

## What Does Brotherhood Mean to Us?

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 ﴿وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ  
 كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا﴾  
 آل عمران، 103

عن أبي هريرة أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ:

«إِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ مِرَاةُ أَخِيهِ، فَإِنْ رَأَى بِهِ أَدَى فَلْيَمِطْهُ عَنْهُ»

مسلم، إيمان 95

### Dear Brothers and Sisters

When asked, “What is brotherhood?”, each of us might give a different answer. Some may refer to brotherhood by blood or family ties, others to spiritual brotherhood, human solidarity or the bond shared in faith. In our religion, Islam, brotherhood is far broader than just being born of the same mother. Brotherhood is to hold affection for a fellow believer. It is a form of loyalty that comes from Rasulullah (saw). It is offering a comforting word and a warm smile in difficult times. Brotherhood is sharing peace and happiness and standing together in sorrow, grief, pain and suffering. It is building a bridge of affection and love between hearts that removes distances, borders and any obstacles. The minimum level of brotherhood is not harming others, the moderate level is benefiting others and the ideal level is preferring others over oneself. As our Prophet (saw) expressed: *“The believers, in their mutual love, compassion, and mercy, are like one body. When one organ suffers, the rest of the body shares the pain with sleeplessness and fever.”*<sup>1</sup> Therefore, brotherhood means being able to act like a single body in showing love, compassion and mercy to one another. In this world of trials where we face all kinds of difficulties, brotherhood is to seek the pleasure of Allah together.

### Dear Brothers and Sisters!

How sad it is that, as Muslims, we have not been able to uphold this noble legacy after the Messenger of Allah (saw). While the admirable brotherhood between the Ansar and the Muhajirun should have served as an example for us, it has unfortunately remained only a historical memory in our minds. Worldly interests and power struggles have damaged the exemplary society that our Prophet Muhammad (saw) left behind. Hearts that were meant to nurture affection, love, sincerity and closeness toward one another have been burnt by the flames of greed, self-interest, selfishness, hatred and vengeance. The hearts that were once united by the Messenger of Mercy have become places for negative emotions like hatred.

Are all these not the painful consequences of our distance from the brotherhood that the Messenger of Allah (saw)

proclaimed centuries ago? Yet, our Prophet (saw) said, *“Each of you is a mirror to his brother; if he sees something wrong in him, he should correct it.”*<sup>2</sup>

### Dear Jama’ah!

The ummah, which should be united and in harmony, is unfortunately broken up today. It is burning in the fire of corruption and division. In different parts of the world, Muslims are subjected to discrimination and various forms of oppression. Empowered by the silence of the ummah, aggressors rain bombs upon innocent people in Palestine and other regions, without distinguishing between women, men, the elderly or babies. There are, of course, many reasons why the idea of brotherhood has not been fully rooted in our minds and hearts. One of the main reasons is that many people view their own opinions, sect, school of thought and personal perspective as the only true path. Yet Allah (swt) has commanded us Muslims to be on the path of truth and to pursue justice. He has not commanded us to place ourselves in the position of truth, nor to claim it exclusively for ourselves. We have all been commanded to serve on the path of truth. No one should say, “Truth is in my hand,” or claim, “I am the truth.” We must hold firmly to the values that define us and preserve our unity and solidarity. Indeed, Allah (swt) commands: **“Hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided. And remember the favor of Allah upon you—when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became brothers by His grace.”**<sup>3</sup> Brotherhood is waking up with the call to prayer and taking a bowl of soup to your neighbour. It is knocking on the door of the elderly neighbour living alone across the street and asking, “Do you need anything?” It is maintaining heartfelt connections with our relatives, not just during Eid, but all year round. If there is tension between us and someone, no matter who it is, then brotherhood is taking the first step and becoming the reason for reuniting. Brotherhood is not throwing insults on social media but rather sharing kind words. It is defending someone's honour even in their absence. It is not allowing distance to grow between people's hearts.

Let us not forget that in the sight of Allah, superiority is not based on lineage, wealth or status. The most honourable in the eyes of Allah is the one who is most compassionate and sincere toward their fellow brother or sister. May Allah (swt) count us among those who live by and uphold this noble path. Ameen.

<sup>1</sup> Muslim, Birr, 66

<sup>2</sup> Muslim, Iman 95

<sup>3</sup> Âl-i Imrân suresi, 3:103