Asabiyyah - Part 2

In a recent Khutbah, we explained that asabiyyah with all its kinds and forms is one of the deadly diseases that have weakened the Muslim Ummah in the past as well as today; the once unified, merciful, and cohesive Muslim Ummah has transformed into differing, conflicting, warring entities.

Asabiyyah (Fanatism – Partisanship – Clanishness) is man's supporting the people to whom he belongs, whether they are right or wrong, oppressing or oppressed.

The belonging to these people can be due to family ties, friendship, ethnicity, color, birth place, citizenship, school of thought, political party, or people with common interest.

The drive that causes asabiyyah is the feeling of being better than others, and that others are at a lower class.

So, the person that has this feeling of asabiyyah thinks so highly of himself and of those to whom he belongs, and thinks that other people are NOT as good as his own people.

This kind of thinking is corrupted, and it is in fact a kind of arrogance that comes from the mentality of Iblis, which led him to disobey the command of Allah when He ordered him to prostrate to Adam believing that he is better than Adam (A.S.)

The most common form of asabiyyah, we Muslims suffer from is the regionalism and nationalism.

It is not much different from the tribalism that existed in Jahiliya.

This kind of asabiyyah has grown in intensity within the Muslim Ummah after the fall of the Islamic Ottoman Khilafa.

Regionalism is formed amongst a group of people who live in one region or in one country.

They think that just because they are living together in one region, that by itself will give them better qualifications than others.

So they look down on others and think highly of their own selves even if those other people have lived with them for tens of years and even if they were

born in their region but they are not originally from them.

This regionalism was a goal that was sought by the enemies of Islam, so they planted this deadly thought and nourished it with all means, including dividing the Muslim land into smaller countries, and established conflicts in these boundaries to maintain the divisions and disputes.

Unfortunately, Muslims ended up victims of this deadly asabiyyah that only benefited the opportunistic people by keeping and strengthening their positions.

We need to ask ourselves, why Islam has fought asabiyyah and warned us against it?

Simply because gathering and mutual support on the basis of asabiyyah contradicts the fundamentals of Islam and its teachings.

The Muslim who believes in Allah (S.W.T.) has his heart filled with love of Allah and love toward those who are loved by Allah, and hatred toward those who are hated by Allah.

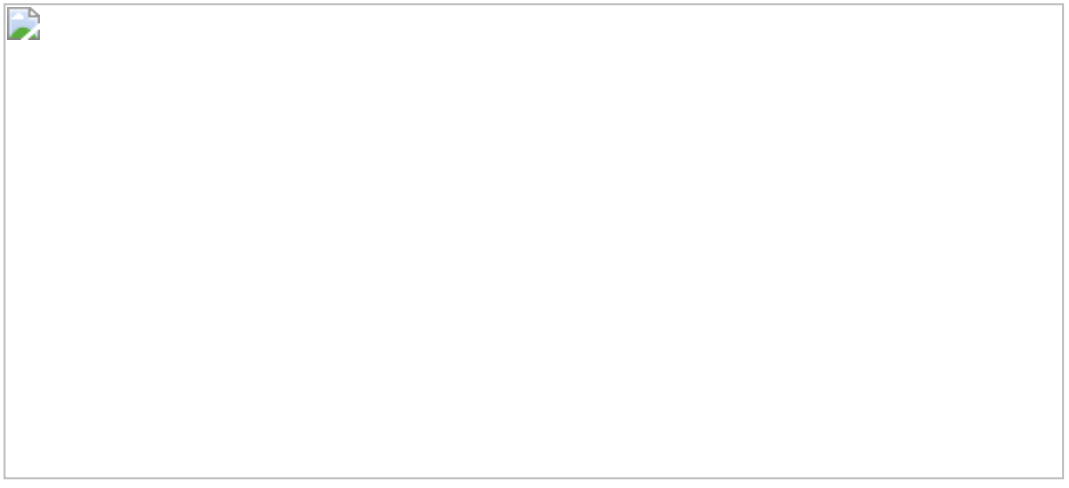
The relationship between the true Muslim and other people is based on Islamic perspectives only.

The true Muslim supports and allies himself with those who are loved by Allah and supports them when they are right even if they are the farthest people from him (in blood, ethnic background, race, birth place, or nationality....).

On the other hand, a true Muslim hates the enemies of Allah and shows animosity towards them even if they are the closest people to him (in blood, ethnic background, race, birth place, or nationality....)

This is the true stance of a believer and he adopts no other stance.

