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## Editorial

The *Mawlid al-Nabi* is celebrated by all Muslims in their common love for the last and greatest of God's messengers to mankind. As such, this fervent and ubiquitous celebration of the birth of prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) indelibly marks his Ummah and gives them their unique Muḥammadan character. The Islamic nature of the *Mawlid* celebrations and their natural and providential role in holding the Ummah of Muḥammad within a single fold were obvious to our predecessors but call for some explanation in our day. So in what follows, let us begin with the most fundamental truth of Islam.

There is no doubt that the idea of *tawḥīd* is the quintessential principle of Islam. While this idea of Unity—in both its transcendent and immanent modes—defines the essential and vertical dimension of the Muslim soul, it has a correlative aspect that is substantial and horizontal. To explain, the first dimension defines the soul's direct relationship with the Divine through prayer, remembrance, and unitive consciousness or awareness. The second dimension refers to the soul's indirect relationship with God through His Word and the human Logos that is the intermediary—being both the pontifex of the created order and the point of conflation between the Divine and the human. The conflation and closeness to the Divine allows for the human Logos to firstly be closer to created beings than they are to themselves, hence the statement in the Qur'an:

النَّبِيُّ أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ

The Prophet is closer to the faithful than their own souls (33:6)

Secondly, this closeness allows for accessibility and makes it more existentially possible for the human Logos to draw humans “like” himself towards the Creator—increasing their remembrance of Him at every step. This horizontal attraction and assimilation occurs through the virtues for which the Logos is the personification and best model. Hence the *āyah*:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ  
وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

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In the Apostle of Allah there is certainly for you a good exemplar,  
for those who look forward to Allah and the Last Day, and re-  
member Allah greatly. (33:21)

By attaching themselves to the outward virtues and moral code of the Sunnah, the believers can progress in a very real and tangible way towards the inner substance of the exemplar, which is nothing but a constant state of remembrance and the ultimate station of *tawhīd* and Unity. It is by following the Prophet's commands and example, and consequently by losing their "individualities" and lower personas that the believers are able to gain and find their true identities as any one, or more, of the multiple aspects and qualities of the Prophet (ﷺ). Hence, in Islam the Law is not contrary to the esoteric Path, but rather a part of the single continuum that comprises them both, as well as the other stations and levels. Nor is the historic and practical existence of the Prophet (ﷺ) opposed to his most inner reality as the divine Logos. Dr. Muhammad Legenhausen writes of this dichotomy in the following manner:

This is not to deny the historical person or to oppose the historical person to the idealization, for there is a single person who appears in history who was orphaned and raised by an uncle and experienced all the details of the life of the famous religious leader of Arabia some six hundred years after Christ (peace be upon him), but at the same time is one who was appointed by God and given a mission of warning and bearing the glad tidings of divine mercy and sovereignty, and again, is the same person who is the pure light of God's first creation and for the sake of whom the entire world has been created. In Shia thought, these are not to be understood as opposing paradigms, but as different hierarchically ordered aspects of a single reality. The lowest level of such aspects is that of the Arabian man's physical history, his movements, and what he ate. At a higher level, there is the person Muḥammad as prophet and apostle of God, the recipient of divine revelation, and divine guide. Finally, there is Muḥammad as the light of the intellect, pure illumination and virtue, a cosmic reality totally annihilated in divinity. This division is reflected in Haydar Āmulī's division of *Shari'at*, *Tariqat*, and *Ḥaqīqat*, and in Mullā Ṣadrā's division of the sensory, imaginal, and intellectual worlds.<sup>1</sup>

The breadth and width of the "single reality" that the spiritual substance of the Prophet represents, especially in its aspect of universal mercy, entails

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<sup>1</sup> Legenhausen, Muhammad, "The Prophet Muhammad from a Shia Perspective" [<http://islamicinsights.com/religion/clergy-corner/the-prophet-muhammad-from-the-shia-perspective.html>].

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that it reaches out further and further as it unfolds on the plane of human history. This means that over and beyond the law, the prophetic substance imbues itself in the living cultures of Muslim societies, and Muslims the world over gain access to this quasi-sacramental presence by partaking in those sacred times and places that have maintained a continuous link with it. Hence the absolutely positive nature of the day of *Mawlid al-Nabi* and the holy shrine of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Masjid al-Nabi; and the relatively positive nature of the birth and death anniversaries as well as the shrines of those Muslim saints that represent the continuity of the Prophetic presence and his *walāyah*. To remove these auspicious points of access from the Muslim culture on the charge of being “innovations” is tantamount to denying the *walāyah* of the Prophet (ﷺ) himself. The misuse and abuse of such occasions and places aside, they are not only ‘good innovations’ or *bid‘ah hasanah*, but goodness and *ihsān* itself.

As can be inferred from the discussion above, the spiritual benefits of the *Mawlid al-Nabi* and the prophetic presence are widespread and many. But the goodness does not stop there; it manifests itself on the social and political plane as well. For when Muslims of all types and inclinations acknowledge their abundant love and intimate closeness to the Prophet (ﷺ), they are implicitly acknowledging and actualizing their love for each other—precisely because he (ﷺ) is closer to **all** the believers than they are to themselves and to each other. When they are close to him, they are closer to each other and closer together. God smiles upon those believers who befriend each other and He has mercy on them.

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ  
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ  
الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ  
عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

But the faithful, men and women, are friends of one another: they bid what is right and forbid what is wrong and maintain the prayer, give the zakat, and obey Allah and His Apostle. It is they to whom Allah will soon grant His mercy. Indeed Allah is all-mighty, all-wise. (9:71)

This friendship of the believers is real and actualized and not just sentimental because it is consequent upon the obedience of God and His prophet. Moreover, the only disparity and divergence that the faithful show is in their competing and vying with one another to outdo each other in goodness and virtue, and calling upon one another to the particular good that God has given them; or in other words, they only differ in that they invite others towards the Good through those aspects of the Sunnah of His prophet that have become apparent to them in their particular position in the multifarious channels of prophetic grace.

In the lead article of this issue of the journal, Āyatullāh Muḥammad ‘Alī Taskhīrī, speaks of the differences between the schools of thought in the Ummah to be natural and good. He even refers to the differences existing between the prophets of God. The true or good differences occur where limitations of perspective and knowledge are acknowledged and an attempt is made by all parties to achieve a higher and a more comprehensive picture of reality. The false or bad differences occur where one side believes in the relativity of the truth and thereby claims total truth to itself, implicitly denying the other of any claim to truth in any sense whatsoever. The first set of differences are akin to different intensities and colours of light, while the second are like the difference between light and darkness itself. Hence the differences between the Islamic *madhāhib* can potentially be good if they are seen to be different paths to, and aspects of, the total and comprehensive prophetic substance and Sunnah—such ways as are traversed by Muslim scholars and *mujtabidīn* in their arduous journey of love and rapture towards the holy Prophet (s). Āyatullāh Taskhīrī writes in his article:

When we accept the existence of the various Islamic schools to be a result of the variety of *ijtihāds* endorsed by Islam, we must consider each to be a different path in attaining the satisfaction of Almighty God. When there is difference among schools, it is natural for Muslim individuals to research them until satisfied that they have performed their duty before God and choose in accordance with the criteria in which they believe. Naturally, no one may reproach others for their choices, though such choices may not be to their liking. It is also wrong to force someone to choose a specific school since selection of a school of thought is intertwined with matters of faith and cannot occur but through one’s own reason and judgement.

Muḥammad Wā‘iz-Zādeh Khurāsānī, in his article in this issue, “The Voice of Unity: Islamic Brotherhood”, echoes these sentiments:

Therefore, Islamic *madhāhib* are paths towards Islam. The source of most of them lies in the *ijtibād* and differences of opinions regarding



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the Qurʾān and the Sunnah, which stem from the [limited] understanding of an individual or a group of people.

In his article “Imam Khumaynī’s Vision of Islamic Unity”, Dr. Muḥammad Raḥīm Īwazī explains that while Muslims must avoid the “bad” differences—those that stem from disparate and unconnected parochial approaches to integral reality, the “good” differences of opinion are not contrary to the central principle of *tawḥīd* in Islam when seen in its fullness; he writes:

However, in the view of Imam Khumaynī, differences of opinion should not prevent unity—there can be unity in tandem with dissimilar opinions: “Why should different opinions cause external discord?” Consequently, all humans, and all Muslims must disregard their personal, factional, and ethnic beliefs and preferences and prepare the way for out-and-out governance of Islam on the basis of *tawḥīd* and through emphasis on common human and Islamic principles.

Clearly the most common of all human and Islamic principles is the Prophet (ﷺ) and his continued presence through the streams of *walāyah* that manifest themselves as springs of pure life-giving water throughout the breadth and span of the Muslim world and history. In so far as the stream is continuous, we must, out of pure humility if nothing else, accept what is allotted to us by providence and drink of its rejuvenating waters. In comparing our stream with the streams of other Muslims, we should bear in mind the common source of all streams and follow them to that supreme source of great bounty that gives any given stream its merit.<sup>2</sup> It is at the source that we should expect to finally fully understand the relative worth and the ultimate wisdom behind the different streams that issued from it. In one of his last counsels to his Ummah, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

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<sup>2</sup> The inner esoteric reality of the Prophet (ﷺ) and its identity with the *ism al-jāmiʿ* allows for him to bring together all partial and disparate realities qua reality. Partiality can only be overcome by reference to the whole; the contingent can only exist by connection to the necessary; the accidental can only subsist by way of the essential. Just as all religions must be protected by the Ultimate religion of Islam which is their guardian or ‘*mubaymin*’, similarly all *madhāhib* must base themselves on the **ultimate**—and not “original”—*madhhab* of the Prophet (ﷺ). As will be explained below, it is not so much a matter of going back to the origin as it is a matter of persevering till the end in the right manner so that we are united with the Prophet (ﷺ) and all those that he is united with.

AL-TAQRIB

إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيكُمْ النَّقْلَيْنِ مَا إِن تَمَسَّكْتُم بِهِمَا لَنْ تَضِلُّوا كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَ عِثْرَتِي أَهْلَ  
بَيْتِي وَإِنَّهُمَا لَنْ يَفْتَرِقَا حَتَّى يَرِدَا عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضَ

Verily, I am leaving behind two precious things (*al-thaqalayn*) among you such that if you take hold of them you will never go astray: the Book of God and my kindred (*'itrah*) my household (*Ahl al-Bayt*), for indeed, the two will never separate until they come back to me by the Pond (of *al-Kawthar* on Judgment Day).

Insofar as no authentic *madhhab* in Islam can ever dispose of the Qur'an and its transcendent authority in an absolute way, whatsoever of the Qur'an it preserves is inevitably accompanied by the immanent presence of the prophetic substance by virtue of the grace and blessings of the Prophet's progeny that continued the esoteric function of the *walayah* and passed it on to all the various *madhāhib* in differing ways and amounts. The final end of all *madhāhib* and the ultimate *madhhab* is the union of the exoteric and esoteric streams, the meeting place of the vertical pole of Truth and the horizontal ocean of Presence, the coincidence of the reality of *nubuwwah* and the reality of *walayah*—it is the very Pond itself. For those who reach the Pond, have reached the Prophet, upon whom and his Progeny be peace; and those who reach the Prophet (ﷺ) are given the eternal gift of the beatific vision.

Rabi' al-Awwal 1431/ March 2010

## Religious Variety: The Case of Convergence

Āyatullāh Muḥammad ‘Alī Tashkīrī\*

### Abstract:

Islam has many features common to all its schools of thought, some of which consist of Islamic realism (in the positive sense), innateness, balance, lenience, moderateness, comprehensiveness, and universality. These features have enabled Islamic planning for true, practical unification while at the same time accepting differences of opinion that fall within reasonable parameters inasmuch as the emergence of all the extant and bygone Islamic schools seems natural. In order to prevent religious differences from causing stagnation, the Movement for Proximity of Islamic Schools must proceed in keeping with the five fundamentals identified in this paper. Moreover, advocates of proximity (henceforth proximitists) must adhere to the following principles and values: cooperate in cases of unanimity; exempt one another in cases of difference; refrain from charges of apostasy, iniquity, and heresy; abstain from criticism of the consequences of opposing opinions; observe due respect in the course of dialogues; avoid reviling the sanctities of others; and allow freedom in choosing one’s school. In addition, the role of scholars and thinkers must not be disregarded in the process of achieving proximity. This paper succinctly discusses twelve important points in this regard.

**Keywords:** Religious variety, Islamic realism, Movement for Proximity of Islamic Schools, doctrinal differences, emergence of Islamic schools, dedication to fundamentals of proximity.

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### ISLAMIC REALISM

Among one of the most general characteristics of Islam is realism in the positive sense; that is, acknowledging the [limitative] realities of the human world and developing practical plans for their improvement by drawing upon the divine guidance that pertains to humanity at large, in particular human needs and difficulties—all the while guaranteeing justice in their actualization. The negative sense of realism, on the other hand, consists of surrendering oneself to extant “realities”—acquiescing and concurring with

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them initially and eventually surrendering to fantasy and idealism—concepts that are completely disparate from reality.

Islam, as the religion that concludes and perfects all other divine religions and incorporates an ultimately comprehensive life plan for people until the Day of Judgement, naturally subsumes qualities such as innateness, balance, lenience, moderateness, comprehensiveness, and universality. From these stems the Islamic plan to regulate the relationship between theory and practice among the individuals of the Ummah. Though the theoretical aspects of the Islamic schools of thought do not fit in well with the ideal of unity—except in cases where reference is made to the general framework of the *fiṭrah* (primordial human nature), its definite principles, and its indisputable requisites and consequences—the practical position of the Ummah with regards to its main challenges and predicaments can brook no division, discord, disagreement, or weakness.

On this account, Islamic planning for true, practical unity has been proposed as a factor in the realization of the following principal elements:

1. Doctrinal consensus on basic overarching principles;
2. Substantial agreement on Qur'anic and prophetic injunctions between all individuals of the Ummah in a manner completely free of bias;
3. Agreement regarding common Muslim responsibilities as well as the Ummah's general administrative structure;
4. Uniformisation of critical laws and regulations in addition to comprehensive planning to demonstrate the Ummah's unity in not only its orientation and religious bent but also by virtue of its coordination and solidarity in social, economic, legal, and other matters;
5. Emotional communion in regards to moral human behaviour entailing mutual cordiality, purge of rancour, and development of mutual trust and commitment to mutual rights which would ultimately lead to the prevalence of brotherhood and sisterhood in faith as well as the cooperation, self-sacrifice, and devotion necessitated by such fellowship;
6. Awareness of the opportunistic enemies lying in wait to unscrupulously expunge the Ummah's identity and obviate its very existence. It must be impressed upon all Muslims that this enemy has set aside all its internal differences, uniting against the Ummah in order to overcome and destroy it. Unless the Ummah takes necessary measures, it shall be faced with major sedition and corruption.

Islam does not consider differences of opinion to be a problem or setback; rather, it sees them as a natural state such that the Holy Qur'an even speaks of differences among prophets (*'a*):

RELIGIOUS VARIETY

وَدَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ إِذْ يَحْكُمَانِ فِي الْحَرْثِ إِذْ نَفَشَتْ فِيهِ غَنَمُ  
الْقَوْمِ وَكُنَّا لِحُكْمِهِمْ شَاهِدِينَ فَفَهَّمْنَاهَا سُلَيْمَانَ وَكُلًّا  
ءَاتَيْنَا حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا

And [remember] David and Solomon when they gave judgement concerning the tillage when the sheep of some people strayed into it by night, and We were witness to their judgement. We gave its understanding to Solomon, and to each We gave judgement and knowledge... (21:78-79)

The process of the acquisition of greater knowledge and a higher understanding itself may give rise to such differences, just as in the story of Moses ('a) and the pious servant of God.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, the acceptability of differences of opinion is bound by certain restrictions and guidelines, some of which are noted as follows:

- a) They must not compromise the unquestionable principles of human nature or definite Islamic fundamentals the doubting of which results in doubting the verity of Islam itself. In essence, such doubt signifies egress from the sphere of Islam's influence.
- b) They must be based upon reasonable arguments and rationales. Unreasoned and irrational statements must be avoided. Unfortunately, nowadays we are witness to an abundance of inferences and readings that interpret the religion in accordance with personal desires, interests, and tastes. These are interpretations that misuse the religion.
- c) Dialogues must be held in a peaceful manner and must incorporate a logical atmosphere free of any kind of intimidation or deception. The parties involved must be competent and enter into debate with sufficient knowledge of the subject matter. Discussions must proceed with mutual respect and in the most fitting manner possible.
- d) Before all else, every endeavour must be made to discover areas of common ground, to expand on them, and to work together towards their fulfilment. In areas of difference, the parties of the dialogue must absolve one another.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on this story, refer to the Qur'an 18:65-82.

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Accordingly, the following must be avoided:

- a) Discussion with persons who lack necessary competence;
- b) Deceit, demagoguery, and pointless arguments;
- c) Intimidation, political intrigue, incrimination, insult, and accusation of heresy or apostasy;
- d) Allowing disputes to escalate into physical strife;
- e) Attributing to another party something not claimed by them and also reproaching others when they do not hold to the consequences of their claims;
- f) Entering into futile lines of enquiry that are irrelevant to practical and tangible realities.

It must be noted that these items may be extended beyond the scope of Islam to encompass other religions and even other cultures and civilisations.

## DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES

When we adopt the foregoing perspective regarding doctrinal differences between the various Islamic schools, the existence of difference is discerned to be a completely natural phenomenon. Many researchers have comprehensively dealt with this issue in elaborate scholarly treaties; by way of example, various scholars have expatiated on the necessity of *ijtihād* (literally endeavour, but specifically signifying jurisprudential interpretation by means of the Qur'an and hadith), a concept that has continually found deeper roots as the result of the following items:

1. The main source of *ijtihād* is the Qur'an and the traditions of the noble Prophet (ﷺ). It is evident that the *sharī'ah*<sup>2</sup> and, in general, all Islamic beliefs have not been presented in the form of universally understandable statements and formulas; rather, the totality of the corpora pertaining to the *sharī'ah* has been presented in such a manner that exhaustive and fundamental collation and inference is called for, necessitating a comprehensive body of preliminary knowledge and extensive scholarly investigation.
2. The more we are distanced from the historic periods in which these texts were originated, the more we have need for such endeavours, i.e. *ijtihād*, not only in magnitude but also in variety.

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<sup>2</sup> According to Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *sharī'ah* is the incontrovertible canonical law of Islam as opposed to provisional laws formulated due to temporal or spatial expedience. Also, in a broader manner, it is the Qur'an and hadith, i.e. the Islamic source texts, as pertaining to the realm of jurisprudence. [tr.]

## RELIGIOUS VARIETY

The reasons for this are that a great deal of hadiths, not to mention the contexts, cotexts, and related texts that must be considered with them in tandem, have been lost; the circumstances surrounding the presentation of various Islamic texts (both the Qur'an and hadith) have been forgotten; changes have been introduced in the manner of their expression; mistakes and blunders may have been made; and finally, the detrimental role of maleficent individuals must also be considered.

3. Significant changes in lifestyle, complexities in desiderata, varieties of bonds and relations, and modern issues which are not explicitly dealt with in religious texts all necessitate that corresponding rules be derived from general laws, subordinate principles, or practical truths—all of which are subsumed within *ijtihād* and serve the function of resolving doubt and irresolution.
4. Humanity is in need of specialists that specifically enquire into various branches of Islamic studies and guide the process of coordinating Islam and its rulings with the various aspects of life by integrating the doctrinal, emotional, and behavioural positions of Islam into an integrated whole. This is a sine qua non for conclusive arbitration in matters of controversy which are requisite for total effectuation of Islamic decrees. Thus, the issue of *ijtihād* was introduced and emphasized by the *ulamā'* (i.e. Islamic scholars) while, on the other hand, the opponents of Islam, who fully understand the role of *ijtihād* in the flexibility of Islam and the preservation of the Ummah have mounted a crusade against *ijtihād* under the pretext of denying the *ulamā'* domination over society.

## HARM OF SUBJECTIVITY IN IJTIHĀD AND TECHNIQUES OF CAUTION

Naturally, *ijtihād* can also involve harm brought about by the subjectivity of the *mujtahid* (i.e. Islamic jurispudent). This subjectivity is inherent in the process of *ijtihād* as a result of the *mujtahid's* background, perspectives, predilections, and beliefs. Thus, the procedures (and hence the results) can differ for any two individuals that perform *ijtihād* on a particular topic using the same text. In other words, despite the fact that all the texts represent a singular truth and unique decree in accordance to Divine Knowledge, subjectivity affects the process and results of *ijtihād*. Even so, it is incumbent upon each *mujtahid* and their respective followers to act in accordance with the results of the jurist's *ijtihād*.

It is for this reason that in Islamic thought the results of this process cannot be considered actual Islam in an absolute sense, so as to deny the possibility of having any further say in the matter. However, under no circumstances does this issue pertain to cases where the text possesses conclusive credentials and indisputable signification since in these cases no *ijtihād* occurs. *Ijtihād* is only germane to instances of doubt where the matter in question deviates from the path of certainty.

The damage of subjectivity escalates when the procedure of *ijtihād* goes beyond personal decrees and enters into the area of general Islamic beliefs and doctrine. Shahīd Muḥammad Bāqir Ṣadr (r) considered this phenomenon to stem from several pitfalls the most important of which are:

1. Uninformed interpretation of existing circumstances and prevailing truths by the *mujtahid*;
2. Confining the text to a particular framework;
3. Abstraction of canonical rationales from their conditions and contexts;
4. Prejudgement about the text (Ṣadr, 1990:382).

The point on which doubters of Islamic thought and gainsayers of *ijtihād* support their refutations and on which they advocate its abolishment from human life is that it delves into the domain of the profane and fallible. As has been previously indicated, some sacred areas of Islamic study are immune to the contravention of transgressors and those with inimical intentions. Moreover, in areas of doubt there are cases where incontrovertible rationales—such as *ḥujjiyat-e zuhūr*<sup>3</sup> (effectivity of the manifest)—lead the way to truth. On the whole, vast expanses of Islamic study are thus made secure against encroachment from all possible angles. This can be seen in the fact that in many cases of doubt—in view of the ineluctable nature of the exercise of *ijtihād* as a natural system for interpreting law or religious texts—the *ulamā'* pursue the method of caution so as to mitigate as much as possible any harm that might be caused by their subjectivity.

As a result, the science of *Uṣūl-e Fiqh* (jurisprudential fundamentals) has been developed comprising meticulously detailed instructions and parameters. This science systematises the *ijtihād* procedure using the following mechanisms:

- a. Discourses on conclusive rationales in matters of *sharī'ah*. These include verbal rationale such as comprehensive discourses on origin, verbal expression, signification, *ḥujjiyat-e zuhūr*, and the real-

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<sup>3</sup> *Ḥujjiyat-e zuhūr* is a jurisprudential principle denoting that the apparent meaning of a religious statement is religiously effective and binding. For example, since the Qur'an states, "...and perform *ṣalāt*..." (29:45) carrying out *ṣalāt* (i.e. ritual prayer) is obligatory. [tr.]



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world instances of each, as well as logical rationale such as the relations between decrees, the relations between decrees and their real-world instances, and the preludes and results of each.

- b. Canonical principles with the purpose of solving problems in cases where there are no conclusive rationales including “Sufficiency of Cursory Knowledge” or “*Istiṣhāb*”<sup>4</sup>.
- c. Comprehensive discourses regarding contradictions among rationales.

After discourses in jurisprudential fundamentals, diverse highly methodical juristic discourses are considered. Because of their potential effect on the process of inferring religious commandments, some of the *ulamā'* fittingly appended the necessity to consider goals defined by the *shari'ah* to the aforementioned items. Equally, a series of general, incontrovertible Islamic principles such as realism, innateness, balance, comprehensiveness, eternality, finality, moderateness, coherence of decrees as a whole, and universality may also be included among these items.

## EMERGENCE OF DIVERGENT ISLAMIC SCHOOLS

It is self-evident that at the time of the holy Prophet (ṣ), since he directly received the religious concepts and commandments from God, there was little need for *ijtihād*, though some of the *Sahābah* (Companions of the Prophet (ṣ)) advanced various *ijtihāds* which the Prophet (ṣ) corroborated.<sup>5</sup>

In that period, differences were simple. However, after expansion of the Islamic territory, the Verse of *Nafr* (emigration; cited bellow) was revealed which formulated the basis of *ijtihād* and the credibility of *khabar-e wāḥid* (i.e. singular narrations). God Almighty declares:

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<sup>4</sup> *Istiṣhāb* is a rule denoting a previous state's continued efficacy in the absence of a negating reason. For instance, if this rule is accepted, it follows that one that has made *wuḍū* and cannot remember performing any act that invalidates it retains the state of *wuḍū*. [tr.]

<sup>5</sup> For instance, in the hadith of Ma'ādh it is narrated that before sending Ma'ādh to Yemen the holy Prophet (ṣ) asked him, “If you do not find an issue in the Book of God and the Traditions of the Prophet, how will you make ruling?” Ma'ādh answered, “I will state my own *ijtihād* and shall withhold nothing.” However, some of the *ulamā'* have differing interpretations regarding this (See: *Uṣūl ul-Muḏaffar*, vol. 3, pp. 195-196).

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَافَّةً فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ  
 مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ  
 لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ

Yet it is not for the faithful to go forth en masse. But why should not there go forth a group from each of their sections to become learned in religion, and to warn their people when they return to them, so that they may beware? (9:122)

It was, however, natural for the trend of *ijtibād* to increase after the passing of the holy Prophet (ﷺ). In the era of the *Tābi‘īn*<sup>6</sup> this trend escalated to such heights that various Islamic schools with distinctive characteristics emerged.

Sāis (n.d.:94) ventured the opinion that in the period from the start of the second century to the middle of the fourth century of the Hijra (lunar reckoning) the world of Islam was witness to 134 jurisprudential schools such that many cities possessed their own distinct school. Asad Ḥaydar (1990:160), however, considered the number of these schools to have been in excess of fifty.

In the opinion of some of the *ulamā’*, the schools that were introduced after the *Tābi‘īn* stage were individual ‘schools’ that had no following among the master’s disciples and thus were lost with the death of the master. Other schools had many adherents and gradually developed after their views were compiled into comprehensive anthologies (Subḥānī, 1997:58).

The following are some of the schools that have not survived the ravages of time: the Ḥasan Baṣarī School (AD 643-728 [23-110 AH]), the Ibn Abī Laylī School (AD 693-765 [74-148 AH]), the Ūzā‘ī School (AD 706-774 [88-158 AH]), the Sufiyān Thūrī School (AD 715-777 [97-161 AH]), the Layth ibn Sa‘d School (deceased AD 794 [178 AH]), the Ibrāhīm ibn Khālīd Kalbī School (deceased AD 854 [240 AH]), the ibn Ḥazm Dāwūd ibn ‘Alī Iṣbahānī Zāhirī School (AD 817-883 [202-270 AH]), the Muḥammad ibn Jurayr Ṭabarī School (AD 838-922 [224-310 AH]), the Sulaymān ibn Mihrān A‘mash School (deceased AD 765 [148 AH]), and the ‘Āmir ibn Sharaḥbīl Sha‘bī School (deceased AD 723 [105 AH]).

<sup>6</sup> The *Tābi‘īn* were those who did not meet face to face with the Prophet (ﷺ) himself but rather with his *Saḥābah* and cited narrations through them. [tr.]

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The schools that have withstood the scrutiny of time and still endure are as follows: the Ithnā ‘Ashar Imāmī (Twelve Imam) School which was developed and promoted by Imām Muḥammad Bāqir (‘a) and Imām Ja‘far Ṣādiq (‘a); the Zaydī School; the Hanafī School, the Shāfi‘ī School, the Mālikī School, the Ḥanbalī School, and the Ibādī School.

This paper does not aim at discussing the grounds for the emergence, development, or disappearance of these schools as these have been discussed by other scholars dealing with the causes for differences among schools. Regarding such causes, in the introduction to his book, *Bidāyat ul-Mujtahid wa Nihāyat ul-Muqtaṣid*, Ibn Rushd (1991) adverted to several points in reviewing the premises of *ḥujjiyat-e zuhūr* and *ḥujjiyat-e qiyās*<sup>7</sup> (effectivity of analogy). Additionally, Ḥakīm (1979:18-19) discussed the differences in the fundamentals of inference. Finally, differences between methods and stages of reasoning may also be considered a factor for such differences among schools.

In addition to the preceding objective factors, individual features such as erudition (e.g. level of knowledge) and mental features (e.g. analytic aptitude) may be considered effective in this regard, as well as the role of political, historical, expediential, and social factors.

To return to the crux of the matter, issues which hold prime importance in this paper consist of the following:

First, the emergence of various schools indicates the evolution of Islamic erudition in reaction to three broad circumstances: the absence of the holy Prophet (ṣ) and the Ummah’s severance from divine revelation; the broadening of needs, the plethora of events, and the complexity of societies; and also the accumulation of juristic knowledge and the introduction of new Islamic disciplines. Thus, the origination of diverse schools was a natural and proper occurrence—a result of civilisational influences.

Second, these schools compose a treasury of precious intellectual wealth for the Islamic civilisation. Their existence enables the Islamic leadership and Muslim individuals alike to make better choices in the practical assimilation of the *sharī‘ah* into individual (especially where following the most learned *mujtahid* has not been specified as a requirement) and societal life. This rises from the fact that opinions and views that originate from Islamic

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<sup>7</sup> *Ḥujjiyat-e qiyās* is a principle denoting that decrees can be made on the basis of the resemblance of an issue that has not been explicated in the *sharī‘ah* to an issue pertaining to an existing religious text. By way of illustration, solely taking this principle into consideration and no other, *if* a hadith from the Prophet (ṣ) exists stating that wine is *najis* (i.e. unclean) because it causes intoxication, anything that causes intoxication would be considered *najis*. [tr.]

processes such as *ijtihād* may be attributed to Islam and considered Islamic. In this way, vast expanses open up, empowering the religious authority to select the best option among many to achieve the interests of the Ummah (even if this religious authority does not personally agree with any given *ijtihād*). The religious authority may amalgamate various perspectives and opinions to attain a superior social theory or school. This is a particularly tangible sign of the flexibility of Islam.

Third, as previously pointed out, these schools result in the productivity of Islamic life. Although due to aforesaid reasons the formation of these schools could be predicted, what transformed this positive and constructive phenomenon into a negative one in the process of Islamic development is what can be called sectarian detriment. Sectarianism diverges from the dialogical path enjoined by the Holy Qur'an, disregards the lenience and moderateness of Islam, and descends to unproductive and reprehensible moral altercation. To paraphrase Shaykh Yūsuf Qarḍāwī (n.d.:210), we are witness to horrible times and un-Islamic methods of imputing others with disbelief, iniquity, and heresy, which on their own have lead to numerous confrontations, produced streams of blood and tears, and divided the Ummah, distancing it from its proper civilized stature.<sup>8</sup>

Consequently, we urgently entreat that religious schools return to their natural state by developing the spirit of constructive Islamic dialogue, shared empathy, and discovery of common grounds; that is, what we view as the "Movement for Proximity of Islamic Schools".

### THE MOVEMENT FOR PROXIMITY OF ISLAMIC SCHOOLS

That which in recent decades has come to be named the Movement for Proximity of Islamic Schools obtains its roots from the most ancient of Islamic periods. To explain, this movement has derived its very authenticity and versatility from the lofty principles of the Islamic *shari'ah* to say nothing of the fact that, with the expansion of the Ummah's responsibilities, its necessity has become manifest in the shaping of, or at the very least in the active participation in, the Islamic civilisation.

In recent times, this movement has been successful in becoming an active Islamic approach. The *ulamā'* and Islamic personages laid the foundations of this grand movement at the close of the 1940s. They made great efforts to delineate its principles, prompting them to write many articles with the aim of justifying and consolidating the movement and establish-

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<sup>8</sup> See also Anṣārī (n.d.), p. 155 onward.

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ing its authenticity, its religious origins, and its ever-increasing necessity in the Islamic society.

Now, we are proudly witness to the flourishing of this seed and its subsequent growth into a great tree of purity which in the locution of the Qur'an enjoys firm roots, possesses branches reaching up into the sky, and continually gives forth prolific fruits.

### COMMON FUNDAMENTALS

It is our belief that if the fundamentals that all Islamic schools commonly agree on are considered, general advocacy of the concept of proximity will logically ensue. These fundamentals are as follows:

**First** is belief in the basic tenets of faith; namely, divine unity (in the essence, attributes, actions, and worship of God), the prophethood of Muḥammad (s), the Holy Qur'an, and the Resurrection.

**Second**, total adherence to the fact that the Holy Qur'an and the noble Sunnah or Tradition of the Prophet (s) are the main sources of understanding the views of Islam in all things and affairs including existence in its entirety, life, and the past, present, and future of humans in both worlds as well as the commandments of the *shari'ah* that organize human life and personal and social behaviour. Other principles and sources such as reason, syllogism, and consensus are only credible if they are supported on or derived from one of these main sources.

All of the personages of the Islamic schools plainly acknowledge the fact that they present their views by means of these two sources.

In this regard, many narrations from the Imams ('a) have been documented. For instance, it is cited that Imam Ṣādiq ('a) stated:

Everything returns (or refers) to the Book and Tradition (Ḥurr 'Āmulī, 1412a:111).

Mālik ibn Anas has stated:

I am a child of Adam who might be either right or wrong; thus, col-  
late my statements with the Book and Tradition (Ibn Ālūsī, 1401:199).

