

# HARMONY IN DIVERSITY: EXPLORING THE FOUNDATIONS AND SOURCES OF UNITY WITHIN THE UMMAH THROUGH ISLAMIC IDEOLOGIES

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## **Abstract**

*The concept of the unity of Ummah, or the global Muslim community, holds significant importance in Islamic teachings. This abstract explores the foundations and sources of unity within the Ummah as elucidated in the Quran, Sunnah (traditions of Prophet Muhammad), and other Islamic teachings. The term "Ummah" refers to the collective body of Muslim believers, transcending geographical, cultural, and ethnic boundaries. Islamic teachings emphasize the oneness of Allah and the interconnectedness of all Muslims, fostering a sense of brotherhood and solidarity. The Quran, the holy book of Islam, serves as the primary source for understanding the principles of unity within the Ummah. Verses in the Quran highlight the importance of mutual cooperation, compassion, and understanding among believers, emphasizing the idea that Muslims are like a single body. The Sunnah, comprising the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad, serves as a practical guide for implementing the principles of unity. The Prophet's farewell sermon, for instance, emphasizes the equality of all Muslims and the importance of preserving unity. Additionally, the concept of the Ummah is reinforced through various historical examples of solidarity among early Muslim communities. Furthermore, Islamic teachings stress the role of leadership in fostering unity and resolving conflicts within the Ummah. Just governance, justice, and adherence to Islamic principles are highlighted as essential elements for maintaining harmony among Muslims. Despite the rich teachings promoting unity, challenges and divisions persist within the Ummah. This abstract discusses these challenges, ranging from sectarianism to geopolitical conflicts, and explores how a return to the fundamental principles of Islam can contribute to overcoming such divisions.*

**Keywords:** Quranic Principles, Brotherhood, Islamic Unity, Challenges to Unity, Compassion.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

The concept of the unity of Ummah, the global Muslim community, stands as a cornerstone in Islamic teachings, reflecting the profound principles embedded in the Quran, the Sunnah, and other foundational sources. Islam, as a comprehensive way of life, not only emphasizes the oneness of Allah but also underscores the interconnectedness of all believers, transcending geographical, cultural, and ethnic boundaries. This introduction delves into the foundations and sources of unity within the Ummah, shedding light on the teachings that guide Muslims towards fostering a collective sense of brotherhood and solidarity. The Quran, regarded as the ultimate source of guidance for Muslims, plays a pivotal role in articulating the principles of unity within the Ummah. Verses within the Quran highlight the significance of mutual cooperation, compassion, and understanding among believers. The metaphorical portrayal of Muslims as a single body emphasizes the organic unity that should bind them together. It is through the Quran that Muslims derive the principles that form the basis of their collective identity and cooperation. Complementing the Quran, the Sunnah, which encompasses the traditions and actions of Prophet Muhammad, provides a practical framework for implementing the principles of unity. The farewell sermon delivered by the Prophet serves as a poignant testament to the equality of all Muslims, irrespective of their ethnic or social background. The Sunnah serves as a guide for daily living, reinforcing the idea that unity is not only a spiritual concept but a lived reality rooted in the actions of the Prophet.



Additionally, historical examples within Islamic traditions highlight instances of solidarity among early Muslim communities, offering valuable lessons on how unity can be achieved and sustained. The understanding of these historical precedents contributes to the contemporary discourse on fostering unity within the Ummah. While Islamic teachings strongly advocate for unity, challenges and divisions persist within the Ummah. Sectarianism, geopolitical conflicts, and internal strife pose significant obstacles to the realization of a harmonious Muslim community. This paper will explore these challenges in-depth, seeking to understand their roots and examining how a return to the fundamental principles of Islam can serve as a catalyst for overcoming these divisions. In essence, the unity of the Ummah is not merely a theoretical concept but a dynamic force embedded in the teachings of Islam. As the subsequent sections will elaborate, a comprehensive understanding of these teachings provides a roadmap for Muslims to strengthen their bonds, cultivate harmony, and collectively embody the principles that define the true spirit of Islam.

Islam always gives prominence to live together in unity. Islam is the only religion which promotes unity and solidarity of the Muslims. Islamic injunctions are absolutely valuable to establish peace and security. Islam also enjoins to adopt moderation in every sphere of life. At the moment Muslim Ummah is standing at the threshold of trial and tribulation caused by the ever increasing tendency of sectarianism and religious extremism. Intolerance and intensive dissemination of special thoughts have led the people towards irascibility and resentment. Under these circumstances it is need of the hour to bring moderation in thinking and mood so that the religion Islam and human life could not be affected due to the menace of sectarianism. It is paramount responsibility to create an environment of unity, perseverance, clemency and forbearance. After analyzing the root causes and harsh ground realities which become a source to intensify the severity of sectarianism, the condemnation of sectarianism in Islamic Shariya and steps and measures to be taken to deracinate and eradicate this perilous sectarianism have been presented in this article .

