



إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ

(Qur'an 21:92)

This Ummah of yours is indeed one Ummah, and
I am your Lord,
therefore, worship Me alone.

“Surely this is your brotherhood”

Factors to achieve Muslim unity

Jumah Khutbah (Sermon)

Delivered

by

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على أشرف الأنبياء والمرسلين

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ ۖ وَاصْبِرُوا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ

الصَّابِرِينَ

And obey Allah and His Messenger and do not fall into dispute and thereby fail and lose your power. And Be patient, Allah is indeed with those who are patient.

(Qur'an 8:46)

والمؤمنون بعضهم أولياء بعض ...

The Believers are the helpers and allies of each other.

(Qur'an 9:71)

مثل المؤمنين في توادهم و تراحمهم و تعاطفهم مثل الجسد؛ إذا اشتكى منه عضو تداعى له سائر الجسد بالسهر والحمى ۖ - رواه مسلم.

The Prophet (saw) said: "The example of the Believers in regard to their love and compassion for each other is as the example of the body: When one part suffers, the whole body suffers."

لا يؤمن أحدكم حتى يحب لأخيه ما يحب لنفسه - رواه البخاري ومسلم.

"None of you is a true believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself."

These Ayat and Ahadith are very well known by most of the Muslims, and while they adorn the walls of the Masjids and other Islamic institutions, it is a painful pity to note that their message has not entered the hearts of many of our contemporary Muslims.

Brotherhood is the tie that binds Muslims together. It is the divine bond that unites their hearts and it is the strongest link of Faith. The Prophet (saw) said:

أوثق عرى الإيمان: الموالاة في الله والمعاداة في الله، والحب في الله والبغض في الله عز وجل. رواه الطبراني، وصححه الألباني.

"The strongest link of Faith is allegiance in Allah, enmity in Allah, love in Allah and hatred in Allah the Most Glorious Most Majestic." Meaning that you choose alliance in accordance with the guidance of Allah, only have enmity with those who are enemies of Truth, Love those who are good and hate the actions of those who commit evil.

Brotherhood creates harmony and cohesion amongst Muslims. On the day that the Prophet (saw) established the Islamic community in Madinah, he made brotherhood its second pillar, after the unification of Muslims through building a Masjid for them.

Islam glorifies the concept of أُخُوَّةٌ (brotherhood), and it guarantees ثواب (reward) if it is based on Birr and Taqwa (righteousness and piety). Islam does not consider brotherhood as an end in itself but as a means to many good outcomes.

When looking for a friend, a Muslim must search among good and righteous people. The Prophet (saw) said:

- “For whomever Allah wishes good, He will give him a righteous friend who will remind him if he forgets and aid him if he remembers.” He also said (saw):
- “Keep company with those whose sight reminds you of Allah, whose words increase your knowledge and whose action makes you desire the Hereafter.”

The Muslim Ummah is the best of all Ummahs ever brought forth for humanity, as Allah says:

كنتم خير أمة أخرجت للناس

You were the best nation that was sent forth to (save) humanity (Qur'an 3:110)

But this quality is based on three criteria:

- 1 – الأمر بالمعروف Commanding good behaviour
- 2 – النهي عن المنكر Forbidding bad behaviour
- 3 – الإيمان بالله Faith in Allah.

The unity of the Ummah is a prime duty that has been stressed in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Islamic unity is the means of fully living out the message of Islam, which cannot be realised when the Ummah is not unified. Our current disunity hurts the hearts of all of us, we all know that a lot of work is needed.

How do we achieve brotherhood and Islamic unity?

I would like to present 10 factors to achieve Muslim unity. I will present five factors in my first khutbah, the remaining in my 2nd Khutbah.

(1) Giving the Qur'an its due respect. Al Qur'an is the Book of Allah which no falsehood can approach. It is Guidance for all people to lead them to the absolute Truth.

It is the standard document for every Muslim. It is the blessed words of our Creator to guide us to the best quality life. It is the source of all understanding of one's life and duties. It is the source or settling disputes among Muslims and between Muslims and non-Muslims. There is a solution in the Qur'an for every situation we may find ourselves in. Therefore, it is imperative that Muslims come back to understanding the Qur'an and being enlightened by its teachings.