Shāfi'ī also has made statements with the same purport.

**Third** is the acceptance that Islam has endorsed *ijtihād* as an augments of the scope of canonical inference since it functions as a tool for understanding Islam and emphasizes the flexibility of the *shari'ah* and its capacity for alignment with critical developments under specific criteria and guidelines. This reading of *ijtihād* necessarily signifies the potential for forging a bond between the manifold products of *ijtihād* as well as Islam as

a whole—in cases of dissimilarity or even contradiction of various *ijtihāds*, which stem from differences in insight, understanding, beliefs, and perspectives. Such differences are called *asbāb al-khilāf* in the Islamic sciences.

Aside from the fact that it is a realistic and natural religion, another reason that Islam endorses *ijtihād* is that after so many centuries from its emergence, lacking support from divine revelation and the Infallibles, in order to become well versed in the *sharī'ah* there is no other way but that of *ijtihād*—even though it is susceptible to harm caused by subjectivity and involves divergent or even contradictory opinions, many of which may be incongruous with the true aims of Islam in the form intended in the Divine Knowledge.

As can be seen, this logical method (i.e. *ijtihād*) has the ability to make inferences in all areas including beliefs, concepts, decrees, and even the position of Islam in regard to natural laws.

**Fourth**, the principle of Islamic unity is one of the characteristic features of the Islamic Ummah, without which it can have no justifiable claim to perfection. Islam has presented a comprehensive plan for the realization of unity which is accomplished by seizing the 'Secure Cable of God' (which consists of the immutable ties that link humans to God) and emphasis on unity of origin, creation, *sharī'ah*, means, and destination. Islam enjoins the Ummah to collectively enter the province of total surrender to God and refutation of the actions of Satan. It points out the effects of unity and spreads the seeds of morality, self-sacrifice, and relinquishment of narrow-sighted interests in favour of the greater goal. Setting aside all separatist pretexts such as language, nationality, clan, tribe, colour, and ethnicity, Islam has highlighted, among other things, humane criteria such as knowledge, *taqwā* (God-consciousness), and the perennial struggle or *jihād* against evil as well as the necessity to seek common grounds, employ logic and good sense, and engage in calm, cogent dialogues.

Belief in this principle, which is considered one of the chief fundamentals of the Proximity Movement, encompasses requisites that will be discussed in later paragraphs.

The **fifth** and last but not least of these fundamentals is Islamic brotherhood. Though this is embodied within the previous fundamental, it is emphasised here independently since it is considered the most important component and regulator of all social relations in Islam. In our opinion, its effects not only cover morality but aspects of the *sharī'ah* as well. In addition, it has a primary influence on the process of *ijtihād* itself—in the event that no decrees emerge to repudiate it.

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This fivefold backbone consists of the central fundamentals on which the Proximity Movement is based such that their acceptance or acknowledgement shall logically and automatically entail belief in this movement.

For this reason, we believe that proximity is not restricted to dialogic or moral aspects just as it is not limited to particulars of the *sharī'ah*; rather, it also embodies various intellectual and civilisational aspects. It is appropriate that all of the jurisprudential and intellectual elite take part in this movement. More importantly, these elite must go among the Muslim masses to familiarize them with the culture of proximity and Muslim unity. This is necessary because, though Islam endorses natural and non-detrimental intellectual differences, under no circumstances does it permit even the slightest disagreement in its theoretical position regarding critical internal and external matters of Islam and the Ummah. Hence, Islam considers standing in opposition to the religious authority (an individual who, as a rule, must integrate the functional positions of the Ummah into a united whole) tantamount to standing in opposition to God, considering that the Qur'an has beforehand proclaimed compliance with the religious authority to be commensurate with obeying God and His Messenger.

### VALUE SYSTEM OF PROXIMITISTS

On the basis of the above fundamentals and also the assertions of the *ulamā'* and exponents of proximity, we invite the people to hold to the following values, which we regard as the central policies to be pursued by proximitists in attaining the specified goals:

#### I. COOPERATION IN MATTERS OF AGREEMENT:

There are many issues in which there is common agreement among the schools. The Islamic schools of thought possess extensive common grounds in the domains of both doctrine and *sharī'ah* (which according to some *ulamā'* comprise up to 90% of all the general subject matter of Islam). In the domain of ethics, there is almost total consensus. Moreover, there is close correspondence in the areas of Islamic concepts, customs, and even in matters of Islamic history and its civilisation—excepting differences of opinion in the assessment of some specific cases. Finally, all Islamic schools of thought have consensus regarding the necessity for unity through common social alignment and societal solidarity.

Doubtless, cooperation on common intellectual ground is tantamount to cooperating to foster a common ground within the minds of the people, avoiding matters that may weaken it, and reinforcing a common ground in

the process of the Islamic society's development. The necessity for cooperation in areas of individual, social, and civilisational behaviour is also beyond doubt and covers critical lines such as implementation of the Islamic *sharī'ah*; veneration of Islamic sanctities including the ceremonies of *hajj* and Friday prayer; and realization of the true features of an Islamic Ummah, namely unity.

The proximity movement must do its utmost to discover common ground, raise public awareness, and extend the scope of common areas.

## 2. EXCULPATION OF ONE ANOTHER IN MATTERS OF DISPUTE:

If we believe that *ijtihād* is a correct and natural method that cannot be invalidated by any single decision, since the procedure of *ijtihād* inherently subsumes differences of opinion, we have perforce accepted dissimilarity of opinions and *fatwās*. It must be noted that in Islam, difference of opinion has not been prohibited. What has in fact been prohibited and regarded as improper is debilitating infighting and strife as well as religious dispersion and sectarianism. This is a clear indicator of the rationality of Islam and its acceptance of logic.

Consequently, every Muslim individual, whether Islamic scholar, *mujtahid*, or *muqalid* (i.e. follower of a *mujtahid*), must be able to tolerate opposing opinions and refrain from intimidating, threatening, or insulting those with different views.

Many hadith enjoin the *mu'minīn* (i.e. the Faithful) to patience, moderateness, and open-mindedness which may be considered directly pertinent to the current state of affairs.

By way of example, after a certain group was mentioned in the presence of Imam Ṣādiq ('a) the narrator of the hadith stated to the Imam, "We exonerate ourselves from them since what we say, they do not." The Imam said, "They have accepted our *wilāyah* (leadership) but they do not say what you say and for this reason you exonerate yourselves from them?" The narrator answered, "Yes." The Imam declared, "This is something that we have but you do not. Thus, it is fitting that we exonerate ourselves from you. [...] So, you also must extend the hand of friendship to them and withhold exoneration. Many are the Muslims that hold one share and others that hold two. It is not fitting that the Muslim with one share imposes anything on the owner of two shares..." (Ḥurr 'Āmulī, 1412b:160-161).

The attitudes of the personages of various schools toward each other are interesting examples of this truth. These personages never denied anyone leave to perform *ijtihād* nor considered it *harām* (i.e. forbidden) for some-



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one who had reasons contradicting their own *ijtihāds* to follow other jurisprudential interpretations. The following are some examples:

It has been narrated from Imām Mālik ibn Anas that:

I am a child of Adam who might be either right or wrong; thus, collate my statements with the Book and Tradition (Ibn Ālūsī, 1401:199).

Imām Shāfi‘ī has said:

If there is a correct hadith in opposition to my statements, put aside my statements (ibid).

Abū Ḥanīfah has declared:

This is my opinion and I think it is the best but if someone has a different opinion I accept that and for someone that does not know my reasons, citing *fatwās* from me is *harām* (ibid).

Imām Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal had stated:

It is due to the scarcity of people’s knowledge that they follow others (ibid).

This concept is exactly what the great scholars who came later underscored.

### 3. REFRAINING FROM ACCUSATIONS OF UNBELIEF, INIQUITY, AND HERESY:

We consider *takfīr* (i.e. to regard others as unbelievers or accuse them of unbelief) to be among the tragedies of our history. Despite the existence of lofty texts that not only present a definite description of what a Muslim is but also proscribe the *takfīr* of Muslims,<sup>9</sup> we are nonetheless witness to this affliction and its consequences, namely intellectual stagnation along with prevention of creativity and self-assertion. Incredibly, this goes so far that some authors consider opposition to even one word of their books to entail unbelief!<sup>10</sup>

Hence, we believe that the equation of “faith or unbelief” must be substituted with one of “correctness or mistakenness”. For this we must seek support in the Qur’an which, even in dialogues with true unbelievers, advises the holy Prophet (ﷺ) to observe reason and say:

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<sup>9</sup> For more information refer to *Jāmi‘ ul-Uṣūl* by Ibn Athīr Jazrī, part one, pp. 245-250, 259, and 261; see also the hadiths of the book, *Al-Imān*.

<sup>10</sup> There is so much evidence to this fact that we will forgo citing them.

وَإِنَّا أَوْ إِيَّاكُمْ لَعَلَىٰ هُدًى أَوْ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

Indeed either we or you are rightly guided or in manifest error  
(34:24).

#### 4. REFRAINING FROM ANIMADVERSION AGAINST THE CONSEQUENCES OF AN OPINION:

It is completely logical for people to be evaluated, criticised, and controverted due to their opinions. However, we have also become accustomed to sparking off disputes regarding the consequences of an opinion. In such disputes matters of unbelief and heresy are raised concerning the consequences of the opinion in question, whereas the advocate of the opinion may not hold to such consequences.

For example, some advocates of intellectual *taḥsīn* (inclination) and *taqbiḥ* (aversion) accuse their opposition of disbelieving in the honourableness and truthfulness of the Prophet (ﷺ) on the basis that what negates the mendacity of a prophet working miracles is solely that humans are intellectually (as opposed to emotionally) averse to the concept of a liar performing miracles. On this basis they conclude that by refuting the existence of intellectual aversion we are in fact refuting the very belief in prophethood. They hold to the same belief regarding compliance with the will of Almighty God, whereas that which compels us to obey God is reason to the exclusion of all else.

Also, others consider those who support *tawassul* (seeking help), *shafā'ah* (absolution from sin), or making oaths in any name but God's as polytheists.

Calm, scientific dialogues are what we seek. We do not endorse discontinuation of *kalām* discourses. Logic necessitates such debates and discourses. That which we champion is logical debate and forgoing attribution of issues to opposing parties that do not acquiesce the imputed views. In this way we may obstruct the path to many detrimental and divisionary accusations.

#### 5. ADOPTING RESPECTFUL ATTITUDES IN DIALOGUES:

Dialogue is the logical, correct, and humane method of transferring ideas. The Holy Qur'an advances fascinating, transcendent views regarding the preliminaries, conditions, aims, and style of dialogues. Among these is

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listening to the views of others and following the best among them and also refraining from accusation and calumny. The following holy verse deals with the orientation of the Prophet's (ﷺ) discussions with non-Muslims warning him away from inciting prior resentments and allowing two-sided accusations, and inspiring him to observe logicality in discussions:

قُلْ لَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا أَجْرَمْنَا وَلَا نُسْأَلُ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

Say, 'You will not be questioned about our guilt, nor shall we be questioned about what you do' (34:25).

In this verse, the method of expression has been meticulously chosen such that, with respect to the other party, it does not say, "...nor shall we be questioned about your *guilt*" though the style of the sentence would seem to possess more coherence if stated in this manner.

### 6. AVOIDING DISRESPECT TO THE SANCTITIES OF OTHERS:

Though this item is subordinate to the previous principle, its mention may be even more important since such disrespect creates a negative emotional atmosphere and disrupts the proper equilibrium in dialogues. In repudiation of such disrespect the Qur'an states:

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ  
عِلْمٍ كَذَلِكَ زَيْنًا لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ عَمَلُهُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ  
بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

Do not abuse those whom they invoke besides Allah, lest they should abuse Allah out of hostility, without any knowledge. That is how to every people We have made their conduct seem decorous. Then their return will be to their Lord and He will inform them concerning what they used to do (6:108).

Along with explaining the instructive responsibilities of the Faithful and that they should not impose their views on others—even polytheists—God Almighty invites them to conduct themselves with a humane spirit:

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وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكُوا<sup>ط</sup> وَمَا جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا<sup>ط</sup> وَمَا أَنْتَ

عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ

Had Allah wished they would not have ascribed partners [to Him].  
We have not made you a caretaker for them, nor is it your duty to  
watch over them (6:107).

There are many Islamic hadiths and narrations that proscribe cursing and using profane language. When such instructions are given in regard to confronting polytheists, it is of even greater import to observe this principle in socialising with Muslims who are brothers to one another, who all have the same goals, and whose pains, adversities, hopes, and desires are the pains, adversities, hopes, and desires of each and every Muslim. In this situation, no offence can be justified especially in cases where the other party truly believes their opinions to be sacred.

#### 7. FREEDOM IN CHOOSING ONE'S SCHOOL OF THOUGHT:

When we accept the existence of the various Islamic schools to be a result of the variety of *ijtihad* endorsed by Islam, we must consider each to be a different path in attaining the satisfaction of Almighty God. When there is difference among schools, it is natural for Muslim individuals to research them until satisfied that they have performed their duty before God and choose in accordance with the criteria in which they believe. Naturally, no one may reproach others for their choices, though such choices may not be to their liking. It is also wrong to force someone to choose a specific school since selection of a school of thought is intertwined with matters of faith and cannot occur but through one's own reason and judgement.

Each school has the right to explain and advocate its views without encroaching on the rights of others or resorting to accusation, calumny, or demagoguery. We do not seek to debar sound, rational debates on matters of belief, jurisprudence, or history. However, wrongful exploitation, debilitation, futile quarrelling, or imposition of views can never be accepted.

We believe that the violations committed throughout the vicissitudes of our history have risen from noncompliance with the rules and principles of proper dialogue and neglect of the truth that all schools of thought serve to exalt the word of Islam and, needless to say, act in accordance with their own conception of this word.

## FUNCTIONS OF THE ULAMĀ' AND INTELLECTUALS IN PROXIMITY

There is no doubt that the main load of the Proximity Movement is borne by the *ulamā'* and Islamic intellectuals since they are heirs to the prophets—and thus inviters to the divine message and builders of future generations—besides being the most familiar with the principle foundations of proximity and the most effective in unifying Muslims as well as actualizing the characteristic features of a true Islamic Ummah.

Along these lines, the following twelve functions are concisely proposed:

First, strengthening the notion of moderation in interpreting the *sharī'ah*.

Second, ingraining the Islamic method of dialogue among Muslims.

Third, restoring an active role to the science of *Uṣūl-e Fiqh* in the inference of canonical laws.

Fourth, taking into consideration the aims of the *sharī'ah* and the characteristic features of Islam in the course of this movement and during the implementation of Islamic *fiqh* (i.e. jurisprudence) into practical laws and regulations.

Fifth, endeavouring to revive the discipline of Comparative Jurisprudence.

Sixth, paying assiduous attention to centres of collective *ijtihād* such as the Islamic Jurisprudence Forum (*Majma'-e Fiqh-e Islāmī*).

Seventh, devoting attention to Theoretical Jurisprudence (*Fiqh-e Nazariāt*) which discovers various elements of Islam in the diverse areas of human life including society, economy, and law. This discipline differs to some extent with jurisprudential inference. Theoretical Jurisprudence brings to light the differences between Islamic views and the views of profane schools. In addition, it offers diverse practical solutions to the Islamic administration so that the authority may choose the best among several solutions.

Eighth, striving to systematise referral to religious experts and eliminate eclecticism (*iltiqāt*), liberal interpretations, new [heterodoxical] interpretations, etc.

Ninth, contemplating the fundamentals and values of the Proximity Movement; reflecting them in research, reviews, debates, and writings; considering them in intellectual and jurisprudential inferences as important guidelines and expediencies unexpressed in the *sharī'ah* which are preferred

over less important decrees as per the rule of *tazāḥum*<sup>11</sup> (contrariety) in *Uṣūl-e Fiqh*.

From this stems our support for Jurisprudential Proximity and our emphasis on the closeness of jurisprudential schools to one another in some international conferences. In explanation, after more careful consideration of some juristic disputes it is commonly observed that dissimilarities are mostly linguistic in nature, stemming from difference of perspectives or definitions.

This is also the case in many discussions of principles including *qiyās* (analogy), *istiḥsān*,<sup>12</sup> and *sadd-e dharāyi*' (obstruction of means). Such tendencies exist in some books dealing in principles such as the *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* of Muḥaffar and also Sayyid Muḥammad Taqī Ḥakīm's book of jurisprudence.

It must be noted that there are many books suffused with divisionary incitations which magnify differences and contort them into abominable untruths. They insinuate for the reader the impossibility of attaining any kind of common ground and represent matters such that it would seem differences dominate all areas and that no proximity of views and perspectives is viable. These writings disregard the truth and turn a blind eye to the unicity of sources, methods, criteria, and aims.

Tenth, cooperating in enlightenment of the Ummah and transfer of the proximity culture to the masses such that they feel deep camaraderie, seek to cooperate despite their religious differences, prepare themselves for proximitist activities, and become receptive to the multiplicity of religious voices. This is because differences in inference of canonical decrees and assessment of historical situations, not to mention behavioural differences, are all tolerable and justifiable as long as they remain within the general framework of Islam and stem from differences of *ijtihād*. However, if a practice is considered to be beyond the framework of Islam by all *mujtabids* measures must be taken to disprove it in the best possible manner.

Eleventh, collaboratively and unremittingly endeavouring to implement the mentioned unitary attitudes in all critical areas including implementation of the Islamic *sharī'ah*; realization of a religious republican system; confronting the enemies of Islam and challenging their plans to harm the

<sup>11</sup> According to the rule of *tazāḥum* in an instance of contrariety of two decrees, the most important one must be implemented. [tr.]

<sup>12</sup> According to the *Loghatnameh-ye Dehkhoda* (*The Dictionary of Dehkhoda*), in logic, *istiḥsān* is a type of logical rationale that opposes simple syllogisms and is usually stronger. Also, in jurisprudence, it is abandonment of syllogism in favour of something that is easier for the people to accept. [tr.]

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identity and the very existence of the Islamic Ummah; preservation of the Ummah's unity and avoidance of division; and finally, preference of public interests over personal or sectarian interests.

Twelfth, encouraging the establishment of proximity-oriented organizations such as centres for contrastive proximity research; social clubs common to followers of all schools; proximity-oriented camps; and proximity assemblies in all territories in which Muslims live.

Islamic organizations and governments may also take part in proximity by supporting the movement, holding relevant conferences, organizing various proximity projects and programmes, utilizing committed parties in the media, rejecting divisionary elements and manifestations, and disseminating the culture of religious moderation.

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*The Holy Qurʾan.*



## The Shia Imams and Muslim Unity

‘Alī Aqā-Nūrī

Translated by Hamid Waqar

### Abstract:

This is the first part to a series of articles that will outline the stance of the Shia Imams with respect to Muslim unity. The article begins by defining the meaning of ‘Muslim unity’ and goes on to enumerate the characteristics of such unity, especially as found in the Quran and the Sunnah. It then outlines some practical methods of creating unity and preventing division, by giving examples from the *sīrah* of the Prophet (ﷺ). The next part will continue by touching on the advent of exaggeration (*ghulūw*) and the forging, infiltration, and distortion of traditions. The section will conclude by referencing the main topic of the series by noting that the Ahl al-Bayt stuck firm to the foundations of seeking unity. The common qualities of these spiritual authorities in their theological, political, legal, and social debates was their compassion and moral uprightness, as their goal was always guidance towards the ultimate truth.

**Keywords:** Qur’an, Sunnah, Shia Imams, Muslim unity, Shia schools of thought, Sunni schools of thought, practice of the Ahl al-Bayt, unity.

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### THE MEANING OF ISLAMIC UNITY

In general usage, the terms *waḥdah* and *itihād* mean unity, unison, solidarity, convergence, unanimity, unification, unidirection, community, and agreement about an issue. One of the characteristics of a movement seeking unity is that it works along a single path or in a single direction with the purpose of reaching a single goal. These two terms—i.e., *waḥdah* and *itihād*—in the meanings that have been mentioned are antonyms of terms such as ‘multiplicity’, ‘dispersement’, ‘dispute’, ‘division’, ‘sectarianism’, and ‘divergence’. Therefore, unity is turning division into solidarity; divergence into convergence; dispersement into juncture; various opinions into a single opinion; and the specification of a common and agreed upon goal in order to choose the path leading to it.

One is faced with various paths and possibilities while trying to depict a role model for Islamic unity. The reason for this is that modern scholars, reformists, and followers of the various Islamic sects and theologies have their own particular opinion about this concept. For instance, many scholars today consider Islamic unity on one or more socio-political dimension as a form of union, mutually beneficial. Others give importance to religious commonalities and correcting religious misunderstandings, and this is called 'bringing the schools of thoughts together' (*taqrīb madhāhib*), or in better terms 'bringing together the followers of these schools.' In reality, the type of unity that is true and desired is that which applies to both the socio-political dimension and the ideological-religious one. This is an lasting unity held upon the firm foundations of the proximity of the beliefs of the various schools—it is a foundational proximity between the principles and pillars of the schools and not just a superficial coming together of a few scholars of a few sects.

Some people consider that the path leading to Islamic unity and the proximity of schools can be achieved only by adhering to the Islamic commonalities and expelling sectarian differences and merits. Others speak about a convergence of schools or choosing one of them [as a point of fusion]. Yet others state that the only way to achieve unity is by returning to the age of the righteous companions and their successors (*salaf*) and to relive their lifestyle. Again, there is a group that expresses the view that Islam should do away with all schools of thought and yet another which seeks unity through inviting others to their school.<sup>1</sup>

Each one of these scholars, despite the sympathy that they have for the Islamic community as a whole, relied upon the accepted political and religious views of their own school of thought. It is self-evident that following their opinions is not only impossible but actually leads to even further differences. Every Islamic school of thought is firm upon its beliefs and derivations (*ijtihad*); the same is true for every theological or jurisprudential scholar, and this desire to defend one's school, of course, is quite natural. However, the interference of particular sectarian elements and using them within the discussion of unity will not get us anywhere—it will only lead to an incorrect definition of unity and an improper encouragement towards it.

The desired and effective form of Islamic unity is one that gives importance to the benefits and goals of the proximity of religious beliefs and which stem from people who have many commonalities despite their de-

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to *Nidā-ye Waḥdat*, p. 182.

nominal differences. Muslims, for instance, believe in a single God, recognize the Messenger, and follow a common heavenly scripture called the Qur'ān. Their main goal is success in this world and the next as well as proximity with Allah.

By presenting more suitable and more intellectual methods—which have roots in the path of the Ahl al-Bayt and are founded upon concrete religious sources—the desired unity can be achieved. The characteristics of such a unity include the following:

**First:** The desired Islamic unity affirms that Muslims, despite their various theological, jurisprudential, and political ideologies, are a single Ummah. The foundational elements of this Ummah are the acceptance of common principles such as: the oneness of Allah, prophethood, resurrection, and the belief and commitment to the religious laws and practices which are accepted by all Muslims. With the acceptance of this principle, none of the small differences and various jurisprudential, theological, or historical opinions could harm the oneness of the Ummah.

The deviant groups and innovators, such as the *ghulāt* (extremists) and the *nawāṣib* (enemies of the Ahl al-Bayt)—with precision being taken to the meanings and instances of these two groups—have always been rejected by the Islamic society. They have been considered outside the fold of Islam by the two main sects and are separated from other Muslims. Therefore, Islamic schools of thought are permitted to protect and defend their denominational uniqueness—of course, this is only if it has a legitimate uniqueness that can be defended by firm Qur'ānic beliefs which are part of the definite commonalities and principles of Islamic thought. True seekers of unity must draw a line between the foundational religious elements and denominational qualities, regardless of how defensible they are. The unique jurisprudential and theological particularities of their school of thought, even when they cause perfection, growth, increase of understanding, and proximity to the truth, should not be included in the definite principles of religion. This is especially the case for beliefs that are of less importance, such as the eternity of the Qur'ān or other historical controversies including the issue of predestination, justice, and holiness. Those who focus on these minor issues and reject each other or call each other disbelievers do not seem to consider whether they themselves are being just or holy.

**Second:** Islamic unity dictates that intellectual disputes with other schools of thought must be in accordance with the standards of ethical debate, tolerance, and morals. Each school, while remaining firm to their beliefs, must treat and speak to others courteously. In such a unity, instead of

labelling others as being corrupt, misunderstanding each others' views, insulting one another, and nitpicking minor details, what takes its place is the respect for opinions, the regard for compassion and religion, and the desire for forgiveness of others. There is no place for hurting one's emotions or religious beliefs; there is no place for emotional judgments about other groups; and there is no place for dissolving particular religious schools in an attempt to force their adherents into other ones—all in the name of achieving Islamic unity.

**Third:** The type of unity of Muslims that is correct and which is desired is one based on religious sources and principles. This should be considered a religious duty, stemming from individual desire. A contingent unity—i.e., a temporary one emphasizing the necessities of the time or the existence of a present or potential danger (which could also be called 'tactical unity' or 'political unity')—will only keep the fire alive under the ashes. If individuals of a particular group—who are considered "polytheists", "apostates", "disbelievers", "hell-bound", "more impure (*najis*) than dogs"—are tolerated for a certain time due to some contingent benefit, their acceptance will not be obtained. On the contrary, due to the hypocrisy inherent in this form of unity, the hatred for the other group will be increased. What is necessary is a permanent and strong unity, which is when the scholars of the Islamic schools of thought officially recognize others within the fold of Islam—despite the differences in their levels—as "Muslims", "believers", and "people of salvation." They must not consider that they are the only ones who believe and that their accepted ideologies and versions of history form the yardstick separating faith from disbelief. The resistance and the differences between the schools of Islam have not always been, and are not, equal to the resistance and differences of religion and the code of practice. It is possible to intellectually cooperate with others, to enjoin them to the good, and to forbid them from evil.

**Fourth:** In the Islamic unity that is sought after, the beliefs of a group should not cause one to consider them spurious, undesirable, or unacceptable. Taking this important matter into account, those who believe that they will be able to see Allah on the Day of Judgment do not necessarily belong to the *Mujassamah* (corporealist) or *Mushabbah* (anthropomorphist) sects. Those who believe in the quiddity of the divine essence and divine attributes do not necessarily belong to the *Mu'attilah* sect (those who reject belief in the Names and Attributes of God). Those who deny the essential nature of good and evil do not consider Allah to be an oppressor. Similarly, it is unjust to state that one who answers his internal love for the Prophet's (ﷺ) family by kissing and showing respect towards their holy

shrines or who makes harsh statements about their enemies and stays away from them is a polytheist and permissible to murder.

**Fifth:** True seekers of unity (and not just the superficial ones) have not stopped their efforts due to the harms and difficulties that have and are happening in Islamic society. They do not come to a standstill due to the multiplicity of theological and jurisprudential opinions. Rather, they focus on the types of opinions, confrontations, misunderstandings, and recently, the incitement of religious sensitivities. According to the words of Shahīd Muṭahharī (r), the threat to Muslims that stems from unreasonable misunderstandings on both sides is more than what stems from actual religious differences. The religious differences amongst the Muslims are not ones that prevent unity; they are not ones that prevent brotherhood from forming under the Qur’ānic spirit of “the faithful are indeed brothers.” (49:10) The God that all of them worship is one and they all attest to it: “There is no God save Allah.” They all believe in the prophethood of Muḥammad (s) and that prophethood ended with him. They all believe that his religion is the final religion. They all take the Qur’ān to be their heavenly scripture, recite it, and consider it to be their constitution. They pray in one direction and stand up to the call to prayer (*adhān*). They all fast in one specific month of the year, the month of *Ramaḍān*. They celebrate the days of *Fiṭr* and *Aḍḥa*. They perform the rituals of the *ḥajj* in similar ways and gather together in Allah’s sanctuary. They love and respect the family of the Prophet. This is enough for a connection between their hearts to be made and for the feelings of Islamic brotherhood to stir within them.

So take precaution against misunderstandings. Take precaution against the incorrect perceptions that the various schools have with regard to each other. Take precaution against all factors that only blacken the relationship between Muslims.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, one must refrain from bringing up the bitter past while, at the same time, prevent the spread of those moments of decline. Instead, one must focus on the points of strength and the energetic areas of Islamic culture. Imam Khumaynī clearly states:

Muslims are obliged to treat each other with courtesy and friendship; they must have love for one another as true siblings. It is clear that love and desire increases these sentiments. That which breaks the bonds of brotherhood and causes division within the congregation is hated by the Legislator and is in opposition to His lofty goals. It is well-understood that if this greater sin becomes prevalent in a con-

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<sup>2</sup> Ḥajjī, *Guzīdeh-ī az yāddāshthā*, p. 10.

gregation, it will cause hatred, envy, spite, and enmity; it will be the root of corruption in the community. The tree of hypocrisy will be created and the unity of the society will tear apart; the religious foundations will give way leading to the increase in corruption and evil.”<sup>3</sup>

## QUR’ĀN AND ISLAMIC UNITY

A detailed analysis of what the Qur’ān states about Islamic unity—mentioning the factors, sources, and methods of unity and the importance of refraining from fostering differences—is outside the scope of this work and beyond the ability of this author. It is clear that recognizing and presenting such an important issue would entail a complete understanding of the concepts mentioned in each verse that pertain to this subject matter and the context that the verses were revealed in. More importantly, one would require the privilege of obtaining the educational spirit of the Qur’ān.

At the same time, however, the doors of research should not be closed due to this limitation especially since the Imams considered the Qur’ān to be the most important axis of unity, the principles of which are taken from this sacred text. Therefore, effort has been made, to the extent that was possible, to present the principles of the Qur’ānic viewpoint in this regard. They have been divided into two categories:

### A. Emphasizing unity and prohibiting division

Through a general comparison it can be claimed that no school of thought or religion has emphasized unity, cooperation, and the paths of obtaining it, nor emphasized refraining from differences, division, and the negative outcomes of them more so than Islam. This is so important that it has been said: “Islam has been founded on two bases: worshipping the One and unity.” The station of unity in Islamic culture is so high that some state its necessity is supported by the Qur’ān, the general divine will and its consequences.<sup>4</sup> The Qur’ān praises the Islamic Ummah as being a single Ummah<sup>5</sup> and which is established by exceptional men and role-models who have gathered together under the banner of faith in Allah.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, all humans, with all of their differences accounted for, are considered to have a single, common principle. The Qur’ān, in addition to commanding peo-

<sup>3</sup> *Sharḥ Chehl Hadīth*, p. 296.

<sup>4</sup> *Al-Mizān fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, v. 2, p. 124.

<sup>5</sup> Qur’ān, 21:92; 24: 152.

<sup>6</sup> Qur’ān, 2:143; 3:10; 21:92.

ple to brotherhood, unity, and cooperation in righteousness and piety, considers these concepts to be blessings which were given to the Islamic Ummah during the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) due to their acceptance of Islam and of his prophethood.<sup>7</sup> The Qur'ānic insistence and emphasis towards religious unity and the Islamic society can be noted in the following expressions: “hold fast”, “correct the essence between you”, “cooperate”, “peace”, “reform”, “reform of the essence between you”, “the divine colour”, “love”, and “brotherhood”.

Likewise, the Qur'ān put at the forefront of its teachings the prevention of enmity, malice, and hatred between individuals and groups as well as the negation of intellectual hypocrisy, controversy, and enmity. Aside from the Qur'ān, this important issue has also been taken seriously in Islamic traditions which will be mentioned in later chapters.<sup>8</sup> The Qur'ān, as the most authoritative source of Islam, considers divisions and disputes in the society to be the “tunes of Satan” and the main factors behind destruction.<sup>9</sup> The separation of Muslims into groups is placed in the company of divine punishment; its results are the bitter taste of war and difficulties.<sup>10</sup>

The Qur'ān considers enmity and hatred to be the forgotten retribution of Allah; it counts them as sins and acts of rebellion. It states that they are the actions of Satan and therefore, severely prohibits rebellious struggle and enmity. The removal of this enmity has been listed as one of the important tasks of prophethood. In the opinion of this heavenly scripture, one of the main factors behind the destruction of previous nations was the division and separation of their society. The most important factor of the separation of a society is its differences in regards to religion. Rebellious struggle and division only achieve stagnation, separation, and the weakening of social foundations.<sup>11</sup> The Qur'ān taught us—through the verses which emphasize thinking and pondering deeply about religion, and through the verses which command us to weigh opinions, choosing the best of them—that we must refrain from unfruitful arguments and from arguments that lead to enmity. It is interesting that, while the Qur'ān is emphasizing social compassion and the decrease of social separation and argumentation, it orders Muslims to refrain from heated intellectual debates with the People

<sup>7</sup> Qur'ān, 3:102-103; 49:10; 5:2.

<sup>8</sup> Refer to *Mizān al-hikmah*, v. 2, p. 456; v. 3, p. 43; v. 6, p. 65; *Tafsīr ibn Kathīr*, v. 2, p. 194-195; v. 1, p. 396; *al-Mizān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, v. 3, p. 374; v. 7, p. 393; *Tafsīr muḥīṭ al-a'zam*, v. 2, p. 374; *Nahj al-balāghah*, speeches Qāshimah, 120 and 147.

<sup>9</sup> Refer to Qur'ān, 2:208 and 253; 3:103; 4:157.

<sup>10</sup> Qur'ān, 6:65; 5:14, 64 and 91; 2:213. For further information refer to *al-Mizān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, v. 3, p. 372-375; v. 11, p. 60-65.

