

Mariem Moussawi

Sister Naseera

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Segregation Within the Muslim Ummah

As lovers of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and his progeny, and as servants of Allah (SWT), we need to make our Ummah stronger because it is falling apart. In the name of Islam we are killing our own Muslimeen. We are killing them spiritually and at times in cold blood when we should be giving them aid. Within our own Ummat Mohammad we are dividing ourselves within our community and local masjid. We have the Sunni, Shia, Palestinian, and Desi Masjid, and so many other labels. We discourage one another to come inside and pray. We discourage women from entering the masjid by giving them less space compared to men.

We discourage African American brothers and sisters to enter our masjid because they may not speak Arabic. These cultural barriers, these labels, these differences are tearing our Ummah apart. We are willing to help and be welcoming with Christians or Jews to come visit our masjid just to have an extra person or two convert and we barely can welcome our own brothers and sisters in Islam. We do indeed have different schools of thought within our own math-ab, yet we have so much more commonalities. We need to follow the example of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), break these barriers and unite the Muslim Ummah to give to one another regardless of which school of thought we come from.

One of the barriers facing the Muslim world includes the division between Sunni and Shia, which began slightly after the Prophet's (PBUH) death. In a brief and explicit summary the division happened when the Caliphate was given to after the Prophets Death. The Shia School of thought believe that the succession or caliphate was appointed to Ali (Peace and Blessings be Upon him) and from their the chain was given in order to eleven leaders after him all related to Ali. Until today's time they believe that the last succession is given to Imam (leader) Mahdi (Peace and Blessings Be Upon Him) in modern days and that he is alive and will be the savior on the day of judgment (discoverthenetworks.org, 1).

On the other hand a brief summary of Ahlul Sunnah Wal Jama'a believe the succession was given to Abu Bakr (RA), Umar (RA), Uthman (RA), and then Ali (RA). That there were these four caliphates in order and then they have the Sunnah (Life) of the Rasool to follow, Hadeeth (scriptures), and Quran as their sources in modern days. But the main focus is the tension started from who was appointed by the Prophet and each individual sided with one (discoverthenetworks.org, 3). The tension does grow bigger as historical history shows hatred being created however even though there was tension never ever in historical facts or stories does anyone see hatred or division between them (caliphates). It was difference in opinion yes, it was handled in a respectful manner yes, but never division amongst them where they felt not welcomed to pray in the same mosque. Never did the Prophet use division amongst his people and labels. Muslims have taken it upon themselves to elevate the issue.

In addition due to these conflicts we very often hear the issues that are happening in our local masajid, and very few take a stand to make a change. A well known website

called *UnMosqued* ... “is a documentary film which aims to highlight the growing need for reform in many of the mosques found in America. The purpose of the documentary is to engage a group of people who have been disconnected from their local mosque and explore the various reasons that have led to this sentiment (*Unmosqued*).

Within both math-habs you now see even more simple, but realistic issues of men and women praying together. The masjid is for salat (prayer) and to make tawba (repentance), but sometimes women are made to feel unwelcome in the local mosques. Sister Mersiha Hadziahmetovic-Rashid shares her experience on *UnMosqued* and wrote how she was so furious that even within her own community at the mosque she was not welcomed, stating,

I'm sick and tired of the haram police. No wonder <5% of American Muslims attend a masjid. It's because you make Islam hard when it's not supposed to be hard. Air, grass and water are not the only halal things. If men and women can pray together at the holiest of sites, well by golly, they sure should be able to pray together in small town America!!! And women in the saws's time were included in everything in fact women would chime in during khutbas, which Implies they sat near to saws and other men so that everyone could hear their comments.

(Hadziahmetovic-Rashid, 2014, 6)

This one example of a sisters complaint about her experience at the masjid, which she explains the cultural barrier of men and women not praying near each other or in the same room. In fact as small as this may seem it's causing more barriers and not welcoming our brothers and sisters to actually attend the mosque for prayer. Whether

coming from a Sunni or Shia back ground within each of those ma-thahbs we are still not being welcoming and pushing each other away.

The division between the different schools of thought also continues to have a strong hold in modern day society with Muslim students in Universities; Muslim university students decided to create organizations where Muslim students could come together and promote their own interests, but then even this has been divided. When someone says “Muslim organization” what comes to mind is that all Muslims regardless of which sect of cultural background they come from is a participant in that organization. However; as the University of Michigan-Dearborn (UMD), have created a group for specific Muslims from a specific sect. As Muslims due to the tragedy of nine eleven incident we are being targeted and watched every day.

