

«الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ، لَا يَظْلِمُهُ، وَلَا يُسْلِمُهُ»

“A Muslim is the brother of another Muslim; he does not wrong him, nor does he abandon him.” [Al-Bukhari]

(Translated)

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At the height of the tragedy of the people of Gaza, where days are measured by the number of martyrs, and nights by the number of children who slept without shelter or medicine, the banners of the Arab Cup are raised as if they were banners of victory, that compensate defeat. Screens are turned to make a goal in a net an event, whilst a mother's weeping for her dead infant is made a “passing news item.” Nations are preoccupied with the victory of this team, and the defeat of that one, their eyes quenched with a euphoria that makes them forget the bloodshed. They are called to rejoice at a time when they should be called to stand up, to offer aid, and to be truthful with Allah (swt) and with history.

What kind of cup is this? It is the cup of heedlessness... a cup to be drunk from to extinguish awareness, to bury memories, and to cool the questions that frighten tyrants. It is as if we are saying to the wound: Be silent; the match has begun! It is as if we're telling the destroyed hospitals: Wait! Sports commentary is louder than the cries of thousands of children, thousands of bereaved women, and thousands of wounded people groaning in Gaza and elsewhere - wounds that no one from the Arab world has stepped forward to heal, except for complaints and public condemnations, that neither stop a plane nor deflect a missile.

And Gaza isn't alone. Look at Sudan, being drained by war and fragmentation. Look at Yemen, caught between poverty, siege, and a protracted cycle of bloodshed. Look at Syria, whose tears haven't dried in years. Look at Lebanon, left on the brink of collapse and fear. Look at Kashmir, the Rohingya, and East Turkestan... tragedies that multiply, and we comment on them with songs, and silence them with festivals.

This is nothing new. This is how football is used - when it's intended as a “painkiller” - after major wounds. In 1982, Beirut was besieged and bombarded, while the world stayed up all night watching the World Cup in Spain. Goals were broadcast, while entire neighborhoods were buried under rubble. In 2014, the world's screens were immersed in the Brazil World Cup, and on those same days, Gaza erupted in a new conflagration. Cheers mingled with reports of bombing, and the cheers prevailed.

O Ummah of Islam... the problem isn't a game being played, but a heart being sold, dancing on wounds. It's being lured into artificial joy over something trivial, while we see the remains of our brothers and sisters and remain unmoved by the righteous anger. The Prophet (saw) said, «الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ، لَا يَظْلِمُهُ، وَلَا يُسْلِمُهُ» **“A Muslim is the brother of another Muslim; he does not wrong him, nor does he abandon him.”** [Bukhari]. This means he doesn't leave him with those who harm him. Instead he supports him and defends him. Did you defend your Muslim brothers and sisters who are being subjected to severe torture in your time with the Arab Cup?