<sup>11</sup> Refer to verses such as: 26:13; 3:64; and 7:46.

of the Scripture; it states to leave the discovery of truth to Allah and the Day of Judgment.<sup>12</sup> In addressing the People of the Scripture, an invitation is given to common principles and to adopt a single front against the polytheists and the disbelievers.<sup>13</sup> While giving attention to the importance of unity and brotherhood and the grave emphasis of the Qur'an prohibiting Muslims from heated debates, division, dividing into parties, and following different paths,<sup>14</sup> the bases of differences and division can be traced back to certain ethical-moral vices such as: distrust, backbiting, seeking faults, spying on believers, accusation, defamation, abusive language, ridicule, egocentrism, arrogance, hatred, and the severance of family ties.<sup>15</sup>

By researching the many verses and traditions in this regard, it can be stated in general that an important goal of the Qur'an was to establish a unified Ummah where heated arguments, division, war, and bloodshed would not exist. People would congregate in accordance to intimacy, cooperation, brotherhood, love, and justice. Throughout this work, we will mention over fifty verses regarding unity and the methods of obtaining it, as well as division and the factors behind it. Here are some examples of the verses:

وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا ۗ وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ  
عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ  
إِحْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ  
يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

Hold fast, all together, to Allah's cord, and do not be divided [into sects]. And remember Allah's blessing upon you when you were enemies, then He brought your hearts together, so you became brothers with His blessing. And you were on the brink of a pit of Fire, whereat He saved you from it. Thus does Allah clarify His signs for you so that you may be guided. (3:103)

<sup>12</sup> Examples of traditions in which Allah is considered the final judge are: 39:3; 22:68-69; 6:164.

<sup>13</sup> Qur'an, 3:64.

<sup>14</sup> Qur'an, 6:159; 30:31-32; 43:65; 21:37; 3:105.

<sup>15</sup> For instance, refer to Qur'an, 49:11-12; 104:1-2; 4:112; 24:4; 6:153.



#### SHIA IMAMS AND MUSLIM UNITY

Here, Allah, in addition to introducing the axis of unity as being a divine blessing, prohibits us from division. In another place he considers differences and division to be a disliked method of previous nations:

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ  
وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

Do not be like those who became divided [into sects] and differed after manifest signs had come to them. For such there will be a great punishment. (3:105)

أَنْ أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا فِيهِ ... وَمَا تَفَرَّقُوا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا  
جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ

... Maintain the religion, and do not be divided in it... They did not divide [into sects] except after the knowledge had come to them, out of envy among themselves. (42:13-14)

وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ ۖ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ  
بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۗ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَلْنَاكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

'This indeed is my straight path, so follow it, and do not follow [other] ways, for they will separate you from His way. This is what He enjoins upon you so that you may be Godwary.' (6:153)

مِنَ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيَعًا ۗ كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ  
فَرِحُونَ

Of those who split up their religion and became sects: each faction exulting in what it possessed (30:32)

Allah, in the Qur'an, considers division to be in opposition to the prophetic lifestyle and the Sunnah. He states:

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إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيَعًا لَسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ إِنَّمَا  
أَمْرُهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ

Indeed those who split up their religion and became sects, you will not have anything to do with them. Their matter rests only with Allah; then He will inform them concerning what they used to do. (6:159)

Muslims are prohibited from heated debates. The results of heated debates are mentioned in the Qur'an where it states:

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ  
وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

And obey Allah and His Apostle, and do not dispute, or you will lose heart and your power will be gone. And be patient; indeed Allah is with the patient. (8:46)

As is seen, the apparent meanings of these verses denote a prohibition from differences, heated debate, and division in religion. The command has been given to hold fast to the divine cord and division is depicted as the characteristics of the polytheists and those who have been destroyed. The condemnation of the polytheists in some of these verses is not because of their polytheism, but rather because of the differences in their speech and their role in dividing religion.<sup>16</sup>

#### B. Methods of creating unity and preventing division

According to what was said, it can be claimed that the general spirit of the social teachings of Islam is as follows: the prohibition of war, of enmity, of dissension, of the formation of parties, of breaking up the society of believers, of racism, and of the mistrust of individuals and groups. The positive foundations of the social teachings of Islam are unity, cooperation, mutual love, and doing well unto each other. With regard to the command and permission that Islam gives to war, it can be explained in that such permission for war can prevent social mishaps and protect the material and

<sup>16</sup> *Al-mizān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, v. 16, p. 182.

spiritual rights of the people. One may ask, however, if the scope of these commands and prohibitions covers the different degrees of the multiple views and understandings in the fields of theology, jurisprudence, and politics that have caused the formation of Islamic schools of thought? It seems as if it can prohibit war, heated argumentation, and unfruitful disputes and consider love, purity, brotherhood, and social cooperation in a positive light. Yet, does the religious code call for a unification of opinions and beliefs?

Answering positively to this question would bring us face to face with other questions and attempts at answering them. For instance, inviting someone to think about and ponder deeply over religion implies that various opinions and understandings will inevitably be formed. Can it be said that Islam orders something, but does not take account of its natural consequences and in fact prohibits them? It is quite evident that one cannot tell an individual to think about something and then forbid them to express their conclusions regarding it. Of course, there is a criterion that has been placed on this process of thinking, but even if two individuals were to use the same criterion, there is no guarantee that their conclusions would be the same.

The variances in man's cognitive potential and his ability to understand and intuit is certain and undeniable. Infact, some commentators of the Qur'an have used verses of the Qur'an to prove that variation of perspectives is the rationale for creation.<sup>17</sup> As such, these differences call for diverse intellectual understandings leading necessarily in their turn to varying beliefs and opinions. The necessity in question can only be removed when the source of variation and differences is removed. It is self-evident that the removal of the source is not possible; so how can the necessary differences be resolved without removing their source?

Therefore, the differences of opinions and the differences of viewpoints amongst the various theological, political, and jurisprudential schools in Islam cannot be judged without differentiating between the cases and without understanding the motives.<sup>18</sup> Rather, the characteristics of undesired differences must be contrasted to those differences that are based on certain criteria. In the Qur'anic culture and the Islamic code of practice, what is given more importance than anything else is the importance of observing

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<sup>17</sup> *Al-Jāmi' li-ahkām al-Qur'an.*

<sup>18</sup> Some commentators of the Qur'an have stated that the verses which condemn dividing into sects and differences, which were mentioned, are about the parties and congregations which are contradictory to religious principles—i.e., they are outside of religion. (Milād, *al-Ta'addudiyyah wa al-ḥiwār fī al-khuṭūb al-Islāmī*, p. 127).

the limitations, expressing the theoretical and practical criteria, and expressing the methods of clarifying the differences; not uprooting its source. This article will suffice itself by mentioning two important cases in this regard:

### First: Division as a result of truth-seeking or rebelliousness

The differences and divisions which stem not from contemplation in religious matters and seeking the truth, but from political, social, and personal factors—such as the love, hatred, or conceit of an individual or a group towards another—is not only rejected but outright prohibited. Examining certain verses of the Qur'an, it becomes clear that some undesired differences and divisions stem from rebelliousness, envy, and the assertiveness of the people who cause division. One of the most important factors behind wars and bloodshed in human society is the desire to be superior or the notion of it that some groups have. In the category of Qur'anic verses pertaining to differences and division, one set of verses mention how some people divided after knowledge had come to them and after the truth had been made clear to them. The Qur'an prohibits believers from such division and states in numerous verses:

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ

Do not be like those who became divided [into sects] and differed after manifest signs had come to them... (3:105)

أَنْ أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا ۗ وَمَا تَفَرَّقُوا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا

جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ

... Maintain the religion, and do not be divided in it... They did not divide [into sects] except after the knowledge had come to them, out of envy among themselves... (42:13-14)

Here, Allah states that some nations did not become divided until after they received knowledge. In other words, they knowingly and intentionally became divided and this would not happen unless there was an element of rebelliousness that they exhibited towards each other. This same motive and spirit is mentioned in other cases in the Qur'an as well.<sup>19</sup> While narrating

<sup>19</sup> Refer to 2:213; 3:19; 45:16; 10:93.

these differences and divisions—which are usually attributed to the Israelites and particularly their scholars—there is no mention made of them seeking the truth or desiring to understand it, or for that matter, whether or not they actually discovered any aspect of reality through it. The reason behind this is that the reality of the situation had already become clear to them—“after the knowledge had come to them”. Therefore, in Qur’anic terms, the motive behind their division was the rebelliousness (transgression, oppression, or envy) of their scholars. For this reason, ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī says: “Allah did not condemn division or differences in the Qur’ān unless they were accompanied by carnal desires and opposition to rational guidance.”<sup>20</sup>

In any case, despite the fact that the Qur’ān affirms that one will not be punished for his mistakes and for what he committed out of forgetfulness, an enormous amount of attention has been paid to those who cause division intentionally (*ta’ammud*) and out of rebelliousness (*baghā*). Such actions are not to be tolerated in this world and have severe consequences in the next. Permission to fight those who continually divide and differentiate and who do so out of insubordination and rebelliousness has been granted. The Qur’ān states:

وَإِن طَآئِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِن بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقْتُلُوا الَّتِي تَبَغَى حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ

If two groups of the faithful fight one another, make peace between them. But if one party of them aggresses against the other, fight the one which aggresses until it returns to Allah’s ordinance ... (49:9)

### Second: Holding fast to the Qur’ān and the Sunnah

It is natural that when a school of thought prevents division and tries to create a congruent society, the method of achieving it is also mentioned. Therefore, Allah introduces the two principle axes that are immune from attack: the Qur’ān and the Sunnah. He describes them as being the foundations of religious unity, the tools of guiding Muslims to the straight path, and the most effective means for removing or decreasing social and theological differences and divisions. The Qur’ān has always correlated the obe-

<sup>20</sup> *al-Mizān fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, v. 11, p. 60.

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dience of Allah with the Messenger. The method of solving disputes has been to hold fast to Allah and the Prophet (ﷺ). The following are verses of the Qur'an in this regard:

وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ ۖ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ  
بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۗ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّاكُم بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

'This indeed is my [i.e., the Prophet's] straight path, so follow it, and do not follow [other] ways, for they will separate you from His way. This is what He enjoins upon you so that you may be Godwary.' (6:153)

According to this verse, the 'straight path' is the path in which there is no division. If a person or group treads along the path of division and separation, apart from the path of revelation in which there are no differences, he would have stepped off of the 'straight path.' The apparent meaning of the verse also states that the 'straight path' is the path of the Prophet of Islam (ﷺ). The Qur'an, in another place, considers the 'straight path' to be the path of the prophets, martyrs, righteous, and truthful.<sup>21</sup> It is interesting to note that in the aforementioned verse, the Qur'an first mentions the 'straight path' and the necessity of obeying it as a prerequisite to avoid becoming divided into different groups.<sup>22</sup>

وَكَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ وَأَنْتُمْ تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ وَفِيكُمْ رَسُولُهُ ۗ  
وَمَنْ يَعْتَصِم بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ هُدِيَ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ۝ وَأَعْتَصِمُوا  
بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا

And how would you be faithless while the signs of Allah are recited to you and His Apostle is in your midst? And whoever takes recourse in Allah is certainly guided to a straight path ... Hold fast, all together, to Allah's cord, and do not be divided [into sects]. (3:101 and 3:103)

'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī writes in this regard:

<sup>21</sup> *al-Mīzān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, v. 7, p. 378.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* p. 381.

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“Holding fast to Allah” is holding fast to the verses of Allah and His Messenger (i.e., the Qur’ān and the Sunnah), in which guidance has been guaranteed. Holding fast to the Messenger of Allah is, in reality, holding fast to the Qur’ān; they both stem from one source. The reason for this is that Allah, in the Qur’ān, orders us to obey the Prophet (ﷺ). Fundamentally, obeying Allah cannot be achieved, except through His Messenger.”<sup>23</sup>

Allah’s cord (*ḥabl*) is the Qur’ān that has been revealed from Allah. These verses of the Qur’ān are, like a cord or rope, tied together and connected together by Allah.<sup>24</sup>

### THE PROPHET (ﷺ) AND ISLAMIC UNITY

With a meager amount of reading about the Prophet of Islam’s teachings in theology and about his practices, it will become clear that the establishment of the Islamic Ummah was formed upon unity. The actions and goals of the believers—which even include a merciful outlook towards non-Muslims—compose the substance and the fruit of the collection of the Prophet’s teachings and practices. Here, some words and actions of the Prophet, in which the establishment of Islamic unity are primarily intended and clearly mentioned, will be presented.

#### A. A general invitation towards solidarity

There are many instances where the Prophet spoke about social unity, mutual understanding, and brotherhood in faith on the one hand, and the prohibition against division on the other. He also spoke about the sources, factors, and foundations of both unity and division.

Essentially, the idea of noble moral traits (*makārim al-akhlāq*)—the establishment of which, in the Prophet’s words, is the philosophy behind him being raised as a prophet—is nothing other than creating a religious society based on brotherhood, common language, mutual love, forgiveness, purity, generosity, optimism, justice, compassion, and good-manneredness; it also means staying away from war, reproach, pessimism, backbiting, racism, false accusations against Muslims, and other unethical traits. The Prophet’s ethical advice is full of phrases such as mutual love, mutual aid, positive confrontation, righteousness, peace, compromise, and forgiveness.

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<sup>23</sup> *al-Mizān fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, v. 4, p. 389.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 3, p. 369.

Providing a list of these cases is outside the scope of this article. It will suffice to mention a few examples:

The Prophet stated that Muslim unity causes goodness and mercy while division is the factor behind destruction and punishment. He stated: “Congregating is good (a mercy) while division is torment.”<sup>25</sup> The Prophet’s opinion is that congregating is positive and the more a community is together, the better it is.<sup>26</sup> The Prophet’s ceaseless encouragement towards congregational prayer and being present in mosques is also reported in hundreds of traditions.<sup>27</sup>

The Grand Messenger has statements where separation from the Islamic congregation is considered a form of leaving the fold of Islam and returning to the Age of Ignorance. He states, “The noose of Islam has been removed from the necks of the one who separates himself from the Muslim community.” Likewise he says, “The one who separates from the Muslim community in a small way will die in a state of ignorance.”<sup>28</sup>

Other short statements from the Prophet in this regard have also been reported, such as: “Allah’s hand is upon/with the congregation,”<sup>29</sup> “Be with the community and beware of division,” “Do not cause division for those before you who caused division perished,” “Do not cause division or your hearts will become divided,” and “Whoever divided into sects before you perished.”<sup>30</sup>

Of course, one cannot be certain that each one of these traditions came from the Prophet. Likewise, the motives for counterfeiting such traditions—especially keeping in mind the misuse of expressions such as “the necessity of a community” and “refrain from breaking the Muslims’ cane” by the Umayyad leaders—cannot be overlooked. Nevertheless, the repeated emphasis that the Prophet (ﷺ) gave to the unity of the Muslim community, and more importantly, his very own actions in this regard, supports the general meanings of these traditions.

In order to solidify the manifesto “The believer is a brother of the believer,”<sup>31</sup> the Prophet has narrated many traditions:

<sup>25</sup> *Kanz al-‘ummāl*, v. 7, p. 557; *Nahj al-faṣāḥah*, h. 1202; also refer to traditions 56, 638, 1234, 2769, 2726, 2855, and 3211.

<sup>26</sup> *Kanz al-‘ummāl*, v. 7, p. 555.

<sup>27</sup> For instance, refer to *Ibid.*, p. 552-585. There are over 150 traditions from the Prophet in this reference which encourage this obligation.

<sup>28</sup> *Nahj al-faṣāḥah*, h. 2769; refer to *Bihār al-anwār*, v. 26, p. 67-73 for this compilation.

<sup>29</sup> *Tirmidhī*, h. 2166; *Nahj al-faṣāḥah*, p. 615.

<sup>30</sup> *Kanz al-‘ummāl*, v. 1, p. 177; 182, 205-206.

<sup>31</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 1414.



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A believer befriends and is befriended. There is no good in the person who befriends and is not befriended. The best people are those who people benefit from.<sup>32</sup>

Believers are brothers: their blood is mutual. They are like one hand against those who are opposed to them.<sup>33</sup>

A believer is like a building to another believer; each part solidifies the other.<sup>34</sup>

The example of a believer in mutual friendship, compassion, and love is the example of a single body: if a part of it feels pain the rest of the body will feel pain along with it throughout the night and with a fever.<sup>35</sup>

Likewise, the Prophet said:

Meet your brother with an open face. Making your brother smile is charity for you. Forgiveness is for the person who does not have hatred for his brother. It is not suitable for a believer to remain apart from his religious brother for more than three days. It is not suitable for a believer to abuse his brother. It would be suitable for Allah to distance the fire of hell from any Muslim who defends his brother's honor.

The Prophet (ﷺ) emphasized greeting one another, counting it as one of the actions that the angels would engage in. He strongly prohibited remaining angry with a Muslim brother for more than three days and encouraged the reconciliation between them. As for the person who gives and receives gifts—without taking into consideration their value—in order to create friendly relationships and strengthen the bonds of brotherhood and unity (in the place of division between parties and elements of egoism within society), his reward would be that of a person who fights on the path of Allah. Therefore, in the society where the Prophet (ﷺ) is the role-model and the official, the worthiness of an individual replaces partisanship, and compassion and intellectualism overcome violence and sensitivity.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to this, the Prophet described the Muslims as a set of teeth—all being the same and equal. He said, “Muslims are equal like teeth [in one's mouth].” He also said, “None of you are Muslims unless you love for your brother what you love for yourself.”

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<sup>32</sup> *Kanz al-'ummāl*, v. 1, p.1 42 and 155; there are many similar traditions in this book, refer to pages 140-166.

<sup>33</sup> *Bihār al-anwār*, v. 71, p. 316.

<sup>34</sup> *Kanz al-'ummāl*, v. 1, p. 141.

<sup>35</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* numbers 2585 and 2586.

<sup>36</sup> Refer to *Kāfī*, “Kitāb al-īmān wa al-kufr: bāb al-muṣāfiḥah,” p. 179; likewise refer to *Pezhūbīshī dar sirab-e nabawī*, p. 235.

Emphasizing Islamic equality and brotherhood, the Prophet said:

Muslims are brothers of Muslims. They do not oppress one another, they do not lie to one another, they do not refrain from helping one another, and they do not abase one another. A sufficient amount of the potential for evil is created for a person when he ridicules his own brother. A Muslim's complete existence—his life, property, and loved ones—are forbidden for other Muslims.

The Prophet (ﷺ) considered the following to be one of the signs and traits of a Muslim:

A Muslim is a person who makes other Muslims feel safe from his speech and hands.

There are three things in which nothing other than sincerity enters the heart of a believer [meaning that it would be impossible for him to betray them] ... the third is the issue of unity amongst the Muslims. This means that he would not be hypocritical, would not break the cane of Muslims, and would not divide the congregation of Muslims.<sup>37</sup>

## B. Practical lifestyle

The universal direction that the Prophet of Islam (ﷺ) took during his role as a prophet was the establishment of a monotheistic society based upon high values such as faith, divine single leadership, piety, unity, and religious brotherhood. It is quite clear that achieving such a goal in a society where ignorant, racist, and tribalistic values are tied into all of the beliefs and social structures—be they grand or minute (the Qur'an even states that their dead were permissible to them)—is not an easy task; rather, it demands an ability that is far greater than what the average human can shoulder. The Prophet did not have any other choice than to strengthen the Muslim social ties. Through special divine aid, he would partake upon the best method of managing disputes. There are cases of the Prophet's actions in this regard during the period that he resided in Makkah, but the prominent cases are to be found in the period of the establishment of the first Islamic government in Madinah. In this period, there were more internal and external opportunities of division.<sup>38</sup> The Prophet did not satisfy himself with

<sup>37</sup> A more detailed and better organized research of this issue can be found, narrated from both schools of thought in: *al-Wahdah al-Islamiyah fi al-ahādith al-mushtarakah*, p. 73-119.

<sup>38</sup> The internal foundations of division were the existence of an ancient conflict between the *Muhājirs* and the *Anṣār* (with titles such as *Makkan* and *Madani*, northern and southern, *qahṭānī* and *'udnānī*), between the Hashimites and the Umayyads, and the former enmity between the internal groups of the Anṣār (the Aws and Khazraj). The external foundations

mere words and actions; rather his practical lifestyle was also formed on the foundations of reaching such important goals. A list of the efforts and methods of the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) in creating unity amongst the companions will be given:

1. The establishment of the mosque and emphasis given to the Muslims to congregate in it for Friday and congregational prayers.
2. The establishment of the single unified Ummah.
3. The creation of a religious bond of brotherhood between individuals and groups.
4. The creation of national unity and general treaties amongst the people.
5. The specification of the noble Messenger (ﷺ) as the legal reference point in solving disputes.
6. The rational battles against the customs and intolerance of the Age of Ignorance

Examining each one of these points and citing the Prophet's (ﷺ) efforts behind the establishment of the single unified Ummah rotating around Allah and the Messenger is great in its own merit. It can become a practical role model for all Muslims. Here, only a few of these cases will be surveyed.

Among the most important factors behind the division of individuals and social groups are religious intolerance, sectarianism, and tribalism. This claim is illuminated by reviewing the present divisions within Islamic society. One of the Prophet's (ﷺ) cardinal areas of effort was the prevention or regulation of these forms of intolerance. In this regard he has said, "Allah will raise a person whose heart has a shred of intolerance (*ʿaṣabīyah*) in it with the Arabs during the Age of Ignorance."<sup>39</sup> He also said, "A person who invites people towards intolerance has acquired [the punishment of] a murder similar to the murders that took place in the Age of Ignorance."<sup>40</sup> He performed many temporal measures in Madinah with the purpose of removing disputes and tribal competition, as well as regulating and directing them. When the Prophet entered this city and saw that the two ancient rivals, the *Aws* and *Khazraj* tribes, were competing for the honour of hosting the Prophet, he wisely said: "My house will be wherever my camel stops." Likewise, he used the tactic of quickly moving the soldiers in order

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of division were the evil plans of the Jews and hypocrites where they tried to cause differences amongst the Muslims.

<sup>39</sup> *Uṣūl kāfi*, v. 2, "Bāb al-ʿaṣabīyah," p. 308.

<sup>40</sup> *Sunan ibn Mājah*, v. 2, "Kitāb al-fitan: bāb al-ʿaṣabīyah," p. 1302, h. 3948.

to quell a dispute that arose amongst the companions during the Battle of Banī Muṣṭalaq.

However, with the institutionalization of connections from the Age of Ignorance and the tendency towards tribalism, such conditions were not completely uprooted during the Prophet's life. Sometimes the internal intolerance and hatred between the *Muhājirīn* and *Anṣār* not only resulted in their coming face to face with one another, but also resulted in them coming face to face with the Prophet. For instance, Zubayr ibn 'Awwām, who was of the *Muhājirīn*, fell into a dispute with a member of the *Anṣār* about irrigation. The Prophet solved the dispute by stating that the *Anṣār* will be able to irrigate after Zubayr. The *Anṣār* judged the Prophet's decision by using the tribalistic and intolerant criterion of the Age of Ignorance. He told the Prophet: "You ruled in favour of your cousin."<sup>41</sup>

In regards to the moderate temper that he had while interacting with the people who opposed him, there are many Qur'ānic proofs as well as those from traditions which show that he prevented misunderstandings, unfounded accusations, and contemptuous looks towards them. It is clearly understood from these examples, and hundreds of other examples mentioned in books of history and traditions, that the Prophet, in addition to encouraging and emphasizing a unified society, also paid attention to the methods of arriving at it. The Prophet tried in various ways to uproot the basis of dispute in the Ummah, even after his death. Specifying the pivotal nature of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah as well as the political and religious position of reference assigned to the Ahl al-Bayt are all examples of these efforts. Therefore, the duties of any political, intellectual, and social leader dictate that he adopt the same methods as the Prophet, taking him as his role model.

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<sup>41</sup> *Bukhārī*, v. 3 and 4, "Kitāb al-masāqāt," p. 235-237; for more information refer to *Majmū'eh maqālāt pezhūbishī dar sirah nabawī*, p. 284 onwards.

## The Voice of Unity – Part II: Islamic Brotherhood\*

Āyatullāh Muḥammad Wāʿiz-Zādeh Khurāsānī  
Translated by Hamid Waqar

### Abstract:

As the second in a series of talks regarding the subject of unity, the present article focuses on the concept of Muslim brotherhood and its relation to a united Ummah. Through the use of Qurʾānic verses and incidents found within the sacred history of Islam, the validity and necessity of Muslim brotherhood in our times is highlighted. With regard to how the hearts of believers are united, one comes to understand that brotherhood in Islam is one of the greatest blessings granted by Allah to Muslims—a blessing that will continue in the Hereafter. Anything opposed to this blessing—such as nationalism and sectarianism—is an act of ingratitude with lasting consequences.

**Keywords:** Islamic unity, Ummah, Muslim brotherhood, nationalism, *madhāhib*, Unity week.

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In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful  
Allah states:

وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا ۗ وَادْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ  
عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ  
إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِّنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا كَذَٰلِكَ  
يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

Hold fast, all together, to Allah's cord, and do not be divided [into sects]. And remember Allah's blessing upon you when you were enemies, then He brought your hearts together, so you became

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\* This is the second of a series of talks delivered in 1991 by Muḥammad Wāʿiz-Zādeh Khurāsānī. The first was printed in the previous issue of the Al-Taqrīb journal, no 5.

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brothers with His blessing. And you were on the brink of a pit of Fire, whereat He saved you from it. Thus does Allah clarify His signs for you so that you may be guided. (3:103)

Our discussion throughout these speeches revolves around the idea of Islamic unity and bringing the Islamic *madhāhib* together. In the first speech the issue of the “unified Islamic Ummah” was discussed.

إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ

Indeed this Ummah (community) of yours is one Ummah, and I am your Lord. So worship Me. (21:92)

We discussed that issue to the extent that time permitted us. There I mentioned the three categories of unity that Islam refers to, which include: the unity of humanity, the unity of religions, and, finally, the unity of the Islamic Ummah. An example of what was stated is that the unity of Muslims (or the unity of the Islamic Ummah) has more to do with society and politics while Islamic brotherhood or the brotherhood of believers has more to do with compassion. These two—unity and brotherhood—have a strong connection with each other.

## THE BEGINNING OF THE UNIFIED NATION

I came across an important reference after my previous speech in regards to the unified Ummah. It is a strong piece of evidence which officially makes it clear what the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) implied when he addressed the Muslims as a unified Ummah. It is found in *Sīrah ibn Hishām*, which is actually a *sīrah* (life history) written by Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq who lived in the middle of the second century and was a student of Imam Ṣādiq (‘a) and Imam Bāqir (‘a). He wrote a book entitled *al-Maghāzī* which is one of the oldest biographies of the Prophet. Parts of this book remain and have been printed. A century after him, Ibn Hishām summarized ibn Isḥāq’s work into a book and this has been passed down to us. It is considered one of the most reliable biographies of the Prophet and has been printed and annotated many times.

The method of the Prophet’s migration is discussed in this book. The Prophet migrated and gave his first Friday Sermon in Banī Salmah after which he entered Yathrib (present-day Madinah) and gave his second and third Friday Sermons there. Then, he made a contract between the Muḥājirīn (people who migrated from Makkah) and the Anṣār (people who resided in Madinah). This contract is one of the most reliable and most

important political documents of Islam, one worthy of being discussed separately. In it, the Prophet wrote: “This is a contract by Muḥammad, the Prophet, between the believers and the Muslims of the Quraysh (i.e., the Muhājirīn) and Yathrib (i.e., the Anṣār) and those that will follow them.” The first sentence of the contract is: “They are a single nation standing against all other nations.” In other words, these Muhājirīn and Anṣār and all those who are associated with them are one nation in the face of other nations. He then mentioned each tribe found within the Quraysh and in Yathrib and explained in detail the duties that they had to each other. He also explained the contracts the Anṣār had with the Jews (of Banī ‘Awf) and with the believers in terms of their mutual obligations. From the political perspective, they are considered one nation. All were ordered to be just and to refer to Allah and the Messenger (ﷺ) in their disputes.

Therefore, the beginning of the unified nation started with the migration. We know that the migration of the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) was the beginning of the establishment of the Islamic government since it was after the migration that the Prophet established the Islamic government in Madinah. One of the main foundations of this government was that the Anṣār, the Muhājirīn, and all of the people with them would have to take this step together and become a unified nation. So, the migration was the start of the Islamic government and the announcement of the unified Islamic Ummah. This issue must be added to what was discussed last week about the unified Ummah.

It is suitable to narrate another sentence that the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) mentioned to the Muhājirīn while in Makkah at the advent of his migration: “Verily, Allah has made for you brothers and homes that you will be secure in.”<sup>2</sup> The Muslims of Makkah migrated in groups because of this prophecy.

### THE PACT OF BROTHERHOOD BETWEEN THE ANṢĀR AND THE MUHĀJIRĪN

After this, again soon after the migration, there is another incident documented in *Sīrah ibn Hishām*<sup>3</sup> which is also very important. This incident is found under the subheading ‘Brotherhood between the Muhājirīn and the Anṣār’. This has a connection with Islamic brotherhood, which is the subject of today’s speech. In it, Ibn Hishām writes:

<sup>1</sup> *Sīrah ibn Hishām*, v.2, p.143 [Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī].

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.109.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.146.

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The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) said, “the Muhājirīn and the Anṣār will group up in pairs and become brothers in Allah’s path.” Then, he took the hand of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and said, “this is my brother.” So, the Messenger of Allah—who was the leader of the messengers, the imam of the pious, and the messenger of the Lord of the worlds and who does not have a similarity amongst the worshipers—and ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib became brothers.

Then Ibn Hishām mentions the companions one by one and says, “and Hamzah bin ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib and Zayd ibn Ḥārithah, the stepson of the Messenger, became brothers.<sup>4</sup> Ja‘far ibn Abī Ṭālib and Ma‘ādh ibn Jabal became brothers.” He then mentions the names of others and says, “Those who names reached me have been mentioned.”

It is important to note that first it was announced that the Muslims were a unified Ummah consisting of the Anṣār and the Muhājirīn and anyone following them. Then, the brotherhood pact was established in order to strengthen the bonds between the Anṣār and the Muhājirīn and amongst the Muhājirīn themselves. Although the title of the section in the book is between the Anṣār and the Muhājirīn, we see that some of these pacts of brotherhood were between two Muhājirīn—for instance, the Prophet (ﷺ) was a Muhājir as well as ‘Alī (‘a); Hamzah, the Prophet’s uncle, was a Muhājir as well as Zayd ibn Ḥārithah. Nonetheless, for the most part, the pacts of brotherhood were between one Anṣār and one Muhājir. According to Ibn Hishām, these pacts implied real-life consequences: the brothers would inherit from each other and observe the rights of [blood] brotherhood until the end of their lives.<sup>5</sup>

#### TYPES OF BROTHERHOOD IN ISLAM

It should be pointed out that just as there are various forms of unity in Islam, there are various forms of brotherhood in Islam as well.

The first form of brotherhood is familial brotherhood: two brothers, two sisters, or a brother and a sister from one father and one mother, from one father and two mothers, or from one mother and two fathers. All of these people are brothers and sisters to one another.

Of course, this is the case in a religiously sanctified marriage between a husband and wife. But, if two children are born out of wedlock, even though people may consider them brothers, religious law does not accept it

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.146-148.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.



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and the laws regarding brotherhood does not apply to them; for instance, two brothers born out of wedlock do not inherit from each other.

Therefore, Islam even interfered in this natural form of brotherhood. It stated that two blood brothers are considered legal brothers if they stem from a religiously approved marriage. This is one form of brotherhood.

The second form of brotherhood has to do with nursing. If two infants who do not have familial relations breastfeed from one woman for a specified time, with the conditions that are mentioned in jurisprudence, they will become brother and sister, two brothers, or two sisters due to suckling. When the people whom it is forbidden to marry are mentioned in the Qur'an, the following phrase is mentioned:

وَأُمَّهَاتِكُمُ الَّتِي أَرْضَعْنَكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتِكُم مِّن الرِّضَاعَةِ

... your [foster-]mothers who have suckled you and your sisters through fosterage ... (4:23)

This means that the mothers who nursed you are forbidden to marry just as it is forbidden to marry your natural mothers. Your sisters due to suckling [from the same woman] are also forbidden to marry. This is also another form of brotherhood which is different than familial brotherhood.

The third form of brotherhood is tribal brotherhood. Two people from the same tribe are considered brothers, though it may seem strange. In fact, the Qur'an states that the prophets are brothers of their nations. I have collected many verses which prove this matter. The Qur'an reads:

وَأذْكُرَ أَخَا عَادٍ إِذْ أَنْذَرَ قَوْمَهُ بِالْأَحْقَافِ

And mention [Hud] the brother of 'Ād, when he warned his people at Ahqāf. (46:21)

وَإِلَى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا

And to Midian We sent Shu'ayb, their brother. (29:36)

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَى ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا

Certainly We sent to Thamūd Sālih, their brother. (27:45)

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إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمُّ أَخُوهُمْ نُوحٌ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ

When Noah, their brother, said to them, ‘Will you not be wary  
[of Allah]? (26:106)

There are other verses similar to those that have been mentioned about Hūd and Lot.

In any case, a member of a tribe has a connection with another member of that tribe; they are brothers of each other. For instance, in a tradition, the Prophet is said to have called a fellow Arab, “O Arab brother.” There is a brotherhood between the prophets and their nations, even if their nation did not believe in them. This type of brotherhood is tribal brotherhood.

Of course, it can be argued that the tribe believed in these prophets at a later time and that is why the Qur’an mentions them as brothers of their nations. If this is the case, then the type of brotherhood would be more of a religious brotherhood, which is the next category that will be mentioned.

