

## Exploring the Themes of Brotherhood and Equality in the Light of Prophetic Sirah

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### ABSTRACT

The study explores the themes of brotherhood and equality as portrayed in the Prophetic Sirah (the biography of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ). By focusing on the historical, ethical, and social dimensions of the Sirah, this research elucidates how the Prophet's life and teachings serve as a blueprint for these fundamental values. Through a detailed analysis of primary sources and scholarly interpretations, the study highlights the Prophet's role in fostering brotherhood and equality, illustrating their transformative impact on early Islamic society. The research also discusses the ongoing relevance of these themes in contemporary contexts, demonstrating how the Prophet's teachings on unity and justice continue to influence moral and social norms within the Islamic world today. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how the Prophetic Sirah embodies and advocates for the ideals of inclusivity and fairness, emphasizing the lasting significance of the Prophet's guidance on the principles of brotherhood and equality.

**Keywords:** *Prophetic Sirah, Brotherhood, Equality, Islamic Ethics, Social Impact.*

### 1.1 Introduction

Islam is a religion that emphasizes peace, security, and offers a comprehensive code of life. It encourages living with mutual love and brotherhood. As stated in the Holy Qur'an: "All believers are brothers, so make peace with your brothers and fear Allah so that you may be shown mercy."<sup>1</sup> This verse underlines the importance of fostering peace and considering every Muslim as a brother, emphasizing the universal bond among Muslims worldwide. No matter where a Muslim resides, other Muslims regard him as their brother, which forms a universal fraternity unique to Islam.

Furthermore, Islam's teachings on justice and righteousness advocate for the establishment of equality. All humans are descendants of a single ancestor, Adam, and Prophet Muhammad reinforced this principle of equality in his farewell sermon, articulating that no one has superiority over another based on race, ethnicity, or colour. He said, "O people, know that your Lord is one, and your father is one. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab, nor a white person over a black person, nor a black person over a white person, except through piety." The preferred religion in the sight of Allah is Islam.<sup>2</sup>

Islam aspires to see its followers living in harmony, both at home and in society. It teaches love, respect, and honour, alongside justice, fairness, tolerance, and mutual affection. Islam also lays down golden principles for living within a community. If these principles of brotherhood and equality are embraced, society can indeed become a cradle of peace.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Al-Quran, 49:10.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Hambal, Ahmad, *Musnad Ahmad ibn Hambal*, Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, Vol:4, HN:19774, 1993.

<sup>3</sup> Farooq, Mohammad, *Rehmat-e-Doo Aalam Aur Islami Ikhlāq*, Aareeb Publications, New Delhi, p 123, 2012.

The concept of brotherhood and equality in Islam is as relevant today as it was centuries ago. In a world increasingly divided by race, nationality, and economic disparities, the Islamic emphasis on universal brotherhood serves as a powerful reminder of our shared humanity. Islam's insistence that no person is superior to another except in terms of piety challenges contemporary issues of racism, xenophobia, and social inequality. By embracing these teachings, modern societies can work towards achieving greater harmony and unity.<sup>4</sup> The Islamic principles of brotherhood and equality advocate for a just society where peace and mutual respect are prioritized, providing a framework for addressing current social and ethical challenges.

This study focuses on the two main themes of the Prophetic Sirah: brotherhood and equality, as exemplified through the teachings and actions of Prophet Muhammad. His life serves as a practical model for these ideals, offering timeless lessons on how to foster genuine unity and uphold justice within the community. By examining the Prophetic Sirah, we gain valuable insights into how these principles can be implemented in today's world, helping to bridge divides and create a more cohesive society. Through the teachings of Prophet Muhammad, this study seeks to highlight the enduring relevance of brotherhood and equality, emphasizing their vital role in achieving peace and stability in both individual and communal life.

