

The Unity of the Ummah, and the Concept of the Jamaa'ah (Community)

(Translated)

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Many wonder whether the Islamic Ummah today is a single ummah, or divided into different peoples. If it is a single Ummah, how can we explain this division, and fragmentation in its stances on crucial issues, especially when confronting its enemies, who mercilessly shed the blood of its sons and daughters every day?

The truth is that Muslims were, are, and will remain, one Ummah apart from other people, as the Messenger of Allah (saw) wrote in the Madinah Document, **«بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ، هَذَا كِتَابٌ مِنْ مُحَمَّدٍ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ، بَيْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ وَيَثْرِبَ، وَمَنْ تَبِعَهُمْ، فَلَحِقَ بِهِمْ، وَجَاهَدَ مَعَهُمْ، إِنَّهُمْ أُمَّةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ مِنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ... وَإِنْ سَلِمَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَاحِدَةً، لَا يُسَالِمُ مُؤْمِنٌ دُونَ مُؤْمِنٍ فِي قِتَالٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ، إِلَّا عَلَى سَوَاءٍ وَعَدْلٍ بَيْنَهُمْ»** **“In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. This is a document from Muhammad, the Prophet ﷺ, between the believers and the Muslims, from within the Quraysh and Yathrib, and those who followed them, joined them, and fought alongside them. They are a single Ummah, apart from all other people... And the peace of the believers is one. No believer makes peace with other than the believer in Fighting in the Path of Allah ﷻ, except on equality and justice among them.”**

Once again, there is no doubt that the Islamic Ummah was and still is one Ummah, unified by the foundation upon which it was founded, which is Islam, its aqeedah (doctrine) and its Shariah Law. Whoever embraces the Islamic aqeedah and is satisfied with its Shariah Law is part of this one Ummah.

Allah (swt) warned Muslims against leaving the Deen of Islam and following paths other than the path of Islam, saying, **﴿وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السَّبِيلَ فَتَفْرَقَ بَكُمْ﴾** **“And that this is My Path (Siraat), which is straight, so follow it and do not follow other paths, for they will separate you from His path. This He has enjoined upon you that you may become righteous.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Anaam:153].

However, the problem facing the Ummah today, of division and fragmentation, is due to a matter other than the unity of its Deen. Today we lack the ability to be one community (jamaa'ah) under one leader, which is known as political unity. Even though we are one Ummah, we are not one community, and this is a great shortcoming in a great matter. Islam has warned us against political division, conflict and strife. Allah (swt) says, **﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ * وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَاصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ﴾** **“O you who have believed, fear Allah as He should be feared and do not die except as Muslims * And hold fast, all together, to the Rope of Allah, and do not be divided among yourselves. And remember the favor of Allah upon you, when you were enemies and He unified your hearts and you became, by His favor, brothers. And you were on the brink of a pit of Fire and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah make clear to you His verses. His verses, that you may be guided.”** [TMQ Surah Aali-Imran: 102-3]. Ibn Kathir mentioned in his tafseer (commentary) of His (swt) Statement, **“And do not be**

divided,” that, أمرهم بالجماعة ونهاهم عن التفرقة “He ﷺ commanded them to remain in congregation and forbade them from being divided.”

Allah (swt) said, **«وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ»** **“And do not dispute and thus lose courage and your strength departs.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Anfaal 46]. What dispute and failure could be greater than what Muslims are experiencing today?! We have been divided into weak secular political entities ruled by lowly Ruwaibadah rulers who serve the enemies of Islam, fighting our Shariah Law and distorting our principles as much as they can, wasting our energies, squandering our wealth, preventing the sources of our glory, and devoting themselves to tearing our strength apart, and preventing us from coming together as a single community (jamaa’ah).

The Prophet (saw) ordered that Muslims must have one state and one imam, saying, **«كَانَتْ بَنُو إِسْرَائِيلَ تَسُوسُهُمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءُ، كُلَّمَا هَلَكَ نَبِيٌّ خَلَفَهُ نَبِيٌّ، وَإِنَّهُ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدِي، وَسَتَكُونُ خُلَفَاءُ فَتَكْثُرُ»** **“Banu Israeel had their political affairs looked after by the Prophets (as). Whenever a Prophet died, another prophet succeeded him. However, there will be no prophet after me. Instead there will be Khulafa’a (Caliphs), and they will increase in number.”** The Companions asked, “What do you therefore order us to do with respect to them?” He (saw) said, **«فُوا بِبَيْعَةِ الْأَوَّلِ، فَالْأَوَّلِ، وَأَعْطُوهُمْ حَقَّهُمْ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَأَلُهُمْ، عَمَّا اسْتَرْعَاهُمْ»** **“Fulfill the Bayah pledge of allegiance, one Caliph after the other, one at a time, and give them their rights, for Allah ﷻ will ask them about what He has entrusted them with of guardianship.”** [Muslim]

The great importance of this Shariah obligation is established by the fact that the Prophet (saw) ordered the killing of anyone who seeks to divide the political unity of Muslims. He (saw) said, **«مَنْ أَتَاكُمْ وَأَمْرُكُمْ جَمِيعٌ عَلَى رَجُلٍ وَاحِدٍ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَشُقَّ عَصَاكُمْ أَوْ يَفْرِقَ جَمَاعَتَكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُ»** **“If someone comes to you while your affairs are unified under one man, wanting to split your unity or divide your community (jamaa’ah), then kill him.”** And he (saw) said, **«فَمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَفْرِقَ أَمْرَ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ وَهِيَ جَمِيعٌ، فَاضْرِبُوهُ بِالسَّيْفِ كَيْفَ مَا كَانَ»** **“Anyone who tries to disrupt the affairs of this Ummah while they are unified you should strike him with the sword whoever he may be.”** [Muslim]. And he (saw) said, **«إِذَا بُوِيعَ لِخَلِيفَتَيْنِ فَاقْتُلُوا الْآخَرَ مِنْهُمَا»** **“When Bayah of allegiance has been taken for two Khaleefahs (Caliphs), kill the one for whom it was taken later.”** [Muslim]. The command to kill a Muslim and shed his blood is evidence of the existence of a Shariah demand that is sought to be achieved and preserved, which is much greater than even the sanctity of the Muslim’s blood. This evidences the obligation of the political unification of the Ummah under one Imam, under whom the Muslims are a single community (jamaa’ah).

