

A Vision of Muslim Unity

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Abstract: Muslims, in the last few decades, have been seriously criticized by the West. Sectarian prejudice and intolerance have started taking roots. Frequent sectarian clashes in Muslim countries are taking a heavy toll of Muslims lives. This is all due to the Ulama al-Su [the corrupt clergy], who instead of preaching of unity among the Ummah, are promoting hatred and creating chaos. With their narrow mindedness, they are bent, by any means, on changing the Aqaid of the smaller wing to their own way of thinking and practice. Every Muslim, be of any school, believes in Tawhid, Nubuwah and in the Qur'an. These cardinal principles should be the unifying points for the people of the Ummah and not their minor individual differences. Ulama al-Su have always explained the concept of unity wrongly. According to their limited understanding, the meaning of unity is only religious harmony. The unity of the Muslim Ummah does not mean to change the Aqaid and following of its larger wing. It does not require that one should leave his faith and adopt that of another. It is not possible nor is it feasible. The meaning of the unity of Ummah, is, Muslims should become aware and be organized against hostile forces, which are their common enemies.

Muslims in the last few decades have been seriously criticized by the West. Sectarian prejudice and intolerance has spiraled out of control. Frequent sectarian clashes in Muslim countries are taking a heavy toll on Muslims lives. This is all due to the Ulama al-Su (the corrupt clergy), who instead of preaching of unity among the Ummah, are spreading hatred and creating chaos. With their narrow-mindedness, they are bent, by any means, on changing the Aqaid of the minority to their own way of thinking and practice. Every Muslim, belonging to any school, believes in Tawhid, Nubuwah and in the Qur'an. These cardinal principles should and can be the unifying points for the Ummah, not their minor individual differences. Ulama al-Su have always explained the concept of unity incorrectly.

According to short sighted clergy, the meaning of unity is only religious harmony. Unity of the Muslim Ummah does not mean changing the Aqaid of the minority. It does not require that one should leave his faith and adopt that of another. This is not feasible. Unity of Ummah delineates that Muslims should be aware and organized against hostile forces, which are their common enemies. Islam eliminates the roots of injustice at every level. Rasulullah (S) informs:

- i). "He is not from us who invites on the basis of Asabiyyah (injustice)
- ii). He is not of us who commits murder on the basis of Asabiyyah (intolerance)
- iii). He is not of us who kills on the basis of Asabiyyah (discrimination).

Another interpretation of unity of Ummah is fortification against all forces of Shait'an. A careful study of the history of Islam reveals that as long as this unity of thought persisted, bounties continued. It is only intolerance due to which the Ummah now faces multiple problems globally. The mission of Shait'an is always to create disunity among Muslims by means of linguistic, racial, family and religious prejudices. It was the Umayyad monarch of Syria, in the early days of Islam, who gave birth to religious intolerance and the concept of unity became a sweet dream. Moula Abi Abdillah Al Imam al-Husain (as) killed this nature of Shait'an and provided us a model of unity through his exemplary character:

- Moula al-Husain (as) embraced Shahadat for the unity of Ummah. All those who know the difference between justice and cruelty have recognized his sacrifice. His Shahadat was not for any specific race, age, class or school, but for the divine unity.
- He departed from Madinah only to protect the unity of Ummah.
- He converted the Hajj Ehr'am into Umrah only to secure the unity of the Ummah.
- He pitched his tents away from the bank of Euphrates for the sake of Ummah's unity.
- He along with Ahl al-Bayt (as) and Ash'ab bore three days of thirst for the unity of Ummah.
- Sayyid'at Fatimiyy'at tolerated unspeakable cruelty and bore many trials and tribulations only for the unity of the Ummah.
- Al-Imam Ali Zain ul-Abideen (as) did not raise the slogan of Qisas against the Umayyads, only for the sake of the unity of the Ummah.

Unity of the Ummah was always a top priority of the Ahl al-Bayt (as). Students of history can easily examine the Nabavi politics during the glorious era of Bani Fatimah, in Misr, who granted privileges to all people practicing different religions along with those belonging to different Muslim sects. A large number of Christians and Jews got prominent positions in various departments according to their abilities and skills. Similarly, Hanafi, Maleki, Shafa'i, Hanbali and the Ithna Ashar intellectuals were appointed to key positions in various institutions of the Fatimi Empire on the basis of merit. The Bani Fatimah (as) allowed the freedom of thought within the admissible limits of Islam to all. Moreover, the Bani Fatimah (as), without discrimination, showed respect and bestowed awards to the notables of various faculties of sciences according to their credentials.

The 9th Shia Fatimi Ismaili Imam, Ahmad al-Mastur (as), known as "Al Shakhs al-Fadil Saheb al-Rasail" explains in "Ikhwan us-Safa":

"We do not bear any intolerance on the basis of the school of thought".