The Qur'an must be accepted in its totality with the firm realisation that it is the pure Word of Allah (s.w.t). The Qur'an is unified in theme and content – a perfect message with no contradictions or distortions. Moreover, Ahadith regarding the explanation of various Ayat of the Qur'an are also truths, they are the words of the truthful Prophet (saw), the Hadith helps us to understand how to apply the Qur'an in our daily lives.

Minor differences in religious doctrines have become an unfortunate cause of fragmentation among Muslims. To overcome this, we must go back to the Qur'an and Hadith.

(2) Giving the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw) its due respect. This is the second factor for achieving Muslim unity and it is also the second source of Islamic legislation. Whatever the Prophet (saw) stipulated must be accepted in the same way as the Qur'an. Since the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw) is an explanation of the Qur'an, one must remember that the sayings of the Prophet (saw) and the example demonstrated by him is not an optional matter for Muslims to take or leave according to their desires.

أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ

Obey Allah and obey the messenger and those who have authority over you
(Qur'an 4:59).

Our success and our good comes from obeying Allah and obeying His Rasul. The true cause of disunity is that we are not giving the Qur'an and Sunnah their due. As for those who have authority among us, they are adjoined only if they lead us in obedience to Allah and obedience to His messenger, if they deviate from the path of Allah and His messenger, then there is no obedience to them according to the Hadith:

لَا طَاعَةَ فِي مَعْصِيَةٍ، إِنَّمَا الطَّاعَةُ فِي الْمَعْرُوفِ

A leader has no right of obedience if he asks you to disobey Allah. Obedience is only in what is within the conventions of Islam. (Bukhary)

Obeying those who invite to wrongdoing is a form of shirk and it is one of the causes of our weakness.

There would only be genuine unity through holding fast to the Qur'an and the Prophet's Sunnah and resisting the Muharramat (forbidden things) and Munkarat (evils).

تركت فيكم أمرين لن تضلوا ما تمسكتم بهما كتاب الله وسنتي

**"I have left among you two things which if you hold onto you would never go astray:
The Book of Allah and my Sunnah."**

(3) The third factor in the achievement of Muslim unity is following the path of the Khulafa' ar-Rashidin and the Sahabah.

اتبعوا سنتي وسنة خلفاء الراشدين المهديين.

“Follow my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly-guided Khulafa’ ar-Rashidin.”

This Hadith shows the significant status of the Sahabah, especially Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthman and ‘Ali (raa). The Khulafa` are not infallible, but as they were declared “rightly-guided” by the prophet (S.A.W), then their leadership provides guidance for all Muslims who aspire for leadership.

(4) Consulting the learned authorities.

فاسألوا أهل الذكر إن كنتم لا تعلمون.

So ask the people of knowledge if you do not know. (Qur’an 16-43)

Knowledgeable scholars must be consulted in any unclear or controversial issue. We should not jump to any hasty conclusions based upon our own limited understanding or interpretation of the Shari’ah, but instead ask those who are the most knowledgeable in this field. And when they give us an answer, they should answer based on the Qur’an and Sunnah.

(5) Establishment of Majlis ash-Shura. It is the duty of the Muslims to work hard to establish a Majlis ash-Shura (Advisory Council). The principle of Shura has been proved to be effective in the tradition of the rightly guided Khulafa’ar-Rashidin. The tragic decline of the Khilafah in the 14th century after the Hijrah proved to be the beginning of the decline of the whole Muslim world.

(6) Committing to the principles of Islamic brotherhood. Commitment to Islamic brotherhood is a fundamental basis of Islamic unity. For this principle to be achieved, we must love each other in Allah, visit, help and advise one another.

We must strive not to hurt one another as our prophet (S.A.W) said:

المسلم من سلم المسلمون من لسانه ويده.

“The Muslim is he from whose words and actions other Muslims are safe.”

يا أيها الذين آمنوا لا يسخر قوم من قوم عسى أن يكونوا خيرا منهم

O you who believe! Let not any people mock other people, for it may be that they are better than them. (Qur’an 49-11)

This is because true virtue, excellence and honour are not to be measured by worldly standards but by the standard of Allah, which no-one knows except He.

إن أكرمكم عند الله أتقاكم

Truly the most noble of you with Allah is the most pious of you. (Qur’an 49-13)

(7) Individual efforts and responsibilities.