The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, **«مَنْ فَارَقَ الْجَمَاعَةَ قَيْدَ شِبِيرٍ فَقَدْ خَلَعَ رِبْقَةَ الْإِسْلَامِ مِنْ عُنُقِهِ»** **“Whoever leaves the jamaa’ah (community) by a handspan has removed the yoke of Islam from his neck.”** [Al-Haakim in Al-Mustadrak]. The Prophet (saw) said, **«مَنْ خَرَجَ مِنَ الطَّاعَةِ وَفَارَقَ الْجَمَاعَةَ فَمَاتَ مَاتَ مِيتَةَ جَاهِلِيَّةٍ»** **“One who defected from obedience to the Amir, and separated from the jamaa’ah (community) of the Muslims, and died in that state, would die the death of one belonging to the days of Jahiliyyah (pre-Islam)”** [Muslim]

All of this is evidence of the forbidding of the political division of Muslims, and the danger it poses to the Ummah, which is what the noble Companions (ra) understood and agreed upon. On the authority of Abdullah Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both, he (ra) said, Umar (ra) addressed us in Al-Jabiyah and said, “O people! I

stand among you just as the Messenger of Allah (saw) stood among us. He (saw) said, «عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْجَمَاعَةِ، وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَالْفُرْقَةَ، فَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ مَعَ الْوَاحِدِ وَهُوَ مِنَ الْإِثْنَيْنِ أَبْعَدُ، مَنْ أَرَادَ بَحْبُوحَةَ الْجَنَّةِ فَلْيَلْزِمِ الْجَمَاعَةَ» **“Adhere to the jamaa’ah (community) and avoid division, for Shaytan is with the separated individual, but Shaytan is further away from two together. Whoever desires the abundance of Paradise must adhere to the community.”** [Tirmidhi]

It was narrated that the Ameer ul Muimineen (Commander of the Believers), Umar bin Al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, said, يا معشر العرب! الأرض الأرض، إنه لا إسلام إلا بجماعة، ولا إمارة إلا بجماعة، ولا إمارة إلا بطاعة، ألا فمن سوده قومه على فقه كان ذلك خيرا له، ومن سوده إلا بجماعة، ولا إمارة إلا بجماعة، ولا إمارة إلا بطاعة، ألا فمن سوده قومه على غير فقه كان ذلك هلاكاً له ولمن اتبعه **“O Arabs! Land is merely land. There is no Islam without a jamaa’ah (community), and no jamaa’ah (community) without an imarah (emirate of an Ameer), and no imarah without obedience. Whoever is ruled by his people based on Fiqh (Shariah jurisprudence), that is better for him, and whoever is ruled by his people without Fiqh, that is destruction for him and for whoever follows him.”**

From all of the above, we realize that what the Ummah needs today is a single state and a single Imam, behind whom it fights, by whom it protects itself, and through whom it repels the injustice of its enemies. It unifies its work and policy by applying Islam completely domestically, and carrying it as a global Risaalah message abroad through Dawah and Jihad. The unity of the Ummah on aqeedah and believing on Shariah alone is not enough. It does not substitute its political unity and its jamaa’ah (community) under a single Khaleefah (Caliph).

Sadly, the concept of the Shariah obligation of the jamaa’ah (community) today is absent from many of the elite and intellectuals, let alone the general public. Moreover, it is fought by some of those with Islamic garb and Shariah certificates, in service of their benefactors. The need of the hour is to strive and devote oneself to re-establishing the concept of jamaa’ah intellectually among Muslims, in preparation for its practical re-establishment on the ground.

There is no doubt that working for the political unity of the Ummah and restoring it to a jamaa’ah (community) once again was, and still is, a matter fraught with risks and difficulties. However, the distance of a thousand miles, which began with a single step, has been significantly covered by the Ummah. All the Ummah has to do now is to continue by further injecting the determination of the doers of good deeds, and sharpening the resolve, stirring the water whenever it stagnates, and constantly innovating in the means and styles to achieve public opinion on this Islamic project, and utilizing the energies of the sincere and directing them towards establishing the Second Khilafah Rashidah (Rightly-Guided Caliphate). All this is in defiance of the brutality of the tyrannical rulers and their colonialist masters. The Ummah must continue in further penetrating the centers of power in the Ummah, and restoring them to the ranks of Islam and Muslims, and innovating in achieving this no matter the cost in terms of sacrifices. Let the Ummah in general and the Dawah carriers in particular learn that victory (nasr) is with patience and that with hardship comes ease. Allah (swt) said, ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَنْصُرُوا اللَّهَ يَنْصُرْكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَكُمْ﴾ **“O you believe, if you support Allah, He ﷻ will support you and firm your foothold.”** [TMQ Surah Muhammad: 7].

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