

Prof. Dr. İyd Belbaa

EGYPT - ESTABLISHING THE ISLAMIC UNITY IS FARDH

Praise be to Allah (SWT) who is Lord of the worlds. Peace and blessings be upon the most blessed one of all created beings and the one who has been sent as a mercy to the universe.

The issue of unity of the Muslim Ummah is not something new but it is an issue of unity which was perpetuated by the prophets who were consecutively sent to humanity for the ages.

Allah (SWT) says as follows after mentioning His messengers in the Qur'an: "He knows what lies before them and what lies after them (what lies in their future and in their past, what is known to them and what is hidden from them); and they cannot intercede for any but His believing servants, those with whom He is well-pleased, and they themselves quake for reverent awe of Him." (Anbiya, 21:28)

Allah (SWT) has declared that the people of faith are a one Ummah (community) due to the belief of tawhid (unity) for the ages. The polytheists have always at odd with the majority. Being fardh of unity in the verse based on that the word 'ummah' in Arabic is mansu. That is, as long as the ummah is one Ummah and you have agreed on the unity you are one Ummah. If you disagree and disintegrate, of course, those who are conflicted with truth are not members of the true religion.

Those who disintegrate into fractions in religion are those who do factionalism and conflict in religion. Allah (SWT) says as follows in surah Mu'min:

"O you Messengers! Partake of (Allah's) pure and wholesome bounties, and always act righteously. I have full knowledge of all that you do. This community of yours is one single community of the same faith, and I am your Lord (Who creates, sustains, and protects you), so hold Me alone in fear and keep your duty to Me in piety. But people, having broken up into groups, differed among themselves as regards the Religion, each group proudly rejoicing in the portion they have." (Mu'min, 23:51-53)

The religion and ummah of all the messengers are one. And, this is invitation to worship only to Allah without attaching any partners to Him.

They were split up into pieces in religious issues. That is, after being commanded to be united they divided the religion into different factions and beliefs. Each group of them get pleasure from their views and astray that this is the highest rank of going astray. Allah (SWT) threatens with leaving them in astray and heresy till they will perish.

We should focus on the decree about factional conflicts which result groupings and disputes. We should think to what extend this is a religious diversity. The scholars of Islamic law should engage themselves with this issue and should carry out surveys and studies on it. While dealing with this issue they should highlight the development of Ummah ignoring the trivial discussions. They should devote their souls, minds, hearts, conscience to Allah (SWT) and focus on activities which will provide the unity of Muslims and the Islamic unity and clear the Islamic nationalism from conflict, factionalism and disputes.

This is Islamic nationalism which dates back to the ages. Hence, it is Islamic nationalism which gathers the Muslims who have a one god faith on one faith principle with different stages and angles.

If the only factor which realizes the only collective personality is this Islamic nationalism then sincere children of the Ummah should feel a great shame because the children of our Ummah which is extension of the Ummah to the ages do not realize to what extend the disputes, divisions and groupings are dangerous.

The vision of Islamic unity in the Risale-i Nur is told to the servants of the Risale-i Nur and the Qur'an with such a spiritual style as follows:

“And so, O Risale-i Nur students and servants of the Qur'an! You and I are members of a collective personality such as that, worthy of the title of 'perfect man.' We are like the components of a factory's machinery which produces eternal happiness within eternal life. We are hands working on a dominical boat which will disembark the Community of Muhammed (PBUH) at the Realm of Peace, the shore of salvation. So we are surely in need of solidarity and true union, obtained through gaining sincerity—for the mystery of sincerity secures through four individuals the moral strength of one thousand one hundred and eleven—indeed, we are compelled to obtain it.”

The secret in this mystery is that each individual should see through the eyes of the other brothers and hear through the ears of the other brothers with a true and pure sincerity. Thus, ten people who attain the true sincerity can gain a spiritual power and value. They see with twenty eyes, think with ten minds, listen with twenty ears and work with twenty hands.

Our Prophet (PBUH) says as follows: “The believers are like a body in loving each other, having mercy for each other and protecting each other. If any part of the body gets disturbed the other parts also get a fever and remain sleepless.

That the Risale-i Nur decrees the Islamic unity as fardh points out the urgency of this issue. None of the Muslims has a luxury of remaining aloof to establishment of the Islamic unity.

The truth is the vision of Risale-i Nur which extends the depth of the future has determined the problems of today since then. We can see that this determination is quite well-directed and conscientious and that he did not tolerate at all the aloofness, inertness, indifference for Islamic unity and Islamic nationalism and that he did not accept any excuse in these issues and that he declared in the Umayyad Mosque and to the Islamic world which would come 40-50 years later that such behaviours would be a great threat and damage to Muslims.

