

Chapter 12: Islamic Fraternity

[Laying the Foundation for an Islamic Fraternity in Medina](#)

The existence of sympathy, sincerity, and harmony among the people of a society makes that society a living one – one that is fit for human life and evolution, in which all can find salvation and progress and can enjoy each other's sympathy and sincerity.

In the process of establishing such an ideal human society, Islam does not pay the least bit of attention to such considerations as race, language, skin colour, and geographical location. Rather, this holy religion regards all Muslims as equal." [1](#) It looks only at the people's faith in God, which is the root of all unity.

'Islamic brotherhood' is the phrase best revealing this all embracing unity. This meaningful, clear expression in the Holy Qur'an describes this Islamic precept:

'**Truly the faithful are brothers**' (49: 10).

[The Prophet's Initiative In Creating Islamic Brotherhood](#)

After having settled in Medina and after building a mosque that was indeed the military and constitutional base of the Muslims, the Holy Prophet of Islam took an excellent initiative. He laid the foundation of Islamic brotherhood, so that great unity and sincerity would be engendered in Muslim society and so that the emigrant Muslims would know that, though they had lost a number of their friends and relatives and had been forced to leave their homes, in return, they had gained brothers who were much more loyal and sympathetic from every point of view.

Therefore, besides the general fraternity and brotherhood that exists among all Muslims, the Prophet concluded contracts of brotherhood among his followers. He announced each two Muslims to be brothers. He himself selected 'Ali as his own brother and said, "Ali is my brother". [2](#)

In the Holy Qur'an, Islamic brotherhood has been elevated and held in reverence:

`And hold fast to the covenant of God, all together, and remember the favour of God upon you when you were enemies, then He united your hearts so by His favour you became brethren, and you were on the brink of a pit of fire, then He saved you from it; thus does God make clear to you His communications that you may follow the right way' (3:3).

Islamic Brotherhood: Byword Of Unity And Fraternity

Islamic brotherhood is not a honorific expression but a reality mingled with the spirit of faith whose fruits emerge one after the other.

Our Holy Leader Imam Sadiq has explained some of the fruits of Islamic brotherhood in the following way: `A believer is the brother and guide of another believer. He does not betray or oppress him, nor does he ever cheat his brother. A believer never breaks his promise'. [3](#)

One of the requirements of Islamic brotherhood is that whatever a Muslim desires for himself, he should desire for his brother in Islam, and he should help his Muslim brothers by any means possible, whether by his wealth or by his speech or by any other means. It is far from Islamic brotherhood if you have enough food, water, and clothing while another Muslim is hungry, thirsty and naked.

Imam Sadiq, peace be upon him, has said, `If you have a servant and your brother in Islam does not have any, you must send your servant to help your brother prepare food, clean clothes, and perform any other needed work'. [4](#)

Islamic fraternity has overshadowed all relationships, even family relationships. The Qur'an openly says,

`You shall not find a people who believe in God and the latter day befriending those who act in opposition to God and His Apostle, even though they were their own fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kinsfolk' (58:22).

It was the principle of Islamic brotherhood that made the Ethiopian Bilal and the Persian Salman brothers and two of the best companions of the Holy Prophet of Islam. In the light of Islamic brotherhood, many deep-rooted enmities were reconciled and divided groups were united. This unity requires that all Muslims share each other's sorrows and joys like members of a large family. Muslims should be sincere and affectionate toward each other, and their watchword should be unity and brotherhood.

Islamic brotherhood firmly holds all Muslims responsible toward each other and establishes an all-embracing responsibility so that Muslims cannot be heedless of each other's troubles and problems but every Muslim must, within his own abilities, endeavour to solve the problems of Muslims and to create possibilities for the advancement and promotion of Islam.

This responsibility is divided into two parts:

Economic Cooperation: This responsibility is related to meeting people's economic needs, such as hygiene, education, shelter, employment, and the like, and part of the precepts of the Holy Qur'an and the instructions of religious leaders deal with this as well as with fundamental precepts and programs such as zakat (the poor-due prescribed by Islam), almsgiving, charity, and the like.

Scientific and Educational Cooperation: This part includes propagation, guidance, and teaching. That is to say, all Muslims are duty-bound to communicate to others whatever they have learned and not to neglect each other's guidance.

Also, there are two basic principles among the practical precepts of Islam that urge Muslims to call upon each other to perform their religious duties and to refrain from committing sins. These precepts, which are indeed most beneficial to Muslims, are rated among the most significant requirements of Islamic brotherhood. But unfortunately, Muslims seem to have forgotten this great precept due either to imaginary fears or to selfish interests, and perhaps due to both.

As we clearly observe, in most Muslim societies, prohibition from committing sins and mutual encouragement to obey religious instructions have long been neglected. This deplorable situation has resulted in the ruin of the ethical spirit of Islamic brotherhood, and following this ruin, other superiorities and advantages of this living society are lost.

Islamic Brotherhood In The Present Age

In our age, Muslims need real unity more than ever. God has endowed Islamic countries with invaluable resources which others intensely covet. Thus, they try every means possible to divide Muslims and distract them from their critical situation. It goes without saying that dispersion, lack of unity, and negligence are extremely effective causes of ruin and slavery, and obviously the world-devouring enemies of Muslims are quite aware of this fact.

Therefore, we Muslims must be alert and vigilant in order to overcome those who clearly intend to exploit us, devour our natural resources, and bring us humiliation and misery.

The solution to our problems concerning our brutal enemies lies in Islamic brotherhood of which the foundation has been laid by the blessed hands of the Holy Prophet of Islam, and in following Islamic precepts.

No matter how powerful the Muslims are, still they greatly need unity. So the lesson of unity and Islamic brotherhood should be effectively taught to primary school students, and later on, as youngsters grow older and are promoted to higher grades, practical training programs treating Islamic brotherhood and other precepts of Islam must be added to their education, to strengthen their Islamic spirit. Moreover, it is one of the greatest duties of Muslim parents to bring up children who are real Muslims and sympathetic

to other Muslims.

It is crystal clear that if the Muslims had observed the principles of Islamic brotherhood and had been united and sympathetic, they would never have suffered so much tyranny, humiliation, and exploitation from the non-Muslims. But it is a pity that the Muslims' negligence has ,given the covetous exploiters an opportunity to enslave, humiliate, degrade, and plunder millions of Muslims in Africa, Asia, and all over the world, Muslims who really deserve lordship and superiority if they follow Islamic precepts.

[1.](#) Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol. 73, p.293; Rudih Kafi, p.246.

[2.](#) Sirih ibn Hisham, Vol. 2, pp.504-505.

[3.](#) Usul ul-Kafi, Vol. 2, pp. 166-167.

[4.](#) Ibid., p. 169.

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