Glorious Islamic teachings are manifest to foster the unity and consciousness of the Muslim Ummah. All the ignoble elements which are aspirant to disunite the Muslim Ummah have been repudiated and reviled. Islam has gathered all the Muslims together in a string of fraternity and has taught to desist from conflicts and clashes which reprehensibly affect unity .

The constituents of unity are extremely prominent in all the Islamic Injunctions and worships. By offering congregational obligatory prayers, the purified sentiments of love, equality and affection are strengthened and on the propitious occasion of congregational prayer of “Jumma-Tul-Mubarik” and prayers of “Eid-ul-Azha” and “Eid-ul-Fiter” majority of the Muslims gathers at central places to offer these prayers by which a scene of concordance and unity can be observed. Similarly while wearing white color cloth as a dress on the auspicious occasion of pilgrimage (Hajj) the Muslims from all over the world eliminate all types of discriminations and perform indistinguishable activities “Manasik-e-Hajj .”

In this article being studied, unity of Muslim Ummah, the conception of Islamic Shariya and the ways and means by which these objectives can be achieved, a research study is being presented in the light of splendid Islamic teachings. The translation of Verses of the Holy Quran has been taken from the English translation, presented by Mufti Taqi Usmani. Meanings of Unity :

Imam Raghیب Isfahani (Died in 502 Hijri) writes :

“Unity means “Al-infarad” that is to say the unique and distinctive and one, in fact it is called about that particular thing which has no part .”

And the substance of the word “Tauheed” is ( Wao Hay Daal) it means belief in Oneness of Allah regarding His existence and all Attributes

MEANINGS OF UMMAH :

“The word Ummah has been abstracted from the word “Omm” which means the root and original. Such as the word “Ummul Qurra” is used for Makka Mukkarama and it is also used for every city which is the center of the surrounding communities. The meaning of Ummah is a group or community.

Imam Raghیب Isfahani writes :

“According to the Arabic dictionary, the word “Ummah” is used for such a group or community who has been established on the basis of unity and relationship. Whether this may be the unity of

ideologies and beliefs or being in one era or being together on any land of a country or any other area that is to say of ancestry, language, color etc .”

That’s then the unity of the Muslim Ummah is based on the basic beliefs of their community .

The Injunctions of the Holy Quran Regarding Unity of Ummah<sup>4</sup> :

“Surely, this is the fraternity of your Faith, a single Faith, and I am your Lord; so worship Me”. (Translated by Mufti Taqi Usmani). Hazrat Ibn-e-Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) writes to explicate this verse<sup>5</sup> :

“Your religion is the only one religion .”

And Hazrat Hassan Basri (R.A.) writes :

“Your method is one that is to say this Sharia which has been mentioned that is agreed upon Sharia .”

Imam Muqatil Bin Suleman (Died in 150 Hijri) writes regarding explication of this verse :

“No doubt this is your nation which is being followed by you, that is to say Islamic Sharia is a one nation which had been followed by the Prophets and the believers .”

Ibne Jareer Tabri (Died in 310 Hijri) writes to define this verse :

9( Doubtlessly your nation is only one nation and I am your Lord O people, worship Me, besides other idols and gods whom you worship except Me .”

Allah Almighty Said at another Place :

“Surly, this is your creed, a single creed, and I am your Lord. So fear Me .”

)Translated by Mufti Taqi Usmani .(

Imam Ibne kaseer (Died in 774 Hijri) gives an explanation of this verse :

“O the community of Prophets, your religion and community is one. And that is to invite to worship One Allah, Who has no partner therefore, it was said, “I am your Lord fear Me .”

Allah Almighty Said at another Place :

“All men used to be a single „Ummah (i.e. on a single faith). Then (after they differed in the matters of faith), Allah sent Prophets carrying good news and warning, and sent down with them the book with Truth to judge between people in the matters of their dispute”. Mufti Muhammad Shafi (Died in 1976 A.D.) presents simplification of this verse :

- A summary of that simplification is given below :

“That all men believed in one religion, belief and community ages ago which was based on one nation and religion of nature then many differences of mood and humor and difference of opinions and thoughts created different ideas and beliefs. It was very strenuous to distinguish between spurious and meritorious (right and wrong). Allah Almighty sent down His Messengers (A.S.) to guide about right path and divine books were revealed on them. It is quite vivid that it was not contradiction of ancestry or language or color or country and time but it was contradiction of ideologies and beliefs and thoughts. By comparison it was revealed that in this verse unity means unity of thoughts and conceptions and unity of belief and school of thought ”

It was comprehensible that despite contradistinctions of era and areas of the Prophets (A. S.) they all unanimously followed one belief and one religion and that is the invitation to believe in One Allah about which every Prophet (A. S.) called his respective community .