### 1.2 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its exploration of the foundational principles of brotherhood and equality in Islam through the teachings of Prophet Muhammad. In an era marked by social divisions, inequality, and conflict, understanding these principles is crucial for fostering unity and mutual respect. This study aims to:

1. **Enhance Understanding of Islamic Values:** By focusing on the concepts of brotherhood and equality, this study provides a deeper understanding of core Islamic values. It highlights how these principles can contribute to a more just and harmonious society.
2. **Promote Social Harmony:** The study emphasizes the universal applicability of Islamic teachings in promoting peace and social cohesion. By revisiting the life of Prophet Muhammad and his teachings, it encourages communities to adopt attitudes of compassion, justice, and inclusivity.
3. **Address Contemporary Challenges:** In a world where issues like racism, inequality, and discrimination persist, this study offers insights into how the teachings of Islam can provide solutions. By drawing on the example of Prophet Muhammad, it underscores the timeless relevance of Islamic principles in addressing modern social issues.
4. **Bridge Cultural and Religious Gaps:** Understanding the themes of brotherhood and equality in Islam can help bridge gaps between different cultural and religious communities. It promotes interfaith dialogue and understanding by demonstrating shared values of humanity and justice.
5. **Educational Value:** This study serves as an educational resource for scholars, students, and anyone interested in Islamic studies. It provides a comprehensive analysis of how the life and teachings of Prophet Muhammad can be applied to contemporary ethical and social challenges.

### 1.3 Methodology of the Study

To achieve its objectives, this study employs a multi-faceted methodological approach, combining both qualitative and analytical methods:

1. **Literature Review:** The study begins with an extensive review of existing literature on the life of Prophet Muhammad (Sirah), focusing on themes of brotherhood and equality. This includes analyzing classical Islamic texts, such as the Qur'an, Hadith collections, and biographical accounts of the Prophet's life. Scholarly interpretations and contemporary writings on these themes will also be reviewed to provide a comprehensive background.
2. **Textual Analysis:** A detailed textual analysis of relevant Qur'anic verses and Hadiths will be conducted to understand the Islamic teachings on brotherhood and equality. This analysis will focus on the context, language, and implications of these texts to draw insights into their meanings and applications.

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<sup>4</sup> Aziz, Qutubuddin, *The Prophet of Islam A Blessing to Mankind*, Akhtar Publications, New Delhi, p.51, 1992.

3. **Historical Contextualization:** The study will place the teachings of Prophet Muhammad within their historical context to understand how he addressed issues of brotherhood and equality in his time. This will include an examination of key events from the Sirah, such as the formation of the first Muslim community in Medina, the Charter of Medina, and the Farewell Sermon.
4. **Comparative Analysis:** The study will also conduct a comparative analysis to explore how the themes of brotherhood and equality in Islam relate to similar concepts in other religious and philosophical traditions. This will help highlight the universal nature of these values and how they contribute to global discussions on ethics and justice.
5. **Contemporary Application:** Finally, the study will apply the principles of brotherhood and equality derived from the Prophetic teachings to contemporary issues. Case studies and real-world examples will be used to demonstrate how these Islamic values can be implemented to address current social challenges and foster a more inclusive society.

Through this methodology, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the significance of brotherhood and equality in Islam and their enduring relevance in today's world.

#### 1.4 Brotherhood in Islam

In Islam, brotherhood is a fundamental obligation that requires Muslims to protect each other's lives, property, honor, and dignity without any form of discrimination. It is strictly forbidden to violate these principles, as doing so undermines the concept of Islamic brotherhood, known as *Ikhwat-e-Islami*. This Islamic brotherhood stands in stark opposition to any form of division or hostility among Muslims based on national, linguistic, regional, or familial differences.

