caliph of Sunni Islam, and first Imam of Shia Islam) and Fatimah (daughter of the prophet Muhammad) and younger brother of Hasan Ibn Ali. "Hussein is an important figure in Islam, as he is a member of Ahl Al-Bayt (the household of Muhammad) and Ahl Al-Kisa, as well as being the third Shia Imam".(Redha,1999: 34)

AL Hussein became the head of Shia Imam and the head of Banu Hashim after the death of his older brother, Al Hasan Ibn Ali, in 670 (AH 50). His father's supporters (Shi'a Ali) in Kufa gave their allegiance to him. However, he told them he was still bound to the peace treaty between Al Hasan and Muawiyah and they should wait until Muawiyah was dead. Later, Al Hussain did not accept the request of Muawiyah for the succession of his son, Yazid , and considered this action as a breach of the Al Hasan–Muawiya treaty. When Muawiyah died in 680, Al Hussein refused to pledge

allegiance to Yazid , who had just been appointed as Umayyad caliph by Muawiyah because he considered the Umayyads an oppressive and religiously misguided regime. He insisted on his legitimacy based on his own special position as a direct descendant of Muhammad and his legitimate legates. As a consequence, he left Medina, his home town, to take refuge in Mecca in AH 60. "There, the people of Kufa sent letters to him, asking his help and pledging their allegiance to him. So he travelled towards Kufa. At a place near Kufa, known as Karbala, his caravan was intercepted by Yazid's army. He was killed and beheaded in the Battle of Karbala on 10 October 680 (10 Muḥarram 61) by Shimr Ibn Thil-Jawshan, along with most of his family and companions". (Redha,1999: 56)

Anger at Hussein's death was turned into a rallying cry that helped undermine the Umayyad caliphate legitimacy and ultimately overthrow the Umayyad caliphate by Abbasid Revolution.

"Hussein is highly regarded by Shia Muslims because he refused to pledge allegiance to Yazid , the Umayyad caliph, because he considered the rule of the Umayyads unjust. The annual memorial for him, his family, his children and his companions is called Ashura (tenth day of Muharram) and is a day of

mourning for Shiite Muslims. His action at Karbala fuelled the later Shiite movements". (Madresy, 1995: 45).

Al-Hussein Bin Ali Bin Abi-Talib, the third of the immaculate household Imams, and the second Sebt (son of a daughter) the chiefs of Heaven's youth, and the sweet basils of the Chosen, and one of the five people of the cloak, and the chief of martyrs.

The words of historians and researchers had a consensus that Al-Hussein was not given an epithet apart from 'Abi Abdillah'.

He was given many titles, and each of those titles carried a medal which suits the greatness of his person. Some of those titles are: The Sebt (son of a daughter) of the Prophet, the chief of Heaven's youth, and the sweet basil Allah's Messenger, he was also entitled as the Master, the Guardian, the Staunch, Blessed, Karbala's Martyr ,and the Master of Martyrs.

A summary of his life from birth until martyrdom: He lived for sixty five years and nine months and ten days. So his stay with his grandfather the Messenger of Allah was six years and eleven months .He stayed with his father the Commander of the Faithful for five months and few days less than thirty years, and with his brother Al-Hassan in his Imamate just less than ten years by six months and twenty days, and his Imamate

after his brother lasted just below ten years by ten months and days. "He left Medina after the news of Muawiya's death arrived in the mid of Rajab year sixty. He left Mecca heading to Iraq on Monday the tenth of Thi-Alhujja year sixty, and he arrived at Karbala on the second of Muharram year sixty one, and his martyrdom was on the tenth of Muharram of that year". (Madresy, 1995: 75).

### What is Catharsis?

Catharsis is a Greek term meaning purification and purgation. This is derived from *kathaire* which has medical applications. The first, and most serious, definition of catharsis in the area of dramatic arts is the one developed by Aristotle in his *Poetics*: "Pathos which influences one's soul equal affects others' souls; if there is any difference in such impacts, it is only in one of the degrees, for instance, in fear and pity." In *Poetics*, Chapter XIV, Aristotle talks of catharsis with regard to Classic works as such: "Fear and pity may arise from a play or be ensuing from sequence of events, with the latter being superior to the former and a job of great poets. Legends should be compiled in such a way to shiver their audience, who then should feel pity for the protagonist, just as happens for Oedipus audience. If this effect is intended to be achieved from the setting, it

is beyond the poetical principles and needs nothing but material equipment” (Dr. S.Sen,1973: 45)