Sayings of the Saviour of mankind the Holy Prophet (Blessings and peace be upon him)

To establish unity of Ummah the Holy Prophet (Blessings and peace be upon him) issued many valuable orders by adopting different manners and he purified the rites and rituals of the age of ignorance. He presented revolutionary reforms and eliminated every type of prejudice and pride based on ethnic and racial, ancestral and geographical and national .

Hazrat Jabir Bin Abdullah (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated.

“We were (the participants) in ghazwa and a person from immigrants (struck with foot on the buttocks) the helper (Ansari man) said, “O the

Ansari! (Assist me!)” the immigrant also said “O the immigrants!(Help).” When the Messenger of Allah heard that, he said, “What’s that?” they told, “A person from the immigrants struck with foot on buttocks of Ansari. On that the helper said, “O the Ansari!” and the immigrant said, “O the immigrants!” The Holy Prophet (SAW) said “

“Leave it (That call) for it is a despicable thing .”

Because this sentence reflected prejudice that’s why the Beloved Prophet (SAW) of Allah did not like it and he established a concept of international fraternity among the Muslims. While delivering his “Last Farewell Address” the Holy Prophet (SAW) gave a great message about unity for all the nations of the world with international manifestation. The Holy Prophet ((SAW)) said :15

“O people! Your Lord is One and your father is also one, remember there is no superiority for an Arab over a Non-Arab and for a NonArab over an Arab, neither for the white over the black nor for the black over a white except in God-consciousness .”

While delivering a lesson to accentuate unity among the Muslims, the Holy Prophet (SAW) said :

“ A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim, so he should not maltreat him, nor should he hand him over to a tormentor. Whosoever fulfilled the needs of his brother, Allah will fulfill his needs; whosoever brought his (Muslim) brother out of tribulation, Allah will bring him out of afflictions of the Day of Resurrection, and whosoever screened

a Muslim, Allah will screen him on the Day of Resurrection .”

In this Hadith the Holy Prophet (SAW) has mentioned five worthwhile points .

- A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim .
- He himself should not maltreat him, nor should he hand him over to a brutal .
- Whosoever remains anxious to fulfill the needs of his brother ,
- Allah will fulfill his needs .
- Whosoever brings his (Muslim) brother out of tribulation, Allah will bring him out of adversity of the Day of Resurrection .
- Whosoever will screen a Muslim, Allah will screen him on the Day of Resurrection .

If all the members of Muslim Ummah start following the footsteps of the model of excellence, the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) and decide to fulfill the rights of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) resultantly they all will be able to achieve crowning glory and this will be the golden age of the Muslim unity and solidarity. Ultimately despise and disdain among the Muslims will be eliminated. He also said on another occasion :

“ None of you will have belief till he aspires for his (Muslim) brother what he yearns for himself .”

It is noteworthy that if every person has enthusiastic passion to think about his brother wholeheartedly and positively and the best endeavors will be made by him to save his brother from loss then this will be a real source to unite the Muslim Ummah. Similarly while describing the nature of relationship of one Muslim with another Muslim, the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) said :

“A true believer to a sincere believer is like the brick of a wall, strengthening each other, while (describing that) the Holy Prophet

(SAW) clasped his hands by interlacing his fingers .”

While describing the blessings and rewards of unity of the Muslims, the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) said :  
“ And the hand of Allah is on the Jama’ah (group) and whosoever breaks from it, is immersed into the fire .”

The Holy Prophet (SAW) Said at another Place :

“No one has the superiority over anyone except with honesty or piousness .”

The Prophet of Allah (SAW) said, “You see the believers as regards their being compassionate among themselves and showings endearment among themselves and being affectionate, bearing resemblance to one body, so that, if any organ of body is not well then the entire body shares the wakefulness (Sleeplessness) .”

These Hadiths are highlighting the Muslim Unity substantially and comprehensively. And these teachings had gathered all the Muslims in a string of unity despite different color and ancestry, language, family and regardless of being from different areas .

THE SOURCES OF MUSLIM UNITY :

Far-reaching and desired consequences can be achieved by taking substantial steps and measures to create awareness about Muslim Unity and to establish unity among the Muslims .