The fourth form is Islamic brotherhood or religious brotherhood. There are numerous proofs in the Qur’an for this form of brotherhood. For instance:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ

The faithful are indeed brothers. Therefore make peace between  
your brothers. (49:10)

The verse just prior to this one is in reference to conflict between Muslims. It says that in such a conflict, Muslims must intervene and find out who is in the right. They must fight against the oppressor until he corrects his wrongdoing. This verse then states, “the faithful are indeed brothers”—i.e., there is a religious brotherhood between them. The result: “Therefore, make peace between your brothers.”

Here, the two parties that are in conflict and the person that wants to arbitrate between them and make peace are all considered brothers of one another since the verse states: “[you] make peace between your brothers.” There are many other delicate points in this verse which will not be mentioned.

Another verse of Islamic brotherhood is the following verse:

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وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا ۗ وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ  
عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ  
إِخْوَانًا

Hold fast, all together, to Allah's cord, and do not be divided [into sects]. And remember Allah's blessing upon you when you were enemies, then He brought your hearts together, so you became brothers with His blessing ... (3:103)

Some commentators of the Qur'an state that the enmity mentioned in this verse is in reference to the Aws and the Khazraj which lasted 120 years. Others say that what is meant is the enmity that commonly existed between Arab tribes since they were constantly at war with one another. There were only four months that were exempted and were considered "holy months" and they included Shawwāl, Dhū al-Qa'dah, Dhū al-Ḥijjah, and Rajab. The purpose of this exemption was so that they could rest, attend to their lives, replenish their strengths for war, or perform the *hajj* and return to war.

There is no doubt that many of the Arab tribes were enemies with one another and constantly at war with each other. These wars and enmities of the Arabs before Islam are mentioned in many biographical books [of the Prophet] such as the Fajjār war, for instance. Other wars are also mentioned in detail in *Sīrah ibn Hishām*.

Therefore, this verse considers brotherhood and compassion between believers a blessing from Allah. It states that the divine rope should be clung to. In the previous speech I said that clinging on to the divine rope means clinging on to the religion of Allah. All of the people that have resorted to the religion are the unified nation and make up the brotherhood of believers.

### COMPASSION OF THE HEARTS

How is brotherhood achieved? The above-mentioned verse implies that it is with the compassion in hearts—"Remember Allah's blessing upon you when you were enemies, then He brought your hearts together." So, the bringing together of the hearts is a divine blessing. When the Qur'an mentions the issue of unity amongst Muslims (Islamic unity), Islamic brotherhood is also mentioned.

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It is understood then that the Islamic Ummah is truly a single Islamic Ummah when the following conditions are adhered to: First, that the religion of Allah and the Qur'an are held onto: 'Hold fast to Allah's cord.' And second, that the hearts are brought together and that Muslims truly consider others as their Muslim brothers. If one does not think about Muslims (as was previously stated) then he is really not part of the Islamic Ummah.

In summary, the verse states that the foundations of Islamic brotherhood is a two-fold matter: holding fast to religion and having the hearts brought together; the hearts must be brought together.

In another place, the fondness for religion and holding fast to it is described in the following way:

وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ  
الْكَفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ

... But Allah has endeared faith to you and made it appealing in your hearts, and He has made hateful to you faithlessness, transgression and disobedience ... (49:7)

This is what is meant by holding fast to religion.

But, the verses which clearly mention the issue of compassion are verses 62-63 of Surah Infal:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَيْدَكَ بِنَصْرِهِ وَبِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ

... It is He who strengthened you with His help and with the means of the faithful (8:62)

The Qur'an then immediately speaks about the believers:

وَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ لَوْ أَنْفَقْتَ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مَا أَلَّفْتَ  
بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ

and [God] united their hearts, and if you spent all that is in the earth, you could not have united their hearts ... (8:63)

It was not humanly possible for compassion to be placed between the hearts of the Aws and the Khazraj, who had fought for 120 years. The same could be said for the Quraysh and other Arab tribes who had fought for

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years. There was no possibility that compassion would be placed between their hearts through the use of monetary means or worldly blessings.

وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ أَلَّفَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

...but Allah united them together. Indeed He is all-mighty, all-wise. (8:63)

It is understood here that this compassion is a divine blessing which is only achieved through strong belief.

### LITERAL MEANING OF BROTHERHOOD

Shaykh Ṭūsī defines the Arabic term *akh* ('brother') in *Tibyān*.<sup>6</sup> He states that the term *akh* is used when two or more people have the same destination. He says: *yaqūlūna fulānūn yatawakkha* [same root as *akh*] *sha'na fulānin* ("it is said that a certain person travels along the path of another and that their destination is one and the same"). Or, it is stated: *kbuz 'alā hādha al-wakhā* [same root as *akh*] ("perform an action and take it seriously with this intention").

So, the principle literal meaning of the word relates to people going in the same direction. A unified Ummah is a group of people who have one leader. Brothers are people who have one destination. Hence, there is a type of literal correlation between Ummah and brotherhood.

Therefore, the hearts of believers—who are brothers—are brought together and their purpose and destination is one. Their concern is with Islam and its destiny. They all think about the Islamic world despite the fact that they are spread throughout the globe.

Unfortunately, there is not enough time to mention all the delicate points of the verse in question and to adequately depict the main purpose of the verse. The Qur'ān states: "It is He who ... united their hearts." (8:62-63) This is similar to when it states:

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا

It is He who sent to the unlettered [people] an apostle... (62:2)

In other words, this action is an action that Allah performs. It is Allah who sends messengers. It is Allah who unifies the hearts. The term 'He' in these

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<sup>6</sup> *Tibyān*, v.2, p.546

verses (which all refer to Allah) carries a lot of meaning. Unifying the hearts of Muslims is a divine action, not a human one.

Again, the two verses are as follows: “It is He ... who united (*allafa*) their hearts, and if you spent all that is in the earth, you could not have united (*allafta*) their hearts. But Allah united (*allafa*) them together. Indeed He is all-Mighty, all-Wise.”

Notice that the Arabic term ‘*allafa*’ has been repeated thrice. The Qur’ān is a miraculous book and observes brevity. If a word is repeated numerous times in one verse it proves the importance that the Qur’ān gives to it. This is similar to the term ‘*ahād*’ in Sūrah Tawhīd which has been repeated twice and the term ‘*laylah al-qadr*’ which has been repeated thrice in Sūrah Qadr.

Allah is the one who created unity between their hearts. The verse ends with: “Indeed He is all-Mighty, all-Wise.” In other words, He created this unity between their hearts from His might and wisdom. Allah wants to bring the unified Ummah into existence. This unified Ummah must be brothers to one another. The condition of brotherhood is compassion. Allah created this unification of hearts so that believers would become brothers. It is only when they become brothers that the unified Ummah can be established and, like God in his station of might and wisdom, the truth can also be propagated [with might and wisdom]. There is much more to say in this regard as the Qur’ān is replete with many fine points.

### BROTHERHOOD IN THE QUR’ĀN

The Qur’ān mentions the issue of brotherhood in many other verses. It states with regards to orphans:

وَإِنْ تَخَالَطُوهُمْ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ

... and if you intermingle with them, they are of course your brothers... (2:220)

There is no problem if the guardians of orphans deal with them in a way where their property is sometimes mixed—for instance, their mutual food is cooked in one pot. The Qur’ānic reason for this is: “they are your religious brothers.” The expressions *fa ikhwānukum* (“for they are your brothers”) and *fa ikhwānukum fī al-dīn* (“for they are your brothers in faith”) have been used repeatedly in the Qur’ān:

فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوْا الزَّكَاةَ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ

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Yet if they repent and maintain the prayer and give the zakat, then they are your brethren in faith... (9:11)

فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَعْلَمُوا آبَاءَهُمْ فَاِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ ۚ

... And if you do not know their fathers, then they are your brethren in the faith... (33:5)

### THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COMPASSION AND BROTHERHOOD BETWEEN BELIEVERS AND DISBELIEVERS

The Qur'an raises a particular issue: just as compassion and brotherhood is found between believers, so too compassion and brotherhood is found between disbelievers as well. In fact, it is found between oppressors as well. But there is one difference. I have collected many verses in this regard and the following is a summary of what I have found.

The brotherhood between believers is true, close, and firm because it stems from faith and the path of Allah. This brotherhood between them will continue in the Hereafter as well and will carry many benefits for them. As the Qur'an states:

الْاِخْلَاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ اِلَّا الْمُتَّقِينَ

On that day, friends will be one another's enemies, except for the Godwary. (43:67)

This means that those who were so-called "friends" in this world will become enemies on the Day of Judgment; however, this is not the case for the pious whose compassion between each other is firm. Nonetheless, many [amongst the disbelievers] who have a pact of brotherhood with each other will be separated on the Day of Judgment.

كُلَّمَا دَخَلَتْ اُمَّةٌ لَعْنَتْ اُخْتَهَا

... Every time that a nation enters [hell], it will curse its sister [nation]... (7:38)

People in such nations will state that they had nothing to do with the other and will say to them: "You misguided me. If you did not call me to this path I would not be in hell right now."

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فَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ يَتَلَاوَمُونَ

Then they turned to one another, blaming each other. (68:30)

ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكْفُرُ بَعْضُكُم بِبَعْضٍ وَيَلْعَنُ بَعْضُكُم

بَعْضًا

... Then on the Day of Resurrection you will disown one another  
and curse one another... (29:25)

The brotherhood between the believers and between the pious—which in the world is established (*li-Allah*) for Allah and (*fi Allah*) in Allah—will remain in the Hereafter as well. The reason for this is that the compassion between the disbelievers in this world is out of mutual interest and therefore temporary; it is not real nor is it due to faith. This is the opposite of believers whose compassion for each other is real and based on faith in Allah.

The Qur'an says the following about believers and the dwellers of heaven:

وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِّنْ غِلٍّ إِخْوَانًا عَلَىٰ سُرُرٍ مُّتَقَابِلِينَ

We will remove whatever rancour there is in their breasts; [intimate like] brothers, [they will be reclining] on couches, facing one another. (15:47)

In heaven, there is no form of enmity between the hearts of the believers. All of them are brothers to one another; all of them love one another. The same is true in the world as well. In reality, the Qur'an wants Muslims to have the same state in this world as they do in the Hereafter; or, to put it in a better way, it wants Muslims to invest in their heaven and to live like the dwellers of heaven while still on earth.

This type of religious brotherhood that believers have is very valuable. Brotherhood is the biggest blessing that Allah gave to the Muslims. This brotherhood must be firm. There should not be any reason or inclination which would overshadow this brotherhood.



## TRIBALISM AND ISLAM

We live in a time where tribalism has developed in the form of nationalism and has become rampant. It first started in Europe. In the past there were tribal differences, a tribe was an enemy of another; a race was an enemy to another. Now, there are differences amongst nations. It can be said that the present nations are the past tribes. The last century was the century of the growth of racism. If this form of tribalism grows and other forms of compassion are overshadowed, the people of the world will be harmed. Look at the leftovers of the former Soviet Union which are now troubled with a growing sense of nationalism. The groundwork has been laid for them to fight against each other. This is very harmful. Just recently, I read the following verse and explained it:

يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ  
لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَنُّكُمْ

O mankind! Indeed We created you from a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes that you may identify yourselves with one another. Indeed the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most Godwary among you... (49:13)

The issue of nations and tribes has been mentioned by Allah in this verse. Allah has made the different tribes but He did not cause them to stand up to each other or to negate one another. He did not cause them to overlook each other's merits. No. Instead, He created them so that they can know one another; so that they could be compassionate with one another. If tribalism grows, especially in the sphere of Islam, it would become the greatest danger for Islam. About forty or fifty years ago we saw works that were published in Arab countries which discuss the issue of tribalism. Many Arab political parties were formed based on tribal affiliation. They did not speak about Islam; they spoke about their Arab tribe. This thought has grown in other Islamic countries as well. If you go to Turkey you will find that Turkish nationalism have entered people's hearts extensively. The people are Muslims, but their Turkishness might be more important to them than their Islam.

The same thing is occurring here in Iran as in other countries as well. If nations grow to such an extent to where Muslim nations are pitted against each other (which has unfortunately happened) there would be no hope for Islamic unity. The Iraq-Iran war was introduced as the Arab-Fars war,

whereas that was not the case. Rather, it was a war of some oppressors against an oppressed Islamic nation which recently freed itself from the reigns of colonialism.

Yes, tribes and nations are legitimate in order for people to recognize one another: to recognize where somebody is from and what characteristics he has; to recognize what one's identity is. However, in an Islamic environment and in an Islamic society, these forms of tribalism and nationalism must not undermine Islamic unity and Islamic brotherhood which Islam has brought as a divine blessing. If Muslims wake up considering their nationality first—meaning that they wake up and consider themselves Iranian before Muslim for instance—it would be a tragedy. This was prevalent during the period of the *tāghūt* (rebel).<sup>7</sup>

When people were taken to the Savak and were asked about why they performed political and Islamic activities, the Savak would remind them that they were Iranians first and then Muslims. The Savak would tell them that they should not care about Arab or Jewish wars. They told me once: “We are Iranian first; then Muslim. We should emphasize our Iranian nature. Why should it matter that Muslims or Arabs fight against Jews?”

Unfortunately, I heard the exact same thing from a Muslim in India. This thought is starting to grow in India in the form of Indian nationalism. Dreadfully, Muslim youth have been affected by this wave of propagation and nationalism. A Muslim told me: “I am Indian first and then Muslim. This means that if India is attacked I will defend it; but if Islam is attacked and the interests of India are not present, I would not participate.”

Similar words were spoken during the period of the *tāghūt* as well: “If they take Jerusalem, they take Jerusalem. We are Iranian. What does it have to do with us?” One must ask them: “Then, what about Islamic brotherhood? Does not the Qur'ān place Islamic brotherhood above all other forms of brotherhood?”

The message of Imam Khomeini (*r*) could be summarized as follows: Muslims are one Ummah—a single nation—which is called the Islamic Ummah. Their other nationalities must be overshadowed by this Ummah. It is not the case that they should be destroyed altogether; no, they should simply be overshadowed. A Muslim should first take into consideration the interests of Islam, then the interests of his nation, and then his personal interests. If Islam is in danger, all Muslims must volunteer and repel this danger. This volunteering might not be in the interests of an individual, of

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<sup>7</sup> This refers to the reign of the Pahlavi regime (Tr.)

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a tribe, of a city, or of a nation. But, it is in the interests of Islam. Islam calls for such a unity amongst various nationalities.

If a person travels from the borders of China to Indonesia nobody should ask him what nationality he is or what passport he carries. Islam made all of these nations—which comprise more than one hundred and where more than one hundred languages may be spoken—into one Ummah. All are Muslim and all share a destiny.

Of course, this does not mean that geographical borders must be removed. That would not be practical and I do not propose such a thing. Nobody else is after such a thing either, and they should not be. But what I am saying is that these borders must be protected in Islamic countries and the members of each of these areas must consider themselves Muslim before anything else—they must think about the Islamic world. If a corner of the Islamic world was attacked by foreigners then everyone should come together and repel the attack. Nobody should say that Palestinians were attacked and that does not have anything to do with us. Iranians should not say, “We are Iranian.” Iraqis should not say, “We are Iraqi.” Pakistanis should not say, “We are Pakistani.” This is against the clear commands of Islam and goes against the tradition I read earlier: “Whoever wakes up and does not think about Muslim affairs is not a Muslim.”<sup>8</sup> What more can be said on top of this?

Therefore, one should never think that a particular Muslim nation was attacked and that their nationality is different than ours or that their school of thought is different than ours and hence has nothing to do with us.

## ISLAMIC UNITY AND MULTIPLE SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

This is the last issue I wish to discuss on this topic. Islam is different than *madhhab* (school of jurisprudence or thought). Islam is the principle of religion that all Muslims believe in. A *madhhab*, however, is a path to religion. In fact, this was a matter of great ingenuity on the part of Islamic scholars who named their schools as *madhāhib* and not religions so that these different schools would not be in opposition to the principle religion. Therefore, Islamic *madhāhib* are paths towards Islam. The source of most of them lies in the *ijtihād* and differences of opinions regarding the Qur’ān and the Sunnah, which stem from the understanding of an individual or a group of people.

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<sup>8</sup> *Al-Kāfi*, Kitāb al-imān wa al-kufr, section 70, no. 1 and 5.

Of course, at the advent of some *madhāhib* politics did, in fact, have a role to play. There is no doubt about that and, God-willing, I will discuss the originations of some *madhāhib* in detail in the future. Nonetheless, *madhāhib* were formed. We are followers of the Ja‘farī *madhhab* while others are followers of the Ḥanafī *madhhab*—which, ostensibly, the majority of Muslims follow. Another may follow the Shāfi‘ī *madhhab* or the Mālikī one, while yet another will follow the Ḥanbalī *madhhab*. Again, another person may follow the Ibāḍī *madhhab*, and so on and so forth. Can the differences of these schools be so great that they would overshadow Islamic unity?

If a Muslim of another *madhhab* was attacked and his land occupied by the occupiers or he was oppressed by the oppressors, would we say that it has nothing to do with us? Would we say that our school is different than theirs? Such a thing should never be said and is in opposition to the necessities of religion. We who are Shias are associated with ‘Alī (‘a) and we take pride in that as well. All Muslims would take pride in being devoted to him. After the battle of Jamal, some thought that since ‘Alī (‘a) had overcome those who opposed him (i.e., the people of Basrah and their companions), he would divide their wealth amongst his soldiers and take them captive. Instead, however, the Imam said, “These are Muslims; these are our brothers who rebelled against us.” In other words, their rebellion against ‘Alī (‘a) did not cause him to state that they were not his brothers or that they were not Muslims.

I do not want to enter a jurisprudential discussion here. It is self-evident that if one is an enemy of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), he is a *nāsibī*. But, thank God, there are none of these people alive today. They fought against ‘Alī (‘a) but all he said was, “These are brothers who rebelled against us.” He preserved Islamic unity to this extent. God-forbid, however, that this battle (of Jamal) could become the pretext for some Muslims to consider others as disbelievers. ‘Alī (‘a) states in his will that was given to Imam Ḥasan (‘a) and Imam Ḥusayn (‘a): “God-forbid that you fight and kill Muslims” (i.e., with the excuse that the Commander of the Faithful was killed by them).

## THE SCALE OF THE UNITED UMMAH

The essence of what I am saying is that the unified Islamic Ummah and Islamic brotherhood, which has been mentioned in the Qur’ān, must be in the same form as it was during the age of the Prophet (ṣ). The differences that came later must not cause any harm to the unity that existed during the time of the Prophet. Therefore, all of us belong to a particular *madhhab*;

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we have beliefs backed with reasoning. It is the task of scholars to sit down and discuss these matters, not the task of the people. None of these sectarian differences and dispersions should cause us to label one another a disbeliever or to consider one another outside the fold of Islam. They should not cause us to become enemies of one another or to cause harm to the unification of the hearts that Allah has enacted amongst the believers. Therefore, Islamic brotherhood exists at the level of the universals [of the faith] that all Muslims believe in. I said previously<sup>9</sup> that the criterion for an Islamic Ummah is the universal beliefs and faith that all Muslims emphasize. They resort to these universals; this is the scale and criterion of a unified Islamic Ummah. Nationalistic, tribal, or sectarian differences must not affect this common Islamic brotherhood and must not cause it any harm.

### UNITY WEEK

Last week was Unity Week. I have to thank all good and Muslim Iranians for celebrating this week in a great way. The International Conference of Unity was formed and, God be praised, was successful. Various organizations cooperated with the conference, such as: The Organization of Islamic Propagation, The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) World Assembly, and The World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought. In addition to Tehran, it was held in a few other provinces as well. The guests that came from foreign lands also participated in the ceremonies held in various provinces. A great ceremony was held in Zahidan, as well as Kurdistan and Gorgan where Shia and Sunni brothers participated. Everyone came together in the conference held in Tehran.

One person participated from the eastern part of the Islamic world and another from the western part; yet they sat next to each other as brothers, shared ideas, and mutually listened to the speeches. The media outlets in general and the Islamic Republic television specifically must be thanked for their positive broadcast of the ceremonies and of the Unity Week. Newspapers must also be thanked. The Friday Prayer leaders who mentioned the issue of unity in their sermons must also be appreciated. A note of thanks must be given in all of these areas.

This all stems from the blessings of the Islamic Revolution and from Imam Khomaynī (r) who laid the seeds of Islamic brotherhood. Praise be to Allah that it has now grown and spread to other Islamic countries. The Islamic movement has started everywhere. Those who oppose us used to say

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<sup>9</sup> That is, in Part I of the series.

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that this movement is a Shia movement; they have now retreated from that position and proved that it is an Islamic movement.

Finally, the supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, must be thanked for following up on this Islamic movement. He founded a number of cultural organizations such as the The World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought, the effects of which we are currently seeing as a blessing of Allah. In the end, I emphasize that Muslims must consider Islamic brotherhood as a blessing. This is a clear statement of the Qur'an. This blessing must not be given up for any price. No tendency, nationalistic thought, political party, tribe, or *madhhab* should be allowed to compromise and undermine Islamic brotherhood.

## Abū Ḥanīfah and the Transmission of Traditions

ʿAbd al-Ṣamad Murtaḍawī

Translated by Hamid Waqar

### Abstract:

As the founder of the Ḥanafī school of fiqh, Abū Ḥanīfah is known more as a jurist than a transmitter of traditions (*muhaddith*). He is often depicted as a scholar who did not give great importance to tradition (*ḥadīth*) and used analogical reasoning (*qiyās*) instead. However, Abū Ḥanīfah not only accepted traditions like all other jurists as a source for deriving religious rulings, but was actually known to have transmitted them as well. In addition to the Sunni books of traditions, there are many Shia books which have recorded narrations transmitted by him. This article examines the role that Abū Ḥanīfah played in transmitting traditions and provides examples of a few of these narrations that are recorded in both the Sunni and Shia books of traditions.

**Keywords:** Abū Ḥanīfah, *ḥadīth*, transmitting traditions, *ʿilm al-rijāl*, scholars of traditions, books of traditions, Islamic jurists.

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### ABŪ ḤANĪFAH’S ROLE IN THE TRANSMISSION OF TRADITIONS

Transmitting traditions (*aḥādīth*) was an honour that many struggled to achieve and Abū Ḥanīfah was amongst those who had a deep desire to learn the words of the Noble Prophet (ﷺ). Despite his love for Prophetic traditions and the work of transmitting them, it is said that he refrained from spending the entirety of his time in this field.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, there are presently many traditions where Abū Ḥanīfah is mentioned in the chain of narration. The question is, since Abū Ḥanīfah is counted amongst the *Tābiʿīn* (those who came after the companions of the Prophet) was he able to narrate directly from the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ)? This is a matter of dispute amongst the scholars.

Some believe that although Imam Abū Ḥanīfah was able to meet during his lifetime a few companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), it is not clear

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<sup>1</sup> Iblāgh, p. 44.

that he directly narrated traditions from them.<sup>2</sup> ‘Allāmah Ibn ‘Ābidīn writes in this regard:

Some people have stated that Abū Ḥanīfah met with eight companions, listened to their narrations of traditions and transmitted them. This is false because if these traditions were with the grand Imam, Abū Yūsuf, Imam Muḥammad, Ibn Mubārak, ‘Abd al-Razzāq, and others would have transmitted them for the honour, or at least due to a competitive nature since these types of traditions are merits of honour for the transmitters.<sup>3</sup>

Others, however, have taken the opposite point of view: not only did Abū Ḥanīfah meet seven or eight companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), but he also transmitted a tradition from each one of them.<sup>4</sup> In order to substantiate their claim, this group presents specific instances where Abū Ḥanīfah narrates directly from the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ). The following traditions are examples of this:

1. Abū Ḥanīfah narrates from Anas ibn Mālik, who narrates from the Prophet (ﷺ): Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim man and woman.
2. Abū Ḥanīfah narrates from Jābir who states that an Anṣār came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, I have not been given a child and I do not have a child.’ The Prophet said, ‘Where are you in regards to seeking forgiveness abundantly and giving charity often? It is through this that Allah grants one a child.’ The man then increased his charity and increased his seeking of forgiveness.
3. Abū Ḥanīfah narrates from ‘Abdullah ibn Juz’ Zubaydī, who narrates from the Prophet (ﷺ): Allah will grant ambition and sustenance without measure for the one who ponders deeply about religion.
4. ... Abū Ḥanīfah narrates from ‘Abdullah ibn Abī Awfī, who narrates from the Prophet (ﷺ): Anyone who builds a mosque—even if his contribution is little (lit. *the scratching of a bird*)—Allah will build a house in paradise for him.
5. ... Abū Ḥanīfah narrates from ‘Abdullah ibn Anīs, who narrates from the Prophet (ﷺ): The love of something will make one blind and deaf.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn ‘Ābidīn, 1988, v. 1, p. 149; Abū Zuhrah, p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn ‘Ābidīn, *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Muẓaffar, p. 92; Ibn ‘Ābidīn, p. 150; Iblāgh, p. 52-53.



6. ... Abū Ḥanīfah narrates from Wāthilah ibn al-Asqa‘, who narrates from the Prophet (ﷺ): Call that which you doubt about to what you do not doubt about.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the fact that the chains of narrations of these traditions show that Abū Ḥanīfah directly narrated from the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), it is still conceivable to say that he did not hear these tradition from the companions themselves. Rather, it was due to the trust that he had for the intermediary transmitter that he refrained from mentioning his name and narrated directly from the companions. It will be proven that amongst the categories of traditions, there are many incompletely transmitted traditions which have many similarities with these types of traditions.

Those who narrated traditions from Abū Ḥanīfah in order to prove that he directly transmitted traditions from the companions are often criticized by a segment of scholars in the field of Islamic sciences. According to these scholars: “There are liars in the chains of narrations of these traditions. Such traditions cannot be trusted.”<sup>6</sup> Of course, this group only questions the reliability of the chain of narration. It is possible that these traditions have also been transmitted through (other) correct chains of narration.

In order to come to a conclusion about and prove whether or not Abū Ḥanīfah heard traditions directly from the companions, we will conduct a historical analysis of this issue. The following two matters must be distinguished: 1) whether or not Abū Ḥanīfah heard traditions from the companions and 2) whether or not he transmitted traditions [with or without any intermediaries] from the companions. The reason that these two issues should be separated is because a comparison between the life of the companions and the birth of Abū Ḥanīfah cannot be used to prove whether or not Abū Ḥanīfah transmitted traditions from the companions. The possibility exists that Abū Ḥanīfah did not directly hear traditions from the companions, but nonetheless narrated from them through an intermediary, whose name he does not mention due to the trust that he had for the transmitter.

Imam Abū Ḥanīfah was born in the year 80 AH and passed away in the year 150 AH.<sup>7</sup> Since Mālik ibn Anas passed away in the year 93 AH and since we know that he travelled to Kūfah<sup>8</sup>, there is the possibility of Abū Ḥanīfah narrating a tradition from him when he was 13 years old. However, keeping in mind that Abū Ḥanīfah was working in the marketplace at that

<sup>5</sup> Iblāgh, *Ibid.*; also refer to Ibn Muẓaffar, *Ibid.*, and Suyūṭī, 1990, p. 25-28.

<sup>6</sup> Ibn ‘Ābidīn, p. 149; Abū Zuhrah, p. 60.

<sup>7</sup> Ibn Sa‘d, v. 6, p. 368; Ibn Kathīr, 1997, v. 10, p. 76.

<sup>8</sup> Dhahabī, 1998, v. 6, p. 391; Khatīb, v. 13, p. 334.

age and did not give much importance to knowledge, it is improbable (though not impossible) that he heard a tradition directly from Mālik ibn Anas.

Jābir ibn ‘Abdullah Anṣārī is introduced as a companion whom Abū Ḥanīfah heard a tradition from. However, Jābir passed away in the year 78 AH which makes it impossible for Abū Ḥanīfah to have heard a tradition from him since Abū Ḥanīfah was not yet born at the time. ‘Abdullah ibn Anīs passed away in the year 54 AH—26 years before Abū Ḥanīfah was born. Hence, it is impossible that Abū Ḥanīfah heard a tradition from him as well. It is also quite far-fetched for him to have heard traditions from the other companions since ‘Abdullah ibn Abī Awfī passed away in 87 AH, Wāthilah ibn Asqa‘ passed away in 83 AH, and ‘Abdullah ibn Juz’ passed away in 86 AH. It is far-fetched that a child of 3 to 7 years would be able to hear a tradition from a companion of the Prophet (ﷺ), memorize it, and transmit it years later. In conclusion, it must be said that although the possibility exists that Abū Ḥanīfah transmitted traditions from the companions, it is very unlikely that he heard the tradition directly from any of the companions.

As mentioned above, there is a difference of opinion amongst the scholars regarding whether or not Abū Ḥanīfah heard traditions from the companions. However, his having heard traditions from the *Tābi‘īn* and transmitting them is unanimously agreed upon by all scholars. In fact, some scholars claim that Abū Ḥanīfah received traditions from four thousand scholars and leaders of the *Tābi‘īn*.<sup>9</sup>

Of those whom Abū Ḥanīfah narrated traditions from include the following: ‘Aṭā’ ibn Abī Rabāḥ, Abū Ishāq Sabī‘ī, Muḥārib ibn Dithār, Ḥammād ibn Abī Sulaymān, Haytham ibn Ḥabīb Ṣawwāf, Qays ibn Muslim, Muḥammad ibn Munkadir, Nāfi‘ Mawlā ibn ‘Umar, Hishām ibn ‘Urwah, Yazīd al-Faqīr, Samāk ibn Ḥarb, ‘Alqamah ibn Marthad, ‘Aṭīyah al-‘Awfī, ‘Abd al-Azīz ibn Rafī‘, ‘Abd al-Karīm Abūmīyah, ‘Āmir Sha‘bī.<sup>10</sup>

Not only did Abū Ḥanīfah narrate traditions from others, but he also became an intermediary for other transmitters. Among the famous transmitters who have narrated traditions from Abū Ḥanīfah include individuals such as: Ḥammād ibn Abū Ḥanīfah, Ibrāhīm ibn Ṭahmān, Ishāq ibn Yūsuf al-Azraq, Asad ibn ‘Amr al-Qādī, Ḥasan ibn Ziyād al-Lu’lu’ī, Hamzah al-Ziyāt, Dawūd Ṭā’ī, Zafar, ‘Abd al-Razzāq, Abū Na‘īm, Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan Shaybānī, Abū Yūsuf al-Qādī, Wakī‘ ibn Jarrāḥ,

<sup>9</sup> Ibn ‘Abidīn, 1998, v. 1, p. 146.

<sup>10</sup> Khatib, v. 13, p. 324; Dhahabī, p. 393-395; Ibn Kathīr, p. 77.

Hushaym ibn Bashīr, Yaḥyā ibn Naṣr ibn Ḥājib, and ‘Abdullah ibn Mubārak.<sup>11</sup>

In conclusion, there is no doubt that Abū Ḥanīfah is counted amongst the transmitters of traditions. Although his specialty was jurisprudence, not only did he benefit from the science of traditions and transmitting them, but he also took a keen interest in this field as well.

### ABŪ ḤANĪFAH ACCORDING TO THE SCHOLARS OF TRADITIONS

The scholars of *‘ilm al-rijāl* (the science studying the transmitters of traditions) have contradictory remarks regarding Abū Ḥanīfah. It seems that Khaṭīb Baghdādī, the author of *Tārīkh Baghdad*, had some sort of enmity for Abū Ḥanīfah since many traditions which imply a weakness in Abū Ḥanīfah can be found in his book. For instance, Khaṭīb narrates from Ibn Mubārak stating that Abū Ḥanīfah was “an orphan in traditions” (implying that he did not benefit from knowledge and traditions). On the other hand, however, this same Ibn Mubārak has many positive remarks regarding the reliability and justice of Abū Ḥanīfah with regards to traditions and there are many comments of praise for him.<sup>12</sup> Because of this discrepancy, separating the contradictory traditions and determining the correct ones from the invalid ones is a very difficult process.

Some scholars of *‘ilm al-rijāl* made decisive decisions about the station of Abū Ḥanīfah as a transmitter of traditions. It is stated that Nisā’ī, the author of one of the six *Sunan* of the Ahl al-Sunnah, considered Abū Ḥanīfah weak in traditions. Ibn ‘Uday and a number of other scholars of traditions followed Nisā’ī in this case.<sup>13</sup> There are other scholars of traditions such as Muslim ibn Ḥajjāj, Yaḥya ibn Mu‘īn, and Qays ibn Rabī‘ in *Tārīkh Baghdad* who narrated traditions which, according to them, place Abū Ḥanīfah in the fold of weak transmitters—or even in the fold of transmitters who should be dismissed.<sup>14</sup> In other books of history, as well, traditions are found which point to Abū Ḥanīfah being among the weak transmitters of traditions.<sup>15</sup>

Abū Ḥanīfah transmitted many traditions from the *Tābi‘īn* and the generation after the *Tābi‘īn*. But, can he really be counted amongst the weak transmitters of traditions? It is definitely not the case that he took the

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Khaṭīb, v. 13, p. 343-344.

<sup>13</sup> Dhahabī, v. 5, p. 390.

<sup>14</sup> Khaṭīb, p. 450-451 and 422-430.

