

The Message from the Imam Khatib of Tokyo Camii, Çınar, regarding Muharram and Karbala

The first month of our Hijri calendar is Muharram. Muharram means being worthy of reverence. This month is filled with virtues, grace, divine prosperity, and an abundance of divine blessings. In this regard, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) teaches us that the most meritorious fasting outside of Ramadan is performed in the month of Muharram.

When the Prophet Muhammad (saw) migrated to Madinah, he saw that the Jews performed Ashura fasting and asked them why. The Jews replied, "Today is the great day when Allah saved Musa (Moses) and his people and drowned Firawn (Pharaoh) and his people in the water. Musa used to fast on this day as a sign of gratitude to Allah, and we do the same." Then, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "I am closer to Musa than you." He advised his ummah to observe Ashura fasting for two days, either on the ninth and tenth day or on the tenth eleventh day.

The Day of Ashura is also when a great tragedy, the Karbala incident, occurred, which sears our hearts as we recall. The Prophet Muhammad's (saw) beloved grandchild, Husain, whom he called as "my sweet-smelling flower in the world" and described as "the master of Heaven's youth", and over 70 Muslims, most of whom were from the family of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), were massacred and martyred on the 10th of Muharram in Karbala. Husain and the others who accompanied him are immortalized in the hearts of all Muslims for their valiant stand against injustice and persecution, as well as their earnest walk in the name of the truth. Those who dared to force them into this persecution are imprisoned in the collective conscience of all Muslims.

The Karbala incident is common grief for all of us as the Muslim ummah and a heart wound from our history. How tragic it is that new Karbala occurrences continue to occur in Islamic geography today due to aspirations and interests since not enough lessons are taken from the terrible tragedies of the past. However, what falls upon every Muslim, whose heart aches at the mention of Karbala and who sighs in sorrow when the name Husain is uttered, is to read and comprehend the Karbala correctly. It is our collective obligation to preserve the spirit of tawhid and wahdat and safeguard our togetherness and solidarity to prevent future Karbalas from occurring. We must stand up for what is right and seek the truth. In times of sedition, we must use our foresight and insight to see through reality. We must stand up against persecution and injustice just like Husain (ra).

I would like to make this occasion to wish the mercy of Allah the Almighty (SWT) first and foremost upon Husain, the Master of Martyrs, as well as all our martyrs who have sacrificed their lives in the cause of our sacred values.

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