“O Believers! Do you know how many tribes of enemies have taken up position to attack the tribe of the people of belief? There are more than a hundred of them, like a series of concentric circles. The believers are obliged to take up defensive positions, each supporting the other and giving him a helping hand. Is it then at all fitting for the people of belief that with their biased partisanship and hostile rancour they should facilitate the attack of the enemy and fling open the doors for him to penetrate the fold of Islam? There are maybe seventy circles of enemies, including the misguided, atheist, and the unbeliever, each of them as harmful to you as all the terrors and afflictions of this world, and each of them regarding

you with greed, anger and hatred. Your firm weapon, shield and citadel against all of them is none other than the brotherhood of Islam. So realize just how contrary to conscience and to the interests of Islam it is to shake the citadel of Islam on account of petty hostilities and other pretexts! Know this, and come to your senses!

O people of faith! If you do not wish to enter a humiliating condition of slavery, come to your senses and enter and take refuge in the citadel of: "Indeed The believers are but brothers" (Hujurat, 49:10) to defend yourselves against those oppressors who would exploit your differences! Otherwise you will be able neither to protect your lives nor to defend your rights. It is evident that if two champions are wrestling with each other, even a child can beat them. If two mountains are balanced in the scales, even a small stone can disturb their equilibrium and cause one to rise and the other to fall. So O people of belief! Your strength is reduced to nothing as a result of your passions and biased partisanship, and you can be defeated by the slightest forces. If you have any interest in your social solidarity, then make of the exalted principle of "The believers are together like a well-founded building, one part of which supports the other" your guiding principle in life! Then you will be delivered from humiliation in this world and wretchedness in the Hereafter.

Let us listen to this verse in which Allah (SWT) commands us to be in congregation and prevents us from being disunited so that we get a good model of the Qur'an:

"And hold fast all together to the rope of Allah and never be divided. Remember Allah's favour upon you: you were once enemies and He reconciled your hearts so that through His favour you became like brothers. You stood on the brink of a pit of fire, and He delivered you from it. Thus Allah makes His signs of truth clear to you that you may be guided (to the Straight Path in all matters and be steadfast on it.)" (Al Imran, 3:1)

"Be not as those who split into parties and followed different ways after the manifest truths had come to them. Those are the ones for whom is a tremendous punishment." (Al Imran, 3:105)

"This is my straight path, so follow it, and do not follow other paths, lest they scatter you from His Path. This He has enjoined upon you, that you keep from disobedience to Him in reverence for Him and piety to deserve His protection." (An'am, 6:153)

"Those who have made divisions in their Religion (whereas they must accept it in its totality), and have been divided into different parties – you have nothing to do with them. Their case rests with Allah, and then He will make them understand what they were doing." (An'am, 6:159)

"(Set your whole being, you and the believers in your company, on the upright, ever-true Religion) turning in devotion to Him alone, and keep from disobedience to Him in reverence for Him and piety, and establish the Prayer in conformity with its conditions; and do not be of those who associate partners (with Him)" (Rum, 30:31)

"When affliction befalls people, they invoke their Lord turning to Him in contrition; then, no sooner does He favour them with a taste of mercy from Him, than some of them associate

partners with their Lord, (Who has created them, and sustains and cares for them).” (Rum, 30:33)

"And my breast will be constricted (so that I fail to show the necessary perseverance and tolerance), and my tongue will not be free (to convey Your Message with the right fluency), so appoint Aaron as a Messenger beside me.” (Shu’ara, 26:13)

“They will never fight against you as a united body (in alliance with the Hypocrites, with the Jews of Khaybar and others), unless it be from within fortified strongholds or from behind high walls. Severe is their belligerent discord among themselves (except when not opportunistically allied in warfare against you). You think of them as one body, but in fact their hearts are at odds with one another: This is because they are a people who do not reason (and come to an understanding of the situations they face).” (Hashr, 59:14)

After all these Divine warnings and messages to what extend it is right that some people take a different path and separate from the mainstream of Islam based on their humanely ideas.

Among these messages, there are the essentials of relation that needs to be among Muslims that the establishment of the collective personality of the faith which is based on the Islamic unity, the Islamic nationalism and ethical values depend on these essentials.

There should be this divine call in the conscious of every Muslim:

“It was by a mercy from Allah that (at the time of the setback), you (O Messenger) were lenient with them (your Companions). Had you been harsh and hard-hearted, they would surely have scattered away from about you. Then pardon them, pray for their forgiveness, and take counsel with them in the affairs (of public concern), and when you are resolved (on a course of action), put your trust in Allah. Surely Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him).” (Al Imran, 3:159)

And, this is the akhlaq (good manners) of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It is forgiving and wishing which is result of slenderness, kindness, tenderness and tolerance.

Risale-i Nur says as follows regarding this issue: “The key to happiness of the Muslims in Islamic community life is the legal consultation.”