<sup>15</sup> Ibn Sa‘d, v. 6, p. 369; Hursāwī, narrated from *al-Du‘afā’ wa al-Matrukīn* and Ibn Jawzī, v. 3, p. 163.

transmission of traditions lightly—this was due to his piety, his efforts to refrain from attributing false traditions to the Prophet (ﷺ), and the strong attention that he gave to the prophetic tradition: “A place in the fire is prepared for whoever intentionally lies about me.”<sup>16</sup> Hence, it cannot be claimed that he was not careful enough with regards to transmitting traditions such that he be considered amongst the weak transmitters or in the fold of those transmitters who should be dismissed.

To explain the reservation that some scholars of *‘ilm al-rijāl* had with regards to Abū Ḥanīfah as a transmitter of traditions, one must investigate the criteria and principles that such scholars stipulated for themselves. After all, it must not be forgotten that Abū Ḥanīfah occasionally resorted to *qiyās* (analogical reasoning) in order to derive religious rulings—since he did not accept many traditions because of the extreme precaution that he took and strict criteria that he established for himself with regards to traditions—and hence, this had a huge effect on the creation of such thoughts regarding Abū Ḥanīfah.

‘Allāmah Shi‘rānī states: “Abū Ḥanīfah did not narrate traditions from anyone except the *Tābi‘īn* who were famous for their justice and truthfulness. All of the narrators who he narrated from were trustworthy people; none of them were accused of lying.”<sup>17</sup> Despite some of the comments made by scholars in *Tārīkh Baghdad*, *Sayr a‘lām al-nublā’*, and other books regarding the weakness of Abū Ḥanīfah in the transmission of traditions, there are other reports which are mentioned confirming him and testifying to his truthfulness in the transmission of traditions.<sup>18</sup> For instance, it has been narrated that Yaḥyā ibn Mu‘īn said: “Abū Ḥanīfah is trustworthy in the transmission of traditions. He refrained from transmitting a tradition until he memorized it with precision.”<sup>19</sup> In other traditions from Yaḥyā ibn Mu‘īn, he describes Abū Ḥanīfah in the following words: “trustworthy, trustworthy,”<sup>20</sup> “trustworthy without problem,”<sup>21</sup> “He was, by Allah, too pious to lie,”<sup>22</sup> and “truthful, truthful in traditions and jurisprudence.”<sup>23</sup> These have been used to confirm him and praise him in the science of traditions; they testify to his truthfulness and trustworthiness.

<sup>16</sup> Bukhārī, 104; Abū Dāwūd, 3166; Ibn Mājah, 36; Aḥmad, 1339; Dārimī, 235.

<sup>17</sup> Sha‘rānī, v. 1, p. 231.

<sup>18</sup> Khatīb, p. 449-450; Dhahabī, v. 6, p. 395.

<sup>19</sup> Khatīb, p.449.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 450.

<sup>21</sup> Dhahabī, Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Khatīb, p. 449.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 450.

As is evident, we are faced with numerous contradictory remarks about Abū Ḥanīfah's transmission of traditions. It is unclear which ones should be accepted and which should be rejected. However, since it is clear that Abū Ḥanīfah was a pious man, it is difficult to conceive of him within the fold of weak transmitters of traditions or in the fold of those transmitters who must be dismissed.

'Weakness' can be explained in two ways: first, what is meant by being a 'weak transmitter' of traditions is that one takes the transmission lightly—i.e., he transmits it without giving importance to the subject-matter or the chain of narration. In other words, he does not consider important the criteria that the scholars of traditions establish in order to prevent traditions from being distorted. Abū Ḥanīfah cannot be described in this way, and he is innocent of any such accusations of this type of weakness against him. Moreover, 'Allāmah 'Abd al-Birr states, "Those who considered Abū Ḥanīfah to be trustworthy and testified to his trustworthiness are much greater in number than those who spoke ill of him."<sup>24</sup>

If, on the other hand, what is meant by 'weakness' in the transmission of traditions is that the person did not transmit an extensive number of traditions, then in that sense, Abū Ḥanīfah would be considered 'weak'. Since Abū Ḥanīfah spent much of his time setting up jurisprudential sessions and deriving jurisprudential rulings from the traditions, he did not have much time to transmit traditions. Due to the great amount of precaution that he practiced with regards to traditions, and keeping in mind the environment that he lived in where many traditions were fabricated, he made it a point to transmit traditions on very few occasions.

In conclusion, it can be stated that Abū Ḥanīfah was not in the fold of the weak transmitters of traditions (using the term as defined in the science of traditions). It is possible that some of the *ahl al-ḥadīth* (those who believed in the principality of the traditions) attributed this characteristic on him because of the dispute between them and the *ahl al-ra'ī* (those who allowed for opinion and analogical reasoning), so that his character would be questioned.<sup>25</sup> The existence of contradictory opinions about Abū Ḥanīfah, which have been attributed to a number of scholars within *'ilm al-rijāl*, is supporting evidence for this claim.<sup>26</sup> A number of Ḥanafī scholars have tried to defend the founder of their school by criticizing and examining the traditions which led to Abū Ḥanīfah being considered weak and many

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<sup>24</sup> Ibn 'Abd al-Birr, p. 456.

<sup>25</sup> Hursāwī, p. 47.

<sup>26</sup> Khatīb, p. 450; Dhahabī, Ibid.

books have been written on this issue including Ibn Muẓafar's *al-Radd 'ala al-khatīb*.

### TRANSMISSION OF TRADITIONS BY ABŪ ḤANĪFAH FOUND IN SHIA BOOKS OF TRADITIONS

Imam Abū Ḥanīfah lived towards the end of the first century after the *hijrah* and during the beginning of the second century which made him a contemporary of Imam Ṣādiq and Imam Bāqir ('a). He had a love for the Prophet's (s) family and would sometimes sit in their intellectual discussions and debates. There are traditions in *Musnad* by Imam Abū Ḥanīfah which are narrated from Imam Bāqir and Imam Ṣādiq ('a).<sup>27</sup> These traditions depict a friendly relationship between Abū Ḥanīfah and the two Imams ('a).

Some believed him to be a Shia because of the support that he gave to Zayd ibn 'Alī, a member of the Messenger of Allah's household, in his uprising against the government of the time and the enormous amount of love that he had for this family. However, it is quite clear that Abū Ḥanīfah was known as an Ahl al-Sunnah *mujtahid* (religious authority) and even today, his *madhhab* has the most followers in the world from amongst the *madhāhib* of the Ahl al-Sunnah. Moreover, the Shia *madhhab* is critiqued in the book *Fiqh al-akbar*, which is attributed to him, and in *al-'Ālim wa al-muta'allim*. Nevertheless, there are still traditions in the *Musnad* of Abū Ḥanīfah where he narrates from Imam Ṣādiq and Imam Bāqir ('a). The following are just two examples:

1. Abū Yūsuf narrates from Abū Ḥanīfah, who narrates from Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn 'Alī (al-Bāqir) regarding the Prophet (s): He prayed from the end of the time of the night prayers until the morning prayers. During this time he performed eight *raka'āt* (cycles of prayer) and three *raka'āt* of *witr*. Then he performed the two *raka'āt* of the morning prayer.<sup>28</sup>
2. Abū Yūsuf narrates from Abū Ḥanīfah, who narrates from Ja'far ibn Muḥammad (al-Ṣādiq), who states that Ibn 'Umar said: A man came and said, "I performed all of the rites except *ṭawāf* and then I came unto my family..."<sup>29</sup>

There are many of these examples in the *Musnad* of Abū Ḥanīfah, the *al-Āthār* of Imam Muḥammad, and the *al-Āthār* by Abū Yūsuf. These show

<sup>27</sup> Pākatchī, 1372, v. 5, p. 386; Abū Zuhrah, p. 146.

<sup>28</sup> Abū Zuhrah, p. 146 narrated from al-Āthār and Abū Yūsuf, p. 34.

<sup>29</sup> Abū Zuhrah, p. 124.

that there was a close relationship between the two Imams (al-Şādiq and al-Bāqir) and Abū Ḥanīfah. It is because of this that some scholars have raised doubts regarding some of the negative comments attributed to Abū Ḥanīfah in respect to Imam Şādiq and Bāqir (‘a).

As mentioned earlier, some writers have considered Abū Ḥanīfah to be a Shia scholar of traditions. An example is Shahrīstānī who lists Abū Ḥanīfah amongst the Shia scholars and authors.<sup>30</sup> Of course, this may seem far-fetched since there is no historical evidence to show that Abū Ḥanīfah was a Shia. Nevertheless, it is understandable why Shahrīstānī and others considered Abū Ḥanīfah to be a Shia scholar of traditions. Not only did he have a friendly relationship with Imam Şādiq and Imam Bāqir (‘a), but he also had a special liking for the family of the Prophet (s). This alone, however, could not have been the sole reasons on why he was considered a Shia by such scholars—Abū Ḥanīfah’s transmission of traditions from Imam Bāqir and Imam Şādiq (‘a) must also have played a part in the formation of such a thought.

Although the principles mentioned above are agreed upon, it is better to search the Shia books of traditions in order to evaluate his role. Even though Imam Abū Ḥanīfah is severely criticized and even cursed in some Shia books of traditions—and has been described as an opinionist and a person who follows his vain desires<sup>31</sup>—his name, however, is found in the chains of narrations of Shia traditions. What is interesting is that in three of the four main compendiums of Shia narrations as well as some other Shia books of traditions, there are various traditions that have been transmitted through Abū Ḥanīfah.<sup>32</sup>

Some may argue that perhaps the ‘Abū Ḥanīfah’ that appears in the Shia chains of narrations refers to someone else with the same name. However, by closely examining the chains of narration of these traditions, it becomes clear that, although there are other people in chains of narration under the name ‘Abū Ḥanīfah’, in many of these traditions Abū Ḥanīfah’s complete name—i.e., Nu‘mān ibn Thābit—is clearly mentioned. This dismisses such a doubt.<sup>33</sup> On the whole, therefore, one can state that Abū Ḥanīfah appears in the chains of narrations of some Shia books of traditions, often with his full name—Abū Ḥanīfah Nu‘mān ibn Thābit—clearly mentioned.<sup>34</sup> It is

<sup>30</sup> Shahrīstānī, v. 1, p. 222-223.

<sup>31</sup> Kulaynī, v. 1, p. 57; Majlisī, v. 2, p. 305; Ṭabarsī, v. 2, p. 360.

<sup>32</sup> Kitābchī, p. 403.

<sup>33</sup> Ḥurr ‘Āmulī, v. 20, p. 35.

<sup>34</sup> Majlisī, v. 14, p. 252; Şadūq, p. 223, Ḥurr ‘Āmulī, v. 20, p. 35; Ṭūsī, v. 1, p. 407.

perhaps because of this that some individuals considered him to be a Shia scholar of traditions.

Incidentally, Shaykh Ṭūsī, a Shia scholar, counted Abū Ḥanīfah to be amongst the companions of Imam Ṣādiq (‘a).<sup>35</sup> Najāshī, who is one of the greatest Shia scholars of *‘ilm al-rijāl* considers a transmitter by the name of Abū Ḥanīfah to be trustworthy.<sup>36</sup> Of course, the possibility exists that who Najāshī meant by Abū Ḥanīfah was not Nu‘mān ibn Thābit.

Despite the fact that Abū Ḥanīfah was an Ahl al-Sunnah scholar and despite the fact that he transmitted many traditions which are accepted by the Ahl al-Sunnah, the number of traditions in the Shia books of narrations transmitted by Abū Ḥanīfah are worthy of attention. The following are examples of Shia traditions in which Abū Ḥanīfah is mentioned in the chain of narration:

1. Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar ibn ‘Alī al-Baṣrī narrates from ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Bandār, who narrates from Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Ṭūsī, who narrates from his father, who narrates from ‘Alī ibn Ḥasharm, who narrates from al-Faḍl ibn Mūsā, who narrates from Abū Ḥanīfah Nu‘mān ibn Thābit, who narrates from Ḥammād ibn Abī Sulaymān, who narrates from Ibrāhīm al-Nakha‘ī, who narrates from ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Utaybah, who narrates from Zayd ibn Thābit, who states: the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) said, “O Zayd, have you married?” I said, “No ...”<sup>37</sup>
2. ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm narrates from his father, who narrates from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Naṣr, who narrates from Ismā‘īl ibn Abū Ḥanīfah, who narrates from Abū Ḥanīfah: I asked Abū ‘Abdullah (‘a), “How is it that a murder needs only two witnesses whereas adultery needs four witnesses?”<sup>38</sup>
3. ‘Alī ibn Ḥammād al-Baghdādī has transmitted to us from Bashr ibn Ghiyāth al-Marīsī, who stated that Abū Yūsuf Ya‘qūb ibn Ibrāhīm narrated from Abū Ḥanīfah, who narrated from ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Salmānī, who narrated from Khanish ibn al-Mu‘tamar, who narrated from ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a) who stated: the Messenger of Allah called for me ...<sup>39</sup>
4. ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Qāsānī narrates from al-Qāsīm ibn Muḥammad, who narrates from Sulymān ibn Dāwūd, who narrates

<sup>35</sup> Kitābchī, *Ibid.*, narrated from Rijāl Ṭūsī, p. 325.

<sup>36</sup> Refer to Rijāl Ḥillī, p. 80 under Abū Ḥanīfah.

<sup>37</sup> Ḥurr ‘Āmulī, v. 20, p. 35.

<sup>38</sup> Kulaynī, v. 7, p. 404; Ṭūsī, v. 6, p. 277.

<sup>39</sup> Ṣadūq, p. 223.



from al-Nu‘mān ibn ‘Abd al-Salām, who narrates from Abū Ḥanīfah: I asked Abū ‘Abdullah (‘a) about a man who commits fornication with a corpse. He (‘a) stated, “There is no punishment for him.”<sup>40</sup>

5. Zarārah and Abū Ḥanīfah narrate from Abī Bakr ibn Ḥazam: A man performed wudū’, wiped the soles of his feet, and entered the mosque.”<sup>41</sup>
6. Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Maḥbūb narrates from ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad, who narrates from al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad, who narrates from Sulaymān ibn Dāwūd, who narrates from al-Nu‘mān, who narrates from ‘Abd al-Salām, who narrates from Abū Ḥanīfah, who states: I asked Abū ‘Abdullah (‘a) about whether crying in prayer breaks the prayer ...<sup>42</sup>

Many such traditions can be found in the Shia books of traditions. Although people such as Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā are given the nickname ‘Abū Ḥanīfah’ and are mentioned as such in Shia chains of narration,<sup>43</sup> it is easy to differentiate between Imam Abū Ḥanīfah and other people who have been given this nickname. This is because either Abū Ḥanīfah’s full name (i.e., Nu‘mān ibn Thābit) appears in the chain or there are other contextual clues (for example, other transmitters who are connected to him) which assist in determining the individual intended. For instance, in the third tradition, although the complete name of Abū Ḥanīfah is not mentioned in the chain of narration, the existence of people such as Abū Yūsuf Ya‘qūb ibn Ibrāhīm, who was a special student of Abū Ḥanīfah, clearly points to the fact that the ‘Abū Ḥanīfah’ that is intended is Nu‘mān ibn Thābit. Also, it is known that Abū Yūsuf did not have any relationship with the other Abū Ḥanīfah.

We also have many traditions in the Shia corpus of traditions praising Imam Ṣādiq (a) and his high intellectual station which have been transmitted by Abū Ḥanīfah. These compose some of the important traditions in the Shia corpus.<sup>44</sup>

The fact that Abū Ḥanīfah as well as some of his associates are mentioned within the chains of narrations in the Shia books of traditions seems to suggest that they were considered trustworthy by some of the Shia scholars, in the sense that they were satisfied with transmitting and re-

<sup>40</sup> Ḥurr ‘Āmulī, v. 27, p. 409.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. and Nūri, v. 1, p. 409.

<sup>42</sup> Ṭūsī, v. 1, p. 408; Ḥurr ‘Āmulī, v. 7, p. 247.

<sup>43</sup> Kulaynī, v. 1, p. 453 and Majlisī, v. 15, p. 263.

<sup>44</sup> Ṣadūq, 1413, v. 2, p. 292.

ording their traditions and believed them to be reliable links going back to the Imam. Below are two examples of traditions where not only Abū Ḥanīfah, but Ibrāhīm ibn Nakhi‘ī, one of Abū Ḥanīfah’s leaders, Ḥammād ibn Sulaymān, his teacher, and Abū Yūsuf, one of his famous students, are mentioned:

1. Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar ibn ‘Alī al-Baṣrī narrates from ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Bandār, who narrates from Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Ṭūsī, who narrates from his father, who narrates from ‘Alī ibn Ḥasharm, who narrates from al-Faḍl ibn Mūsa, who narrates from Abū Ḥanīfah al-Nu‘mān ibn Thābit, who narrates from Ḥammād ibn Sulaymān who narrates from Ibrāhīm ibn al-Nakhi‘ī, who narrates from ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Utaybah, who narrates from Zayd ibn Thābit, who said: the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) asked me, “Have you married?” I said, “No ...”<sup>45</sup>
2. In *Muntakhab al-baṣā’ir*, Abū Yūsuf Ya‘qūb ibn Ibrāhīm narrates from Abū Ḥanīfah, who narrates from ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Salmānī, who narrates from Jaysh ibn al-Mu‘tamar, who narrates from ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a), who said: ...<sup>46</sup>

In conclusion, it can be said that Abū Ḥanīfah was considered one of the transmitters of traditions. Despite the fact that some Ahl al-Sunnah scholars of traditions considered him weak there are many other Ahl al-Sunnah scholars who considered him trustworthy and accepted his traditions. And despite the fact that some Shia scholars of traditions rejected him, there are many other Shia scholars of traditions who accepted his traditions. Therefore, although Abū Ḥanīfah may not be considered a ‘transmitter’ per say in its proper technical definition, there is no doubt that he did indeed transmit many traditions that are found in both Sunni and Shia books of traditions.

It is necessary to mention that there are very few traditions—either two or four—transmitted by Abū Ḥanīfah in the six main Ahl al-Sunnah books of traditions. However, there are many traditions transmitted by him mentioned in other Ahl al-Sunnah books such as the *Musnad* of Ibn Abī Shaybah, the *Musnad* of ‘Abd al-Razzāq, the *al-Athār* of Abū Yūsuf, the *al-Athār* of Imam Muḥammad Shaybānī, and the *Musnad* of Abū Ḥanīfah. Ṭabarānī has also narrated traditions transmitted by him. In fact, ‘Abdullah ibn Dāwūd Kharībī states in this regard: “Muslims must pray for Abū Ḥanīfah in all of their prayers because he protected jurisprudence and the *sunan*.”<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Ḥurr ‘Āmulī, v. 2, p. 35.

<sup>46</sup> Majlisī, v. 41, p. 252; Ṣadūq, p. 223.

<sup>47</sup> Suyūṭī, 1990, p. 103; Khatīb, p. 344-345.

Moreover, the reasons why there is doubt regarding whether or not Abū Ḥanīfah falls in the category of transmitters of traditions in its proper technical definition include the following: 1) There is no book written by Abū Ḥanīfah where he independently transmits traditions and differentiates between the valid and invalid ones. The only book that does exist is his *Musnad* but even there, it is not certain if it should be attributed to him. 2) There is no historical evidence to show that Abū Ḥanīfah travelled with the sole purpose of searching for traditions in order to collect them and later on transmit them, or that even a portion of his life was spent in this endeavour.

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## Manifesto for a New World

Jafar Gonzalez Bornez

### Abstract:

The global hegemony of Western capitalistic imperialism has recently been challenged on many fronts—by the Islamic resurgence movements in the Middle East culminating in the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, by revolutionary groups in formerly oppressed and repressed countries such as those in Latin America, and also by a host of anti-globalization movements operating at grass-roots levels throughout the globe. What unites them is their vision of a “new world” free from the clutches of tyranny, oppression, inequality and the likes. In this paper, the author emphasizes the need for Muslims to consider Islam, not as one alternative religion independent of all others, but as the continuation of the same divine message preaching the truth of the One God and the establishment of justice. As such, it can work together with other non-Muslim groups based on mutual principles in order to re-envision and re-create a new society.

**Keywords:** Islamic Revolution, new world, justice, imperialism, revolutionary Muslims, anti-globalization movement, unity.

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وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ  
وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ  
الظَّالِمِ أَهْلِهَا وَاجْعَل لَّنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ وَلِيًّا وَاجْعَل لَّنَا مِن  
لَّدُنكَ نَصِيرًا

Why should you not fight in the way of Allah and the abased men, women, and children, who say, ‘Our Lord, bring us out of this town whose people are wrongdoers, and appoint for us a guardian from You, and appoint for us a helper from You?’ (4:75)

When people speak of ideas that revolutionise society, they do but express the fact, that within the old society, the elements of a new

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one have been created, and that the dissolution of the old ideas keeps even pace with the dissolution of the old conditions of existence.

Manifesto of the Communist Party

*In Your name, O Justice!!*

From the ruins and decomposition of the old world, a new world is being born. The agonizing old world, based on the logic of the usurer's benefit, is resisting—giving way to this new world which begins full of faith in transcendental values, ready to satisfy simultaneously the material, intellectual, and spiritual necessities of humankind.

The new world releases with its gentle hands the old flags of social justice that claimed to guarantee true freedom and human happiness; yet only those who conceive of the human being as a whole made up of three dimensions—material, intellectual, and spiritual—will be able to construct a society capable of satisfying all human necessities.

The usury-infected and despotic world tries to drag humankind into a war of total destruction before allowing power to escape from their hands, bloodstained through centuries of oppression and tyranny.

Attempting to stop their inevitable disappearance from the scene of history, they invent and nourish groups to engage in terroristic attacks in order to acquire the necessary alibi to justify their violent advocacy of war.

Using their lies, they invade countries and plunder the remains of the worldwide economy—an act of desperation before drowning in the black well of forgetfulness.

The new world, from its first and vague steps, extends its hands of solidarity to all the people worldwide and babbles its first words of anti-imperialist fraternity while understanding its faith in a God of Truth and Mercy and inevitably committed to Justice; defending the weak, the exploited, and the oppressed; and constructing a global society—just, free, unified, and fraternal.

The victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, at the beginning of the year 1978, projected to the world scene a new revolutionary force that is based on the belief in the One and Almighty God—a God of kindness and justice, the Defender of the truth, of the good, of social justice, and of the fraternity between people—and that uses the Holy Quran explicitly as the basis for their political program.

Due to their faith in the Almighty God, these new revolutionary forces—directed and guided by Imam Khumaynī—were capable of simultaneously facing all the imperialistic powers of their time and to leave every battle field victoriously.

## MANIFESTO FOR A NEW WORLD

Since then, the expansive strength of their ideas has not stopped growing and spreading throughout the whole world, first between the oppressed Islamic communities worldwide and subsequently between all the oppressed people—feeding their desires of freedom and accelerating the crisis of the large decadent empires—initially the agonising Union of Soviet Socialist Republic and now the whole capitalist block.

In order to confront what appears to them as a new “ghost”—which, this time, moves not only along Europe but across the whole world—they met in Saint Alliance. It was composed of all the reactionary right and left forces, the extinct Soviet Union, the United States of America, France, England, Germany, China, Japan, the petroleum monarchy, and the puppet governments in the Islamic countries.

For more than eight years, the new Islamic revolution was battled by a silent worldwide coalition when the tyrant Saddam invaded Iran with his armies and his most sophisticated weapons in order to put an end to the revolution. In the words of Kissinger, “If we do not stop it now, we will see it extend from Bangladesh to Morocco.” During these last thirty years, it has been challenged on all fronts and by all their military, economic, and propaganda resources ... yet without any success.

To stop this revolutionary movement—a movement armed with faith in God and with the transcendental values that emanate from the Holy Qur’ān—the world tyrannies did not hesitate in provoking terrorist attacks in order to feed the spectrum of the new ghost who threatens their so called “free and democratic society”; this is the ghost of Islam.

The CIA and Mosad have trained and continue to train terrorist groups—ones formed by ideologists hired by the imperialists and composed of ignorant fanatics from the marginalized areas of the Islamic world and from the most ignorant, impoverished, and indignant of the oppressed Muslim communities—in order to organize terrorist cells that will nourish the equation: Islam=terrorism.

With the pretext of combating this self-manufactured “Islamic terrorism”—but in reality, fearing their own destruction as the ruling power—on the one hand, they invade Islamic countries like Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Lebanon, Sudan, and Ethiopia, and on the other, they spend large amounts in sectarian propaganda through their principal agents in the Islamic world: the corrupted petroleum monarchies. This propaganda is impregnated of hatred and lies against the revolutionary Muslims. Through their control over the Islamic sacred centres of peregrination—Mecca and Medina—they try and impose on the Muslim community their corrupted power. They work hard to prevent the awakening of the Islamic people—

those oppressed by rulers sold to the empire—while repressing mercilessly the manifestations of solidarity with the Palestinian people and the repulsion to Zionism and imperialism. They multiply their activities with the Wahhabi agents—those who have infiltrated the Islamic world disguised as Muslims—with the only objective of dividing the Muslims and combating the revolutionary Islamic movement inspired by the true teachings of the Holy Qur’ān; they deform its interpretation with aberrant readings in order to justify sectarian violence and totalitarian narrow-mindedness in complete contradistinction to the flexible and unifying philosophy present in the sacred text. Behind the scenes, they congratulate themselves and pat themselves on the back with their Zionist owners.

They also threaten the use of atomic bombs in the face of countries like the new Russia and China—countries that seem to strengthen their anxieties of becoming a Universal Empire. As for the new emerging revolutionary countries previously composed of the oppressed, they insist on the establishment of dialogue and collaboration—as if to deny shamelessly the ghost of their own atomic holocaust—in order to pacify them. In so doing, they attempt to quell the growing resentment of public opinion in their own countries which openly opposes their warmongering plans, the continuity of their unjust system, their repressiveness in relation to the natural resources of mankind and of the life conditions on the planet.

The oppressed countries in the world, particularly in Latin America, take advantage of the new-found opportunity offered to them by the fact that their despotic rulers have now given their total attention and use of resources to combat the growing and successful Islamic revolution in the Middle East. Through this opportunity, such countries, which were previously pressured in every way, now conquer new spaces of freedom, unimaginable till the successful arrival of the Islamic revolution.

With Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Paraguay in the front line, the Southern American continent finally begins to rid itself of its imperialistic oppression and finds in the Islamic revolution the natural allies to defend against an aggressive and militaristic enemy; the road has opened up before it in the construction of a new world, based on social justice and the equitable distribution of wealth, healthcare, education, habitation, and work.

We are, then, witnesses of a crucial moment in the history of mankind: while the old system—based on their logic of the industrial and financial profit, and lately in usury and lies—collapses and gives way, new revolutionary forces—which openly incorporate a new spiritual dimension (pre-



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viously unknown) within their program of social resistance—appear triumphant on the international scene.

From the triumph of the Islamic revolution in Iran, we are witnessing the last phase of the confrontation between the old world, which resists disappearance, and the new world, that rises to fight it. As the winter reach its end, the old world in their desperate attempts to prevent their disappearance, looks ready to destroy the world in a nuclear war before giving away the power that they have manipulated for centuries.

But the forces of a new spring are expanding and coordinating with each other; though they are still shy and in their preliminary stages, they are, nonetheless, determined and undeniably unstoppable.

The armies of the Zionist project to dominate the world are defeated by the resistance in South Lebanon and in Palestine and they struggle impotently in Iraq and Afghanistan. Without doubt, the old imperial power agonizes in its death; yet in its fall, it threatens to drag all humankind to chaos and destruction.

To avoid this, it is necessary and urgent that the forces of the new world become organized in order to begin filling the emptiness left by the falling old empires with a new way of direct action and social organization and with structures in line with what it advocates of social justice and brotherhood.

If the new forces of the Islamic revolution want to play their role in the creation of that new world, the revolutionary Muslims will have to understand clearly that Islam is not one more religion and the last of them, but the eternal religion of the One God; that there are not many religions and Islam is the final of them, but that there is only one religion named ‘*islām*’ by God and that *muslims* are the ones who, from the beginning of times, voluntarily surrender to His orders and His directions.

فَلَمَّا أَحَسَّ عِيسَىٰ مِنْهُمُ الْكُفْرَ قَالَ مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ<sup>ط</sup>

قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَأَشْهَدُ بِأَنَّ

مُسْلِمُونَ

And when Jesus sensed their faithlessness, he said, ‘Who will be my helpers toward Allah?’ The Disciples said, ‘We will be helpers of Allah. We have faith in Allah, and bear witness that we are *muslims* (i.e., we have submitted). (3:52)

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وَإِذْ أَوْحَيْتُ إِلَى الْحَوَارِيِّينَ أَنْ ءَامِنُوا بِي وَبِرَسُولِي قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا  
وَاشْهَدْ بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ

And when I inspired the Disciples, [saying], ‘Have faith in Me and My apostle,’ they said, ‘We have faith. Bear witness that we are *muslims*.’ (5:111)

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ ۗ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي  
الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ ۗ مِلَّةَ أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ۗ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ  
قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى  
النَّاسِ ۗ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِاللَّهِ هُوَ  
مَوْلَاكُمْ ۗ فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ

And wage jihad for the sake of Allah, a jihad which is worthy of Him. He has chosen you and has not placed for you any obstacle in the religion, the faith of your father, Abraham. He named you ‘*muslims*’ before, and in this, so that the Apostle may be a witness to you, and that you may be witnesses to mankind. So maintain the prayer, give the zakat, and hold fast to Allah. He is your master—an excellent master and an excellent helper. (22:78)

الَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ هُمْ بِهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ وَإِذَا يُتْلَىٰ  
عَلَيْهِمْ قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا بِهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّنَا ۗ إِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ  
مُسْلِمِينَ

Those to whom We gave the Book before it are the ones who believe in it, and when it is recited to them, they say, ‘We believe in it. It is indeed the truth from our Lord. Indeed we were *muslims* [even] before it [came].’ (22:52-53)

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وَوَصَّىٰ بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبُ يَبْنَئِيَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ لَكُمْ الدِّينَ  
فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

Abraham enjoined this [creed] upon his children, and [so did] Jacob, [saying], 'My children! Allah has indeed chosen this religion for you; so never die except as *muslims*. (2:132)

قُولُوا ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ  
وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَا أُوتِيَ  
الْنَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ

Say, 'We have faith in Allah, and that which has been sent down to us, and that which was sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus were given, and that which the prophets were given from their Lord; we make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we are *muslims* (we submit).' (2:136)

مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُّسْلِمًا  
وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian. Rather he was a *hanif*, a *muslim*, and he was not one of the polytheists. (3:67)

قُلْ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ  
وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ  
وَالنَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ  
مُسْلِمُونَ

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Say, 'We have faith in Allah, and in what has been sent down to us, and what was sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus were given, and the prophets, from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him are we *muslims* (we submit).' (3:84)

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ دِينًا مِّمَّنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ وَاتَّبَعَ مِلَّةَ  
إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا ۗ وَاتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا

And who has a better religion than him who submits (*aslama*) his will to Allah, being virtuous, and follows the creed of Abraham, a *hanīf*? And Allah took Abraham for a dedicated friend. (4:125)

إِلَىٰ وَأَوْحَيْنَا بَعْدَهُۥ مِنْ وَالنَّبِيِّنَ نُوحٍ إِلَىٰ وَأَوْحَيْنَا كَمَا إِلَيْكَ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِنَّا  
وَيُونُسَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَعِيسَىٰ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ  
زُبُورًا دَاوُدَ وَءَاتَيْنَا سُلَيْمَانَ وَهَارُونَ

We have indeed revealed to you as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him, and [as] We revealed to Abraham and Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, Jesus and Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon,—and We gave David the Psalms— (4:163)

قُلْ إِنِّي هَدَانِي رَبِّيَ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ دِينًا قِيَمًا مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ  
حَنِيفًا ۗ وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

Say, 'Indeed my Lord has guided me to a straight path, the upright religion, the creed of Abraham, a *hanīf*, and he was not one of the polytheists.' (6:161)

شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا وَصَّىٰ بِهِ نُوحًا وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَمَا  
وَصَّيْنَا بِهِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ ۚ أَنْ أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا

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فِيهِ كَبُرَ عَلَى الْمُشْرِكِينَ مَا تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَيْهِ ۗ اللَّهُ يَجْتَبِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ  
يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يُنِيبُ

He has prescribed for you the religion which He had enjoined upon Noah and which We have [also] revealed to you, and which We had enjoined upon Abraham, Moses and Jesus, declaring, ‘Maintain the religion, and do not be divided in it.’ Hard on the polytheists is that to which you summon them. Allah chooses for it whomever He wishes and He guides to it whomever returns penitently. (42:13)

وَلَهُد مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ كُلُّ لَّهُ قَانِتُونَ

To Him belongs whoever is in the heavens and the earth. All are obedient to Him. (30:26)

We have to understand clearly that, as there is only one God, there is only one divine message for humanity from the beginning of creation, and that the Holy Qur’ān is the final message that comes to eliminate the adulterations and omissions of the previous messages and to complement them definitively; it is the last of the only, and same, liberating message and a guide from God for humankind.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِئِينَ مِنَ  
ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ  
وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

Indeed the faithful, the Jews, the Christians, and the Sabaeans—those of them who have faith in Allah and the Last Day and act righteously—they shall have their reward near their Lord, and they will have no fear, nor will they grieve. (2:62)

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إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِغُونَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ مَن  
ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا  
هُم يَحْزَنُونَ

Indeed the faithful, the Jews, the Sabaeans, and the Christians—  
those who have faith in Allah and the Last Day and act right-  
eously—they will have no fear, nor will they grieve. (5:69)

مُنِيبِينَ إِلَيْهِ وَاتَّقُوهُ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ  
الْمُشْرِكِينَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِعَا<sup>ط</sup> كُلِّ  
حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ

... turning to Him in penitence, and be wary of Him, and maintain  
the prayer, and do not be among the polytheists—of those who  
split up their religion and became sects: each faction exulting in  
what it possessed. (30:31-32)

The revolutionary Muslims should call our Muslim brothers and all the believers to become united under our common faith that commits us before God—a faith that obliges us to fight for the creation of a world in response to His parameters of Justice, and to defend the poor and the oppressed ones. This is understood by the followers of the Liberation theology.