A teens perspective wanting to go to a non-muslim college, and they’re living in the western world. In times of need we need our brothers and sisters in Islam to be our back bone. In an article by the michiganjournal.org Ghadeer Alaradi a staff writer gives us an insight stating “MSA and SIA are two different Islamic organizations on campus; one following the Sunni school of thought, and the other following the Shia ideology (Ghadeer, 2).” This is at the University of Dearborn-Michigan, which is a diverse campus but the beauty of this is that students want to unite, but this is beyond the lines of what unity or one Ummah means. Allah (swt) says in our holy quran “And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allaah (i.e. this Qur’aan), and be not divided among yourselves [Aal ‘Imraan 3:103] (Islamqa, 5). If we as Muslims can not come together as one unity to stand by each other, then how do we expect our none--brothers and-sisters in Islam to stand by us? It’s a question to ponder about and to honestly analyze.

As Ghadeer writes,

“I’ve heard about this event from a friend of mine that goes to Wayne State University,” said Tuqa Alfatlawi, a University of Michigan-Dearborn student. With all the conflicts in the middle-east, Alfatlawi thinks unionization is a must. “With all the misunderstanding in the Middle East, I think it’s important to promote unity. It shows people that we’re standing together as one (Alaradi, 2012).”

That’s the exact attitude our Ummah needs to stay strong and for the Ummah to grow in number. Briefly with what happening over seas in the middle east as Alfatlawi mentions is honestly enough. How many more lives do we have to loose? How many more innocent children must suffer? All due to this person being a different type of Muslim when all can agree that there is no god but Allah and Mohammad (PBUH) is his messenger. Globally speaking innocent lives are being taken; and locally we are forcing conflicts within our circles. We are letting down bridges when we should be building them towards one another. We are already targeted through the media, and if a Christian and Jew can put their hands together how come Muslims can’t. We need to be loving towards one another in Salat just like the Prophet (PBUH) was with his people. In our community centers hold gatherings, helping out orphans, give food to the needy, and there are so many things we can do just like the students at the University did.

In Islamic history we see how people from the teaching of the Prophet were generous towards one another and the Prophet was sent as a mercy to all of mankind to

perfect the manners of the Muslimeen. In a short story by questionsabout Islam on how to treat other.

“The Qur'an teaches us that we should be generous and give the needy and share our wealth. In fact, Islam teaches us that the poor have a share in our wealth, so it is not optional to give charity. It is their right. Also, Islam teaches us to be generous and to give others from what we have, even if we have a real need for it. When the early Muslims of the city of Al-Madinah received refugees from the city of Makkah, they divided their entire wealth with them in half, sharing with them their houses, farms, animals and money (questionsaboutislam, 2007).”

This is one story among many stories on our roles as Muslims towards each other.

This is where I have future goal to build a Humanitarian Relief Center for Muslims from all different cultures to decrease the issues instead of escalating them. That this Humanitarian center be for those who want to give to their Ummah; and to have a system where every month there will be one Muslim country assigned to raise money for them. We will make sure we give to all our brothers in sisters in Islam from every Muslim country so there are no bias. That this muslims center will hold group (Jama'a) prayers and khutbas in both Arabic and English. This community relief center will have no labels and will be open to the public to give and aid all those who Allah (swt) created on this earth for us to take care of each other.

Allah (swt) says in the Holy Quran Chapter five; Surat Al-Ma'edah

“Because of that, We decreed upon the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land – it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one – it is as if he had saved mankind entirely. And our messengers had certainly come to them with clear proofs. Then indeed many of them, [even] after that, throughout the land, were transgressors.”

In Surat Al-Mu'minoon

“And surely this your nation is one nation and I am your Lord, therefore be careful (of your duty) to Me. (Surah Mu'minin 23:52) (Islam.org)

“In this way we have made you the medium nation so that you be witness for the people.” (Surah Baqarah 2:143)

Subhanallah how Allah (swt) makes us accountable towards each other and he says that if we take someone life away is as if we have destroyed all of humanity or mankind. But look on the other hand if you save a life; it's as if you have saved all of humanity or mankind. The beauty of this religion is giving, loving, uniting, and peace. The definition of the word Islam is peace, deriving from the word Salam.

