

Hajj: Unity in Worship, Division in the Ummah

News:

Millions of Muslims from across the world are currently gathering in the holy city of Makkah to perform the annual Hajj pilgrimage. Pilgrims from different races, cultures, and languages stand together in identical white garments, performing the same rituals in obedience to Allah set. The annual gathering once again demonstrates the spiritual unity of the Muslim Ummah, transcending social status, nationality, and ethnicity.

Comment:

The Hajj remains one of the greatest manifestations of unity among Muslims. Every year, the Ummah gathers in one place, faces one Qiblah, worships one God, and follows the same rituals taught by Prophet Muhammad (saw). Yet behind this extraordinary display of spiritual brotherhood lies a painful reality: the Muslim world remains politically fragmented and deeply divided.

Despite sharing the same faith, Muslims today are separated by borders, nationalism, and political systems inherited from the colonial era. These divisions have gradually weakened the consciousness of the Ummah and replaced Islamic brotherhood with loyalty towards race, nationality, and state interests. As a result, Muslims often respond to global crises not as one united Ummah, but as separate nations with competing priorities.

This condition can clearly be seen in the Muslim world's response to issues affecting Muslims globally. From the ongoing suffering in Gaza to the persecution of Rohingya Muslims and conflicts in Sudan, the Ummah possesses enormous numbers and resources, yet remains unable to act collectively with real political strength. Sympathy exists, humanitarian aid exists, and public demonstrations occur across many countries, but genuine unified action remains absent.

The tragedy is that Hajj itself possesses the potential to revive a broader consciousness among Muslims. It gathers millions of believers from every part of the world in one sacred place, allowing them to witness firsthand the condition of the Ummah beyond their own national boundaries. However, Hajj today has largely been reduced to a purely spiritual ritual, disconnected from the wider political and civilizational realities facing Muslims worldwide.

The rise of nationalism and sectarian thinking has further deepened this fragmentation. Muslims increasingly view themselves through the lens of citizenship and ethnicity rather than through the bond of Islam. Such attitudes contradict the teachings of Rasulullah (saw), who described the believers as one body in which the pain of one part is felt by the whole.

History has shown that the gathering of Muslims during Hajj was once feared by colonial powers because of its ability to generate political awareness and unity among the Ummah. The division of Muslim lands into separate nation-states was not merely geographical, but also ideological, gradually shaping Muslims into isolated populations concerned primarily with local and national interests.

The Ummah therefore faces a critical challenge today: transforming spiritual unity into a genuine collective political unity (Khilafah). Hajj should not only remind Muslims of their individual relationship with Allah (swt), but also of their responsibility towards the condition of the Ummah as a whole. Without overcoming the divisions created by nationalism, sectarianism, and political fragmentation, the unity witnessed during Hajj will remain symbolic rather than transformative.

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