The Fatimi Imams demonstrated their ability of practicing tolerance and established a state where people spent their lives peacefully. They had an ideology of state which their predecessor Al Imam Ahmad al-Mastur (as) explained in his encyclopedic work, Ikhwan us-Safa earlier. In the "Rasa'il," Fatimi Ismaili Imam referring to "Daulatu Ahl al-Khair'i" and "Dulatu Ahl al-Sharr'i" (State of the good and State of the evils) contains only a brief and general discussion on the terms of governments or dynasties and on their succession. Rasa'il Ikhwan us-Safa referred once to the coming of "Daulatu Ahl al-Khair'i" but they meant simply "the time when the adherents to their group would form the bulk of the nation."

Today, the sectarian fire is burning and a majority of the Muslims is calling the minority sects and sub-sects as "Kafir". I would like to recall what Abi Abdillah Al-Imam Jafar us-Sadiq (as) said for such an occasion:

"You must know that you should never terrorize a Muslim. My father (Imam Mohammad al-Baqir) has said on the Asn'ad of what his father Al-Imam Ali Zain ul-Abideen (as) and grandfather Amir al-Mumineen Ali (as) had declared: Whoever casts ferocious eyes on any Muslim with an intention to terrorize, then on the Day of Qiyamah, when there would be nobody to provide protection except Allah, he would himself be in a state of terror and fear."

To be a true and devoted Muslim it is not enough that one should observe Salaat punctually, keep Siy'am during Ramadan regularly, recite Qur'an or religiously attend the lecture of a cleric. Sayyidna Qadi al-Nauman has mentioned in his celebrated work "Sharh al-Akhh'ar" citing Rasulullah (S) that he described the terrorist cult of Khawarij who observed Taqwa but were out of the fold of Islam. He stated:

"In my Ummah, a cult of Khawarij will be separated from religion just like an arrow shot from the bow. Practically, they would offer Fard Salaat, along with Tahajjud and they would also remember the Qur'an."

Abd ul-Rahman 'ibn Muljim (L), the "Contract Killer" of Amir al-Mumineen Ali (as) appointed by the Syrian monarch also belonged to the cult of Khawarij. What should I say regarding Talim in Madaris? Several seminaries and Masajid are being run by the Khawarij around the world today who are producing radicalized militants. Right before us are several examples of "Ulama al- Su" who completed their Talim in Madaris, but due to their malicious approach, millions of people have gone astray on account of their vested interests and corrupt mentality. Defenders of the Khawarij have inflicted real violence in the name of Islam and will continue to do so. The Khawarij threat is of course not a fantasy as the entire Muslim world is suffering due to them and their benefactors.

Unity does not mean that one should change their Aqidah and adopt another's viewpoint or practices. What is needed is that we should understand the basic Talim of Islam and abstain from sources with the sectarian lens. Culture also has an important relation which we cannot ignore. The enemies of Islam, through cultural invasion, have targeted the values of Islam and tried to change it. Western educational institutions have played an important role in the destruction of Islamic ideology. They have silently injected poison and helped in changing the lifestyle along with the approach, language, and morals. This class suffers from an inferiority complex and consider west as Jannah. It is but natural that such people would not have the

same feelings for Islam and divine personalities as the rest of staunch Muslims. This is the outcome of the policies of the corrupt government which has failed to provide up to date education to the children of this country. Rasulallah (S) guides:

“Take the good and eschew the bad.”

If we study minutely, we will find in all aspects of our daily life the influence of western culture and civilization. Due to many reasons, the Ummah is far away from the Talim of Islam presently. Muslim rulers and politicians at large are champions of words but not deeds. They are far from religion and are not true to Islam or with the poor Muslim community, whom they fool through their sugar-coated words and speeches. We are embarking on a boat whose condition is similar to the following couplet:

*“Wind is adverse; the night is dark and the sea rough;
The anchor of the boat is broken, while the sailor sleeps.”*

Rasulallah(S) showed us the way where the actual thought of unity is and whose “Ark” Ummah should embark on:

“We (Ahl al-Bayt) serve as the Ark of Salvation. Whoever holds fast to this Ark will attain salvation and whoever deviates from it will be cast into perdition.”

The lack of unity, lack of education and rise of corruption amongst the clergy are the basic reason for our downfall. The question arising is, against whom should unity be demonstrated. Let’s first fix the enemy as a target. Put the enemy at the central point of the target so that the correct meaning of the unity of the Ummah becomes clear. The forces inimical to Islam know very well that if Muslims unite, they could win the battle against them on all fronts.

Around thirty-four years ago a historical event occurred on April 12th, 1986, which no doubt should be a cause of anxiety for the intellectuals of the Ummah. This event demands from the thinkers and intellectuals of the Ummah that they undertake efforts to unite as it is a vital need of the day. On the above date, the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church visited a Synagogue in Rome, Italy. This historic visit held tremendous meaning. Christians believe that the executioners of Jesus were the Zionist Jews. During the last 2000 years, Christians have propagated this largely. Based on this, Christians have nursed hatred and animosity towards the Jews in their hearts. As a result, thousands of Jews were killed mercilessly in Europe. History informs us that when Christians waged war on the Jews on the basis of religion, they massacred them in Spain and other parts of Europe in the 16th century. As a result, thousands of Jews took refuge in the homes of the Muslims of Spain and in the jurisdiction of the Ottoman Empire to save their lives. Uncounted historical events testify to the noble character of the Muslims who provided protection to the Jews from the swords of Christian Crusaders.

