

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا

جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ.

وَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:

أَفْضَلُ الصِّيَامِ بَعْدَ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ، شَهْرُ اللَّهِ الْمُحَرَّمِ.

THE MONTH OF MUHARRAM AND KARBALA

Honorable Muslims!

We have recently entered the year 1444 on the Hijri calendar, which begins with the month of Muharram. The month of Muharram is one that is full of grace and wisdom, and our Prophet (saw) characterizes it as “**deserving of veneration**”.¹ He (saw) highlights the spiritual barakah of this month by stating, “**The most excellent fast after Ramadan is the one in Allah’s month, Muharram.**”² He advises his ummah to fast on the tenth of Muharram, the Day of ‘Ashura, in conjunction with one prior or subsequent day.³

Dear Believers!

Muharram is also the bitter memory of Karbala. It is the yearning for a drop of water in deserts... It is the yearning season for hearts aflame with the love of ahl al-bayt, wailing “Oh, Husayn...” It is the tears for the time when Husayn (ra), the master of martyrs, and those in his company were mercilessly martyred.

Husayn (ra)... The Messenger of Allah’s (saw) beloved grandson, and a member of ahl al-bayt... Ali al-Murtada (ra) and Fatimah al-Zahra (ra)’s precious son... He is the brave young man whom the Prophet of Mercy (saw) would embrace by saying “**my sweet-smelling flower in this world**”⁴ and honor as “the master of the youth in paradise”.⁵ He is the distinguished representative of high morals and timelessly honorable stance in the cause of Allah (swt).

Dear Muslims!

Karbala is the shared pain of the whole ‘ummah regardless of sectarian, dispositional, and worldview differences. It is the heartache of every Muslim who believes in Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw), and has a love for ahl al-bayt. With at least one family member named Hasan, Husayn, Ali, or Fatimah, and with hearts ablaze with love for the Prophet’s children, the affection of

our great nation for ahl al-bayt has grown throughout the centuries. Our nation continues to feel this love in the depths of their hearts.

Dear Believers!

As we bear the pain of the Karbala Incident, we must read it in such a way as to draw lessons from it so that the same grievances do not reoccur.

The most important lesson we must take from Karbala is to consider it as an opportunity conducive to unity and brotherhood, as opposed to division and separation, and to turn it into a union of hearts. It also includes sharing one another’s joy and sorrow as well as love and hardships. We need to heed our Lord Almighty’s (swt) command, “**Do not be like those who split into sects and differed after clear proofs had come to them...**”⁶ and hold on to one another tightly. We should also embrace unity against sedition, corruption, and separation, and not give any opportunity to those targeting our brotherhood.

Dear Muslims!

Another lesson we must draw from Karbala is to know that the cause Husayn (ra) and his companions sacrificed their lives for was the path of our Prophet (saw). As stated by Ali (ra), it is to observe the fardhs of Allah (swt), to be especially attentive to prayer, and to get closer to Allah (swt) through prayer. It is to comprehend and abide by the pillars, commandments, and prohibitions of Islam, just like Husayn (ra). It also includes upholding righteousness, justice, love, compassion, and mercy as well as preventing evil and spreading good. As advised by the author of Maqalat, it is to be as humble as soil in human relations, to view everybody as equal, and not to reproach anybody. Another lesson to draw is not to succumb to the deceptiveness of the world, and to seek Allah’s (swt) approval at all times. It also advises us to firmly stand against injustice and oppression, and to pursue martyrdom in the cause of Allah (swt) if need be.

I would like to take this opportunity to remember with the wish of mercy and the feeling of indebtedness and gratitude all our martyrs who have sacrificed their lives in the way of religion, faith, homeland, and all sacred values, particularly Imam Husayn (ra), the master of martyrs, and the ahl al-bayt of the Prophet (saw).

¹ Muslim, Siyam, 203.

² Muslim, Siyam, 202.

³ Ibn Hanbal, I, 240.

⁴ Tirmidhi, Birr, 11.

⁵ Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 30.

⁶ Al-i ‘Imran, 3/105.