Obeisance to the Holy Quran and Sunnah :



To establish unity of the Muslim Ummah it is absolutely obligatory to seek guidance from the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Holy the Prophet (SAW) regarding every problem or issue. The Holy Prophet (SAW) Said ,

“I am leaving two things among you, the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of Prophet. Unless you follow these you will not go astray” This verse also substantiate above mentioned Hadith; Allah Almighty Says in the Holy Quran :

“Hold steadfastly, all of you, to the string of Allah, and be not divided ”

The word “Hab Lillah” has been used in this verse. It means the Book of Allah, whereas it has also been described in the Hadith. This verse is consisted of two parts. The first part is of imperative mood that all the people should hold firmly the Book of Allah and the second part is related to prohibitions that do not be divided. Sectarianism has been denounced in the abovementioned verse strongly .

While explicating , Imam Ibne Jareer Tabbri (Died in 310 Hijri) writes :

“Do not live separately from the religion of Allah and that you promised Him which has been taken from you that you should behave compassionately and affectionately among yourselves and be steadfast to obey Allah and Prophets (A.S.) ”

Therefore unless relationship with the Holy Quran will be unwavering and unshakeable, the Muslim Unity will be everlasting. The best ever explication and clarification of the Holy Quran is found in the Hadiths. That’s why the Holy Quran ought to be studied in the light of the Hadiths. It will become a worthwhile and propitious fountainhead to easily determine the righteous direction and it will also be a source to scrutinize and explore the reality and authenticity of such kinds of so called principles adopted by the various sects and schools of thought. Only then it will be easiest to promote the Muslim Unity .

#### ERADICATION OF SECTARIANISM :

At the moment hazardous sectarianism has become a great impediment to the Muslim Unity. By studying the Islamic teachings keenly, this reality is revealed that there is no place for sectarianism in Islam. The Holy Prophet (SAW) has proscribed sectarianism strictly in his many sayings and discordance among the Muslims was a matter of displeasure for him. Therefore he used to warn his companions (R. A.) by interpreting the incidences of different predecessor communities (Ummahs) . Hazrat Ibne Masood (May Allah be pleased with him) narrates :

“I heard a man reciting a verse of the Holy Quran in a peculiar style, and I had heard the Holy Prophet (SAW) reciting the very same verse in a different style. So I brought him to the Holy Prophet (SAW) and told him about that but I noticed the sign of displeasure on his face, and then he said, both of you are correct, so do not contradict, for the nations (communities) before you contradicted, so those were ruined” The verse also testifies this fact .

Allah Almighty Says in the Holy Quran :

“And do not be like the ones who became divided and differed after the clear proofs had come to them. And those will have a great punishment .”

While explaining this verse Sheikh Ibne Atiya Ondlassi (Died in 542 Hijri) writes :

“Then Allah forbade this Ummah that they should not be like previous nations who involved in the sectarianism. Some explicators contradicted about abovementioned verse. Ibne -Abbas has said that in this, every previous nation has been pointed out who contradicted. So sectarianism became a cause of their destruction and Hassan said that Jews and Christians have been pointed out in this and Zajjaj said probably that sects of Jews could have been pointed out and sects of Christians could also be .”

It was revealed that sectarianism is extremely injurious that previous nations were destroyed due to sectarianism. Therefore Muslim Ummah is being ordained that do not be involved in sectarianism like previous nations and ancient communities .

In the light of abovementioned Hadiths, it is manifest that there is no justification of sectarianism in Islam. Unless Muslim community learnt this lesson of unity and solidarity the flag of their dignity and majesty was kept so high everywhere and contrary to this when they got involved themselves in sectarianism and they remained divided since then every passing day is leading them to their decline.

Now it's the time when sectarianism is at its zenith and Muslim Unity has been torn to pieces and that it is not concealed from intellectuals and religious scholars .

#### AVOIDANCE FROM INNOVATION IN RELIGION :

When a person asked Hazrat Umer Bin Ab-dul-Aziz (R.A.) about luck, his sayings regarding the answer of this question are extremely praiseworthy and conspicuous. The summary of his sayings is given below: "I advise you to fear Allah and to adopt moderation in this regard. After this I guide you to follow the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and to get rid of counterfeit principles of religion, invented by the innovator in the religion. So it is obligatory to keep following the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) strictly because Sunnah was commenced by such a person and personality who knew that some people will do mistakes, faux pas, stupidities and depth against his Sunnah. So like that thing for yourself which has been liked by the community of companions (R.A) of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) and ancestors of Ummah for themselves .

