

Muslim Unity

Visiting Masjid al Haraam, I decided to sit down and reflect on why this beautiful structure is the epicentre of Islam. Many of the crucial and milestone events from the life of the Prophet (saw) and our religion took place in Makkah. The question which I kept asking myself was, "Why did Allah decide to make Makkah the place of His beloved House? Why did He swear by this city in Surah al Tin? ﴿وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ... لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ﴾ **"And by this secure city (Makkah)...We have certainly created man in the best stature"**

Analysing the location of Makkah, there doesn't seem to be any immediate, plausible reason for a human to conclude that it holds any significant geographical advantages. There is no fertile land, there are no easily accessible bodies of water nearby, and the land itself is quite mountainous which means that it is difficult for transport systems to be established. It does not therefore necessarily display the traits that a land needs for a society to survive, develop, and flourish.

With this taken into consideration, it is difficult to comprehend that this is the place where Allah's House resides, the place where the most crucial events of the Prophet Ibrahim (as)'s Sunnah unfolded, the place where the Zam Zam well lies, and also the place where major events in the life of our beloved Prophet took place. Furthermore, it is the place where *millions* of Muslims come every year with one goal as a united Ummah for Hajj.

﴿رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾

"Our Lord! And make us submissive unto You and of our offspring a nation submissive unto You, and show us our Manaasik (all the ceremonies of pilgrimage), and accept our repentance. Truly, You are the One Who accepts repentance, the Most Merciful" [Surah al Baqarah]

Yet if you look at Muslims today, there is a clear division. The unity we see in Makkah dissipates as we are outside the bounds of the Meeqaat. We see our fellow brothers and sisters experiencing almost every type of injustice, occupation and violence, whilst the children of this Ummah are being butchered openly. We are so accustomed to such news that we have become numb to such events and unfortunately the oppression the Muslim world faces doesn't make us ponder or accept that this is our problem; it just affects our emotions whilst not being able to think rationally on how if we were a united ummah then such problems wouldn't occur. The list of places where Muslims are affected by this are from the Blessed Land (Palestine) and Syria, the land of the prophets, where physical oppression is taking place, all the way to lands such as Spain where Muslims were expelled from when al Andalus fell and now unable to express or practise Islam without being convicted. Linking this back to Makkah, our deen explicitly states that the life of a believer is more valuable than the Ka'bah itself, yet why are the blood and freedom of Muslims cheaper than the resources in which the lands are pillaged for? We as Muslims have an identity; it needs to be identified personally so that it can be valued explicitly.

فعن عبد الله بن عمر رضي الله عنه قال رأيت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يطوف بالكعبة ويقول: «ما أطيبك وأطيب ريحك ما أعظمك وأعظم حرمتك والذي نفس محمد بيده لحرمة المؤمن أعظم عند الله حرمة منك ماله ودمه وأن نظن به إلا خيراً»

Abdullah ibn Umar (ra) narrated that he saw the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) making tawaf of the Ka'bah and saying, **"How delightful you are, and how great is your scent! How magnificent you are, and how great is your sanctity! But by the one in whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, the sanctity of a believer, his wealth and his blood, is greater in the sight of Allah than your sanctity, and we do not think of him except good."** (Sunan Ibn Majah)

Allah emphasised in the deen which He has given us that unison is essential for us for succeed on individual, family, societal, national and international levels - even if there are disputes we are instructed to resolve these in a manner such that potential issues do not cause ripples in our foundation of political unity. The bond of "la illaha illallah" is meant to be thicker than blood, yet it is currently diluted by oil and dispersed by greed, and as an unfortunate result, discrimination has followed and culture has diluted the deen. The Prophet (saw) said «وَلَا تَدَابَرُوا، وَكُونُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِخْوَانًا» **"...and do not desert one another. And O! Allah's worshipers! Be brothers!"** (Sahih al Bukhari)

Briefly touching on the tafseer of Surah al Fath and analysing the Seerah co-currently, it can be understood that the Sahabah trusted the Prophet in the most difficult of times even when they were

struck with poverty and oppression. The Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah were constantly being humiliated and attacked, yet they did not falter or show signs of disunity as their 'Aqeedah was the Islamic 'Aqeedah and as a result, they had conviction in Allah that victory will come. Arabs, Persians and African nations were united with the same foundation, yet today you will find that it is almost impossible for good interracial friendships or relationships to take place without cultural or nationalistic thoughts and taboos arising. This is a major trait of Jahiliyyah and it is important to remember that this came from Shaytaan when he discriminated against insaan (mankind).

This was in fact the actual reason how Iblees came to be the 'Shaytan' we have been warned against:

﴿وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَفَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِ أَفَتَتَّخِذُونَهُ وَذُرِّيَّتَهُ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِي وَهُمْ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ بِئْسَ لِلظَّالِمِينَ بَدَلًا﴾

“And [mention] when We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam," and they prostrated, except for Iblees. He was of the jinn and departed from the command of his Lord. Then will you take him and his descendants as allies other than Me while they are enemies to you? Wretched it is for the wrongdoers as an exchange...” [Surah al Kahf]

After Makkah was liberated by the Muslims, people were given their rights and the detrimental practises which were plaguing Hijaz at the time were abolished. For the points which have been mentioned so far, it can be understood why places such as Medina, Makkah, and al Quds hold such importance in Islam. Yet Islam tells us that the value of one Muslim is more valuable than the three holy sites even though these places hold such immense historic and religious value. We are the most beloved creation by Allah and he has deemed the value of our life greater than the value of these holy sites.

We are the best nation of the best of creation, yet the leaders of today who are in control of our resources and wealth put Bani Israa'il to shame. Nationalism has plagued the understanding of our creed and an excess of culture has diluted our understanding of the Deen. A government can bomb a country to its south, spend half a billion dollars on a painting and have golden seats in their palaces whilst watching millions of Muslims starve, whilst the same monarchy is proud of throwing around the title of the 'custodian' of the two holy sites of Islam. Yet they neglect the occupation taking place of Muslims in al Quds. In Saudi Arabia, you will notice that there is a picture of Masjid al Aqsa present on a 50 Riyal note; unfortunately, this is the value which has been given to it by the Muslim leaders of today.

«لزوال الدنيا أهون على الله عز وجل من قتل رجل مسلم»

“The destruction of the world is lighter on Allah than the killing of one Muslim” (Sunan al Tirmidhi)

You get acknowledged and applauded for memorising the words of the Quran, but if you try and implement the practices which brought al Aws and al Khazraj together, then you will get tortured or possibly even killed. Skin colour and the area of the dessert you are from is what decides where your status in society is.

The concluding point is that we don't put enough value on ourselves and the potential we possess. We need to use this to motivate ourselves to improve ourselves, our families, our communities, our education and many other aspects so that we can be who we were meant to be instead of getting religious highs from stories which activate nostalgia. It is also important to remember that improving ourselves and building our communities are processes which should take place co-currently and should work symbiotically instead of being treated as two separate entities. The first step towards achieving this is realising who we are and what our purpose is. Additionally, we need to give bay'ah to the religion which we have received from Allah (swt) instead of giving bay'ah to the materialistic factors which surround us. Finally, there is no political unity within the Muslim world; how can we be one functional and successful Ummah (nation) whilst the nations we rule express disunity? We need to improve communities, our nations and ourselves in a symbiotic manner to reach our potential.

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