Our fundamental task is not to convert people to Islam for that is in the hands of God; our task is to respond to the divine call in order to defend the weak and oppressed, to create a world based on social justice, and to commit ourselves to the path of all those (Muslims and non-Muslims) believers and non-believers that are involved in that same task. We must share our thoughts and points of view with them—working shoulder-to-shoulder and without reservations—in order to create that new better world that we say is possible.

Therefore, we, the revolutionary Muslims, have a few tasks before us:

1. To free our beliefs from deformations that pretend to present Islam as one more religion. From within and without, Islam is presented as an alter-

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native religion that wants to consume all the other religious and non-religious beliefs. We must proclaim the general meaning of the word *islām* as the voluntary and absolute surrendering before our Creator and Lord—a surrender that men and women, from the beginning of times, have shown us; We must present the Holy Qur'ān, not as a text opposed to the previous Holy Books, but as what it is: the eternal word of God for all humanity throughout all times.

For this, we will need to redefine ourselves in universal terms—not as a religion and an alternative spirituality, but as a continuation of the eternal truths, as a living reality, and as the end of the only message that the one God has sent to humanity for eternity in order to guide and teach them to make good use of the freedom that He has bestowed upon them.

2. To organize our activities in a fundamental way, using the mosques not only as centres of adoration, but—as God requests of us—as places from where thought, analysis, and debate is conducted, social work is planned and developed, and a better world is fought for.

3. To assume responsibility and to consider ourselves as the engine of that universal change and as ideologists and vanguard leaders of the anti-globalization movement; we must also take charge of the fundamental role of establishing the bases of a new form of social organization based more so on direct action, brotherhood, initiative, and creativity of the people than in the coercive authority and planning of the State. We must be involved in organizing the groups called to create this new world.

In other words, we must conceive of a real democracy—not one where personal power is delegated within the play of power-politics where false promises are systematically betrayed and the peoples' hopes repeatedly crushed, but one characterized by base organizations—ones that take responsibility for developing economic, social, cultural, sanitary, medical and educational welfare that are part of the needs of human society. We must stop demanding and waiting for these needs to be met by the governments; they will never answer to our requests since their power is the result of a violent and unjust appropriation.

4. From both a theoretical and practical point of view, we have to envision a three-fold division and project a three-fold call:

- a) The first consists of the Islamic community.
- b) The second consists of all believers in One God from among the various religions and beliefs.
- c) The third consists of all people who, though they may not possess faith in the One God, are nonetheless capable of discerning between truth and falsehood, justice and oppression, fair distribution of wealth and ille-

gal appropriation, injustice, and usury. It consists of those who side with the oppressed and the exploited, and who are willing to play their part in the creation of a new world based on human values and not on stock-market shares.

The call to all three groups is an invitation to fill—in a direct, active, and creative way—the emptiness left by the forces of the old world—one that is disappearing into extinction.

Where there are anti-globalization movements stirring within the various social circles of different cities, we must join them; where there are none, we must create them. We must contribute our theoretical ideas and practical effort without trying to appropriate them, since that would not only limit their calling capacity and efficacy but would also retract the real spirit of defending the common interest that must guide our social activity.

In order to fulfil our goals, we need to provide the anti-globalization movement with a permanent organization at a grass-roots level—an organization which acts continuously and not sporadically and which thinks in global terms through concerted efforts of coordination at the provincial, national, and international levels with the other anti-globalization movements.

The basic anti-globalization movement does not have to dissolve itself in the countries where revolutionary governments exist. The contacts, agreements, and collaborations that the revolutionary governments of different states establish with each other, as much as it is to re-enforce the common anti-imperialist line, must also be to advance the creation of their own society—i.e., revolutionary bases must be organized in an autonomous way and independent practises must be developed in the construction of the new society.

If they are sincere, the anti-globalization organizations will be able to collaborate with revolutionary governments not only on the level of theory but also on the level of practice; they may offer constructive criticism regarding errors and deviations of the processes of bureaucracy, without getting dissolved into the governmental structures and their parties, since some of these parties (including the revolutionary ones) are used to putting their own interest before that of the general interest of the population.

In the same way, the revolutionary Muslims should let themselves become dissolved within the non-globalization movement. If we do not want to have just a testimonial presence, our participation in the social forums will need to be supported in our own organizations and social activities as revolutionary Muslims.



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It must be, therefore, our primary task to fortify our organizations by inviting Muslims attracted by the Islamic Revolution—whether from before or even now—and to educate them in the necessity of understanding our faith—both its spiritual and social dimensions—thereby generating a voluntary working moral that can expand and give meaning to our organization as revolutionary Muslims.

We have to develop in our organizations and mosques a culture of healthy debate revolving around the necessary issues of the society in which we live in order to confront them. For example, with regards to education, teachers must be called to create independent theories pertaining to the methods and objectives of teaching, to define educational concepts, to form pedagogical methodologies, to research alternative programs of education, and to put these into practice within our schools and newly established colleges. We must orient ourselves in such a way that we teach our children and youth to think for themselves. Through the development of these new educational methods and new pedagogical criteria, we can make our educational establishments attractive models for both Muslims and non-Muslims.

This should not just be limited to education; the same must be done with regards to developing healthcare, establishing a profitable workforce, creating economical initiatives, and dealing in matters related to nutrition, leisure, etc.

The message of Islam cannot expand in a vacuum. We must come down from the level of theory and operate on the practical level in order to show the validity and truth of our ideas and theories.

Only in practice can we unite and bring together our Muslim brothers. It is only by offering a viable social system that gives an Islamic answer to the needs of the Muslims living in non-Islamic societies—particularly related to issues in the education and leisure of youth—that we can attract our Muslim brothers to a unity at the level of action which can surpass the different ideologies and sects on the one hand, and the simple, myopic adaptation of the predominant social, agnostic environment on the other. Furthermore, it is only at this level of action that we can appear as a feasible reference, capable of attracting seekers whose beliefs differ from our own.

In order for the anti-globalization movement and our own Muslim revolutionary organizations to continue forward, we will need to consider from the beginning our economic independence. We cannot continue to be instruments surviving from the salary of governments and government parties, whether revolutionary or not, within their deformed bureaucratic framework that only impedes creative and constructive initiatives.

The experience of the revolutions of the twentieth century has taught us one important fact: parties and revolutionary organizations, after having assumed power, generate a bureaucracy in the guise of a new aristocracy with their own particular interests, privileges, and powers and which are often opposed to the common public interest.

At the same time, so long as the system of nation states continues to exist, the so-called 'national interest'—which is nothing but the State's guise to push their own agenda forward—will continue to be generated, thereby undermining the general interest of humanity.

In our organizations and in our involvement in the anti-globalization movement, we have to develop a general consciousness of the idea that responsibility means service and that our participation on the political, social, cultural, or religious branches of authority can never be the source of privileges and personal enrichment; on the contrary, we must perform a disinterested and nonaligned service to the community that will find satisfaction and reward in the accomplishment of a work well-performed.

Only those who fit such a profile should be chosen to take responsibility and coordinate these positions. Any person looking for personal privileges should be removed from such positions of responsibility.

We should, therefore, make a general call to our Muslim brothers; depending on the success of this call, the invitation should then be extended to other individuals and parties interested in the creation of a new world. With the establishment of an active and organized movement composed of all those ready to play their part in this noble goal, we can effectively attend to the needs of the masses in the fields of habitation, labour, sanitation, education, culture, art, intellectually, and spirituality.

This cannot function only on the theoretical level; rather, it must be a concerted effort of both theory and practice so that through their mutual symbiosis, the idea may be developed further and we may prevent the mistakes of the past from reoccurring. As a result, this process cannot be a closed model that follows narrow parameters and limits the faculty of creativity; rather, it must be an ongoing discussion and debate regarding the nature of the new world and the best manner to ensure its success.

This process must learn from the past—both from its successes and mistakes—and take in account all the obstacles that impelled the fundamental values of social justice, brotherhood, freedom, and personal happiness. It must dismiss such obstacles and oppose similar elements that oppose these fundamental values.

The call must be directed to all classes of humanity so that each individual ready to collaborate in the creation of a new world can give some of

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his time, his knowledge, and his creativity to assist in developing sanitary, educational, cultural, artistic, leisure-based, intellectual, and spiritual structures based on the aforementioned fundamental values. They must attempt to fill the increasing emptiness that the old power is leaving in its devolution towards extinction.

Those entrenched in the political status quo—volunteer actors in the comedy written by the Zionist capital—should be left on their own in their game to obtain personal privileges and benefits—an illusion completely divorced from reality and the real needs and wishes of the majority.

Areas like sanitation and education in many parts of the globe need attending to urgently. This must be done in a humane and effective manner. It requires a volunteer work force of concerned, professional, and creative individuals.

New means of production and distribution need to be conceived of and impelled by those involved in business and associated fields. Their expertise and knowledge on these issues is vital in order to create new sources of wealth with the goal to satisfy the growing needs and demands of a new society. However, these sources must be based on proper management and wisdom and cannot develop into the current irrational and uncontrolled production of goods which has only led to the increase in polluting agents, predators, fomenters of social chaos, rubbish, and environmental degradation. It has also led to the extinction of natural resources and species and, on the human plane, to more suffering along with physical, psychic, and spiritual imbalances.

The generated resources from the new activities will need to be funnelled in the proper channels in order to facilitate and improve the general living conditions—most importantly, the intellectual and spiritual enrichment of the majority and not just the material improvement of a few. It must aim not for the construction of a sophisticated, consumeristic, and unbalanced society; rather, it must aim for a contented world, a simple life, and a model in direct contact with the beauty and grace of nature.

We need to create a society that will do its best to recover the waters, the rivers, the seas, the lands, and the forests. More importantly, we must cultivate a sense of sanctity and respect towards creation, learn to live in less complicated and more wholesome ways, and give back to our notion of time the eternal dimension that truly belongs to it, the antipode of which is the frenzy and crazy disturbances that we have brought about ourselves. Humanity must recover the equilibrium, the good sense, the tranquillity, and the harmony that we are lacking today but which we desperately need.

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In so far as the revolutionary Muslims participate in the new systems and activities, they need to lay emphasis on bringing their own ideas down to the level of ethics and morals instead of getting caught up in theoretical polemics. At the same time, the faulty moral attitudes within the revolutionary movement, which either lack a spiritual basis or are deviated forms of it, must be abandoned.

Intellectual debates are both inevitable and desirable, but those that are based on sectarianism, chauvinism, racism, sexism or any other form of exclusivism that lead to division and that threaten the fundamental bonds of brotherhood and love between human beings must be avoided at all costs.

Writers, poets, musicians, artists, and other creative forces within society have a fundamental role in the creation of a new world since destructive and negative ideas will need to be tackled with creative and constructive ideas, and not through force.

The newborn society must respond negatively to repressive and coercive actions; instead, it must respond in like: ideas to ideas, words to words, and lectures to lectures. Any violent responses—in all its manifestations—against opposing ideas but be forbidden. The use of violence must end effectively. The new world must forbid the use of any force except to prevent the use of violence by the violent as a way to prevail over the rest, but even so, in a measured manner.

The new society must work towards the absolute eradication of any form of physical or psychological torture; in its place, solutions to pathological behaviours and social deviations should be sought within a spirit based on love, comprehension, moderation, tolerance, and good actions. The fact is that in any social body, as in the physical one, any force exerted in a particular direction with a particular intensity generates a resistance of the same intensity in the opposite direction. As such, our society must be as non-coercive as possible in order to prevent a similar reaction.

We will not advocate a violent revolution against the established order, as violence only generates more violence; rather, we will work towards a creative transformation of society through grass roots efforts based on moral values.

This, of course, does not mean that we will have a pacifist attitude at all times for we will defend the right of defending the oppressed where and whenever they are attacked. Anyone who is a victim of armed violence by the State or by others has a right to armed defence. This includes nations and peoples who have become the target of military invasions.

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As revolutionary Muslims, we cannot adopt and expropriate the means-of-production model used by the State, since it is clear that this only helps the formation of a new aristocratic class and inhibits personal creativity and initiative that arises from revolutionary enthusiasm. Instead, we must reorganize society on a system based on justice and the equitable repartition of wealth.

The social model of the revolutionary Muslims is that which the Holy Qur'an advocates—both in its principals as well as its particulars. This will be the basis for their actions, thoughts, and proposals which will be presented for discussion before the active forces in society.

As revolutionary Muslims, our participation in the anti-globalization movement is not necessarily to establish a society based on an Islamic government; rather, it is to contribute to the creation of a new society—with our values and the practical ethics that they imply—in which there is space for all and where all can participate.

It will be a society oriented towards the Good and recognized as such by the majority, and one turned away from evil, also recognized as such by the majority. The moral values and ethical practices will strictly be in line with the Qur'anic mandates both within the scope of our spiritual community and our own personal lives.

It will not be a new totalitarian and uniformed society, but a society based on justice. It will not be a coercive society, but a tolerant one; It will protect the public space from corruption and scandal and respect the private space as one of sanctity and inviolability.

It will be a society with spiritual values, but not dogmatic and inquisitorial ones. It will be a society which nurtures the spiritual dimension of humanity without imposing it on anyone.

God created human beings with a natural and spontaneous instinct to love the Good, the Beautiful, the Truth and the Transcendent. Society does not need to be exposed to these innate ideas through imposing mechanisms. Rather, it can be achieved by providing people and new generations with a frame of confidence, tranquillity, and love, and which does not coerce or deform the essential nature in which we have been created and in which these ideas can flow with freedom and creativity.

The intellect and reason that God created within us are sufficient for us to enjoy our relative freedom, to distinguish the good from evil, and to differentiate constructive ideas and attitudes from corrupted ones.

A society oriented towards the Good is not one that imposes its truth; rather, it nurtures the necessary environment to facilitate anyone in search for it.

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وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ

It is He who created the heavens and the earth with Truth (6:73)

الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ <sup>ط</sup> فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ

This is the Truth from your Lord; so do not be among the sceptics. (2:147)

وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَقَنَا وَعْدَهُ وَأَوْرَثَنَا الْأَرْضَ نَتَبَوَّأُ

مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَاءُ <sup>ط</sup> فَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَمَلِينَ

They will say, 'All praise belongs to Allah, who has fulfilled His promise to us and made us heirs to the earth, that we may settle in paradise wherever we may wish!' How excellent is the reward of the workers [of righteousness] (39:74)

## Nurturing a Culture of Unity

Abdul Malik Mujahid

### Abstract:

Understanding and elaborating on the theoretical principles for Islamic unity is no doubt an important task. Practically realizing the consequences of these principles, however, is often neglected. The following brief article lists ten practical ways in which a culture of unity can be nurtured and developed. These include expanding the boundaries of tolerance, not focussing on detailed points of disagreement, and reaching out across ethnic boundaries. Through practical efforts in this direction, it is hoped that the Qur'anic directive of establishing Islamic unity can be achieved.

**Keywords:** Culture of unity, *ḥajj*, Muslim brotherhood, tolerance, *takfīr*, Ummah.

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The sight is always amazing: Pilgrims standing shoulder to shoulder of all shades and races, dressed in simple white and stripped of all kinds of worldly barriers—be they of wealth, profession, geography, class, education or anything else. This enduring image of *ḥajj* has become a hallmark of this Ummah's unity in its diversity.

But as we head towards this journey of a lifetime or at least watch as our loved ones leave for it in these next few days, the challenge remains: how do we retain this culture of unity that marks *ḥajj*? How do we keep the bonds of Islamic brother and sisterhood intact to fulfil our goals as an Ummah, especially in North America, where our diversity is even more marked than in other parts of the world?

Here are ten practical ways you and your community can build unity:

### 1. Understand that Muslim unity is not an option

It has become a cliché to say that Muslims have reduced Islam to rituals and forgotten their important tenets. While it is crucial to practice the five pillars of Islam, for instance, we cannot ignore other basic aspects of the faith that emphasize brother and sisterhood.

Muslim unity is a *fard* (obligatory duty) according to the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ). Consider the following references below:

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The Qur'an states:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

The believers are but a single brotherhood: So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear God, that ye may receive Mercy. (49:10)

It also mentions:

وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

And hold fast, all together, by the rope which God (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude God's favour on you; for ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, ye became brethren; and ye were on the brink of the pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus doth God make His Signs clear to you: That ye may be guided. (3:103)

In a *ḥadīth* it has been related:

In their love, kindness and compassion for each other, the believers are like a human body: when one part of it is hurt, the rests sympathizes with it in wakefulness and fever.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Reflect on ḥajj as a time for muslim unity

Use this time personally, as well as within your family and community, to remind Muslims of how the *ḥajj* is a unifying factor for Muslims. Hold a family meeting about the topic. Organize a seminar at your mosque about

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<sup>1</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhari and Muslim.



how *ḥajj* is a beautiful symbol for Muslim unity. Make sure your speakers are those who have performed *ḥajj* and can attest to this fact. Also, brainstorm practical ways the lessons of unity from *ḥajj* can be learned in your community throughout the year and come up with an action-plan to implement them.

During the process of planning, make *du‘ā* for unity throughout the period of the first ten days of Dhū Ḥijjah, which is a blessed time. Say the *masnūn takbīrāt* (recommended glorifications) and add the *talbiyyah* to it: *labbayk, Allahumma labbayk, labbayk, lā sharīka laka labbayk, Inn al-hamda wa ni‘mata laka wa al-mulk, lā sharīka laka* (“O my Lord, Here I am at Your service, Here I am. There is no partner with You. Here I am. Truly, the praise and the provisions are Yours, and so is the dominion and sovereignty. There is no partner with you”).

Say it with your children and family and think about its meaning, remembering that you are at Allah’s service. You cannot serve Him unless you are united.

### 3. Learn tolerance towards other points of views

Is it not interesting that we can attend classes at college or speak with colleagues from work and discuss issues while being willing to disagree with them? But the minute some of us step into a mosque or a Muslim community function, all that tolerance seems to get thrown out the window.

Contrary to popular belief, Islam is a broad and extensive faith, and you can find a range of scholarly views on issues as diverse as how to place our hands during prayer to whether or not Muslims should participate in the American political process. If our scholars from the past and present have shown such tolerance towards differing views on the various issues, who are we—as average Muslims who do not have the same level of knowledge—to express intolerance towards another point of view?

To understand this point thoroughly, I would recommend Dr. Yusuf Al-Qaradawi’s book *Islamic Awakening Between Rejection and Extremism*.

### 4. Learn to criticize without injuring

The way some Muslims criticize each other, one would think they were talking to an enemy of Islam instead of a fellow brother or sister. This type of ignorant behaviour is a sure way to create anger, hurt, and dissension. It is no route towards unity.

We must learn the proper *adab* (etiquette) of criticism, whether it is towards individual Muslims or our leaders. Knowing and implementing this

will not only help solve problems in a practical manner but will also lead to a greater sense of brother and sisterhood in the community.

If you feel that your criticism of someone in the past was rude or hurtful, pray for that brother or sister—since the Prophet has said that *du‘ā* increases love between people—and return to them apologetically.

### 5. Avoid adopting harsh positions in trivial matters

There is what is called a “*fiqh* of priorities” and this essentially means that there are some aspects of Islam that are more important than others. For instance, it is more important to emphasize that Muslims establish prayer than whether or not there should be a curtain between men and women in mosques.

Knowing what our priorities are will help us avoid turning secondary issues of faith into factors of division in our communities. Muslim leaders, in particular, must not only understand this but implement it in their communities across North America so that small differences do not destroy the idea of Muslim unity.

### 6. Do not call anyone a Kāfir

This horrible phenomena of calling fellow believers *kāfirs* must end if we want to create a climate that is conducive to unity. *Kāfir*-calling is a sure way to isolate individuals from the Muslim community. We must remember that Muslims in North America come from all cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, whether they were born and raised in the faith or reverted to it. If a person is expressing ideas that are not in line with Islamic values, he or she must be gently corrected. *Kāfir*-calling will only fuel their ignorance, anger and stubbornness, not to mention humiliate and embarrass them.

The Prophet warned that if one person calls another a *kāfir* and the person who is labelled as such is not a *kāfir*, the individual who made the accusation is considered a *kāfir*. Given this warning, is it not sad that there is an organization in Egypt which calls itself ‘the Party of Declaring Others *Kāfirs*’ (*Jamā‘ah al-takfīr wa al-hijrah*)?

### 7. Reaching out across ethnic boundaries

The ignorant practice of maintaining “ethno-centric mosques” is, Alhamdulillah, slowly but surely disappearing in North America. Nevertheless, there is still a long way to go. All of our institutions, functions, and communities in general must become more ethnically diverse and open to the needs and concerns of Muslims of all backgrounds. Muslim leaders and

individuals have a duty to ensure that no Muslim, regardless of their ethno-cultural background, feels shut out of the community, ignored, or neglected.

This can only be done by Muslim leaders and individuals taking the first step and reaching out to Muslims who may have been traditionally isolated because of ethnocentricity in mosques and other institutions. It is not enough to just open the door to all. A direct effort has to be made to solicit feedback, advice, and support from all Muslims so that they feel a part of the community.

Another, more personal way of reaching out is to invite Muslims of diverse backgrounds to your home for food. Extend this invitation to non-Muslims as well to break barriers and share Islam.

#### **8. Heed the advice found in Sūrah Hujurāt**

Chapter forty-nine of the Qu'rān provides excellent guidance on the kind of behaviour that Muslims should avoid in order to establish Muslim unity. For instance, Allah advises us to avoid mockery, defamation, and suspicion. These are all things which serve to divide communities and create hatred, hurt, and dissension.

Discuss the themes of Sūrah Hujurāt relating to Muslim behaviour in family meetings, *khutbas* (sermons), talks, study circles, and classes for young and old Muslims in your community to share this divine wisdom with all.

Whenever you recall that you have done *ghībah* (backbiting) against a Muslim or non-Muslim, you should remember that you need to seek that person's forgiveness. Doing this is a prerequisite to washing off that sin.

#### **9. Share these tips with a wider audience**

Share the above-mentioned tips with fellow Muslims in your community. This can be by suggesting to the *khatīb* (preacher) of Friday and Eid prayers to use the topic of this article for his sermon. Or you can print it out and hand it to worshippers, or publish it in your local mosque newsletter. It is also important to discuss it in various Muslim settings to start the thinking and reflection process amongst Muslims.

#### **10. Make du'ā for unity**

Ask your Imam to emphasize unity as an Islamic duty in his *khutbahs* and suggest practical ways it can be achieved in your country or Islamic organization. Also, encourage Muslims to go for *hajj* and to make special *du'ā* for Muslim unity. When the *hājis* (pilgrims) return from the pilgrim-

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age, the Prophet has encouraged us to receive them and to request them to make *du'ā*. This is another opportunity to seek *du'ās* for Muslim unity.

Finally, make sure that you as an individual are not only working for unity but making *du'ā* for it as well, since the end result of all actions are in Allah's Hands.

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## The Divine Word and Islamic Art\*

Seyyed Hossein Nasr

### Abstract:

The Word of Allah is the origin and principle of Islamic art *par excellence*. Just as the Word descends from the unseen and unmanifest order to the visible and material realm, so too does the art that is based upon it descend from the 'formless' sonoral level to the formal visual plane. And just as the Word, once having entered the formal plane of calligraphy, 'develops' horizontally by becoming ever more complex, similarly Islamic art unfolds its diverse possibilities through the course of history and in numerous Muslim cultures. By continuously reaffirming the presence of the One in the many and Unity in diversity, Islamic art, through its multifarious forms, allows for all Muslims to gain access to the spiritual journey back to the Origin from which the Divine Word issues.

**Keywords:** Islamic art, Divine Word, Sacred art, traditional art, development of art, calligraphy, Quranic art, sonoral art, Quran recitation.

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In seeking to understand the relation between the Divine Word (*kalimat Allāh*), which for Muslims is of course the revealed text of the Noble Qur'ān, and Islamic art, it is important to turn our attention to an important reality which concerns the outward manifestation of the Islamic revelation. If one studies carefully the way in which Islam grew on the earthly plane, one becomes struck by the fact that the outward signs of the revelation, such as Qur'ānic calligraphy, become more and more apparent in the plastic arts as one draws further away in time from the origin of the revelation. Today one often forgets that according to traditional Islamic sources, which are the only ones to matter for us, the Qur'ānic revelation was first received aurally by the Blessed Prophet (ﷺ) and only later was it written down. Before the revelation became visible in the form of calligraphy, it was an invisible sonoral revelation. In entering this earthly abode, the Qur'ānic revelation followed the metaphysically necessary trajectory from

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the Invisible (or absent) World (*'ālam al-ghayb*) to the Visible World (*'ālam al-shahādah*).

It is important to pause a moment and explain further the nature of a sonoral revelation because of its central importance for the understanding of the Islamic experience of the Divine Word and also for its consequence for Islamic art as a whole. Now, sound cannot be seen and therefore from the point of view of our natural external senses is associated with not only the invisible but also the immaterial, for in our natural experience of things we usually associate the material with the visible and palpable. Being immaterial, the sonoral refuses to become imprisoned in any earthly vessel. Sound in fact penetrates our body rather than being an object out there to be seen or felt. When we hear music or poetry, and, on the highest level, the Revealed Word, all of which are sonoral in nature, they break the barrier between us and the world outside of us and enter into our corporeal reality. While objects of plastic art remain objective to us, the sonoral arts seem to become part of our subjective reality without of course losing their objective reality.

The Qur'anic revelation, once manifested in this world through the agency of the archangel Gabriel, first came as a sonoral revelation which penetrated into the inner being of the Prophet and only later was it written in the form of calligraphy as the Sacred Text.

If for the moment we identify form with its corporeal aspect, we might say that the process of the manifestation of the Qur'ān was from the formless to the world of form. The Noble Qur'ān first descended vertically from the World of Divine Command (*'ālam al-amr*) into the heart of the Prophet, or from the Formless in the metaphysical sense through a series of descents to the world of form, and then manifested itself horizontally from sound to writing, a process which traced on the horizontal plane the transition from the formless to the world of forms, according to established metaphysical principles. This transition from the formless to the world of form has also been interpreted by certain Muslim sages as the transition from colourlessness to colour, here colourlessness referring to the unconditioned and formless truth and colour to the truth conditioned by formal constraints. The famous Sufi poet Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, for example, speaks of the link that relates colourlessness to colour when he compares colour to a cloud and colourlessness to the moon covered temporarily by that cloud.

The flowering of Islamic art itself follows this process and exemplifies this principle. First of all, the sacred art of Qur'ānic psalmody precedes in time the sacred art of Qur'ānic calligraphy, which itself unfolds from the original Kufic into many other distinct forms and styles. Secondly, when

one studies Islamic architecture, one sees that in the earliest mosques, the Divine Word is hardly depicted anywhere while the walls are completely white, a colour that in the domain of colours symbolizes the colourless. In these early mosques one experiences the ubiquitous presence of the Divine Word without its becoming identified with a particular form, like the ever present white colour which stands above any particular and distinct colour. Gradually, calligraphy, and also in many cases colour, make their appearance in the *mibrāb*, which is like the heart of the sacred space of the mosque and into which the Divine Word is uttered during the canonical prayers, symbolizing the process whereby the Qur'ān descended into the heart and the mind of the Blessed Prophet. And in the same way that from the heart and tongue of the Prophet the Qur'ān spread to those around him as sonoral revelation, then was written down and spread all over the Islamic community in both its sonoral and written forms, the calligraphic forms and colours spread from the *mibrāb* to the rest of the mosque, both inside and outside, and then to the rest of the urban setting and objects made by artisans. Gradually, they became an abiding reality of the whole of life of traditional Muslims, surrounding them everywhere.

The depiction of the Word of God in the form of beautiful calligraphy at a later stage of Islamic history is therefore in accordance with the metaphysical laws of manifestation which require the process of externalization to proceed from the invisible to the visible, from the formless to the formed and in this case from the audible to the visible and, on another plane, from the colourless, symbolized by white, to colours. Islamic art displays ever-greater use of the depiction of the Word of God in the form of Qur'ānic calligraphy as one draws further away from the source of the revelation. This should be more easily understood in light of the aforementioned principles and also the principle that manifestation involves a movement from unity to diversity and complexity with continuous reassertions of unity as long as a spiritual tradition is alive.

There is, however, another principle that is also at play here. The less one knows, the more one is in need of explanation and, also, the less aware one becomes of the presence of the Sacred, the more one is in need of external reminders of that presence. One can see this principle in action in many different religious climates. As for Islam, since its whole history lies before us, it is easy to observe how the living traditional community responds to this greater need for palpable reminders as the centuries go by. Gradually the use of Qur'ānic calligraphy, usually combined with symbolic geometric patterns which are also reminders of the presence of the One in the many, becomes ever more common until it becomes an ever present

reality reminding Muslims wherever they go in the city and also wherever they are within their private living spaces of the reality of God and His Word. We can see this process in going from the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina, on the basis of descriptions of it since the original edifice is no longer extant, to such early mosques as those of Khurasan, Yemen, Tunis, and Spain, to those of Ottoman Turkey and Safavid Persia. In the first case there is no mention of the use of calligraphy. In the second category calligraphy is found around the *mibrāb*, a pre-eminent example of it being the celebrated *mibrāb* of the *mezquita* in Cordova. In the third category the use of calligraphy is very extensive both inside and in the case of the many Safavid, or for that matter Seljuq and Mamluk mosques, outside of the mosque.

This unfolding from the state of formlessness to form and principial unity to manifestation in multiplicity is also to be seen on another level in the art of calligraphy itself. The earliest Qur'ānic calligraphy is of course the Kufic which is bound to the depiction of the Word of God more than any other Islamic style of calligraphy. This is a script that is difficult to read even by those whose mother tongue is Arabic. The letters seem to be closed upon themselves, refusing to reveal their inner secrets. And there is discontinuity in the script as if each letter or cluster of letters were a world unto itself. Kufic is like the bud of a flower folded upon itself. Then gradually this bud seems to open up into a full blooming flower in later calligraphic styles where lines become more explicit and the flow more continuous. After the development of the great classical styles such as the *thuluth* and the *naskh*, calligraphy becomes even more ornate and even occasionally somewhat baroque in some parts of the Islamic world, leading to what from the Islamic point of view is nothing but a kind of decadence. Fortunately, however, the classical styles continue in a vibrant way to this day, but to the extent that there is a "development" seen in the change of styles over the centuries, one can detect this movement from an enclosed formal reality to the unfolding of this reality, and in certain areas to the decadence of forms through excessive immersion in externalization and forgetfulness of the original unity. For Islamic calligraphy as a whole, however, in contrast to Western art, the forms that attained perfection over the centuries have remained vibrant and living forms and this includes the Kufic. One can therefore say that the development thus outlined is not essentially temporal but principial, although it does possess a temporal dimension. But since it is not only temporal, the various stages of the "flower" from the bud to the full bloom are also simultaneously alive and none of the traditional styles is of only historical interest.



The Qur'ān as the Divine Word also left its indelible mark upon Islamic art in ways other than in calligraphy. Of course the external form of the Qur'ān as written word led to calligraphy becoming a central sacred art of Islam while its content provided for the Divine Law and social conditions within which Islamic art was created. On a deeper level the metaphysical principles or the *ḥaqīqah* of the Qur'ān, are the ultimate source and fountainhead of all Islamic sacred art and not only calligraphy. But there are other aspects of the Qur'ān which are of central importance for Islamic art as a whole. One of these aspects is the invisible presence of the Qur'ān as the sacred reality determining in the deepest manner the spiritual and artistic ambience of the Muslim artist. And then there are certain characteristics of the structure of the Sacred Text which determines the life of the soul of the Muslim including its rhythm.

Everyone familiar with Islamic art is aware of the rhythm that dominates the various forms of that art from architecture and calligraphy to music and poetry. One can experience this rhythm in meditating on the ever-repeating columns of mosques, or strokes of calligraphy and in ornamentation in the rhythmic repetition of geometric patterns and arabesques. One should pose the question, "where does this rhythm come from?" Of course rhythm is to be found in the arts of other civilizations, but the emphasis upon it in Islamic art is particularly notable. The answer to this question is the structure of the Qur'ān. The Sacred Text possesses a strong rhythmic quality not only in the cadence of its poetic utterances, but also in the repetition of certain central refrains and ideas and realities such as the Divine Names to which the text of the Qur'ān returns over and over again. This pattern is like that found in classical Persian music in which the composition flows outward from an origin to which it always returns and so its movement is not linear but cyclic or more precisely helic. The imprint of the Qur'ān upon the Muslim soul creates a strong sense of rhythm which then manifests itself in various ways in different Islamic art forms.