Aristotle deliberated on internal and personal functions of art, which, as elaborated by Bābak Ahmadi in his *Reality and Beauty* (Ahmed, 2010: 24). It was this way of thinking that invented the term catharsis. This way of thinking can, although, be regarded as a rejection of Plato’s opinions that art of drama damages peoples’ souls, particularly the youth. Therefore, Aristotle gave a positive and constructive aspect to theatre by inserting catharsis in drama as a result of fear and pity. (. Golden, 1977: 107)

Nature and reality of the term catharsis, as interpreted to mean purification and purgation, are under heated questions by various scholars, and no word is as renowned as catharsis in the Greek literature. Hippocratic interpretation of catharsis is likely to be used by Aristotle who intended to use the term as to mean what purifies the soul from damages and corruptions. Apparently, purification is not opposed to this interpretation of catharsis (Butcher, 1980: 77)

Berthold Friedrich Brecht defines catharsis as: “What is social important for us is the purpose which Aristotle determined for tragedy: purgation. It is purification of viewers by means of imitation of actions which provoke fear and pity. Purgation sinks audience in persons

whose behaviors are imitated by actors. In their activities and research on the term catharsis, scholars and translators have pinpointed to the issue that *fears* and *pity*, or solely one of them, are/is associated with catharsis. (Dr. S.Sen,1973: 65) Another design is that Aristotle meant to accompany fear and pity with other similar emotions. This is, however, most probable that Aristotle wished to indicate that catharsis is a repercussion of a complex reaction ensuing form fear and pity". (Golden, 1977: 32)

In the 18th century defined catharsis as a change of effects into righteous habits in which fear and pity are so adjusted that can be heightened to reach at the position of virtues.(Dr. S.Sen,1973: 78)

In his Confessions, Saint Augustinus presented a description of the paradox of tragedy. He believed that we enjoy the feelings of affliction and pain in a tragedy as a reference to the feelings of sympathy and pity. Reflected also by many other 18th century thinkers as Adam Smith, Lord Kim, Harry Hum, etc., this definition was attractive due to the close relationship between an artistic accomplishment and Christian ethics. However, David Hume rejected this interpretation that we enjoy from fear and pity, indicating that: "If this was the case, we could have been enjoying being in a hospital more than being in a party.

"This is not only a deficient solution to aesthetics, but also a poor interoperation of catharsis as meant by Aristotle". (Smith, 1940: 45).

### **Purgation and purification:**

In his works prior to the Poetics, Aristotle had used the term catharsis purely in its medical sense. Here, however, he employs it as a medical metaphor, therefore, that purification and cleansing are not proper translations for catharsis; that it should rather be rendered as purgation. "It is the human soul that is purged of its excessive passions." Gerald F. Else (Smith, 1940: p 59) made the following argument against the "purgation" theory: "It presupposes that we come to the tragic drama as patients to be cured, relieved, and restored to psychic health. But there is not a word to support this in the "Poetics", not a hint that the end of drama is to cure or alleviate pathological states. On the contrary it is evident in every line of the work that Aristotle is presupposing "normal" auditors, normal states of mind and feeling, normal emotional and aesthetic experience." (Butcher, 1980: 79-82)



## ***Crying and Wailing for Imam AL Hussein .***

**Crying is a natural act:**

"Islam is a religion based on nature. Wailing or weeping is the innate instinct of a human being. A newborn child starts his life with crying. Weeping is not prohibited in any religion or creed of the world. "Tears are automatically shed when a man is confronted by any physical, mental or spiritual mishap, and tears are not only the sign of grief but also a kind of reimbursement for that grief". (Ahmed, 2010: 55)

Now in whose grief does a newborn child weep? That's the question, which can be answered by the one who remembers his own weeping when he was born. It is said, that when Adam was sent to this earth from Heaven, he wept on that migration, and hence, every child of Adam, weeps when he opens his eyes in this world. If this is true, then this reason for wailing certainly supports our point of view that in the grief of a departure, wailing is a natural habit. Wailing or weeping is a natural instinct hence Allah has also praised this act and has said in the Holy Quran.

