

## DAILY QUR'ANIC REFLECTIONS

## From Juz' 18: A Single Ummah Divided

وَأَنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ فَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ زُبُرًا كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ فَذَرَهُمْ فِي غَمْرَتِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ أَيْخَسِبُونَ أَنَّمَا نُمِدُّهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ مَّالٍ وَبَنِينَ نُسَارِعُ لَهُمْ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ ۗ بَلْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ

Indeed this community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord, so be wary of Me. But they fragmented their religion among themselves, each party boasting about what it had. So leave them in their stupor for a while. Do they suppose that whatever aid We provide them in regard to wealth and children [is because] We are eager to bring them good? No, they are not aware! (Mu'minūn 23:52-56)

**Reflections:**

The one common message that all the Prophets (‘a) brought was: There is but one God, so worship only Him. If all of humanity had taken this to heart and manifested it in their actions, we would not be in the divided state that we are in today. The same is the case for the Ummah of the Prophet (s). Imam Ali says, “No person is more covetous than I for the unity of the ummah of Muhammad (s) and its solidarity.”<sup>1</sup>

What is the cause of division? Man’s *hawā*—his conflicting desires and empty opinions of himself. In this same Surah, Allah (swt) says, “Had the truth followed their *hawā*, the heavens and the earth would have surely fallen apart [along] with those who are in them.”<sup>2</sup> Satan causes divisions within our ranks when he encourages us to magnify our *hawā*. When our *hawā* becomes the divine criteria for our actions<sup>3</sup>, then we break up the religion, each group taking one part and leaving another. Since the part is now disconnected from the totality, we interpret our part in a way that suits us, and hence we revel with what we have. In our stupor and overwhelming heedlessness, we lose our very conscience.

The result is that we become a weak ummah such that when our own brothers and sisters call us due to the severity of the oppression against them in broad daylight, we remain oblivious of their calls.

Having wealth and clanship is a test. We can either use them in the service of Allah to defend Islam and the Muslims, or we can use them to spread our myopic vision of the faith and revel in the process. In an age in which colonial powers are dividing up the Ummah to maintain their domination, we must return back to the Qur’ānic vision: “The faithful (*mu‘minun*) are indeed brothers”<sup>4</sup> and the beginning of Surah Mu‘minūn tells us what qualities define the faithful: (1) humility in prayer; (2) turning away from the vain; (3) being active in giving as a means of purification; (4) self-restrain and moderation; (5) being faithful to commitments; (6) being watchful over prayers.<sup>5</sup> If this became the focus of our faith, as opposed to belittling each other for our differences, we would be in a much greater position.

Shahīd Muṭahharī says, “The one worshipped by everyone is the same; the *qiblah* for all is the same, the month of Ramaḍān and fasting for everyone is the same ... but when this person calls that one a *mushrik* ... it is clear we will not attain unity.”<sup>6</sup>

**To ponder:** How do the qualities of the faithful mentioned at the onset of this Surah bring about strength and unity?

**References:** Āyatullāh Jawādī Āmulī, *Tafsīr Tasnīm*; Shahīd Muṭahharī, *Ittiḥād Islāmī*

<sup>1</sup> *Nahj al-balāghah*, Letter 78

<sup>3</sup> 45:23

<sup>5</sup> 23:1-9

<sup>2</sup> 23:71

<sup>4</sup> 49:10

<sup>6</sup> Muṭahharī, *Ittiḥād Islāmī*, p. 126