The verse “And those who answer the call of their Lord and obey Him (in His orders and prohibitions), and establish the Prayer in conformity with its conditions; and whose affairs are by consultation among themselves; and who spend out of what We provide for them (to provide sustenance for the needy, and in Allah’s cause)” (Shura, 38) commands the consultation to be among the main principles because the true consultation yields sincerity and solidarity. Imam draws the attention to a deep and meticulous kind of consultation. He draws the attention to the fact that the consultation is transmittance of the ideas between generations and this kind of consultation surpasses the time. He defines this kind of consultation as “a consultation which the ages achieve through the history of human kind.”

For that reason, he confirms that the consultation is a reason of progression of the humanity. As there is a process of consultation among the individuals, in the same way there should be the same kind of consultation process among the different communities.

The only way of breaking the chains which many sorts of despotisms and oppressions tied millions of Muslims with them is the legal freedom which is result of legal consultation. The legal freedom is a manifestation of the names Rahman (the Merciful) and Rahim (the Compassionate) of Allah (SWT) and a grace of Him and this is one of features of the faith.

Long live the truthfulness, may the hopelessness perish and may the love, taqwa and consultation persist...

Another principle for realization of the Islamic unity is knowledge. Imam Said Nursi says as follows: "However, the unity cannot be realized through ignorance because the unity is combination of the ideas and combination of the ideas is achieved through the knowledge."

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) warned us about the obstacles of the unity. These are: cold-heartedness, jealousy, grudge, self-righteousness, ill-intention, disturbing and scaring Muslims, cursing to Muslims and waging war against them, overrated self-love and overrated blaming the other Muslims...

If the main reason of these negative features is division and disputes then how can we protect us against division and disputes?

- 1- To act positively, that is, out of love for one's own outlook, avoiding enmity for other outlooks, not criticizing them, interfering in their beliefs and sciences, or in any way concerning oneself with them.
- 2- To unite within the fold of Islam, irrespective of particular outlook, remembering those numerous ties of unity that evokes love, brotherhood and concord.
- 3- To adopt the just rule of conduct that the follower of any right outlook has the right to say, "My outlook is true, or the best," but not that "My outlook alone is true," or that "My outlook alone is good," thus implying the falsity or repugnance of all other outlooks.
- 4- To consider that union with the people of truth is a cause of Divine succour and the high dignity of religion.
- 5- To realize that the individual resistance of the most powerful person against the attacks through its genius of the mighty collective force of the people of misguidance and falsehood, which arises from their solidarity, will inevitably be defeated, and through the union of the people of truth, to create a joint and collective force also, in order to preserve justice and right in the face of that fearsome collective force of misguidance.

To save the truth from the misguidance a Muslims should abandon these following: The evil-commanding soul, egotism, pride which in truth is arrogance, useless sentiments which cause rivalry and fighting.

O my brothers and sisters who carry the identity of Islam! Nothing in any place of the world can threaten the Islamic consciousness more than division and factionalism.

If we ignore this fact then the position which we get into is aiding and abetting the division and factionalism. What will lighten our crime is our lack of power for establishing the Islamic unity. What we have to carry out is the obligations which our religion and the Qur'an burden

us. Our target which is above all our other targets is the realization of Islamic unity and Islamic nationalism and supporting the collective personality of all Muslims. Without a doubt all Muslims are a one community. Different alleys that we walk in do not make us different communities. The problem is not “how we can embrace Islam and make it perpetual” but it should be “how all we can embrace Islam, the religion of Allah, together and make it perpetual”.

There is a huge difference between the question of a Muslim which is “how can I accept the views of the other fraction?” and the one “how can I make the other people accept my views?” The worse is that “how can I establish an authority through which I can impose my ideas to the other groups and people?”

Imam Said Nursi comprehended this issue very well and he was inspired that there might be the diversity of groups and ideas but should not be division and factionalism because the Muslims are one community comprised of a variety of different paths. Our biggest fear is that there may be great differences between us.

One of the biggest dangers threatening the Islamic unity and Islamic nationality is that each group considers itself the only legal representative of Islam because in this case the hearts members of this groups may be filled with divisive feelings and they may think that they are the only group representing Islam truly although their hearts are corrupted by the division.

That we are Muslims means that we need to obey the orders of Allah (SWT) thoroughly. By being Muslim we need to surrender our soul, mind, heart, feelings and will to Allah (SWT).

“When Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter, it is not for a believing man and a believing woman to have an option insofar as they themselves are concerned. Whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has evidently gone astray.” (Ahzab, 36)

Allah (SWT) has decreed... The decrees of Allah and his messenger are mentioned in His holy book and His messenger’s Sunnah as orders and prohibitions. The beloved Prophet (PBUH) taught us how we should perform the orders and prohibitions.

We prostrate to Allah to express our gratitude and praise to Him that He has shown us the path of guidance in the Qur’an: “Say unto them (O Muhammad): For those who believe it is a guidance and a healing; and as for those who disbelieve, there is a deafness in their ears, and it is blindness for them.” (Fussilat, 41:44)

May Allah (SWT) make us one of those who are servants of the Qur’an and Sunnah and make this meeting the blessed one.