The idea of brotherhood in Islam can be understood in two significant ways:

1. **Universal Brotherhood of Humanity:** The entire human race is considered the progeny of one ancestor, Adam. Hazrat Nazrah eloquently echoed this sentiment during the Farewell Sermon (*Hajj al-Wada*) of Prophet Muhammad, which laid the foundations of Islamic equality. He proclaimed, "O people, your Lord is One, and your father is one. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab, nor a white person over a black person, nor a black person over a white person, except through piety." This declaration highlights that all people are inherently equal, with no preference given to one race, ethnicity, or nationality over another.<sup>5</sup>
2. **Spiritual Brotherhood Founded in Faith:** In the sixth century AD, Islam introduced a new dimension of brotherhood based on the belief in the oneness of Allah, compassion for humanity, and the principles of justice and equality. This brotherhood transcended traditional divisions such as caste, race, color, gender, language, ancestry, and wealth, declaring for the first time in history that all humans are equal regardless of whether they are rich or poor, white or black, from the East or the West, male or female, or from any linguistic or geographical background.<sup>6</sup>

The Farewell Sermon of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is considered the first and timeless declaration of human rights, emphasizing universal equality and justice. This sermon was not delivered to serve any temporary political agenda or short-term goal; instead, it was a proclamation made solely for the sake of Allah and to guide humanity in the earthly world. By doing so, Islam laid down the foundational principles of brotherhood and equality, which continue to resonate as a powerful message of unity and solidarity for all people.<sup>7</sup>

##### 1.4.1 Brotherhood in Light of the Qur'an

Islamic brotherhood is clearly defined in the Holy Qur'an, emphasizing the unity that binds all Muslims together through their shared faith. Allah says, "*Indeed, the believers are brothers.*"<sup>8</sup> This verse underscores the bond of brotherhood that exists among all Muslims. The Qur'an further instructs that if two groups of believers engage in conflict, it is the responsibility of others to reconcile them. If one group persists in wrongdoing against the other,

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<sup>5</sup> Siddiqi, Naeem, *Mohammad the Benefactor of Humanity*, Markazi Maktaba Islami, Delhi, p.242, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Jafar, Irfan and Azam, Muhammad, Khutbah Hajjatul Wida {Farewell Hajj} And Concept of Basic Human Rights, *Web ology*, Vol:18 {6}, p.3055, 2021.

<sup>8</sup> Al-Quran, 49:10.

the collective Muslim community is to stand against the aggressor until they return to Allah's command. Once the aggressor submits, reconciliation should be made with justice and fairness, for Allah loves those who act justly.<sup>9</sup>

The essence of these teachings is that fighting among believers is not the behavior expected of them. This principle is reinforced by a Hadith narrated by Abu Bakr Siddique, in which he quotes the Messenger of Allah saying: *"When two Muslims confront each other with swords, both the killer and the one killed are destined for Hell."* When asked why the victim would suffer the same fate, the Prophet ﷺ explained: *"Because he was also intent on killing his companion."*<sup>10</sup> This highlights the grave sin of internal conflict among Muslims and underscores the importance of maintaining peace and brotherhood within the community.

The term *taifah* in the Qur'anic context refers to a small group and, in some interpretations, can even apply to an individual. When conflicts arise between Muslims, whether involving groups or individuals, it is essential to strive for reconciliation. The mediator must remain neutral and be capable of influencing both parties to ensure a fair resolution.<sup>11</sup>

The process of reconciliation involves a few key steps:

1. **Neutrality and Influence:** The mediator should be impartial and have the ability to influence both parties. If an individual cannot achieve this alone, collective efforts should be made.
2. **Assessing the Situation:** It is crucial to understand the root cause of the conflict and determine which party is more justified and which is at fault. This understanding helps guide the reconciliation process.
3. **Ensuring Fairness and Justice:** The mediator must not aim to completely suppress the wrongdoer but should strive for a balanced and just resolution. Even if one party is in the wrong, their rights must still be considered in the final decision.

These principles ensure that the resolution process aligns with the values of justice and fairness, as loved by Allah.

