

Statehood Capacity of the Ummah

The year 2025 marked the inevitable collapse of the Western-led global order. The Eurocentric "modern" system now appears outdated, irrelevant, and incapable of addressing various crises. That year saw waves of Gen Z-led protests against political authorities in multiple countries, deepening national divisions, widening generational gaps, a faltering economy, and rampant socioeconomic fragmentation. This trend prompts a key question: **What makes a nation cohesive, united, and powerful in organizing statehood? And do Muslims possess traits that enable them to build a stable political order?**

To address the question above, Muslims must reassess their identity and the Islamic teachings that define their role in worldly life. Are Muslims merely a group bound by ancestry, ethnicity, or homeland, or are they a political entity united by the *Risalah* or message brought by the Prophet Muhammad (saw)? By recognizing their true identity and Deen, the Muslim community can better filter out foreign concepts introduced by imperialist nations, evaluate them against the Islamic creed and the standards of halal and haram, and confidently build an Islamic civilization in line with prophetic guidance.

The Impossible State for the Ummah

Today, Muslims live in a state system that has lost God, their identity, and the very concept of what an Islamic state system should be. Wael B. Hallaq's book, ***The Impossible State: Islam, Politics, and Modernity's Moral Predicament*** (2013), explores the profound and controversial issue of the incompatibility between the modern state and Islamic law (sharia).

Ironically, many Muslims still fail to grasp the fundamental differences between the modern state and an Islamic state, leading them to pursue their struggles within the framework of secular democracy.

Wael Hallaq argues that a "modern Islamic state" is conceptually and morally impossible, as the current form of the state is a product of Western modernity—hence, "The Impossible State." He rejects the notion that Islam can be realized within the modern state as it exists today. Hallaq views modernity itself as problematic, echoing French sociologist Alain Touraine's *Critique of Modernity* (1992), which posits that secularism—not merely science and technology—forms the core of modernity.

Therefore, it is natural that the Baitul Maqdis problem in Palestine will never be resolved, and in fact, it will become impossible to resolve, as long as it remains trapped within the secular order. The struggle for Palestinian liberation must not lose sight of *the bigger picture* of how political and state life will be shaped by the Muslim community. The Baitul Maqdis problem cannot be separated from the concept of Khilafah (Caliphate), which is synonymous with the Islamic State and has become a political ideal for many Muslims. Despite the negative perception it receives in the West, the Khilafah is a state system prescribed by Islam and guided solely by Muslims.

The Concept of Ummah and Nation

A nation with a strong civilization usually has a clear concept of statehood life, complete with its own set of values and rules. Do Muslims possess this capacity? Indeed, they do—it's just that many Muslims are unaware of it due to their fascination with secular Western ideas of nationhood.

Islam generates a society who have one root of belief, namely the Islamic Aqidah, as well as one root of rules, namely Islamic Sharia. Islamic civilization eventually became a unique civilization whose life was carried out by the people with a unity of value principles (fikrah) and a unity of operational methodology (tareeqah).

In Islamic teachings, the concept of *ummah* parallels the Western notion of a "nation" in political tradition. The *ummah* positions Muslims as active agents of civilization, rather than merely a group united by ethnicity and homeland. It transcends these bounds, embodying a deeply political dimension tied to the capacity for establishing and managing statehood.

However, in contrast to the secular West, the concept of "ummah" is intrinsically tied to upholding Allah's (swt) word (*iqamat al-din*), stewardship of the earth, and the pursuit of justice and prosperity in fulfillment of divine commands. Therefore, "ummah" is closely related to the collective affairs of the people of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) where the meaning of politics in Islam is the regulation of the affairs of the people at home and abroad. ﴿وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا﴾ **“And thus we have made you a just community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you”** [TMQ Al-Baqarah: 143].

For Western admirers, the interpretation of ***Ummatan Wasatan*** is considered as the core concept of religious moderation (**Islam wasatiyah**). However, this is a misconception, as there are 13 narrations that indicate the word *al-wasat* means *al-adl* or justice. This is because only just people can be balanced and can be called the chosen people. These narrations are: *From Abi Sa'id al-Khudri (ra), from the Prophet (saw), ﴿وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا﴾* **“Thus We made you a wasat[an] people.” He said, «عَدُولًا» ‘(The meaning is) fair’** (al-Bukhari, at-Tirmidhi, and Ahmad).

Thus, the phrase *ummatan wasatan* signifies a chosen and just people (*khiyāran ‘udūlan*)—a just community that upholds the teachings of Islam. This *ummah* serves as active political agents, not mere objects in political games. It is a chosen nation—ever-growing, united, strong, and cohesive—that melts diverse nations into its crucible, embracing both Islamic thought and its distinctive operational methods.

This concept is pivotal in politics, embodying an essential element of a state's inherent power. The *ummah* functions as a political nation that shapes world affairs according to its worldview—a true political force. In Islam, politics is enacted through both the state and the *ummah*: the state implements these principles in practice, while the *ummah* oversees and guides the state in upholding them.

Additionally, Muslims as the *ummah* bear the duty of Islamic *da'wah* to all humanity. They must engage the world—fully aware of its circumstances, attuned to its problems, cognizant of the political motives of nations, and vigilant about global political activities. Muslims must also scrutinize the strategic political plans of nations, their implementation methods, their diplomatic procedures, and their maneuvers. Thus, they need to grasp the true dynamics of the political landscape in the Islamic world within the broader international context.

This awareness equips them to devise precise strategies for establishing their own unique statehood life under the Khilafah and spreading Islam's message globally, Allah (swt) willing.

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