وَأَنْ لَيْسَ لِلإِنسَانِ إِلا مَا سَعَى وَأَنْ سَعِيهِ سَوْفَ يُرَى وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى

And man shall have nothing except that for what he strives, and his effort will be seen. And no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another. (Qur'an 53:38-40)

Therefore, strive your best, even if others are falling short in their duties, you must still try your best.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغَيِّرُ مَا بَقِيَتْ حَتَّىٰ يَغْيُرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ

Truly, Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change what is within themselves. (Qur'an 13-11)

The law of change is that your condition will get worse if you get worse and will become better if you become better.

(8) Display – Feel pride in your Islam.

بَدَأَ الْإِسْلَامَ غَرِيبًا وَسَيَعُودُ غَرِيبًا فَطُوبَىٰ لِلْغُرَبَاءِ

“Islam began estranged, and it will again be estranged, so good tidings to the estranged!”

At its beginning, Muslims were isolated and Islam was rejected by the majority. In that beginning, Muslims developed very strong faith and endured a lot of hardship in support of their faith. As more people began to accept Islam and Muslims became dominant, everything changed and the nations ruled by Islam began to prosper tremendously. Then, as Muslims became lax and started to argue over minor things, they became weak and the enemies of Islam started to isolate and target Muslims.

We must condition ourselves to become strong again, to assert our faith and hold onto the teachings of Islam. What the world needs, humanity needs, all life forms need Islam and true Muslims for their salvation. Of course, in the front of these is our children, they need us to show them the way towards upholding Islam.

Today, many Muslims feel shy to offer Salah in front of others. You must offer your salah on time without disturbing others.

Those who are content to hold on to their Islam, despite all odds, including estrangement by society, will succeed in this life and the Hereafter.

(9) Tribalism, nationalism, statism etc. Another great hindrance to the path of Muslim unity is the presence of poisonous doctrines in the Ummah such as tribalism, nationalism, statism etc. Islam condemns these in no uncertain terms:

إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ

This Ummah of yours is indeed one Ummah, and I am your Lord, therefore worship Me alone. (Qur'an 21:92)

In spite of this, many Muslims of various countries are infected with the disease of nationalism or the attitude of ethnic superiority.

Remember the Hadith of Rasullullah during his farewell speech. "Oh people, you all are from Adam, Adam is from soil, there is no superiority of Arabs over non Arabs"...

Fighting among Muslims is most detrimental to their unity, it is a form of Kufr.

The Prophet (saw) said that if two Muslims fight (where neither party is fighting in self-defence), the killer as well as the victim who is killed will go to Jahannam, because the victim would have killed the killer had he been able to do so.

He also told us to remove those who try to destroy our unity. But unfortunately, the terrestrial nationalism supported by foreign powers has divided Muslims and even caused them to go to war against each other. Declaring war against Muslims is totally prohibited in Islam.

(10) Love of the Dunya (WAHN) and dislike of death. It is reported that 'Abdullah ibn Dinar said: "I left with 'Umar ibn al-Khattab to Makkah and we held a wedding feast on the way. From one of the hills came a shepherd. 'Umar said to him: "Sell me a sheep." The reply came: "I am only a slave looking after these sheep; I don't own them." 'Umar then said: "Tell your master that a wolf ate one sheep." The slave said: "And what will I tell Allah?" At this, 'Umar wept, and the next morning he went to the owner, he negotiated for the drover's release and set him free, saying: "That statement of yours ("What will I tell Allah?") set you free in this world and I hope it will set you free in the next."

Dear Brothers and Sisters, the insignificance of worldly possessions in the eyes of the early generations of the Muslims is what made them the leaders and masters of the world, and what made their enemies say of them: "We saw a people to whom death was more beloved than life, and humility more beloved than status, none of whom had any desire for the world."

Shah Waliyyullah Dehlawi, who was one of the most outstanding scholars and thinkers of the Muslim Ummah in the 10th century of Hijrah, made a deep study of Islam and diagnosed the main causes of Muslim disunity:

- 1) The abandoning of the Shari'ah and the system of Shura by the Muslims,
- 2) The abandoning of the Arabic language in education and administration,
- 3) Unnecessary differences and disputes over Fiqh and its interpretation,
- 4) Blind-following of others.
- 5) Luxurious life of rulers, and
- 6) Economic inequality between different social classes and Muslim nations.

We ask Allah to give us the correct understanding of our circumstances today and how to change them. May He guide us and bless us to improve our condition.