#### 1.4.2 Historical Examples of External Influences on Muslim Brotherhood

Despite Islamic prohibitions against discord, conflicts between Muslim groups can arise, sometimes due to external interference. A historical example of this occurred during the time of the Prophet Muhammad when the Jews of Medina were dismayed by the Muslims' significant victory at the Battle of Badr. Shams bin Qais, an elderly Jewish man, sought to reignite hostilities between the Aws and Khazraj tribes by stirring up old rivalries. He instructed other Jews to attend gatherings of the Ansar and recite poems that recalled the battles between Aws and Khazraj, particularly the war of Bu'ath. These provocations rekindled pre-Islamic animosities, leading to a heated confrontation. The situation escalated to the point where both sides were ready for battle, weapons in hand. Upon learning of the incident, the Prophet Muhammad immediately intervened with some of his companions. He rebuked the fighting factions, reminding them that such calls to pre-Islamic ignorance were unacceptable among the Muslim community. He emphasized that Allah had guided them to Islam, which had unified their hearts. Realizing their error, the people of Aws and Khazraj embraced each other, and the conflict was averted.<sup>12</sup>

Another incident demonstrating the need for reconciliation involved Abdullah bin Ubayy, a hypocrite who tried to sow discord between the Muhajirin (emigrants) and the Ansar (helpers) during the Battle of Bani Mustaliq. His actions nearly led to conflict between the two groups, highlighting the ongoing need for Muslim leaders and communities to actively work towards reconciliation whenever disputes arise.<sup>13</sup>

The Qur'an emphasizes that if disagreements occur between two groups of Muslims, it is the duty of wise and understanding members of the community to intervene and reconcile the parties, restoring mutual brotherhood and love. As the Qur'an states: *"Indeed, the believers are brothers, so make peace between your brothers and fear*

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<sup>9</sup> Al-Quran, 49:9.

<sup>10</sup> Al-Bukhari, Muhammad ibn Ismail. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Darussalam Publishers, Riyadh, Book 87, Hadith 14, 1997.

<sup>11</sup> Al-Qurtubi, Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ahmad. *Al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Qur'an*, translated by Aisha Bewley, Dar Al-Taqwa, London, Volume 16, p. 116, 2002.

<sup>12</sup> Mujahid, Abdul Malik, *Aftab-e-Nabuwat Ki Sunhari Shaeey Seerat Sarwar-e-Aalam K Darakshan Pehlu*, Darussalam, Lahore, p 248-250, 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Umri, Akram Dhiya, *Seerat-e-Rehmat-e-Aalam*, translation by Khudabaksh Kalyar, Matro Printers, Lahore, p 472, 2007.

Allah, that you may receive mercy." <sup>14</sup>This verse not only calls for reconciliation but also reminds believers that the foundation of brotherhood is the fear and consciousness of Allah.

In Islam, Muslims are considered brothers to one another, regardless of differences in race, color, nationality, or homeland. Their shared faith binds them together, and they are expected to feel the pain and joy of each other, even if separated by great distances. The importance of this brotherhood is further emphasized in various Hadiths. For example, the Prophet Muhammad said: *"A Muslim is a brother to another Muslim. He does not wrong him, nor does he hand him over to someone who does wrong. Whoever fulfills the needs of his brother, Allah will fulfill his needs. Whoever relieves a Muslim from distress, Allah will relieve him of distress on the Day of Resurrection. And whoever conceals the faults of a Muslim, Allah will conceal his faults on the Day of Resurrection."*<sup>15</sup>

The teachings also warn against behaviours that disrupt this brotherhood. The Prophet cautioned that reviling a fellow Muslim is a sin, and unjustly killing one is disbelief. Islam discourages Muslims from raising their hands against one another and promotes a unified, peaceful community.

Another example highlighting the importance of brotherhood is found in the story of Prophet Musa (Moses) and his brother Harun (Aaron). Musa asked Allah to appoint Harun as his assistant, saying, *"And appoint for me a minister from my family, Harun, my brother."* <sup>16</sup>Together, these two brothers guided the Israelites, showing that strong brotherly bonds are essential for successful leadership and guidance.