From the above discussion it can be known that whosoever will obey the Allah's Prophet (SAW), he will be successful and triumphant and whoever follows the innovative principles in religion or abstracts new baseless principles he should reform his conduct and character. Abstinance from Futile Conversation :

Such types of conversation and discussion must be avoided which are extremely purposeless and ineffective. Sometimes these discussions lead to duel and unending contretemps and violent conflicts. The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) himself has forbidden asking irrelevant and undesired questions .

"Do not ask about such things which I have left you because those people before you were ruined due to excessive questioning and they used to contradict their Prophets (A.S.). Whenever I ordain you to do something you should adopt that according to your affordability and when I restrict you to do anything then leave it ."

#### DIRECT RESEARCH AND INFORMATION:

It is highly indispensable to study the literature and point of view directly before opining about any school of thought and information about their noteworthy thoughts and ideologies must be sought and confirmed if the need is felt that how contradictory matters come under discussion and how the solution of these problematic issues are find out. Sometimes it happens that the literature or creative written material is misrepresented by separating it from the context and a true believer misjudges and lose his faith in those schools of thought and being nervous expresses his aggressive sentiments against it and members of that school of thought immediately reciprocate grievously and fiercely or aggressively by which paths for duel, strong controversial debate and polemical writing or speech are staged. Inevitably torrential blames are exchanged and reciprocated .

Unabated massacre and assassination on the basis of religion and school of thought are the consequences of that situation. Under these inescapable circumstances caused by the sectarianism will increase ultimately and Muslim Unity will be fragmented .

The Holy Prophet (SAW) said :

"Avoid suspicion because it is the worst of fallacious tales ."

The Holy Quran also certifies this fact .

Allah Almighty says in the Noble Quran :

"O you, who believe, abstain from many of the suspicions .

Some suspicions are sins ."

We should verify a contradictory statement whenever any unpleasant situation or event takes place . Allah Almighty Says in the Holy Quran :

"O you, who believe, if a sinful person brings you a report, verify its correctness, lest you should harm a people out of ignorance, and then become remorseful on what you did ."

Forbearance :

Prejudice and partiality are the root causes of an upsurge to escalate violence and brutality of sectarianism at a large extent. If sectarianism is to be eliminated then awareness about Muslim Unity and its significance must be highlighted. Every type of ethnic, racial, ancestral territorial, caste and

creed discrimination should be brought to an end. In this regard first and foremost preference should be given to pay reverence and deference to the people of every school of thought. Although it is not essential to follow their principles and ideologies yet it is obligatory to create environment of tolerance, endurance and forbearance. Dignitaries and venerable personalities of a school of thought should be respected by the members of every school of thought. After Prophets (A.S.) the companions (R.A.) of the Holy Prophet (SAW) are respected persons among all the human beings. Therefore, it is heart rending and traumatic for “Ehlay Sunnat” to bear disparagement and denigration of these personalities. Many Hadiths highlight the exalted and esteemed status of the companions (R.A.) of the Holy Prophet (SAW) therefore it is a moral imperative for everyone to refrain from act or activity or to state against the beloved companions (R.A.) of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and against pious wives (R.A.) of the Holy Prophet (SAW) It is mandatory for every member of any school of thought or sect not to be involved in obnoxious and offensive activities which are ultimately and legally harmful for any other sect .


Contradictions and clashes between two schools of thought should not be publicized. All issues and conflicts must be resolved amicably and peacefully through dialogues. To call sinner, transgressor or rake or to stigmatize one another can be a cause of mounting sectarian turmoil and turbulence .

#### CONCLUSION:

Islam is greatest proponent religion of the Muslim Unity. By studying and following the injunctions of the Holy Quran, Sunnah and event of the life of companions (R.A.) of the Holy Prophet (SAW) it is known that Islam attaches particular importance to the unity of the Muslim Ummah. The Holy Prophet (SAW) has strongly condemned and discouraged such persons or groups who try to disunite and dissociate the Muslims by subterfuge or intrigue .Whosoever chooses his own way contrary to the divine injunctions and conflicting with the principles of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet SAW and his companions (R.A.) will be considered apart from the Muslim community. To ponder over any contemporary problematic issue and to provide its solution in light of Islamic Injunctions is exceptional. Under these circumstances so many misconceptions and misinterpretations are being spread with malice aforethought. Muslim Community should make incessant and concerted endeavors to create such kind of environment to establish unity and solidarity of the Muslim Ummah and all the Muslims should avoid discords and disputes which harm the unity and can be a cause to disintegrate and disunite the Muslims .

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