

Palestine Belongs to the Whole Ummah

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For more than a hundred years the land of al Masjid al Aqsa has been bleeding in front of the eyes of almost two billion Muslims, and for more than a hundred years those Muslims have been taught to watch it like spectators watching a match in a foreign league. Children are pulled from under the rubble in Gaza, soldiers march with their boots through the courtyards of the third holiest mosque in Islam, families are thrown out of homes their grandfathers built, and in the capitals of the Muslim world the palaces stay lit, the trade deals keep flowing and the official statements of *"deep concern"* are copied and pasted from one massacre to the next. This shame did not fall from the sky, because it was built step by step by people who first called Palestine a Palestinian issue, then an Arab issue, and finally a humanitarian file to be handled by charities and the United Nations, until the Ummah forgot that the land was ever its own.

Palestine is Islamic land whose defence is an obligation upon every Muslim, the system of nation states is the cage that keeps the Ummah from fulfilling this obligation, and al Aqsa will remain a prisoner until the Muslims break that cage and stand again behind one shield, which is the Khilafah.

The bond between the Muslims and this land was tied by Allah in His Book, and no border drawn by a British or French officer can untie what Allah has tied. He made al Masjid al Aqsa the destination of the night journey of His Messenger ﷺ and described the land around it as blessed:

> سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَىٰ بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا ۚ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ
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> *"Exalted is He who took His servant by night from al Masjid al Haram to al Masjid al Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing."*[1]

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then placed it among the three mosques to which a Muslim may set out on a journey of worship, saying: *"Do not set out on a journey except to three mosques: al Masjid al Haram, the mosque of the Messenger ﷺ, and al Masjid al Aqsa"*.[2] Whoever claims that a mosque which Allah tied to the Kaʿbah in the Quran, and which the Prophet ﷺ tied to his own mosque in the Sunnah, belongs to one people or one flag has taken the maps of the colonisers more seriously than the words of his Lord,

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[1] Surah Al Isra 17:1

[2] Sahih al Bukhari 1189

because every Muslim on earth carries a share in al Aqsa through his faith, and every Muslim will be asked what he did when it was taken.

Once this status is clear, the duty toward its people is beyond discussion, since Allah commanded the believers to support those who ask for help in the religion:

وَإِنِ اسْتَنصَرُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ فَعَلَيْكُمُ النَّصْرُ

"And if they seek your help in the religion, then it is your duty to help them."[3]

Imam Abu Bakr Ibn al ʿArabi al Maliki (d. 543 AH) explained how heavy this duty becomes when Muslims are held captive and weak in the hands of an enemy, and he reported it as the position of Imam Malik and of all the scholars:

> *"Unless they are weak captives, for then the bond of loyalty with them remains and supporting them is obligatory with the body, so that no eye among us remains blinking until we go out to rescue them if our numbers allow it, or we spend all our wealth to free them until no one is left with a single dirham. This is what Malik and all the scholars said."*[4]

Read these words slowly and then look at the Muslim world today. The scholars said that **not one eye should blink until the captives are freed and that the Muslims should spend until no one has a single dirham left, while today entire peoples are besieged, starved and bombed, and the eyes of the rulers are closed in a deep and comfortable sleep inside their palaces.** A people living under occupation, whose children are killed and whose mosque is raided, are in a condition at least as severe as the captives the Imam described, and Allah throws a question at the believers that no excuse can answer:

> *"And what is wrong with you that you do not fight in the cause of Allah and for the oppressed among men, women and children who say: Our Lord, take us out of this town whose people are oppressors, and appoint for us from Yourself a protector, and appoint for us from Yourself a helper?"*[5]

The children of Gaza are saying this exact duʿa today, asking Allah for a protector and a helper because they have found none among the armies of the Muslims. Shaykh al Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 AH) described the defence against such an aggressor as the greatest of all obligations after faith itself:

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[3] Surah Al Anfal 8:72

[4] Ibn al ʿArabi, Ahkam al Quran, commentary on Surah Al Anfal 8:72, as quoted by al Qurtubi in al Jamiʿ li Ahkam al Quran, Dorar, Mawsuʿat al Akhlaq: https://dorar.net/alakhlaq/2772 (also quoted at IslamQA, answer 264848: https://islamqa.info/ar/answers/264848)

[5] Surah An Nisa 4:75

> *"As for defensive fighting, it is the most serious form of repelling an aggressor from the sanctities and the religion, so it is obligatory by consensus. The attacking enemy who corrupts the religion and the worldly life,* ***nothing after faith is more obligatory than repelling him****. No condition is set for it, and he is repelled according to what is possible."*[6]

Nothing after faith is more obligatory, and yet the armies that the Ummah pays for with its own wealth are used to guard borders against other Muslims, to crush their own people in the streets and to parade at national celebrations, while the one enemy that the Shariah commands them to repel is met with peace treaties, gas contracts and security cooperation. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "*The Muslim is the brother of the Muslim; he does not wrong him and he does not hand him over*",[7] and to hand a brother over means exactly this, to leave him alone with his enemy while you have the power to defend him. Reason confirms the hadith without needing a single book, because no one in the world would respect a man who watches his own brother being beaten to death in the street and excuses himself by saying that the matter belongs to the family living in that house.

Against this clear position, one argument is repeated again and again by those who want the Ummah to stay quiet, the argument says that ordinary Muslims can do nothing, since there is no imam to lead an army and individuals have no power, so the duty simply falls away. There is some truth in the first half, because the individual Muslim in Antwerp, Istanbul or Jakarta cannot liberate al Aqsa alone. The conclusion, however, is the voice of laziness dressed up as fiqh, and it collapses under the very words of Ibn Taymiyyah quoted above, who said that the enemy is repelled according to what is possible. What is possible for every Muslim includes his duʿa, his wealth, his refusal to buy from those who fund the occupation, his voice in every space he can reach, his da'wah to re-establish the khilafah, and the education of his children about al Aqsa, and the one who does none of these has no right to hide behind the absence of an imam. More importantly, the absence of an imam is itself the disease that must be treated, and whoever uses the disease as an excuse to stop treating it has only made the disease permanent. Ibn al ʿArabi lamented the Muslims of his own age in words that strike our age even harder:

> *"To Allah we belong and to Him we return, for what has befallen the people in leaving their brothers captive in the hands of the enemy, while in their own hands*

[6] Ibn Taymiyyah, al Ikhtiyarat al Fiqhiyyah, Kitab al Jihad, Wikisource: https://ar.wikisource.org/wiki/الاختيارات_الفقهية_لشيخ_الإسلام_ابن_تيمية/كتاب_الجهاد

[7] Sahih al Bukhari 2442

> *are treasuries of wealth, abundance of means, equipment and numbers, strength and endurance."*[8]

If Ibn al ʿArabi said this about his own time, what would he say about ours, when the Ummah sits on oil, gas, armies, airbases and some of the richest sovereign funds on earth, and still Gaza is starved while more than fifty Muslim states watch? These resources are locked inside separate national cages, each one guarded by a government that treats al Aqsa as a question of foreign policy and treats its own people's anger as a threat to national security, and the honest name for the sickness of the Ummah is division.

This is the point where the cause of Palestine and the unity of the Ummah become one and the same question. Allah commands:

> وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا
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> *"And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided."*[9]

And He reminds us of what we are:

> إِنَّ هَٰذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ
>
> *"Indeed this Ummah of yours is one Ummah, and I am your Lord, so worship Me."*[10]

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ described this one Ummah as a single living body, saying: *"The example of the believers in their mutual love, mercy and compassion is like the body: when one limb complains, the rest of the body responds to it with sleeplessness and fever"*.[11] A body cut into fifty pieces cannot respond with fever to the pain of one limb, and this is exactly what was done to the Muslims after the Khilafah was weakened and then abolished, since each piece was given its own flag, its own anthem and its own ruler whose first loyalty is to his throne and to the powers that protect it. The Prophet ﷺ also told us how a united body protects itself, when he said: *"Indeed the imam is a shield; fighting is done behind him and protection is sought through him"*.[12] Imam an Nawawi (d. 676 AH) explained the meaning of this shield:

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[8] Ibn al ʿArabi, Ahkam al Quran, commentary on Surah Al Anfal 8:72, as quoted by al Qurtubi in al Jamiʿ li Ahkam al Quran, Dorar, Mawsuʿat al Akhlaq: https://dorar.net/alakhlaq/2772 (also quoted at IslamQA, answer 264848: https://islamqa.info/ar/answers/264848)
[9] Surah Al ʿImran 3:103
[10] Surah Al Anbiya 21:92
[11] Sahih Muslim 2586
[12] Sahih al Bukhari 2957, Sahih Muslim 1841

> *"That is, he is like a covering, because he prevents the enemy from harming the Muslims, prevents people from harming one another, protects the heartland of Islam, and people are wary of him and fear his power."*[13]

Compare this description with the rulers of today, who neither prevent the enemy from harming the Muslims nor inspire any fear in that enemy, and whose power is felt only by their own people in prisons and interrogation rooms. History gave a clear proof of what the shield means. When Theodor Herzl tried to buy Palestine from the Ottoman Khalifah Sultan ʿAbd al Hamid II (d. 1336 AH), offering to pay off the debts of the state, the Sultan sent him a reply through his intermediary Newlinski, recorded in a letter dated 19 June 1896:

> *"I cannot sell even one foot of this land ... Let the Jews keep their billions. If the empire is divided, the Jews may get Palestine for nothing, yet it will only be divided over our dead bodies."*[14]

This report reaches us through the Zionist side itself, which makes it all the more damning for those who came after. A Khalifah drowning in debt refused millions for a single foot of the land, while the national rulers who inherited his lands have handed over far more for far less, sometimes for nothing more than a photograph in Washington. The Sultan was deposed in 1909, the land was promised away in 1917, and within a few decades of the Khilafah falling exactly what he warned of took place, since the shield had been removed and Palestine was taken without a price. The Prophet ﷺ warned: *"Whoever dies without a pledge of allegiance on his neck dies a death of jahiliyyah"*,[15] which shows that living without this shield is a state of sin the Muslims are commanded to end, and every year that passes without it is another year of al Aqsa in chains.

Our duty, then, is to stop speaking about Palestine as the problem of a single people and to drag it back into our mosques, homes and gatherings as the cause of the whole Ummah, to reject every national and ethnic label that turns our brothers into foreigners, to support them with our duʿa, our wealth and an uncompromising boycott, to expose every normalisation and every betrayal by name of the system and structure that produced it, to teach our children that al Aqsa is theirs as much as the Kaʿbah is theirs, and to unite our own communities here in Europe across Turkish, Moroccan, Arab and every other background, since a Muslim community divided by ethnicity in Antwerp is a

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[13] An Nawawi, al Minhaj Sharh Sahih Muslim, commentary on the hadith "Innama al imamu junnah": https://hadithprophet.com/hadith-50682.html

[14] Letter of Newlinski to Herzl, 19 June 1896, from Wathaʾiq Filastin: Miʾatan wa Thamanun Wathiqah Mukhtarah 1839 to 1987, p. 19, Institute for Palestine Studies: https://digitalprojects.palestine-studies.org/sites/default/files/What_Newlinski_said_to_Herzl.pdf

[15] Sahih Muslim 1851

small copy of the same disease that left Gaza alone. Above all, it is our duty to work and call for the return of the Khilafah, the shield behind which the Ummah fights and through which it is protected, because al Aqsa was lost when the shield fell, and it will be liberated when the Muslims stand once more as one body under one leadership that rules by what Allah has revealed and fears no one except Him.

Wa'Allāhu Aʿlam

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