## **Battle of Karbala:**

On his path towards Kufa, Hussein encountered with the army of Ubaydullah Ibn Ziyad in his path towards Kufa. "Hussein addressed the Kufa's army, reminding them that they had invited him to come because they were without an Imam. "He told them that he intended to proceed to Kufa with their support, but if they were now opposed to his coming, he would return to where he had come from. However, the army urged him to choose another way". (al – Maliki,1972: 83). Thus, he turned to left and reached Karbala, where the army forced him not to go further and stop at a location that was without water. Merely

## **Transfer of the Head of Hussein:**

"On the second day after the battle of Karbala, the forces of Yazid raised the head of Hussein on a lance. They took it to Kufa to present it to Ubayd–Allah ibn Ziyad, the governor of Kufa, leaving behind the mutilated body of Hussein". (Tahir–ul–Qadri,2011: 34)

According to a popular belief, the headless body was thus buried there by the tribe of Bani Assad, who were living in the vicinity of Karbala. However, according to the Shia belief that the body of an Imam is only buried by an Imam, Hussein Ibn Ali's body was buried by his son, Ali Ibn Hussein. After the exhibition and display of

the head of Hussein, Ibn Ziyad dispatched it to Damascus to be presented to Yazid as a trophy.

### **Elegies:**

Let us weep with these tragic words .Yes we weep Al – Imam Hussein.

These tragic words make audience weep and they get catharsis which they seek it. As we find in tragic drama.

His wife al–Rabab also eulogized him. She said:

–The one who was the light by whom others enlightened themselves. Is dead in Karbala' unburied!

–The grandson of the Prophet; may Allah reward you good for us and thou might spare the loss of scales

–You were a hard mountain for me to resort to

And you were our companion in kindred and in religion!

–Who was for orphans and the needy; and

Who grants and welcomes the poor!

–I swear by Allah, I don't seek anything

But to get absent in the sands!

His daughter Sukaina also eulogized him. She said:

-Don't blame him! The grief is very deep

Its eyes are full of tears (al – Maliki,1972: 43)

AI-Hussein was shot by the arrows

Of death which hit him directly

-By the hands of the worst people of Allah

Who are the off springs of the dissipated and the army

of the dissolute?!

-Oh, the nation of the bad men, let me know what is your protest Tomorrow was most of you are hit by sword!

-The calamity hit you all except those who followed him You have made him a target for the enemies' spears!

-Oh, eye celebrate all the life with blood Don't weep for a son or a family or a companion –But for the son of the Messenger of Allah Pour matter and blood for him!

The daughter of A'qeel Ibn Abi Taleb eulogized al-Hussein and those who were killed with him. She said:

**-Oh, my eye! Cry in a loud wailing and lamentation**

**And bewail if you bewailed the family of the Messenger  
of Allah**

**-Six, all of them are for Ali**

**Were hit and five for A'qeel**

**Sulairnan Ibn Qubla al-Khuza'e said:**

**-I passed by the homes of Mohammed's family**

**I didn't see like them when I stayed**

**-May Allah not distance the homes and their families**

**And if they got empty depart**

**-They were the hope, then they came back with their  
calamity**

**Those woes got terrific and worsened**

**-Those are people won't sheath their swords**

**And they didn't show cowardice when they fought!**

**-The dead of the Hashemites**

**Has humiliated Quraish's notables and they were  
humiliated**

**-Don't you see the land has become sick**

**For the loss of Hussein and the whole country trembled!**

**-And the heaven wailed lamenting for his loss**

**And its stars wept for him and performed prayers! (al –  
Maliki, 1972: 12)**

**Mansour al-Nemri said:**

**-Woe unto you, Oh, killer of al-Hussein! You have got  
guilty with a big burden you cannot bear!**

**What a gift you gave Ahmad in His grave with the heat  
of the one who lost him .**

**-Come and beseech his intercession tomorrow And get  
up to go to his spring with the wishers**

**-The doubt with me is unacceptable in any case But, I  
may doubt the coward**

**-As if you wonder how doeth not Befall them the  
retribution in haste!**

**-Allah is not hasty even if it was so Your God is not  
inadvertent as you see**

**-So long as a person «enjoys his sin» The punishment will come later.**

**It was said that some people of the city heard a man calling at the same night during which al-Hussein was killed:**

**-Oh, killers of al-Hussein! Oh, fanatics**

**You will get tormented and tortured**

**-All the people of the heaven damning you**

**Whether they are prophets or angels -You have got damned by Ibn Dawoud, Moses and the Bible's master**

**A poet said eulogizing Ali Ibn Al-Hussein:**

**-There was no eye that saw Like him With Bare-feet walking and foot-wear too.**

**Boiling row meat and when it becomes ripe It'l/be for everyone who wants to eat**

**-He was if his fire was set Ablazing by his renowned honour**

**-As a miserable widower Or as an individual alive who is still single**

**-I mean the son of Laila who is of good manners I mean the son of the daughter of the virtuous descent – World doesn't affect his religion, Neither he sees out right for evil!**