The Qur'an contains numerous verses emphasizing the unity and brotherhood of the Muslim community, such as: *"Indeed, this nation of yours is one nation, and I am your Lord, so fear Me."*<sup>17</sup> It also instructs, *"And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided."*<sup>18</sup> This verse is a dual command: to cling to the unity of faith and to avoid division and disunity. Those who divide their religion into sects and cause fragmentation are admonished, as the Qur'an states, *"Indeed, those who have divided their religion and become sects – you are not associated with them in anything."*<sup>19</sup> This warning serves as a reminder to Muslims to maintain their unity and brotherhood, avoiding anything that could lead to division.

#### **1.4.3 The Teachings of Brotherhood in Light of Ahadith**

Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of brotherhood, as illustrated by various hadiths. Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Do not envy one another, do not argue with one another, do not hate one another, do not turn your back on one another, and do not undercut each other in trade. Be, O servants of Allah, brothers. A Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. He does not oppress him, abandon him, lie to him, or look down upon him. Piety is here," and he pointed to his chest three times. He then continued, "It is evil enough for a person to belittle his Muslim brother. All things of a Muslim are inviolable for another Muslim: his blood, his property, and his honour."<sup>20</sup>

This hadith highlights the importance of maintaining harmonious relationships and protecting each other's rights. It calls for Muslims to act as brothers, avoiding jealousy, hostility, and deceit, and instead fostering a community based on mutual respect, compassion, and justice.

In another hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "The example of the believers in their mutual love, mercy, and compassion is like that of a body: when one limb suffers, the whole body responds with sleeplessness and fever."<sup>21</sup> This comparison illustrates the interconnectedness of the Muslim community, where the suffering of one member affects all, thereby promoting empathy and collective responsibility.

Ibn Battal, a renowned Islamic scholar, explained this concept by stating that the cooperation of believers in worldly and spiritual matters is embodied in such teachings. Systems like zakat (charitable giving) are established to support the needy, ensuring that they do not have to beg. This system of brotherhood ensures that Muslims look out for one another's well-being.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Al-Quran, 49:10.

<sup>15</sup> Al-Bukhari, Book 46, HN 3.

<sup>16</sup> Al-Quran, 20:29-30.

<sup>17</sup> Al-Quran, 23:52.

<sup>18</sup> Al-Quran, 3:103.

<sup>19</sup> Al-Quran, 6:159.

<sup>20</sup> Ibn Hajjaj, Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, Darussalam Publications, Riyadh, Book 45, HN 32, 2007.

<sup>21</sup> Sahih Muslim, Book 45, HN 83.

<sup>22</sup> Ibn Battal, Abul Hassan Ali ibn Khalaf ibn Abdul Malik, *Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*, translation by Abu Tameem Yasir ibn Ibrahim, Darul Nashr Maktaba Rasheed, Riyadh, Vol 9, p 227, 2003.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also said, "Help your brother, whether he is an oppressor or oppressed." When asked how to help an oppressor, he replied, "By preventing him from oppressing others."<sup>23</sup> This teaching underscores the importance of justice and fairness, ensuring that even when a Muslim is in the wrong, help is extended in the form of guidance to correct his behaviour. Anas ibn Malik reported that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "By the One in Whose hand is my soul, no servant truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself."<sup>24</sup> This hadith emphasizes the selflessness required in Islamic brotherhood, encouraging Muslims to desire for others the same goodness and success they seek for themselves.

