



A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF CANNOT STAND

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Essay

"History is ruthless with
divided nations. From the
Fall of Baghdad in 1258
to the dismemberment
of Pakistan in 1971, From
American civil war to
the tragedy of Muslim
Spain, the lesson is
brutally consistent: A
house divided itself
cannot stand."

The famous warning "A



house divided against itself cannot stand." articulated by Abraham Lincoln in 1858 captures a universal truth about human collectives. When a house turn itself, it collapse under the weight of its own practices. Unity is not a luxury of stable societies but is the very condition of survival.

Whether the 'house' is a family a political party, a nation or entire civilization. Persistent conflicts undermine its foundation. While 'Division' on the other hand implies more than healthy agreement. It signifies deep, prolonged practices that turn differences into hostility and dissent into disintegration. Unity does not mean uniformity, nor does it demand the suppression of diversity. Rather it requires a shared moral framework. When

a society loses its capacity to accommodate differences within a common purpose, it begins to tear itself apart. This is why the Quran warns the believers,

Hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided

This very verse of Surh-Al Imran clearly indicates that unity is not merely social convenience, it is a moral and political necessity.

Internal division usually originate from combination of political social and economic causes. Political polarization is often the most visible source. When politics become zero sum contest, opponents are no longer treated as rivals but as enemies. Institutions lose legitimacy and governance turns into paralysis. Along side, the ethnic and social or sectarian fault line weakens the social fabric. When identity become

-es a weapon, citizenship is replaced with tribalism. Just like recurring debate on demand of new provinces in Pakistan is causing Economic inequality further deepens these rifts. This happens when wealth is concentrated in few hands, while the majority feels excluded, resentment replaces loyalty. Finally external forces exploit internal division through propaganda, proxy conflicts and Hybrid warfare. A divided society becomes an easy target for manipulation. The Prophets (SAW) captured the essence of social cohesion and said; The believer to another believer is like a building whose different parts support each other.

History offers a painful illustrations of how internal division leads to collapse. The fall



Baghdad in 1258, was not simply the result of mongol strength. It was the outcome of betrayal, disunity and political intrigue within the Abbasids elite. Muslim Spain once the jewel of European civilization disintegrated into petty kingdoms known as Taifas. Their mutual rivalries invited Christian reconquest. American Civil War nearly destroyed the United States because the nation could not stand against its moral and political contradictions over slavery and states rights. In South Asia fall of Dhaka in 1971, demonstrated how political-alienation and denial of democratic rights fractured Pakistan within. Will Durant was right to observe that the nations are not conquered, they decay from inside before they fall.

In the contemporary world the problem of division has beco-



—ome even more acute. Politics in many democracies is defined by polarization rather than persuasion. Social Media amplifies outrage and reward extremism. In Muslim world, sectarian and ethnic conflicts weaken the states and invite foreign interventions. Societies today face not only physical threats but a narrative war. Where truth is fragmented and loyalty is diluted. Iqbal warned the fate of nation lies in the hand of individuals when he wrote, "The destiny of nation rests in the hand of individual; Every single person is a star shaping the fate of community." When individual internalize division, nation externalizes collapse.

The consequences of sustained internal division and are severe and irreversible. Governance

becomes weak as institutions are paralyzed by mistrust. Economic growth slows, investment decline and talent migrates else where also called Brain drain. Civil unrest becomes routines and extremist ideologies find fertile ground like Kharean attack in Balouchistan that killed forty terrorist. Most dangerously a divided nation loses its sovereignty in practice even if it remains in its name, because foreign power step into 'manage' conflicts, like wise Iran that always need a mediator to resolve and tackle insurgencies. The Holy Quran cautions, "Do not dispute with one another or you will lose your heart and strength will depart." Divisions drain not only politically also drain moral Energy. At the center of



Unity stands leadership. Societies do not unite by accident, they are united by vision. Leaders who rise above factionalism and speak the language of inclusion create cohesion, best current example is **Muhammad Khan Mamdani**, muslim mayor of New York City who beautifully united people of all races and classes. Where as on the other hand those who exploit division for short-term gain destroy the long-term future. Allama Iqbal defines the quality of leadership when he says, **A lofty vision, persuasive speech and a passionate soul, these are the provisions of leader carvan.** Leadership is not about dominating groups but about harmonizing differences within a shared national purpose. Justice, dialogue and constitutionalism are the two spirits and tools of unity.



The way forward lies in the rebuilding trust at every level of the society. Institutions must be strengthened so that no group feels excluded from justice. Education must cultivate tolerance and civic responsibilities rather than prejudice. Media must inform rather than inflame. Most importantly, national narratives must emphasize shared identity. Unity imposed by force is fragile; unity built on justice is durable. Iqbal's optimism remains relevant when he says; **Iqbal is not hopeless about his barren land; give it but a little moisture and it will become highly fertile.** Even fractured societies can heal if nourished with sincerity and vision.

However, unity should not be confused with silence. Healthy dissent is the lifeblood of progress. A society that suppresses difference in the name of unity, they

becomes stagnant and authoritarian. The challenge is to distinguish between constructive disagreement and destructive division. Pluralism must be balanced with cohesion. The real danger lies not in debate but in demonization. When compromise is labeled betrayal and dialogue is seen as weakness, the house begins to crack.

In conclusion, the lesson of history, religion and reason is unmistakable, a house divided against itself cannot stand. Nations that ignore this truth invite ruin within long before defeat from outside. In an age of polarization and identity wars, survival depends upon rediscovering unity rooted in justice, tolerance and shared purpose. The Quran reminds us, "Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of people until they



Change what is in themselves? When hearts unite, institutions strengthen and leadership inspires, the house does not merely stand, it endures.