**A poet said eulogizing al-Abbas Ibn Ali:**

**-The one who; s the worthiest to be wept for is a youth who made al-Hussein weep in Karbala'**

**-His brother and the son of his father Ali, Abu al-Fadl the stained with blood**

**-And who commiserated him nothing could prevent him, and showed generosity for quenching his thirst with water!**

**Al-Kumet also eulogized al-Abbas Ibn Ali. He said:**

**-O, Abu al-Fadl! Their sweet remembrance**

**Is a remedy for the spirits from illness?**

**-The unjust killed, when they killed him, The most generous like clouds.(al – Maliki,1972: 66) never mentioned**



## Conclusion

In this study I focus that there many have pointed out about the receiving of aesthetic originated in Aristotelian's environment and that Aristotle is the real father receiving of aesthetic, through his opinions and his philosophical ideas. They have formed the first ground of the various critical schools and Western literature. Leaders and Western literature still tend to his rulings and his opinions at this day.

This philosopher and critic highlighted lights on the literary and artistic works, not only as the impact of these actions on the recipients while they were undergoing work, but he tried to describe the impact on them after operation of receive, particularly when he focused on relationship between the text and the audience. It is evident through the concept of "catharsis cleansing". This concept, which "pushes recipients to the realization of the mind through the exercise of their approach implicitly gives them a kind of moral balance.

Aristotle interested in the receiving process at three elements: text, the writer and the receiver and gave each of the elements role, which reacts in this trilateral framework. While Plato believes that the cleansing effect of a negative impact because it comes from the simulation and imitation that are rejected just as it leads

to a weakening of the recipient and not the opposite. Through art Aristotle sought to achieve cleansing the recipient. He presented the theory in the literature and he wanted to be comprehensive about the essence and the changes that accompanied it. He saw "that the essence is not thought separate from things and the truth is the potential in the perceived sensory and then the essence of the thing is inseparable from the physical bring.

It must be the goal of the first for literary work or a real tragedy story is cleansing, and so that this goal is achieved, Aristotle sees that the artwork must be its parts are regular, coordination and clarity, thus achieved the most important standards of beauty have are: the regular and consistency and clarity, these regular, coordination and clarity in the artwork associated the element of perception for the recipient. Aristotle was asserted through his views that meaning exists strongly and appears when the emotions excited by thing which made or imitative are the same feelings excited by the origin and then meaning achieved for the recipient and comes respond and effect by cleansing. Aristotle links between the imitation and the respond because the tragedy does not imitate only organism's doing but it is an imitation for emotional situations and

feelings that will raise the parallel feelings for the recipient when is represented at passion of fear and pity.

On the other hand Aristotle interested much in transformation of artworks and he means that form because the essence the sex and the gender are constants, which confirms that the real source of pleasure lies in these transformations that occur on the artworks that wear different forms in every time.

The idea of cleansing (catharsis) linked for the Aristotle most links for element receiver; it is the one who receives the artwork, who interacts with it. The idea of cleansing based on the exciting emotion of pity and fear at receiver, and cleansing here is not just a sentimental emotion is associated with a moment of viewing and mortal but it is a greater sense achieve superior knowledge and paints a picture of the world and is reflected through the receiving act, meanings, ideas, motives and interests generated at the receiver by watching what is happening on the stage.

But if the recipient ( reader or hearer) who read or hear the real events took place a long time ago and is related to someone who rose up against tyranny and slavery that person or prince is Al-Hussein and his revolution against Yazd. At the story of the Battle of

Karbala the Orator pictures the events or they may body during theater which it is called Al Tazieh at this battle how Imam Hussein carries his son ( Ali Al Caber ) whose killed ,how Al Hussein speaks with his brother the last speech or the farewell between them , how children are thirst and they asked the water and there are many tragedy images at this really tragedy story.

These tragic images make the hearers (listener or readers or recipients) excited his emotion and he weeps. They want or hope to be with Imam Hussein as his companions although the difference between the two times. They want to embody the real image for the love which related with their loved Al Hussein. Imam AL Hussein in the Battle of Karbala where he reflected real tragic images, so it makes reader or listener cry when depicting the events of Karbala picture by orators when they embody them as drama or saying.

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