Allah (S.W.T.) gave us a good example of this kind of believer in Ibraheem (S.A.W.). Allah (S.W.T.) said in surat Al-Mumtahinah, (verse 4),



which may be translated as,

"Indeed there has been an excellent example for you in Abraham and those who believe with him, when they said to their people: 'Verily, we are free from you and whatever you worship besides Allah, we have rejected you, and there has started between us and you, hostility and hatred for ever, until you believe in Allah alone."

The society that Islam wants is the kind of society where people gather on the basis of Islam and Islam alone.

So that the believers will have one united Ummah despite their differing colors, languages, ethnic backgrounds, tribes, so that this one Ummah becomes like one body.

We must keep in mind that Islam does not cancel races, languages, and regions, but makes them members and parts within this one body; they move when the body moves towards a common goal, in a way that none of the roles of any parts of the body is canceled.

The scale of being better in this society is not the race, language, national origin, etc...; it is righteousness and good deeds, Allah (S.W.T.) says in surat Al-Hujurat, (verse 13),



which may be translated as,

'Verily, the most honorable of you in the sight of Allah is that (believer) who has At-Taqwa"

So how do we rid ourselves of Asabiyyah?

This is clarified in the Quran. Allah (S.W.T.) commanded us in surat Al-Emran, (verse 103),



which may be translated as,

"And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah, (Islam) and do not be divided among yourselves."

Holding tight and assimilating on the deen of Allah (S.W.T.) and no other deen, and assimilation on the basis of anything else is an un-Islamic, ignorant, and a rejected assimilation.

This holding tight and assimilation on the deen of Allah should be done by all Muslims with no exception. If some do not do this, the cure will not be complete.

Also, it is a must that Muslims unite regardless of the factors that suggest differences, like skin color, languages, regions, national origins because unity is obligatory.

The cure is also with purifying the soul from the traces of Jahiliya and purifying it from arrogance, and looking down on people and planting the virtue of humility and respect of others.

The cure is also with the total awareness that asabiyyah is from the works of Iblis and a means of destruction in the hands of the enemies of the Muslim Ummah from within and from outside. Asabiyyah is a sharp knife that has cut the veins of the Muslim Ummah and is still bleeding and dying.

We ask Allah (S.W.T.) to protect us all from all forms of Al-asabiyyah Al-Jahiliya and make us true believers.

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SECOND KHUTBAH
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One of the unique features of Islam is that it is a religion of unity - even more, it is a uniting faith, with the full meaning of this word.

It stands for the unity of gods into one real God: Allah; for the unity of all messengers and Prophets in their message into one basic message: LA ILAHA ILA ALLAH (There is no God but Allah); for the unity of the spiritual and material sides of the individual into an integrated whole - the human being, and for the unity of all believers into one MUSLIM Ummah.

The Arabic word Ummah is sometimes translated as nation, or community. It comprises those individuals who have something basic common among them.

All the messengers and Prophets of Allah belonged to one and the same Ummah because they had the same creed, religion, and message.

Islam binds the hearts of all believers and joins us in one Ummah. It protects us against weakness and disunity, and against failure and loss.

The objectives of the united Ummah of the believers is to worship Allah (in the broad sense of worship), to a deeper form da'awa to Allah, and to work for the realization of the deen of Allah.

The bond that binds the members of this Ummah is Iman (faith). It is, and should be, stronger than all other bonds such as race, color, or national origin.

It is even stronger than blood relationships. The stronger the Iman, the stronger is the bond between the members of the Ummah.

Among the verses of the Qur'an which describe the relations between the believers are the following:



The believers are but a single brother-hood/sisterhood (Qur'an 49:10).



The believers, men and women, are protectors and supporters one of another (Qur'an 9:71).

The nature of the bond of Iman (faith) which unites the members of the Muslim Ummah and protects them against disunity is described in many prophetic sayings.

An example of which the Prophet, pbuh, indicated that the true and sincere believer shares the feelings of other believers: their happiness and sorrow, as is described by the following prophetic saying:



The similitude of the believers in their kindness, love, and affection, in their mercifulness, and in their sympathy and compassion towards one another, is like a body, when one organ ails, the whole body suffers.

Islam requires that the bond of Iman (faith) be translated into action. Every Muslim should work for forming one strong and disciplined Jama'a (community), which is part of the ONE Muslim Ummah.

In our small community here in Blacksburg, we have the same responsibility of forming and maintaining our Islamic community, our Islamic Ummah, to be a healthy and integral part of the larger Islamic Ummah.

The larger Islamic Ummah is noting but an integral of the different Islamic communities that exist around the world, some are small like ours and some are much larger.

