Factors for Islamic Unity

And hold fast by the Rope (covenant) of Allah, all together, and be not disunited." (Qur'an" 3:103)

Thus says God Almighty to the believers through His Last and Greatest Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (SAWA).

Today on the start of the Islamic Unity Week that spans the two days of the month of Rabi al-Awwal (12 and 17), believed by the two principal groups of Muslims to be the birth anniversary of the "Mercy unto the creation" we ought to ponder on the Revealed Word of God as well as the Prophet's Sunnah and Seerah, in order not to be splintered at a time when the enemies of humanity are trying to sow the seeds of discord among us.

Irrespective of the matter that Sunnis cite the second and third generation of Muslims (Tabe'in & Tab-e Tabe'in) as the source of their date, while Shi'ites consider family accounts of the Ahl al-Bayt to be more reliable, our salvation, both in the transient life of the mortal world and in the eternal life of the Hereafter, lies in Islamic solidarity. And the unity of the ummah is not possible unless Muslims properly reflect on the Prophet's Hadith and open their eyes to the genuine practice and behaviour of the Seal of Divine Messengers.

If anyone were to claim "hasbuna Kitab-Allah" (the Book of God is enough for us), this would be nothing short of self-deception and even blasphemy, because of the fact that the verses of the holy Qur'an, if not explained and expounded by the Prophet and after him by those steeped in Divine Knowledge (Rasekhouna fi Ilm), cannot keep us on the Right Path.

We all know the fate suffered by the previously revealed heavenly scriptures; how the imposters amongst the Israelites tampered with the Torah, and how Paul the Hellenized Jew twisted out of context the contents of the Evangel to coin the spurious beliefs of 'son of God' and 'trinity' – things which Jesus never claimed.

For instance, even in the lifetime of Moses, when this great Messenger had been away on Mount Sinai for a brief period, the Israelites, despite the fact that they had recently been delivered from ages of bondage in Egypt, ignored the earnest appeals of his vicegerent Aaron, and went astray by following the metal calf crafted by the charlatan Samarri.

Of course, in the case of the holy Qur'an, God Himself says that falsehood cannot approach it from any direction (41:42), but how do Muslims explain their splintering into sects in spite of the fact that most of them – at least in Ramadhan – recite this final heavenly scripture, while many among them are its memorizers (Huffaz, plural of Hafez).

The answer is obvious. Just like a medical manual that cannot make its most avid reader a physician capable of curing patients (if not sending them to the other world through wrong prescriptions) unless taught and practically tested by a qualified teacher, the verses of the holy Qur'an, even if recited with parrot-like proficiency, cannot enlighten the brain and guarantee salvation, unless seen in the light of the Prophet's Sunnah and Seerah, and after him by those vested with Divine Authority to interpret them – and certainly not any ordinary Arab who before becoming the Prophet's companion had spent the greater part of life in idolatry and vices.

This is the reason God explicitly commands the believers to obey Him, to obey His Prophet and those vested with authority (4:59). To be more precise the Olil-Amr (those vested with authority) in the sight of God are not those selected, elected, or nominated to rule, and neither those who seized power through deceit or by the sword. It means those vested with authority by God Himself, in the same manner as He had appointed Prophet Muhammad (SAWA). These divinely chosen persons should be free of the slightest fault or blemish, and ought to be immune from any kind of impurity; otherwise they cannot be considered guides.

Now we understand why God vouched the infallibility of the progeny of His Greatest Prophet, with the words: "Indeed Allah desires to remove uncleanness from you Ahl al-Bayt and keep you thoroughly purified." (33:33).

Here the Hadith Thaqalayn (Two Weighty Things) also becomes clear to us, and in the process gives us the most vivid picture of what God means by Habl-al-Allah (Rope of God), which in the light of the following unanimously acclaimed statement of the Prophet, is not a printed or handwritten copy of the holy Qur'an, but an intertwined twin-cord of salvation, embodying the Letter and Spirit of Allah's Revealed Word and those chosen by Him to ensure its correct implementation: "I am leaving among you the two weighty things; the Book of God (Qur'an) and my progeny the Ahl al-Bayt. Hold fast to them and you will never go astray for the two will never part with each other even when they return to me at the Pool (of Kowsar on Judgement Day)."

Here, if someone were to claim (although unconvincingly) that the Prophet used the word "My Sunnah" and not "My Ahl al-Bayt" then the answer is that there is no greater practical behaviour and Living Sunnah of the Prophet than the prime position of his Ahl al-Bayt, whose God-given merits he always used to emphasize to his companions, as is evident by the following Hadith: "The example of my Ahl al-Bayt is that of the Ark of Noah; whoever boards will be safe, and whoever deserts is will be drowned." (Tabarani, Tabari, Hakem)

"The stars are a security for the people of the earth against drowning (when at sea), and my Ahl al-Bayt are a security to the people of the earth against discord." (Hakem in Mustadrik as-

Sahihayn, Bayhaqi, etc)

“Teach your children three habits; to love your Prophet, to love his Ahl al-Bayt, and to recite the Qur'an; because the carrier of the Qur'an will be in the shade of Allah along with his Prophet and the Chosen Ones (the Ahl al-Bayt) on the Day when there will be no shade except that of Allah.” (Narrated by Jalal ad-Din Suyuti, Daylami, Ibn Hajar in Sawa’eq al-Muhriqa, etc)

“On the Resurrection (Day) no foot of a person will move before being asked about four things: his years and how he spent them, his body and how he worn it out, his wealth and how he earned and spend it, and about his love towards us the Ahl al-Bayt." (Abdullah ibn Abbas, Tabari, Tabrani, etc)

“Let my Ahl al-Bayt be to you as the head to the body and the eyes are to the head, because the body would not be guided accept by the head, and the head cannot be guided except by the eyes." (Shabrawi Shafi’i)

These undeniable facts are indeed food for thought for world Muslims on the occasion of Islamic Unity Week, and they keys to unity and solidarity, if they are really keen to build the monolithic ummah, as desired by God and the Prophet, that would be immune from the devilish designs of all satanic powers.