#### 1.4.4 Examples of Brotherhood in the State of Madinah

Upon the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) arrival in Madinah after the Hijrah (migration), his initial focus was to ensure peace within the city and to strengthen the relationships among its inhabitants. He was mindful that the emigrants from Makkah (Muhajirun) should not become a burden to the people of Madinah (Ansar), nor should the emigrants suffer due to their migration. To foster a sense of unity and support, the Prophet (peace be upon him) gathered both the emigrants and the Ansar and preached the concept of Islamic brotherhood. Through the establishment of *Mu'akhah* (brotherhood), he created a harmonious and supportive society among the Muslims.<sup>25</sup>

The Ansar accepted this bond with such sincerity and dedication that it remains unmatched in history. They treated the emigrants as true brothers, generously sharing their wealth and resources. Some Ansar, in a remarkable display of selflessness, even offered to divorce one of their wives so that their emigrant brother could marry her. Similarly, the emigrants also adapted to their new circumstances with resilience and stood strong on their own feet.<sup>26</sup>

#### 1.5 Islam and Equality

According to Raghīb Isfahani, *Adl* refers to the concept of equality, where justice implies distributing resources or opportunities based on fairness.<sup>27</sup> The English synonyms for *Adl* include equity and justice. In the Qur'an, justice is explicitly commanded by Allah, as reflected in the verse: "Indeed, Allah commands you to act justly and with kindness."<sup>28</sup> Among the beautiful names of Allah is *Adil*, meaning "the Just," and this term also applies to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Justice essentially means giving everyone their due rights, whereas the opposite of justice is oppression (*zulm*), which involves treating others unfairly, seizing someone else's rights, or misappropriating their due. In a literary sense, *zulm* can be defined as placing something in a position other than its rightful place, while justice involves maintaining everything in its rightful position.

Although justice is often associated with equality, achieving absolute equality in all aspects is a complex issue. While equality is a popular and seemingly rational slogan worldwide, the practicality of absolute equality is debatable. Different philosophical schools hold varying views on what kind of equality should exist in society. Philosopher Thomas Nagel, for instance, questions what equality truly means and how it should be understood, acknowledging that humans are inherently unequal in many aspects of life. The idea that everyone should be entirely equal is seen as an unrealistic argument, making the concept of total equality an increasingly irrelevant slogan.<sup>29</sup>

##### 1.5.1 Justice to Oneself

Islam emphasizes the importance of justice not only towards others but also towards oneself. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) advised, "Do justice to your Oneself." Many traditions highlight this principle. For instance, when Hazrat Salman Farsi stayed at the house of Hazrat Abul Darda, he noticed that his host was standing in prayer all night, neglecting rest and time with his family. Hazrat Salman Farsi reminded him, saying, "Your Lord has rights over you, your soul has rights over you, your wife has rights over you, and your guests have rights over you. So give everyone their due rights." When the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) learned of this, he affirmed, "Salman has spoken the truth."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Sahih al-Bukhari, Book 46, HN 5.

<sup>24</sup> Sahih al-Bukhari, Book 2, HN 13.

<sup>25</sup> Al-Mubarkpuri, Safiur-Rahman, *Ar-Raheequl-Makhtum*, Darussalam Publications, Riyadh, p.228, 2008.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Isfahani, Raghīb, *Mufradat al-Quran*, Islami Academy, Lahore, Vol 1, p 551-552.

<sup>28</sup> Al-Quran, 16:90.

<sup>29</sup> Nagel, Thomas, *Equality and Partiality*, Oxford University Press, London, p 35, 1995.

<sup>30</sup> Sahih al-Bukhari, Book 30, HN 75.

Another example is Hazrat Abdullah bin Amr bin Al-Aas, who resolved to worship Allah and recite the Quran every night for the rest of his life. The Prophet (peace be upon him) advised against this, stating that such a practice would be unjust to himself. He reminded him, "Your body has a right over you for food and rest, and your eyes have a right over you for sleep."<sup>31</sup> Therefore, justice is not only about fairness towards others but also about taking care of one's own well-being.