If each individual community becomes healthy and strong, the natural conclusion will be health and strength to the larger Islamic Ummah.

So, we have the responsibility to strengthen our Islamic Ummah in Blacksburg. And the least we can do in this regard is be part of it to start with.

Participation in the activities and gatherings is step number one.

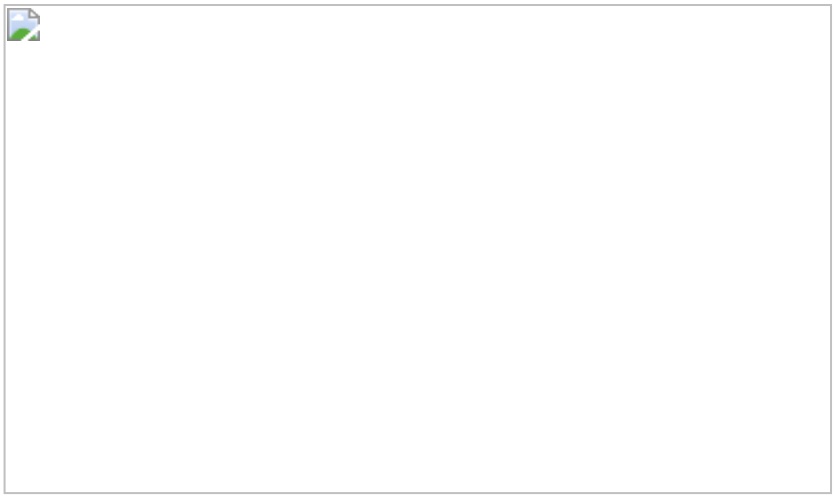
Taking role, volunteering, initiating, helping, loving, and caring, all are in order as well.

The Saturday gathering that used to bring us all together, is now deserted and is threatened to die.

The Saturday gathering served as a social as well as a religious activity for our community for many years.

It brought us closer to each other, gave us the opportunity to know one another, know the new faces that come to our town, check on those you have not seen for sometime and renew brotherhood and sisterhood relationship.

Not ignoring its religious importance as the Hadeeth of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, indicates:



Any group of people that meet in one of the houses of Allah to recite the book of Allah and study it, Allah will shower them with tranquillity and mercy, the angels will surround them, and Allah will mention them to His other creations.

The Jama'a in Islam is the power that works for the deen of Allah. It guards and protects the lives and interests of Muslims.

The disunity destroys the work for Allah and the interests of Muslims. It results in humiliation and failure.

Let us remember that forming one strong Muslim Ummah is a Fard (obligatory duty).

We should start by having one strong Jama'a in our community.

Needless to say, having one Jama'a, united under the banner of La Ilaha ila Allah will qualify us to receive the guidance and support of Allah.

This Jama'a can facilitate the application of Islamic principles in every aspect of the life of individual Muslims.

To establish a true Muslim Jama'a, we need to address the two major problems:

1. The first problem is :

Divisions along cultural, ethnic, and racial lines, which persist in many Muslim communities.

We need to assert our brotherhood / sisterhood in Islam, and remember that the companions of the Prophet (PBUH) included Abu Bakr the Qurashite; Salman the Persian; Suhaib the Roman; and Bilal the Ethiopian.

Out of the highly race- and tribe- conscious city of Mecca came a unique example of Islamic brotherhood.

We need to make a conscious effort to bridge the ethnic and race barriers, and integrate all Muslims in our cultural, social, and recreational activities, as we are all integrated in Jama'a prayers.

2. The second problem is :

Individualistic, self-centered, and selfish attitudes, which are prevalent in Muslim communities.

We need to appreciate the fact that our interests, our well-being, and even our identity will be threatened by maintaining these attitudes.

Many of our goals (such as preserving our Islamic identity, providing vigorous Islamic education to the children and adults, and establishing a strong financial base) can only be accomplished through concerted effort of the members of the Jama'a.

One last word at the end of this Khutbah is I can not emphasize enough the importance of donating to keep this Masjid open.

Without your participation in a regular donation program, the finances of this Masjid is very unpredictable and we may not have the funds to pay our rent and other needs.

Everyone needs to participate at his or her own level and ability, But do participate, because Allah will reward those who spend for His Cause.

We pray to Almighty Allah to give us the guidance and support in forming a strong Muslim Jama'a; to make us realize the importance of this goal; and to protect us against disputes and disunity. And help us keep this Masjid open for His cause and for Muslims to sincerely worship him. Amen.

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