Today these same Zionists are committing heinous crimes against the Muslims, which nobody in history has ever committed. The western Christian block is the most horrible enemy of Islam and Muslims, yet Muslims take such wolves in sheep’s clothing as their friends which are the main reason for disunity between Muslims. Can anyone deny that the head of the Roman Catholics, the Pope, visited a Synagogue in order to apologize for the crimes of his predecessors, committed against the Jews? Or can the Pope neglect the crimes of the Jews that they

committed against Jesus and his followers? This unity between the Church and the Synagogue is actually a wedding of cumulative interests.

Islam is the only religion that is against the worship of a person, mythology, and customs. The ideology of unity is such a divine gift to the Ummah in which lies the secret to progress and prosperity. Whether they are Turks or Iranians, Afghans or Pakistani, Kashmiris, Palestinians or Tajiks, they all are members of the one family of Ummah. The strong chain of unity binds the Ummah to unite; it invites to fight against all the usurpers of rights. So far as the problems of differences among various schools of thought are concerned, it is not new and it also existed during the era of our predecessors. For the larger interest of the Ummah, our wise predecessors overlooked these differences. Rasulullah (S) knew well that the element of superiority or pride can sabotage the unity of Ummah, therefore, under the direction of Wahi he instructed: "No Arab is superior to a non-Arab or a white to a black".

The criterion of superiority is Taqwa, according to the Qur'an, not race and face. Only the ignorant believe that they belong to the "royal family" or "elite family". It is needed today to develop awareness regarding unity and its philosophy among the masses. It is the need of the hour to save the coming generation from this inferiority complex. It is the responsibility of the intelligentsia to introduce countrywide a single modern educational system designed according to the needs of the time.

At present, the Muslim Ummah is passing through a dangerous crossroad. Today Muslims are facing tremendous harm not from non-Muslims, but radical Muslims who are persecuting and killing Shia Muslims, Christians and others who do not share their ultra-radical brand of Sunni Islam. It is Wajib on all Sunni and Shia Muslims to resist them with all means and join in the "Jih'ad". In such a critical time of Muslim history, Jih'ad is Wajib. The lesser level of Jihad which is Wajib in all circumstances upon Muslims is Jih'ad bil Qalb. Declaration of Bara'at with the enemies of Muhammad(S) and his 'itrat Tahirah – Aal'i Muhammad (as) is Wajib upon all those who love Muhammad(S) and his progeny. Avoid any kind of sectarian behaviour that may hurt the unity of Ummah. We must show respect for each other's beliefs. We want to practice our religion in peace. We want people to understand Islam. We don't want war, but for the survival of the innocent from the mercenaries and target killers, defense arrangements and security strategy is necessary.

The apparent meaning of "Al-Dhikr" is the Qur'an; the esoteric connotation however is Rasulullah(S) and his successor Imams of Ahl al-Bayt (as), who are regarded as the Ahl ul-Dhikr, as Al-Imam al-Sadiq (as) and others have affirmed. Dhikr literally means to call back to memory, or in other words, to have something in the conscious mind. Dhikr has been used figuratively for a stimulus which brings an object into the focus of consciousness. To be conscious of Allah, the Qur'an, the other scriptures, and Rasulullah(S) have been described as Dhikr, which means to be perpetually conscious of Allah, and Ahl refers to the persons always conscious of Allah. Therefore, Ahl ul-Dhikr refers to the few who are constantly in the consciousness of the Divine and whose characters are immaculate and purified by Allah Himself, i.e. Ahl ul-Bayt (as). The Qur'an also attests that Ahl al-Bayt are the folk of the Qur'an who should be turned to when

men are after the Qur'an's interpretation. The Qur'an attests to them as the ones with deep and encyclopedic knowledge. The divine mercy guides the sincere seekers of the truth to turn to Ahl ul-Dhikr, Rasulullah (S) and his Ahl al-Bayt (as) for knowledge of the divine.

Qur'an says clearly: [16:43]

"Refer to the Folk of Dhikr when you do not know."

In a tradition upon whose authenticity all Muslims agree, Rasulullah(S) says:

"Even if the entire duration of the world's existence has already been exhausted and only one day is left before doomsday (Day of Judgment), Allah will expand that day to such a length of time as to accommodate the kingdom of a person out of my Ahl al-Bayt (Mohammad, Ali, Fatimah, Hasan, Husain and Imam uz-Zaman)(as) who will be called by my name. He will then fill out the earth with peace and justice as it will have been full of injustice and tyranny before then."

The Ahl al-Bayt (as) alone always emphasized, contributed and finally sacrificed for the unity of the Ummah and are the ideological and etymological foundation of "Wahdat al-Fikr al-Islami" (Unity of the understanding of Islam) while boosting the strategic bonds between the followers. Today, deviant, violent, anti-human and anti-Islamic ideologies of Takfiri terrorist militant groups have actively sought to undermine and counter the genuine ideology of Rasulullah(S) while presenting a cruel and violent image of Islam to the world. This is why we must unite.

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