#### **1.5.2 Islam's Concept of Human Rights**

The Islamic concept of human rights is fundamentally based on the respect, dignity, and equality of all human beings. Islam grants and guarantees these rights because it views all human beings as being born from one father and one mother. The division into nations and tribes exists for the purpose of recognition and cooperation, not for superiority. The concept of human rights in Islam prioritizes giving everyone their due rights.<sup>32</sup>

The Holy Qur'an highlights the honour of humanity from the beginning of creation. When Allah created Adam, He commanded the angels to prostrate to Adam, thus signifying the superiority of Adam's race over all other creatures. As stated in the Qur'an: "And We have certainly honoured the children of Adam and carried them on land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created, with [definite] preference."<sup>33</sup> This verse emphasizes the inherent dignity and honour bestowed upon humanity by Allah, illustrating that humans are superior to many of the creatures that Allah has created.

#### **1.5.3 Human Equality from the Quranic Perspective**

Islam recognizes the equality of all human beings and declares it as a fundamental principle. The Qur'an states: "-O mankind, We have created you from a single male and female and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may know one another. Surely the most honourable of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Allah is All-Knowing, All Aware"<sup>34</sup> This verse emphasizes that all humans share the same origin and are equal in the eyes of God, with honour based on righteousness, not on race or social status.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) illustrated this by comparing the compassion among believers to a single body: when one part suffers, the entire body responds with sleeplessness and fever. He taught justice and knowledge as essential virtues, stating that withholding knowledge is a form of injustice that will lead to darkness on the Day of Judgment.

#### **1.5.4 Islam's Stance Against Disunity**

Islam condemns disunity and emphasizes the importance of solidarity within the Muslim community. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) warned that those who promote or fight for tribalism are not part of the Ummah. The Qur'an stresses the need for unity to prevent chaos and corruption, stating that disbelievers are allies of one another, and Muslims must act likewise to avoid turmoil.<sup>35</sup>

Islam abolished the divisive spirit of tribalism from the pre-Islamic era, recognizing it as a threat to the community. The Prophet saw disunity as a significant temptation and a danger to the integrity of the Ummah. Maintaining unity is crucial, as disunity revives ignorance and undermines the core teachings of Islam.

#### **1.6 The Significance of Brotherhood and Equality in Islam**

Islam teaches that all Muslims should have equal rights, and the rights of non-Muslim minorities must also be safeguarded. This approach fosters a harmonious society that can serve as a role model for others. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) mentioned that those who are just in their decisions and dutiful will be seated on platforms of light on the Day of Judgment, positioned to the right of the Most Merciful.<sup>36</sup> This underscores the importance of justice, which involves fair distribution of responsibilities and appropriate recognition of actions.

In Islam, justice means acting at the appropriate time and maintaining things in their rightful places. The cosmos operates under this principle; even the smallest deviation could lead to disorder, disrupting the balance set by Allah. The Quran states that Allah, the angels, and those endowed with knowledge bear witness to this justice.<sup>37</sup> One of Allah's attributes is "Adil" (the Just), indicating His wish for His followers to embody justice in every

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<sup>31</sup> Sahih al-Bukhari, Book 30, HN 82.

<sup>32</sup> Khan, Mohammad Anwar, Human Rights in Islam, *Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, Vol 4, p.250, 2016.

<sup>33</sup> Al-Quran, 17:70.

<sup>34</sup> Al-Quran, 49:13.

<sup>35</sup> Al-Quran, 8:73.

<sup>36</sup> Al-Darimi, Abd Allah ibn Abd al-Rahman, *Sunan al-Darimi*, Musuaat al-Risala, Beirut, HN 4485.

<sup>37</sup> Al-Quran, 3:18.

aspect of life.

Allah sent Prophets with evident signs, sacred scriptures, and the balance (Meezan) to ensure that people practice justice. The highest form of justice is upholding monotheism (Tawheed), as associating partners with Allah (shirk) results in the gravest of injustices. According to the Quran, idolatry is a profound wrong, as it gives rise to all other forms of injustice and disorder in the world.<sup>38</sup>

### **1.7 Promotion of Islamic Brotherhood and Equality**

To begin with, we must evaluate the historical background and perspectives of humanity and nationalism, both internally and externally. What elements have been involved, and what are their goals and objectives? These are certainly important considerations. It's now essential to raise public awareness at all levels—be it academic, official, or non-official—to clear up misunderstandings, highlight the virtues of Islamic brotherhood, and disseminate all necessary information. The media should be utilized effectively for this purpose.