Furthermore, the language of the Qur'ān displays the effect of the shattering of human language by the Divine Word. The phrases are in a sense "atomized" rather than forming one long didactic or descriptive narrative. The Qur'ānic narrative for the most part seems to have no beginning or end, continuous narratives such as the story of Joseph being an exception. Most other Qur'ānic narratives are like broken pieces held together by the Divine Reality and brought back again and again to central truths which concern man's final ends. Meanwhile, sacred formulae such as the Divine Names are scattered throughout the text, bringing man back again and again to the ubiquitous presence of God. The unity of the Qur'ān is in fact

an inner one and not on the plane of the external meaning of words. The outer form is like a galaxy of atomized sentences and narratives returning over and over to the essential truths, seemingly without beginning or end. It must be remembered that in the Islamic canonical prayers (*ṣalāh*) one can recite after the *fātiḥāh* (the opening chapter of the Text) any set of verses of the Qur'ān one wishes from anywhere in any of the chapters (*sūrah*s) without regard to beginning or end.<sup>1</sup> The beginning and the end seem to be everywhere, reminding us that God is everywhere and nowhere. In this way the sense of infinitude is invoked and formal limitations are transcended.

This reality of the structure of the Qur'ān is directly reflected in the major sacred arts of Islam, that is, sacred calligraphy and architecture along with ornamentation consisting of geometrical patterns and arabesques, not to speak of the sonoral arts such as poetry and music. Of course in the less central arts such as painting, one does also deal with limited forms such as a plant or a horse or, in Moghul miniatures, even with portraits of emperors, but in the central sacred arts, the sense of infinity is invoked by repetitions which the eye can contemplate without beginning or end. Of course in calligraphy one reads from the beginning to the end of a passage, but its artistic effect when looked at as a whole is like that of beholding the ever repeating patterns of columns in a mosque or geometric and arabesque patterns on a wall or a paravan. The eye can begin anywhere and stop anywhere. Every point can be a beginning which in fact never ends. In this way a sense of infinity is created which is a direct reflection of the structure of the Qur'ān on the artistic plane and it is also a way of bringing out the reality of the Qur'ānic verse:

فَأَيُّمًا تَوَلُّوْا فَثَمَّ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ

Whithersoever ye turn, there is the Face of God. (2:115)

One of the greatest achievements of Islamic art is its ability to bring out for those living in the human and therefore formal world something of the reality of that Infinite Reality beyond all forms which in revealing the Qur'ān has left a mark of infinitude upon the formal language chosen for the expression of the Divine Word in Islam.

Another element of great importance for Islamic art and one which is related to the Divine Word is the void. One realizes this aspect of the reality of the Qur'ān even when one listens to the Qur'ānic psalmody in which stops and moments of silence are of the greatest importance and are, in a

<sup>1</sup> Certain schools of Islamic jurisprudence stipulate that an entire *sūrah* be recited. [Ed.]

sense, as important as moments of recitation. The Qur'ān itself refers to the invisible or abstract (*al-ghayb*) and the visible (*al-shahādah*), the first always identified with the spiritual world and the second with the material. Numerous Qur'ānic commentaries have been written by Sufis, philosophers and theologians in which it has been pointed out that the *ghayb*, which literally means absent, does not mean simply not present in the ordinary sense, but the unmanifested, the spiritual, the immaterial. *Ghayb* and *shahādah* are not complementary terms in the horizontal sense but in a vertical one. And in the traditional Islamic cosmologies which provided the framework for Islamic art, there was always an awareness of both dimensions. The *shahādah* was identified with the formal world and, on the level of art, with objects, lines, colours, etc. with which the artist expresses certain intelligible forms or ideas, while *ghayb* was identified with the void. Hence the central significance of the void in Islamic art, which also symbolizes the reality of the non-manifested.

Any non-Muslim who enters a traditional mosque for the first time is especially surprised by the emptiness of its space. In fact the central reality of the space of the mosque is precisely its emptiness, giving the beholder a sense of nothingness before the Majesty of the Divine Reality. This experience of the void is also to be found in traditional Islamic homes and in all the other central arts of Islam. Even decorations, before some decadence set in in certain parts of the Islamic world, have always contained the element of emptiness and void.

This emptiness or void observable in Islamic art, which is so thoroughly opposed to an excessive cluttering of space such as one finds in Baroque and Rococo art in the West, has two profound effects upon the human soul, both directly related to the Divine Word. The first is to help us to become aware of our nothingness before God, of our spiritual poverty about which the Prophet said, "Poverty (*al-faqr*) is my glory." This attitude of spiritual poverty—so central to Islam that it is in fact a name for Sufism, which is also called Muhammadan poverty (*al-faqr al-muḥammadī*)—prevented the human ambience in traditional civilization from becoming excessively cluttered by things and also the heart and mind from becoming so filled with idols, diverse ideas and images as to prevent the Divine Reality from presiding within the being of those for whom Islamic art was meant. Islamic art made use of the void to aid man in this necessary emptying of himself of all that would prevent him from realizing the reality of God within and about him.

The second effect of the void is the creation of the necessary space for the manifestation of the Divine Presence and the spiritual world. The void

for the traditional Islamic mind is not simply nothing, but the “presence of the absent,” a palpable symbol of the *ghayb*. Islamic art had made use of the void in its architecture, calligraphy, traditional designs and even objects of everyday life as well as on the highest level in the psalmody of the sonoral revelation of the Qur’ān. It has provided a direct means for the Muslim to realize the Qur’anic injunction:

وَاللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ وَأَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ

God is the rich and ye are the poor. (47:38)

The greatest wealth of man in this world is in fact in the realization of his utter poverty before God who alone is rich, *al-Ghaniy*.

On the basis of these and certain other principles, Islamic art developed a unique formal artistic language and philosophy which are inseparable from the Divine Word or the Qur’ān in both its content and formal structure. The depiction of the Divine Word in Islamic art began with Qur’anic calligraphy, then became used in the interior and later exterior of mosques and from there spread to homes and public spaces of the Islamic urban environment. Gradually a wedding took place between Islamic architecture and calligraphy which is unique in world art. Whereas much of the grandeur of Christian architecture of the Gothic period resides in its wedding of architecture to sculpture as one observes in the major medieval cathedrals such as Chartres or Notre Dame, in Islam, where for theological reasons sculpture of religious subjects and even for the most part human beings in general was not allowed, Qur’anic calligraphy, or the direct depiction of the Divine Word, took the place of sculpture in Christian sacred architecture. Thus gradually words of the Qur’ān became ubiquitous in urban surroundings adorning not only mosques but other public and private buildings. One can see examples of this type of architecture especially in the central lands of Islam from the Sultan Ḥasan Mosque in Cairo to the tiled mosques of Isfahan and Samarqand but also in the Maghrib. In this way, in a more outward and less esoteric sense to which allusion was made above, architecture itself became the means for the depiction of the Divine Word. Moreover, this depiction surrounded the daily life of Muslims in many other ways since Qur’anic calligraphy was used on objects of daily usage, even on shirts worn by soldiers going to war and on swords and shields. Since there is no legitimate secular realm in Islam, there was no part of life into which the depiction of the Word of God did not reach.

In fact, there is strictly speaking no such thing as secular art in traditional Islamic civilization corresponding to categories drawn from Western

art. The music played in the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul was before the sultan and his court, but it was played by musicians of the Mawlawiyyah Order and certainly cannot be called secular music. Nor can the Delhi Fort be called secular architecture because it is based on the same principles as the Delhi Mosque nearby. One can distinguish between classical and sacred art in Islam but not between sacred and secular art for which there is not even a word in traditional Arabic or Persian texts. One can say that such arts as Qur'anic psalmody and calligraphy as well as architecture are sacred arts whereas traditional carpet weaving and miniature painting are traditional, but one cannot consider the latter as secular. In fact they, like the sacred arts, were created on the basis of the same principles as various kinds of Islamic sacred art and bear the mark, albeit in a less direct manner, of the Divine Word and the principles contained therein already outlined above. But everywhere throughout Islamic art, one can discern the ubiquitous presence of the Divine Word.

In the deepest sense traditional Islamic art complements the *Shari'ah* and both have their roots in the Divine Word as revealed in Islam in the form of the Noble Qur'an. The *Shari'ah* represents the concrete embodiment of the Divine Will and teaches man how to act in accordance with God's Will. Islamic art is the product of principles which teach man how to make so that the Divine Word is reflected in human life and so that through what man makes and the objects that surround his life he is able to remain in the remembrance of God's Word. Islamic art issues from the Divine Word and through its multifarious forms is able to aid those who are aware of its inner meaning of that Word, which is also the barque that carries us to the other shore of existence.

## Imam Khumaynī's Vision of Islamic Unity

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### Abstract:

In an age where the Islamic Ummah was threatened from within by internal discord and division, and from without by global hegemonic powers competing to extend their spheres of influence and to destroy the life-giving sap of the Muslim world, Imam Khumaynī was confronted with a mighty task before him. As a reviver of the religion of God, Imam Khumaynī's vision of Islamic unity was one based on the principal of *tawḥīd* (oneness) through which he set about to redirect the Islamic Ummah towards a unity that would reaffirm the dignity bestowed upon them by Islam, and in so doing, prepare them to face their common enemy. By examining Imam Khumaynī's own words, this article attempts to delineate the aims, objectives and scope of his vision of Islamic unity. It also describes some of the practical steps Imam undertook in order to achieve this vision.

**Keywords:** Imam Khumaynī, unity, Ummah, global hegemony, Islamic government, Muslim independence.

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### THE DOCTRINE OF UNITY

Throughout the vicissitudes of Islamic history, division between Islamic sects and nations has been a complex and destructive affair, dealing irreparable damage—both spiritual and material—on the Islamic Ummah as a whole. This viscous wound upon the exquisite countenance of Islam has not gone unnoticed by the Ummah's reformers, thus arousing their concern.

As a result, during many historical periods, reformers have striven to engender unity among Muslims so as to relieve the heartfelt pain of the Ummah. Each of these reformers also pursued specific aims. A notable unitary reformer of the Islamic Ummah was Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Asad-Ābādī. He and his disciple, Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh, regarded Islamic unity as their most important ideal, endeavouring greatly on this path. In line with this ideal, he chose no nationality for himself, and travelled through and lived in numerous countries during the course of his life.

Another personage who sought Islamic unity was the head of Jāmi‘ah al-Azhar in Egypt, Shaykh Maḥmūd Shaltūt. He declared the permissibility of following the Shia jurisprudence and recognized the Shia school as being on par with the four Sunni juristic schools. The establishment of the ‘Dār al-Taqrīb bayn al-Madhāhib al-Islāmiyyah’ (the Centre for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought) in Cairo by Ayatullāh Muḥammad Taqī Qumī had an influence in Shaykh Maḥmūd Shaltūt’s moderate tendencies. The earnest endeavours of Ayatullāh Burūjardī in publicizing Shaykh Maḥmūd Shaltūt’s decree regarding the authorization of the Shia doctrine alongside the four Sunni doctrines was also greatly influential in this regard and contributed in elevating Islamic unity to a new level.

Despite the conciliatory efforts of Shia and Sunni ‘*ulamā*’ alike, Islamic governments and nations were still consumed with disunity. Both Eastern and Western colonizers still plundered the resources of Islamic countries by inciting discord. The machinations of those antagonistic toward the Islamic Ummah intended to precipitate friction and capitalize on the hostile climate by ransacking the surface and underground resources of Islamic countries, especially their “black gold” (i.e. petroleum). In addition, the nescience of proponents of the various Islamic doctrines, their imprudence regarding insignificant matters, and their general disregard of their common grounds all served to amplify, diurnally, the fires of contention, widening the gap between Muslims.

However, the emergence of Imam Khumaynī’s Islamic Movement in 1342 AH (circa 1963) and the eventual Islamic Revolution in 1357 AH (1979) was a turning point in the ideology of Islamic unity not only between the Shia and the Sunni but also amongst Islamic countries—a turning point proclaimed by Imam Khumaynī himself.

Even though Imam Khumaynī’s view on unity was religiously and politically inspired, it was also a special ideal which this paper attempts to explicate to a certain degree. A relevant question is: What were Imam Khumaynī’s motives for his thoughts on Islamic unity and what were his aims in this regard? It seems that this doctrine of unity was the prime apparatus in negating the hegemony of non-Muslims over the Islamic world since, according to Imam Khumaynī, unity was the secret to the success and perpetuation of the Islamic Ummah.<sup>1</sup>

Regarding the rise of Muslims and the downtrodden peoples worldwide against global imperialists and world-consuming hegemonies, it must be

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<sup>1</sup> Imam Khumaynī, *Ṣaḥīfah-ye Inqilāb* (Book of the Revolution), 4<sup>th</sup> print, (Tehran: Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance Publication, 1368 AH), p. 8.

noted that oppressive powers pursue their aims through intimidation, propaganda, and the use of indigenous turncoats; however, according to Imam Khumaynī if nations stand against such powers, united and aware, oppressors shall be unsuccessful in achieving their objectives.<sup>2</sup>

### THE NECESSITY FOR UNITY

Imam Khumaynī understood the consequences of disunity very well. He recognized that the existing disunity within the Islamic Ummah has given rise to many detrimental consequences—be they political, economic, social, cultural, or military. Obviation of these effects is an arduous task requiring considerable time. The only way to fend off the harm caused by disunity is to stress the importance of unity founded upon Islam and its invigorating teachings. In order to attain this aim, Imam Khumaynī identified the desiderata for unity through which the Islamic Ummah could be redirected onto “the straight path.”

In Imam’s view, the first requisite of unity is rising up in God’s name to completely rectify the human society. Imam Khumaynī announced:

God, the Almighty has declared:

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَعْظُمُكُمْ بِوَاحِدَةٍ أَنْ تَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ مَشْفَىٰ وَفَرَادَىٰ

Say, “I give you just a single advice: that you rise up for Allah’s sake, in twos, or individually . . .” (34:46)

In this canonical declaration, God Almighty has included everything from the darkness before the dawn of nature to the final destination of humanity. It is the best of lessons the Lord has chosen from among all lessons—a word of advice to humankind which is the only means for world rectification.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, justice must be spread throughout the world<sup>4</sup> and a party must be formed of the oppressed people across the globe: “If one party is established in the world—a world-encompassing party, the party of the oppressed or *ḥizbu Allah* (i.e. the Party of God)—[it can bring about] the resolution of all these many afflictions,”<sup>5</sup> and “world Muslims [can] attain ade-

<sup>2</sup> Imam Khumaynī, *Saḥīfah-ye Nūr*, vol. 18, p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., vol. 17, p. 77.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., vol. 8, p. 278.



#### IMAM KHUMAYNI AND UNITY

quate political growth,”<sup>6</sup> “not fear the West in regaining their own culture, self-esteem, and autonomy,”<sup>7</sup> and “stand up against world powers.”<sup>8</sup>

The next requisite of unity is thwarting the conspiracy of arrogant global powers that grant ultimate ascendancy to America. These powers strive to achieve their aims by fermenting conflict among Muslims. The Imam knew that:

The chief enemies of Islam, of the Holy Qur’ān, and of the Prophet are the superpowers, especially America and its corrupt child, Israel. In their rapacity for what Islamic countries possess, and as part of their diabolic scheme to plunder substantial underground resources, they spur on division among Muslims through every possible means.<sup>9</sup>

Imam’s desire was for all Islamic nations to attain freedom and independence through the unity of Muslims.<sup>10</sup> He believed that in order to realize this liberty and autonomy, Muslims must secure the essential requisite of striving for unification,<sup>11</sup> and deny the arrogant global powers license to interfere with their destinies.<sup>12</sup>

Imam Khumaynī regarded unity as a necessary step in order to develop peace and harmony. He declared, “The Islamic Republic is inclined to live in peace and harmony with its neighbours and all others.”<sup>13</sup> Elsewhere, he stated: “I have hopes that global peace will be established on the basis of national autonomy, absence of interference between nations, and general adherence to the territorial integrity of nations.”<sup>14</sup>

In the opinion of Imam, an essential requirement for global harmony is the peaceful coexistence of all countries of the world: “Both the government of the Islamic Republic (of Iran) and its people desire ideological brotherhood with all the Muslims of the globe and also desire peaceful coexistence with all countries of the world.”<sup>15</sup> In other words, he was calling for the development of relations [between nations] with mutual respect as its cornerstone: “Relations with all foreigners shall be on the basis of mutual respect. In this relationship, we shall neither submit to oppression, nor

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, p. 175.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., vol. 11, p. 186.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., vol. 15, p. 125.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., vol. 19, p. 46.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., vol. 17, p. 137.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., vol. 6, p. 122-123.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., vol. 11, p. 125.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., vol. 17, p. 228.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., vol. 11, p. 267.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., vol. 18, p. 13.

shall we oppress others.”<sup>16</sup> “We wish to be friends with all nations of the world. We are initially inclined to be friends with all governments of the world. We desire to have cordial relations with mutual respect with others.”<sup>17</sup>

Imam Khumaynī maintained that the Islamic government is a free, independent government, and that its relations with both East and West must be similar; in other words, if other nations have good relations with the Islamic government, it will also have good relations with them. However, the Islamic government will not permit anyone to interfere with the destiny of its country.<sup>18</sup> On this note he says, “...we (shall) have friendly relationships with all classes of humanity and all the oppressed people of the world on the condition that the relations are reciprocal and based on mutual respect.”<sup>19</sup>

Therefore, it can be said that Imam Khumaynī considered the unity of Muslims and oppressed peoples worldwide to be essential and in line with his religious duties to correct humanity, create unity amongst the oppressed peoples and Muslims of the world, promote social justice, establish peace and tranquillity throughout the world, effect self-confidence, prevent interference of superpowers in the affairs of weak nations or Muslim countries and the plundering of their resources, and foster relations based on mutual respect and cordiality. He regarded unity as the only factor in the triumph and perpetuation of any nation and that is why he so strongly insisted upon it.

#### REQUIREMENTS AND CONDITIONS FOR UNITY

Every ideal or objective has requirements without which it cannot be attained. In addition, in order to attain particular goals, necessary conditions must be met so that the goals do not remain mere wishes; it is through these conditions that humans may realize their aims and arrive at their intended destination. Imam Khumaynī’s doctrine of unity was an ideal and thus it had requirements which had to be met.

The most important issue in this regard is that of justice since “justice is a requisite of oneness [*tawhīd*].” Therefore, to shape Islamic unity, Islamic justice must spread as it is the chief rudiment of unity; in a world full of oppression and injustice, unity can never be realized. Imam has stated, “The

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, p. 259.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., vol. 10, p. 522.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., vol. 4, p. 199.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., vol. 5, p. 114-115.

prophets from Adam to the Last (or Seal) of the Prophets (ﷺ) all came ... to raise the banner of unity and justice among nations.”<sup>20</sup>

Independence and freedom are additional requirements of unity. It can even be said that the independence of Islamic countries is the most important of these “since it is only when we can stand against the whole world and say that we will neither follow those that have incurred the wrath of God [*maghdūbi ‘alayhim*] nor those who have fallen astray [*dāllīn*] and that we will neither follow the West nor the East but the straight path, that we will all be together—all a single hand.”<sup>21</sup>

It is clear that humans have naturally been created as members of different ethnic groups and possess varying beliefs and preferences. Accordingly, Muslims also possess varying beliefs and views. These differences of opinion have caused great friction and strife among Muslims. However, in the view of Imam Khumaynī, differences of opinion should not prevent unity—there can be unity in tandem with dissimilar opinions: “Why should different opinions cause external discord?”<sup>22</sup> Consequently, all humans, and all Muslims must disregard their personal, factional, and ethnic beliefs and preferences and prepare the way for out-and-out governance of Islam on the basis of *tawḥīd* and through emphasis on common human and Islamic principles.

In order to realize his unitary ideal, Imam Khumaynī made use of existing conditions and even forged new ones. One of these existing circumstances was the issue of Palestine and its subjugation by the Occupant Regime of Quds, i.e. Israel, which aspired to fashion a “Great Israel spanning from the Nile to the Euphrates.”<sup>23</sup> With such a desire in mind, this regime encroached upon Islamic countries, killing the Muslims dwelling there or expelling them from their homes. With the intention of opposing the aggressive and bloodthirsty nature of the Occupant Regime and expunging Israel from existence, Imam declared the last Friday of the holy month of Ramaḍān as the World Day of Quds in order that all Muslims cry out against Israel in unity: “I consider the Day of Quds to be the day of Islam and the holy Prophet (ﷺ). It is a day wherein we must prepare all our forces, wherein all Muslims must abandon the isolation into which they have been thrust and stand up to outsiders with all their might.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, vol. 17, p. 77.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, vol. 19, p. 194.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., vol. 20, p. 34.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., vol. 18, p. 101.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., vol. 8, p. 233-234.

Imam considered the liberation of Quds to be a duty binding on all Muslims: “In principle, it is the duty of all Muslims to liberate Quds and sever the evil of this germ of corruption from Islamic states.”<sup>25</sup> This cannot come to pass without the unity of all Muslims.

The yearly rite of the Abrahamic ḥajj was another existing practice that Imam employed to achieve unity within the Islamic Ummah. He revived the practice of ‘exoneration from liability towards polytheists’ (*barā’at az mushrikīn*)<sup>26</sup> which was on the verge of becoming lost in history, forever forgotten, such that by participating in the sacrament of ‘exoneration’ all pilgrims from every country—whether black or white, Asian, African, European or American, Shia or Sunni—would manifest a fraction of Islamic unity, become aware of the affairs of Muslims and their pains and sorrows, seek out solutions to problems, and realize that “holy Mecca and the burial places of martyrs are mirrors to the great events caused by the struggles of divine prophets and the appointment of the holy Prophet.”<sup>27</sup>

Thus, Imam regarded independence, freedom, and justice as the prerequisites and groundwork for Islamic unity and that of all the oppressed peoples of the world. In principle, he did not consider differences of opinion as impediments on the path of unity. He saw unity as the only possible means for the establishment of the objectives of Islam and its absolute governance. Therefore, to realize the ideal of Islamic unification, he drew on circumstances such as the issue of Palestine and the liberation of Quds as well as the rite of ḥajj and the ‘exoneration from liability towards polytheists’—upon which all the Islamic factions and schools are agreed on—and invited all Muslims of the world to embrace mutual understanding and all-out unity.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., vol. 4, p. 31.

<sup>26</sup> The term *barā’ah* means exoneration and is one of the chapter headings of the Qur’an (chapter 9). In it, the third verse reads, “[This is] an announcement from Allah and His Apostle to all the people on the day of the greater ḥajj: that Allah and His Apostle repudiate the polytheists (*barī’un min al-mushrikīn*).” It is said that the Prophet (ṣ) insisted on acting differently from the polytheists in many of the ḥajj rituals, not adopting their pre-Islamic practices. After the Islamic Revolution in Iran, Imam Khomeynī started issuing yearly declarations stressing the importance of the political awareness of Muslims and the repudiation of polytheists as a main element of ḥajj as specified in the Qur’an. As a result, the practice of repudiation gradually revived, such that thousands of Muslims participated in the demonstration against polytheism and unbelief, collectively declaring their aversion of America, Russia, and Israel as the foci of godlessness in the world. [Tr.]

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., vol. 20, p. 132.

## MOTIVES FOR UNITY

In his ideal of unity, Imam Khumaynī had various motives which were inspired by the pure Islamic school of Muḥammad (ṣ). According to Imam, Islam and divine governments are fundamentally different from secular governments in that the latter only seek to secure order within their own country and the most they do is to prevent people from oppressing others. On the other hand, Islam and divine governments possess specific decrees for all matters.<sup>28</sup> One of these matters is defending the existence of Islam which depends on the unity of Muslims: “An important matter that is obligatory on all Muslims is defence of Islam and the defence of the Islamic Republic.”<sup>29</sup> This is contingent upon unity which is a critical issue in protecting the existence of Islam. Additionally, disunion is transgression and must be prevented since the enjoining of good and prohibition of evil is a divine mandate which must be obeyed. On this, the Imam says:

The greatest evil is dominion of outsiders over us. You must enjoin against this evil. You must enjoin governments against the conflicts they have with each other and with their people. They treat the enemies of Islam with friendship even though God has commanded us against association with them. At present, there is no greater evil than putting the interests of Muslims at risk. This obligation belongs to all who want to serve God. All of us must enjoin against this enmity and take up Islamic unity as our slogan—united under the banner of *Lā ilāha illallāh* (i.e. there is no God but Allah).<sup>30</sup>

Moreover, unity is a virtue that brings about world peace and tranquillity. In order to achieve the conditions of peace, a tradition of unity and brotherhood must be established and strengthened since “we seek world peace and tranquillity. From the very beginning, Islam had this objective. It has especially stressed brotherhood amongst the faithful [*mu'minīn*] and among Muslims. In fact, it has made this a law of sharī'ah.”<sup>31</sup>

Another motive of Imam was humanization [i.e., nurturing perfect human souls]. He believed that by virtue of perfect humans, justice may spread and elements harmful to Muslim society may be abolished to prevent harm: “Harm will be incurred upon us the day we are corrupted from within—the day the hearts of people rot and this rot spreads and putrefies

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, p. 234-235.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., vol. 20, p. 13.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., vol. 6, p. 116.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., vol. 16, p. 240.

and destroys the people.”<sup>32</sup> Disciples of the doctrine of the prophets and Imams (*‘a*) can never commit an offence by which the society may be harmed.

An additional motive of Imam was securing and safeguarding the autonomy, freedom, and dignity of Muslims. Imam has stated:

If we had submitted to America and the superpowers, apparent security and welfare might have been established and cemeteries might not have become filled with our dear martyrs; however, we would certainly have lost our independence, liberty, and dignity. Can we become slaves to America and the unbelieving governments so that some goods become cheaper and our people are not martyred or wounded?<sup>33</sup>

A further motive of Imam in his ideal of unity was solving the problems of Islamic countries and Muslims all over the world. Thus, he invited them all to unity and encouraged them to establish cordial relationships among themselves.<sup>34</sup>

However, Imam knew that every “noble aim also carried with it great difficulties and tribulations.”<sup>35</sup> The unification of the Islamic Ummah and all the oppressed peoples of the world were lofty aims possessing great obstacles. Even so, in view of the fact that both human nature and existence itself are founded upon unity and all of creation is journeying toward a unitary destination, he said, “we shall proceed with revolutionary fortitude and tolerance to spread divine justice and the cherished Islam throughout the world.”<sup>36</sup> Therefore, Imam advised all Muslims of the world thus:

O Muslims! Rely on the Islamic culture and struggle against the West and westoxication. Stand upon your own feet. Campaign against occidentalized and orientalized intellectuals. Regain your identity. In the same way that bought-off intellectuals have brought such calamities upon their nations and countries, if you do not unite and rely precisely on true Islam, that which happened before will happen to you as well.<sup>37</sup>

In summation, Imam’s motives regarding unity are the preservation of Islam; the enjoinder towards good and against evil; the humanization and the cultivation of virtuous people; securing liberty, independence, and dig-

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., vol. 17, p. 98.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., vol. 17, p. 51.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., vol. 19, p. 73-74.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., vol. 16, p. 47.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., vol. 13, p. 83.

nity; the spread of divine justice and Islam throughout the world; the prevention of discord; and the attempt to restrain unethical desires.

### THE SCOPE OF UNITY

The unity aimed at by Imam Khumaynī enjoys a broad scope, ranging from the Shia nation of Iran to all Muslims, to the oppressed peoples of the world and, finally, to all humanity. Thus, Imam advises all these groups to use Iran's Islamic Revolution as an example to rediscover their identity and gain self-confidence because "after first relying upon God, self-reliance is a source of blessings."<sup>38</sup> The Islamic Revolution of Iran caused the awakening of the souls of the oppressed, the bereft, and the Muslims of the world and brought about many blessings. This revolution was the herald of unity, liberty, and independence for the oppressed peoples and the Muslims of the world. All this originated from the rediscovery of the self by the Muslim people of Iran.

In addition to the Muslim people of Iran, it is the duty of the Islamic Ummah to strive to achieve unity. The Imam commented, "The various ummahs must be one united Ummah. They should group together and must not see themselves as separate entities. Borders must not distance our hearts."<sup>39</sup> Even though today, the Muslims of the world are separated by geographical borders forming over fifty great and small countries, by God's decree and the necessity of prevailing conditions we must strengthen our ties through commonly held Islamic and human principles. By the blessing of God, the bright horizon of unity appears ever closer. The Imam has said, "Today, the export of the Islamic Revolution can be seen in the world of the oppressed and downtrodden. The movement of the oppressed and downtrodden peoples of the world against the arrogant and powerful is spreading."<sup>40</sup>

In addition to the responsibilities of the clergy within the Islamic Ummah, the clergy of all religions have the responsibility to endeavour in fulfilling the ideals of the prophets, the most important of which is unity: "The Christian clergy, the Muslim clergy, the Jewish clergy ... are in the best position to achieve the ideals of the prophets, which consist in the revelations of God."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., vol. 17, p. 65.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., vol. 10, p. 223.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., vol. 18, p. 11.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., vol. 11, p. 92.

Moreover, the *'ulamā'* and intellectuals of Islamic countries are duty-bound to strive in order to achieve Islamic unity which is the only means of their victory and perpetuation. Thus, Imam recommended:

The *'ulamā'* and intellectuals of all Islamic countries must develop a plan with the motive of discovering a way to deliver Islamic countries from the clutches of Western and Eastern superpowers, compel the leaders of Islamic countries to come out from under the domination of world-devouring countries, and withstand exploitation and colonialism. They must increase their contact with one another and base their strategy on the awakening of deprived peoples and believe that they shall find the way and emerge victorious.<sup>42</sup>

The pilgrims of the *Bayt Allah al-Harām* (i.e. the Holy House of Allah, the Ka'bah) are obliged to lay the foundations of Islamic unity when performing the rites of the Abrahamic pilgrimage. By performing the rite of 'exoneration from liability towards polytheists' they must flaunt the true unity of world Muslims before the superpowers. The rites of ḥajj and exoneration are symbols of the heights of unity. As Imam has stated:

The cry of exoneration is the cry of all the peoples who can no longer tolerate the arrogance of America and its hegemonic presence and who do not want their roars of indignation and disgust to forever remain smothered and withered within their throats and who have decided to live free and die free and be vociferators for all the generations. Their cry of exoneration is the cry to defend the religion—the anguished cry of nations whose hearts have been violently slashed by the dagger of unbelief and dissimulation.<sup>43</sup>

Thus, Imam regarded the scope of unity to be absolute. He asked all humans, all oppressed peoples, all Muslims, all Islamic sects, all Islamic intellectuals, and even all clergy of the various religions to do their utmost to unite the nations on the basis of common human and Islamic principles and to utilize all their abilities to forward this aim of unity.

### AIMS OF UNITY

In his unitary ideal, Imam Khumaynī pursued aims that may be categorized under the following objectives: domestic, foreign, political, economic, social, cultural, and military.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., vol. 18, p. 236.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., vol. 20, p. 111.



His domestic aims of unity included establishing liberty and autonomy,<sup>44</sup> the severance of foreign interference,<sup>45</sup> the prevention of treasonous and criminal activity,<sup>46</sup> rising to greatness and dignity,<sup>47</sup> the advancement of Islamic aims, the realization of Islam in its entirety,<sup>48</sup> the establishment of a correct democracy rather than the corrupt Western or Eastern democracy,<sup>49</sup> the perpetuation of the Islamic Revolution,<sup>50</sup> the attainment of social justice,<sup>51</sup> and the expansion of individual and social justice.<sup>52</sup>

The foreign aims of Imam's idea of unity consist of the following: the promotion of human understanding,<sup>53</sup> the establishment of peace and tranquillity throughout the world,<sup>54</sup> instituting true democracy and freedom,<sup>55</sup> the realization of a profound universal revolution against anti-humanist world-devourers,<sup>56</sup> the rediscovery of spiritual sovereignty and the repulsion of the feeling of inferiority towards tyrannical governments,<sup>57</sup> the termination of the hegemony of resource-hungry countries over oppressed nations,<sup>58</sup> the securing of the right of nations to command their own destinies by means of awakening governments,<sup>59</sup> the establishment of Islamic rule all over the world,<sup>60</sup> the formation of an indomitable Ummah with a secure foundation,<sup>61</sup> the development of an Islamic identity for Muslims,<sup>62</sup> the deliverance from scientific impoverishment of Islamic societies,<sup>63</sup> and the alleviation of the distress of Muslims.<sup>64</sup>

In the short term, Imam Khumayni aspired first to establish an Islamic government in Iran which would achieve social justice within the nation by

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, p. 250.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., vol. 15, p. 175.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., vol. 9, p. 48.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 238.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 9; and *ibid.*, vol. 17, p. 77.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., vol. 9, p. 9.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., vol. 19, p. 143.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., vol. 13, p. 116.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., vol. 8, p. 114.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., vol. 16, p. 113.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, p. 162.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., vol. 14, p. 146.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., vol. 6, p. 169.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., vol. 20, pp. 111-112.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 234.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., vol. 21, p. 19; and *ibid.*, vol. 19, p. 43.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., vol. 19, p. 146.

renouncing colonialism and despotism and acquiring freedom and autonomy and then to disseminate this justice. He desired to create of the Islamic Republic of Iran an exemplar for all Muslims and oppressed peoples of the globe so that they might also attain liberty and independence and sever the hands of foreigners and superpowers from their countries. For this reason, he would assert that all people, all humans, must reinforce the Islamic government so as to uphold justice.

Protection and bolstering of the people's spirituality, establishing justice among them, and delivering the oppressed from the subjugation of persecutors were the long term goals of Imam Khumaynī. These were to be realized through the establishment of world peace, true liberty and democracy, and justice. It follows that humankind would reach a new understanding and a worldwide Islamic government would be established forming an invulnerable Ummah with an unfaltering foundation. Islamic societies would rediscover their Islamic identity and rid themselves of scientific impoverishment. By forming a collaborative army, they would defend Islam and the Islamic Ummah, never allowing land-hungry governments to plunder their resources.