Human history, along with its evolving circumstances, attests that trials, tests, successes, and failures are part of the journey for the righteous. Islamic history is replete with examples like the Battle of Badr, the events of Karbala, and the conquest of Makkah. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated: "Whoever loves for the sake of Allah, hates for the sake of Allah, gives for the sake of Allah, and withholds for the sake of Allah, has completed his faith."<sup>39</sup> This is not about shedding blood; rather, the real objective is that if we have embraced Islam and believe in Allah, we should be prepared to sacrifice our wealth, blood, personal interests, and even our lives for the sake of Allah.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) encouraged such bonds, saying: "Befriending a believer is good, and there is no goodness in a person who is not familiar with anyone, nor is anyone familiar with him." He also said: "Indeed, there are pulpits of light around the Throne, upon which will be people with luminous clothes and radiant faces. They are neither prophets nor martyrs, but even the prophets and martyrs will envy them." When asked about their qualities, he said, "These are the people who love each other for the sake of Allah, sit together for the sake of Allah, and meet each other for the sake of Allah."

Furthermore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Allah has declared, 'My love is guaranteed for those who love each other for My sake and meet each other for My sake.'"<sup>40</sup>

Islam offers a stable and strong bond that transcends differences in colour and ethnicity. It unites Muslims into a single community that spans the entire universe, unaffected by geographical boundaries. To create a society like that of Madinah, we must cultivate an atmosphere of brotherhood. By instilling love and sincerity within our communities, we can build an ideal society based on the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah, where justice prevails and equality is the norm. By adhering to the eternal message of the Qur'an and the teachings of the Holy Prophet, we can aspire to realize the vision of a state like Madinah.

### **1.8 Promoting Unity and Equality through Islamic Values in India**

India's diversity of religions, cultures, and languages highlights the need for values that promote unity and harmony. Islamic brotherhood encourages Muslims to foster unity not just among themselves but with people of all faiths, promoting social peace. Emphasizing justice and equality, Islamic principles can counteract issues like caste discrimination and social inequalities, helping to create a more inclusive society. By engaging in interfaith dialogue and demonstrating compassion, Muslims can combat communalism and religious intolerance. Additionally, values like charity strengthen community bonds, while ethical conduct and integrity help combat corruption. Embracing these principles can help Muslims build a peaceful, just, and unified society in India, where all citizens coexist with respect and dignity.

### **1.9 Conclusion**

Islam's teachings on brotherhood and equality are timeless values that offer essential guidance for fostering peace, unity, and justice in society. The emphasis on seeing all believers as brothers and on treating all individuals with fairness, irrespective of race, ethnicity, or social status, provides a framework for building cohesive and harmonious communities. In a diverse country like India, these principles are particularly relevant, offering a path toward overcoming divisions and promoting mutual respect among people of all faiths. By adhering to the values

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<sup>38</sup>Harvey, Ramon and Tutt, Daniel, *Justice in Islam New Ethical Perspectives*, International Institute of Islamic Thought, London, p 2, 2023.

<sup>39</sup> Al-Sajistani, Abu Dawood, *Sunan Abu Dawood*. Translated by Yaser Qadhi, Darussalam, Riyadh, HN 4681, 2008.

<sup>40</sup> Sunan Abu Dawood, Book 43, HN 4915.



of brotherhood and equality outlined in the Qur'an and exemplified by the life of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, Muslims can play a crucial role in creating a society where peace, compassion, and justice prevail. These teachings not only address contemporary issues like racism and social inequality but also offer a model for ethical conduct that can help combat corruption and strengthen community bonds. Embracing the principles of Islamic brotherhood and equality is vital for building a peaceful, inclusive, and just society, contributing to the overall well-being and unity of the nation.

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