Each of these aims can be divided into political, economic, cultural, and military categories. The political aims included the liberty and independence of all world nations and Muslims, the establishment of world peace and true democracy and freedom, the realization of individual and social justice, the recognition of the right of nations to control their own destinies, the formation of an Islamic Ummah in the true sense, the foundation of a party of the oppressed people of the world, safeguarding greatness and dignity of nations, the advancement of the political aims of Islam, the realization of Islam in its entirety, the achievement of a universal revolution, the termination of the supremacy of world-devourers over the oppressed, the dissolution of the military bases of the East and West from national borders, the formation of an Islamic defence army, the alleviation of the distress of Muslims by dealing with their affairs, and the preservation of the Islamic Republic.

His economic aims were comprised of the following: attaining autonomy and self-sufficiency, the spread of economic justice, fulfilling the international aims of Islam, preventing colonialism and exploitation, and reassuming domestic control of economic affairs.

Imam Khumaynī's social aims were as follows: the establishment of social justice, the prevention of corruption, immorality, and various deviations, the institution of peace and tranquillity, the formation of an Islamic

Ummah with strong underpinnings, and awakening from the torpor of negligence.

The cultural aims included the preservation of greatness and dignity, the perpetuation of the Islamic Revolution, the prevention of corruption and depravity, the obliteration of centres of injustice and vice, the promotion of human understanding, the retrieval of spiritual autonomy and the repulsion of the feeling of insignificance towards enemies, the formation of an Islamic identity for all Muslims, the deliverance from scientific impoverishment in Islamic societies, etc.

Finally, formation of a joint Islamic army to defend Islam and disperse the military bases of the East and West from Islamic countries was the politico-military aim of Imam in his call to unity.

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The doctrine of unity of Imam Khumaynī is considered one of his most important and lasting ideals. This doctrine is a critical point in the history of Islamic unity. Imam's ideal on unity stemmed from the fact that discord in the Islamic Ummah has caused shameful consequences for which we may never be able to compensate because outsiders have attained hegemony over Muslims, Islamic societies have collapsed under colonialist rule, and Muslims have lost their human dignity and have been left behind in all areas. Therefore, we have lost our autonomy, liberty, and greatness and become dependent upon the East and West. As a result of these ignominious circumstances, Imam strongly felt the necessity for unity and rose up to correct the collective human society so that by establishing an Islamic unification, and furthermore, a coalition of the oppressed peoples of the world, the interference of superpowers in the affairs of Islamic and oppressed countries may be counteracted and they may achieve victory.

Imam considered independence, liberty, and justice as the *sine qua non*s and precursors of unity. Hence, he made use of circumstances such as those of Palestine, the rites of ḥajj and exoneration, etc. to engender unity. Imam revealed his thoughts regarding unity with the motive of defending Islam, enjoining the good and forbidden evil, humanizing society, seeking independence, freedom, and dignity for all humans including Muslims, permeating divine justice and Islam throughout the world, and preventing discord and disunity. He viewed the scope of unity to be all-encompassing such that it embraced all humans: oppressed peoples, Muslims of all schools, and even all divine religions. Imam pursued various political, economic, social, cultural, and military goals which may be categorized into

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domestic and foreign levels and also into short-, medium-, and long-term aims.

In conclusion, the Islamic unity that Imam worked towards has brought about many benefits for Muslims and will yield (God-willing) even sweeter fruits in the future. These benefits include the Islamic Revolution of Iran, the Islamic liberation movements, the freedom movements of other oppressed nations, the growing sense of fear on the part of global arrogant powers of Muslims, and the ascendancy of Muslims. Therefore, the unitary ideal of Imam Khumaynī is the source of victory and perpetuation of the Islamic Ummah.

## Country Profile: Turkey

A. R. Amīrdihī

### Abstract:

This comprehensive article covers the most notable points of Turkey's geography and history. Politically, it traces the advent of the modern secular state from the time of the Uthmani caliphate to its present quandry where numerous Islamic political parties are vying for ascendancy in spite of the fanatical secularist proclivities of members of its ruling elite. The paper also comments on the multi-ethnic and multi-religious fabric of Turkish society, stressing on the role played by various official religious organs of the state as well as the grassroots presence of various Islamic movements, most prominently the Sufi *ṭuruq* and orders. By so doing, the author underlines the great potential that lies between the surface of Turkish laicity, alluding to the possibility of the Turkish Muslims regaining their former place of honour and influence in the Ummah.

**Keywords:** Turkey, history of Turkey, Turkish politics, Turkish Islamic parties, Sufi orders.

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### GEOGRAPHY

Turkey is situated in southeastern Europe and southwestern Asia and the geographical coordinates lie between latitudes of 36.5 to 42° north and longitudes of 26 to 45° east in the Northern hemisphere. The country joins the important continents of Asia and Europe. The Asian region of Turkey is also named Anatolia or Asia Minor. Turkey can be visualized as a rectangular area spanning 1660 kilometers from east to west and 550 kilometers from north to south.

Turkey neighbors six Asian and two European countries. It has common borders with Azerbaijan (9 km), Armenia (268 km), Iran (499 km), Bulgaria (240 km), Georgia (252 km), Iraq (352 km), Syria (822 km), and Greece (206 km).

### Area

Turkey covers an area of 780,580 square kilometers, of which 770,760 km<sup>2</sup> comprises dry land and 9,820 km<sup>2</sup> is domestic waters. It is surrounded

by open water on three sides. With an area of 780,580 km<sup>2</sup> Turkey is the 35<sup>th</sup> largest country in the world.

### **Geopolitical and Geostrategic Position**

Due to the fact that a portion of Turkey is in Europe and the rest in Asia, the country is unique in its geopolitical importance. With the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics at the conclusion of the previous century, this importance burgeoned. Turkey is surrounded by open water on three sides: the Black Sea on the north, the Mediterranean Sea on the south, and the Aegean Sea on the west. In the northwestern region of Turkey is the important inland Sea of Marmara which is connected to the Black Sea through the important and strategic strait of Bosphorus and with the Aegean Sea through the Dardanelles strait.

Even though nationally this country is divided into 81 provinces, geographically it consists of seven regions: North Anatolia (the Black Sea region); Marmara which comprises the Sea of Marmara and the European part of Turkey; the Aegean region; the Mediterranean region (southern Turkey); Central Anatolia; Eastern Anatolia; and Southeastern Anatolia (Fallah-Zadeh, 2005-6:23).

### **POPULATION GROWTH AND DIVERSITY**

Currently, Turkey possesses a young and developing population and since its independence in 1923, the government has adopted a national policy to increase the population. At the time of Turkey's 2005 census, its population stood at 69,660,559.<sup>1</sup> The population growth in the region of Southeastern Anatolia is less than that of the north and west of the country. There is a higher population density in the southeast of Anatolia, especially in pluvial areas such as the southeastern slopes of the Taurus Mountains and the highlands of the Siirt and Mardin provinces. The population decreases towards the south due to intermittent drought spells.

The ethnic groups of Turkey consist of Turks (74% of the population) and Kurds (25% of the population). The Kurds of Turkey generally live in the east and southeast of the country. Turkish is the only official language of the country. Smaller ethnic groups in Turkey include the Azeri (in the northeast), Laz (in the north), Arabs (in the south), and Armenians (in Istanbul).

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<sup>1</sup> For more information refer to <http://www.wikipedia.org>.

## COUNTRY PROFILE: TURKEY

Among Turkish cities, Istanbul has the greatest population density due to its unique geographical location, concentration of trade and commercial activities, historic background, and tourist potential.

### **ECONOMIC SYSTEM**

Turkey is a country with a capitalist economic system that is based on a free market economy where the private sector has an ever growing role. In 1999, Turkey joined the G-20, a group of twenty major economies. In 1995, the country reached a Customs Union agreement with the EU. As per the Helsinki European Council held in December 1999, Turkey has been accepted as an official candidate for EU membership. Subsequently, the Turkish government has proceeded with coordinating its economic laws with European Union standards.

Additionally, the United States of America has committed itself to carrying out important economic projects in Turkey including the Baku-Amu Darya pipeline project and establishment of industrial zones in the country.

### **Economic Tendencies**

Before the 1950s, a majority of the people of Turkey performed agricultural activities. Afterwards, with the development of mechanized agricultural methods and growth of the industrial sector, the public has inclined towards the manufacturing and service industries such that, by the start of the 1990s, only 40% of Turkey's active population was working in the agriculture sector. In the 1960s, this number was over 66%. Today, a large portion of the private working population is still active in agriculture. Thus, other industries, especially tourism and manufacturing, take a secondary position (Qasemi, 1995-6:111).

### **THE TURKISH NATIONAL FLAG**

The main emblems on the modern Turkish flag are a white moon and star on a red background. These representations are analogous to the emblems used on the flags of Turkish Seljuk and Ottoman emperors. The moon and star emblem was one of the main symbols of the Turkish states which controlled a large expanse of the Middle East, Central Asia, and Asia Minor (i.e. Anatolia) from the tenth century of the Common Era, in the name of the Ghaznavid, Seljuk, and Khārazmi empires. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottoman Empire retained this emblem as the symbol of state. Since the Ottoman sultans also held the title of Muslim Caliph, this emblem

emerged as the symbol of Islam. Currently, many Islamic countries have variously affixed the moon and star to their flags. The symbol of the Red Crescent organization was also affected in part by this trend. The International Red Cross was founded in 1864 by Swiss businessman Jean-Henri Dunant. Since the organization adopted the cross, which was the symbol of the Swedish government and Christianity, a red crescent was assumed for its Islamic counterpart after the First World War. Some countries that have incorporated the moon and star into their national flags include Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Algeria, Pakistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tunisia, Singapore, Malaysia, and Mauritania.<sup>2</sup>

## POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES

### Historical Background

What constitutes modern Turkey is in fact the lands remnant after over 600 years of Ottoman rule; that is, the remnant after the surrender of the Ottoman sultan before the harsh stipulations of the peace treaty with the Allies and the empire's dissolution in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Pasha, commander of the resistance forces fighting against the Dardanelles Campaign in World War I. Mustafa Kemal was later given the name Atatürk, meaning father of the Turks.<sup>3</sup>

In the peak of its power, the Ottoman Empire which had supplanted the Seljuk Empire in 1299 controlled a large section of modern Balkans, Egypt, Iraq, Arabia, Algeria, Syria, and Hungary. However, with the death of Süleyman the Magnificent, the eighth and most powerful Ottoman emperor, in 1566 corruption and decadence suffused the empire. Thereafter, the Ottoman Empire was on the defensive until the final days of its existence. After WWI, due to the empire's support of the Germans and emergence of independence movements within the empire, many of the territories controlled by the Ottoman Empire in Arabia, Syria, Iraq, and Africa fell into the hands of the Allied powers with the signing of an anti-aggression treaty and the Armistice of Mudros in 1918. Finally, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey abolished the Ottoman sultanate thereby ending Ottoman rule.

Atatürk entered the political and social arena by inciting disorder from 1918 to 1923. He was able to garner much popularity as a result of his great success in WWI. After official recognition of the boundaries of modern

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<sup>2</sup> For more information refer to <http://www.wikipedia.org>.

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.turkishembassy.org/governmentpolitics/index.htm>.



#### COUNTRY PROFILE: TURKEY

Turkey as per the Treaty of Lausanne, Mustafa Kemal was chosen as the first president of Turkey.

The most important undertakings of Atatürk in his 15 year reign on this newly emerged country were cultural and social in nature, including opposition to the interference of religion in politics, propagation of un-Islamic clothing and abolishment of Islamic hijab, substitution of the Arabic alphabet with the Roman alphabet, supplanting of the Islamic calendar with the Gregorian calendar. In short, his chief alterations consisted of the propagation of Western culture.

Ismet İnönü, Turkey's second president followed Atatürk's doctrine. With the outbreak of WWII, changes were made in the domestic and foreign policies of Turkey, including multi-party politics and further westernization. In January 1946, the Democratic Party was established under the leadership of Jalāl Bâyr who was able to gain the majority vote in 1950, thereby governing the country until 1960 when he lost power in a military coup d'état.

From 1960 to 1965 the country was controlled by coalition governments. However, in 1965 the Justice Party successfully gained the majority vote under the leadership of Süleyman Demirel. Due to social disorder and economic difficulties, Turkey experienced another military coup in 1970 leading to two years of military rule. Afterwards, the Grand National Assembly elected Fahri Korutürk as the sixth president of Turkey.

Throughout the 1970s no party was able to gain the majority vote; as a result, the country was again governed by coalition governments. Towards the end of the decade, military interference in internal affairs and public dissatisfaction once more crippled the domestic politics of Turkey. In September 1980, another coup was mounted by General Kenan Evren, Chief of the General Staff, who held political power until the end of the 1980s. He formed a six person committee, i.e. the National Security Council, which limited or prohibited the activity of many parties and modified the Turkish Constitution which had previously been altered at the beginning of the 1970s.

Turkey's agitated political climate continued to a lesser degree into the '80s and '90s until the Welfare Party won the majority vote putting Necmettin Erbakan in power in 1996. However, when the army toppled his government and he was prohibited from participating in political activities for five years, political friction escalated within the country (Fallah-Zadeh, 2005-6:37-9).

### Political Structure

The Turkish constitution was altered in 1971, 1973, and 1974 following domestic changes in state. Finally, in 1982 the new Turkish constitution was put to referendum. The people approved the new constitution with a majority vote of over 90%. According to article 1 of the 1982 constitution, Turkey's government is a republic. In article 2, the characteristics of the Republic of Turkey have been defined as a "democratic, secular and social state governed by the rule of law; bearing in mind the concepts of public peace, national solidarity and justice; respecting human rights; loyal to the nationalism of Atatürk."<sup>4</sup> According to the Turkish Constitution, the judiciary, the legislature, and the executive branches are each independent of one another. The country's administration is presidential-parliamentary meaning that the president, who is appointed by the parliament for a seven-year term, may remove the prime minister from office and can, in critical circumstances, declare a state of emergency or legislate without the approval of the parliament. In normal circumstances, the president may veto the laws passed by the parliament. However, the parliament may resubmit the law to the president with alterations or clarifications whereupon the president cannot refuse to sanction the law in question. It must also be noted that the president may dissolve the parliament in critical situations and demand new elections.

Moreover, the constitution has formulated an advisory council, i.e. the National Security Council, to assist the president in his duties. The members of this council consist of previous presidents, retired judges of the Constitutional Court, and previous Chiefs of the General Staff. Twenty members of this council are chosen by the president for six years tenure and ten additional members are chosen by the current members of the council (Qasemi, 1995-6:111).

### Political Parties

The first party in Turkey after its independence in 1923 was the Republican People's Party or CHP which was established by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. This party was unrivaled in its governance of the country for 23 years. However, the emergence of the first opposing party at the end of the 1940s which branched off from the Republican People's Party, designated the Democratic Party, was a critical point in the evolution of political parties in Turkey. Until the end of the 1950s, the country was governed by these two parties.

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<sup>4</sup> For the full Turkish constitution see: <http://www.byegm.gov.tr/sayfa.aspx?Id=78>

## COUNTRY PROFILE: TURKEY

Interference of the military in domestic politics at the start of the '60s and prohibition of the Democratic Party's activities led to emergence of coalition parties, plurality and debility of political parties. Political party activity was entering a new stage when a recurrence of military intervention in politics and the ouster of politicians in 1971 destabilized the process of democratization and liberalization in the country. This instability continued throughout the '70s in spite of the military's subsequent disinterest in political power and its prompt relinquishment to politicians. This condition persisted until escalation of terror and chaos in the country together with disagreement among political parties in the parliament regarding selection of the president precipitated the return of the military to the political arena at the start of the 1980s, whereupon all political parties were dissolved and several important personages of the parties were incarcerated.

This trend—debility of political parties, formation and fragility of coalition governments, and military intervention in the political arena—generally persisted all through the '80s and '90s, though in 1983 several erstwhile parties resumed their activities.

At present there are numerous parties in Turkey, although only a few political parties hold seats in the parliament. Some Turkish politicians believe that the numerousness of parties is a sign of Turkey's democracy. Others hold that smaller parties have merely been established for personal gain and to attain bargaining power with other parties. Still other experts see the increase of political parties as a result of the shortfall of democracy within parties and the inadmissibility of party members to freely state their thoughts and ideas, thereby causing breakdown of prominent parties and formation of small political factions. In order for each party to enter the parliament, it must gather at least 10% of all the votes nationwide.

According to official statistics, currently over 35 parties operate in Turkey. The following is a political characterization of several of these parties:

Right-wing parties:

1. Moderate rightist: True Path Party (or DYP) and Motherland Party (ANAP)
2. Radical rightist: Nationalist Action Party (MHP) and Young Party (GP)
3. Conservative rightist: Felicity Party (SP) and Justice and Development Party (AKP)

Left-wing parties:

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1. West-inclined leftist: Republican People's Party (CHP) and Democratic Left Party (DSP)
2. East-inclined leftist: Democratic People's Party (DEHAP)

Additional examples of Turkey's political parties are the People's Congress of Kurdistan or Kongra-Gel (KGK), Welfare Party (RP), Democratic Party (Turkey), Confederation of Revolutionary Workers Unions (DISK), Justice Party (AP), New Turkey Party (YTP), New Party (YP), Freedom and Solidarity Party (ÖDP), and Peace and Democracy Party (BDP).

As per the 1982 constitution, political activity of all labour and commercial assemblies, unions, and organizations is prohibited.

#### **Recent Political Changes**

In recent years, drastic changes have been introduced in Turkey's political arena. The most important Islamist movement emerged in the '90s and afterwards as follows:

In 1994, when the Welfare Party under the leadership of Erbakan won the mayoral elections, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan became the mayor of Istanbul. Afterwards, Erbakan was unseated as prime minister by the military's 'postmodern coup' in 1997 and was banned from political activities. The parliament members supporting this party formed a new party named Virtue Party (FP). The newly founded party made a powerful entrance into the political arena by winning over 15% of votes in the 1999 elections. This threatened the secularists and military and activity of this party was prohibited by the court in 2001 prompting Erdoğan, then mayor of Istanbul, to criticize the military and its antagonism towards the Virtue Party. As a result, the court convicted him of instigation and sentenced him to prison.

Subsequent to the banning of the Virtue Party, Islamists reappeared in the shape of two other parties. Conservative Islamists formed the Felicity Party under the leadership of Mehmet Recai Kutan and activists, led by Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül, established the Justice and Development Party. The latter successfully gained the majority vote in the parliament elections and currently it controls the government. Supremacy of the Justice and Development Party coincided with America's attack on Iraq and the fall of Saddam Hussein. The lack of the government's support for America in its attack on Iraq increased the popularity of this party. The Justice and Development Party seek strategic relations with America and its leaders have taken up an extreme position against Israel's crimes and have reviled its subjugative actions. They also greatly endeavour to meet the membership conditions of the European Union (Qasemi, 1995-6:50).

## SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

### Traditions

To a certain extent modern Turkey is heir to the great empire of the past and thus possesses a rich culture and long-established traditions. A distinct difference is apparent between inhabitants of the countryside and those of large cities. In fact, traditionalism and modernism have attained unique aspects by their encounter. It goes without saying that after the dissolution of Ottoman rule and ascendancy of Atatürk, the customs and traditions of the people of Turkey have undergone much change.

One of the cultural traits of Turkish society is the considerable respect of younger people towards their elders. For instance, they kiss the hands of their elders to show respect. There are many manifest examples of this reverence in the traditions and social behaviour of the Turkish people.

In Turkish cities, almost all districts have coffee shops. These coffee shops are frequented by various social classes, from the illiterate to university students and supporters of political parties. The unique status of the coffee shop in the social, political, and cultural life of Turkey has long and colourful antecedents from the time of Ottoman rule (Abolqasemi & Hussain, 1999-2000:248).

The Turks attach considerable importance to neatness and cleanliness which they consider more important than having a wide variety of food on their tables.

The following are several traditions and penchants of the people of Turkey:

- Couples prefer to have male children.
- Families conduct elaborate ceremonies for circumcision of their male children.
- Families perform grand ceremonies for sending male children off to obligatory military service.
- Turks hold magnificent weddings.
- Suitors and their families incite women (whose parents disapprove of their union) to elope.<sup>5</sup>
- Individuals and tribes hold to hereditary enmities.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> This practice is customary in villages.

<sup>6</sup> This Turkish custom was more prevalent in the past; in modern times it has become less common.

#### AL-TAQRIB

- Money is collected from wedding guests for the newlyweds.
- The bride and bridegroom must cooperatively provide necessary furniture and household appliances.
- Turks hold eulogy and mourning ceremonies for their deceased similar to many Eastern cultures.
- The people of Turkey are partial to their place of birth and place of residence.
- Social relations are typically intragroup or tribal.
- The people accord respect to the elderly and aid children, women, and poor people.
- They show interest in competitions and sporting, cultural, art, and traditional events.
- They have a predilection for local and traditional cuisines (Hakim-pur & Marjani, 1994-5:35).

#### Family Commitments

It is quite clear that Turkish families have been influenced by Western social values. Even so, the system of prevailing traditions is long-lasting and deep-rooted, so the foreign cultural intrusions met with great resistance. The effects of this clash can be seen in the differing forms of family and marriage in the Turkish society. Families are gravitating from the cohesive traditional extended form towards the small nuclear form. However, this is not true in all areas of Turkey. According to UNICEF studies, of every 100 families living in the north and east of Turkey, respectively, 48 and 40 families are of the extended and traditional type while in western regions 73% of families are nuclear (Qasemi, 1995-6:39).

In rural areas, families greatly involve themselves in choosing suitable spouses for their children while marriage occurs by the mutual decision of the couple in municipal areas. Marriage below eighteen years of age is against Turkish law. The average marriage age is twenty-five for men and twenty-two for women. Traditional families, especially in rural societies, usually hold to all the formalities leading to marriage. One causative factor for *kız kaçırma* or 'girl kidnapping'<sup>7</sup> may be to escape from the onerous burdens of these many formalities.

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<sup>7</sup> *Kız kaçırma* is the term used when a young woman elopes with her suitor to be religiously and, if possible and desired, lawfully wed.

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Another characteristic of marriage in Turkey is the commonness of marriage with relatives. Despite warnings of the mass media regarding the negative effects of consanguine marriages on future generations, about one-fifth of marriages are with relatives, 7% of which are with close relatives [such as first cousins]. In eastern Turkey 23% and northern Turkey 20% of marriages are consanguineous.

### Holidays and Important Religious Ceremonies

**Kurban Bayramı or Feast of Sacrifices:** This is the greatest official religious holiday of Turkey. According to Islamic tradition, citizens perform animal sacrifices on this day. This celebration is a four-day official holiday starting from the tenth of Dhu'l-Hijjah to the thirteenth.

**Candy Festival ('īd fiṭr):** This festival is the second greatest official holiday in Turkey. As per this festival, the three initial days of the month of Shawwal are official holidays. Due to high consumption of candies and chocolates, especially as gifts to children, this festival is known as 'Şeker Bayramı' or Candy Festival.

**Kandil (candle) Nights:** These festival nights are named thus because of the tradition of lighting candles and lights on the minarets of mosques. These nights are as follows:

1. The Prophet of Islam's (ṣ) birthday on the 12<sup>th</sup> of Rabi al-Awwal which is known as the 'Mevlid (birthday) Kandili'.
2. The first Friday of Rajab, which is known as the 'Regaip Kandili'.
3. The Night of Ascension (*mi'rāj*) which also coincides with the Prophet's appointment (27<sup>th</sup> of Rajab). It is known as the 'Miraç Kandili'.
4. The 15<sup>th</sup> night of Sha'ban which is known as 'Berat Kandili'.

**The day of Aşure (or 'Āshūrā, the 10<sup>th</sup> of Muharram):** According to traditions handed down from Ottoman times, in great cities, especially Istanbul, a kind of sweet soup is cooked called 'aşure'. Exactly ten ingredients must be used to make this soup. The Alevi sect fasts on the first twelve days of Muharram including the day of 'Āshūrā. In the past, the mourning ceremonies of Ja'farī Shī'ahs for Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī ('a) were held in secret, although in modern times they are conducted with majestic grandeur in the Shī'ah areas of Istanbul as well as other areas. It is noteworthy that many Sunnī and Alevi citizens of Turkey also participate in this ceremony (Abolqasemi & Hussain, 1999-2000:268).

**The Night of Qadr:** The Muslims of Turkey believe that the night of the 27<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan is the Night of Qadr and keep vigil for a portion of the night in mosques, performing ritual prayers and reciting passages from the Holy Quran, devotions, and religious elegies.

## ETHNICITY

Since olden times Turkey has been the congress of varied ethnic and cultural groups. For this reason, the country boasts ethnic and cultural heterogeneity. The most significant ethnic diversification in Turkey goes back to the invasion of central Asian Turks (from Mongolia and Chinese frontiers). The comingling of invading Turks with those of Mediterranean ethnicity in Ottoman times generated a new ethnic blend, the Mediterranean-Mongolians, which constitute the majority of Turkey's demographic makeup.

According to statistics broadcast by Turkey's mass media, 85% of the population is ethnically Turk, and the remaining 15% consists of minorities such as Kurds, Armenians, Georgians, Greeks, and Arabs.<sup>8</sup> With a population of fifteen to twenty million, Kurds, who mostly live in the southeastern areas of the country, are deemed as the most substantial minority in Turkey (Abolqasemi & Hussain, 1999-2000:113). Armenians mostly congregate around Lake Van, Georgians on the coasts of the Black Sea, Greeks in Istanbul, and Arabs close to the borders of Iraq and Syria and in the north-east of Turkey.

Among the Turkish minorities, Kurds and Armenians endeavour to preserve their ethnic and religious identities and therefore have attracted the attention of the Turkish government.

### Traditional Clothes

Even though Turks of the Ottoman era lived alongside Europeans, they had no inclination to imitate the latter's clothes. However, after the decline of the Ottoman Empire, emulative tendencies appeared among most social classes excluding the Islamic clergy. This gradually led to the self-alienation of the people of Turkey.

Fundamental change in the clothing of the Turks occurred in the initial years of the republic era. In villages men less frequently wear local clothing although the clothing of women is usually of the traditional kind. The use of the tie has become commonplace in cities and even villages since its use is obligatory for male students. A baggy type of pants similar to those

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<sup>8</sup> Turkey's Arab population has been estimated as two million.



## COUNTRY PROFILE: TURKEY

donned by Kurds is commonly worn in many villages. Many women in villages and small cities wear oversized, colourful pants. Use of a kind of small turban and long over-garment called *labbādab* is popular among religious Muslims even though they are banned. This attire is more common in Istanbul's Fatih district which is considered to be the most religious area in the city. It is also conventional among some Sufi persuasions.

In great cities such as Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir, the attire of both women and men is completely westernized (Fallah-Zadeh, 2005-6:89-90).

### STATUS OF WOMEN

The Ottoman era may be considered as the Dark Age in the lives of women. In this era, women lived in hardship, devoid of any rights whatsoever. They did not enjoy the right to participate in the society, be educated, or work. In fact, women were completely unappreciated. However, at the end of the Ottoman era this area of the society was starting to be recognized. In 1859, the first girls' school was established in Istanbul in the European style. After that, the first teacher's college for women was founded in 1870 and the first women's publication was instituted in 1893.

In the republic era, the Western system of women's rights was implemented. Women attained financial independence and the rights of women and men became almost identical. The Turkish Women's Union was initiated in 1924 but was dissolved after a while, starting again in 1946. The union is non-political although it is active in political matters, especially women-related political issues, and fervently supports the secularists (Qasemi, 1995-6:175).

In 1927, women were accorded the right to vote and in 1932, when civil marriage was proposed, women were granted equal divorce rights. Many women work outside the home, comprising approximately 36.7% of Turkey's workforce. These developments differ among rural and urban women. Village women believe in serving their husbands and working at home while there are three types of city women: completely westernized, superficially westernized, and finally, religious or Islamist.

'Muslim women argue that wearing a headscarf is a human right and a religious duty' though 'secularists see the headscarf as a provocative political symbol, and have managed to get it banned from universities, state schools and government ministries'.<sup>9</sup>

On the whole in the process of Turkey's social changes in recent decades, the status of women has improved in relation to their previous cir-

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<sup>9</sup> [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/talking\\_point/3192647.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/talking_point/3192647.stm)

cumstances in the Ottoman era and they now enjoy additional benefits and freedom. However, this redesign has not equally encompassed all the women of Turkey. Also, in the process of these changes, the original aims of women's freedom have gradually lost their weight, ultimately leading women to self-alienation, westernization, and loss of cultural identity (Parand & Sobhani, 1994-5:117).

Politically, Muslim women in Turkey possess no rights. They cannot make use of educational institutions wearing Islamic hijab. The Muslim women of Turkey who wear hijab are deprived of the right to work in government ministries and the government looks down on this class. Even though the growth of Islamism and following of religious canons has increased in the current decade, the government and its laic officials strive to bar Muslims from all religious mores and propagate a culture of nudity and Western forms among the women of Turkey.

## RELIGIOUS, CULTURAL, AND EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONS

### Religious Background of Turkey

The universalism of Islam caused its swift dissemination beyond its original geographic location, thus permeating within world civilizations, cultures, and peoples.

Islam has embraced all from the Middle East to North Africa, Europe to the heart of Africa, the wilderness of Russia to northeast Asia. A variety of cultures and peoples inhabit these regions.

In many states worldwide, the arrival of Islam initiated great change and brought about the advent of new eras in their histories.<sup>10</sup>

Before the emergence of Islam in Turkey, most of its population consisted of Christians, Jews, and Magians. Ancient Turkey, named Turkistan, encompassed extensive territories. Therefore, it is completely natural that it incorporated many religions and religious groups. In the age of Islamic conquests in the first century of the Hijra, Islam entered the region and spread throughout during the second century.

According to Gustave le Bon, Arab and Muslim rule had greatly expanded as it spread from the Strait of Gibraltar to the Pyrenees Mountains and from the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea to the African Sahara. He goes on to say that a large part of Asia, i.e. the Arabian Peninsula to Turki-

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<sup>10</sup> An example can be seen in the city of Kazan in Tatarstan, where the Muslims celebrated the 1000th anniversary of the arrival of Islam in their country.

#### COUNTRY PROFILE: TURKEY

stan and the Vale of Kashmir to the Taurus Mountains in Turkey, was ruled by Muslims (Le Bon, 1979-80:166).

Delving further into the history of this great realm, the religious backdrop and system of Muslim governance may be described as follows:

With the schism in the Roman Empire and its subsequent sundering into the Western Roman Empire and Eastern Roman Empire, namely the Byzantine Empire, Byzantium (later renamed Constantinople and currently known as Istanbul) became the capital of the latter empire, making present-day Turkey the seat of its rule. However, in 1453, at the close of the Middle Ages and the birth of modernity, Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror assaulted the heart of the Byzantine Empire thereby changing the path of history. With this significant victory the Ottoman Empire expanded all the way to Western Europe thereby causing Christianity to feel seriously threatened. Hence, the Greek and Roman civilizations gave way to the Islamic civilization. Entirely dominating Eastern Europe from its Mediterranean power base, the epic-laden Ottoman army dealt debilitating blows to the heart of the Empire and brought Austria and Italy to their knees through siege. Thus, Turkey became the centre of Islam's power.

The glorious minarets and mosques built by Muslims in Eastern and Central Europe bespeaks of their magnificence, power, and political and cultural influence. Exemplars of this sway include the Sultan Ahmed Mosque and the Ayasofya Mosque in Istanbul. The latter was formerly a Church and now, as a result of the pressure of Europe and the Vatican, praying in it has been prohibited and it has become a museum visited by thousands of tourists every year wherein Christian and Islamic art are commingled. In addition, there are close to 18 thousand Islamic manuscripts and books in the library of the Topkapi Palace Museum.<sup>11</sup>

This world empire and absolute ruler of the Mediterranean seated on the bastion of Constantinople was the greatest military power in Europe and a large part of Asia, controlling Greece, North Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Balkan Peninsula such that Greece was considered a small province of the empire. However, as a result of the division that was fostered within this power and the machinations of

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<sup>11</sup> Cited by Āyandih Rūshan News, Mahdī Ja'farī, Monday, January 9, 2006. In March of the same year, the following interesting report was published: One of the smallest exquisite Quran manuscripts in the world was unveiled to the press by the Sakıp Sabancı Museum in Turkey. This copy of the Holy Quran, which was bought by the Sakıp Sabancı in an auction, was penned by Karīm ibn Ibrāhīm Shīrāzī in one 390 page volume with measurements of 1.37 by 0.86 by 0.59 inches. The cover of this Quran is made of gold-encrusted leather and its pages consist of 22 lines each (see: 27th year, No. 7719, Saturday Isphand 13, AH 1384, p. 5).

colonialist countries, the Ottoman government was sorely defeated by the Allies in the wars of 1912 and 1913 thereby losing all its European lands. The English took away its Arab lands and severed its territories from its domain. The erstwhile great Ottoman Empire thus became a small, broken, dissolved country. All that remained of those western, Asian, and African countries was Istanbul and Ankara. Thus, the centre of Islam's global power became a sickened appendix of Western colonialism, denying all its historic majesty, grandeur, and Islamic glory, implementing a version of global colonialism and arrogance through a secular system and Pan-Turkism, microphagically feeding off Western capitalism. A nation alive with the spirit of Islam, deriving its richness, power, and majesty from the Islamic culture, genetically and identically forged by Islam finally transforms into a semi-westernized entity that had lost itself. (Golī Zavārih, 2001-2:163-164)

Will this situation continue thus or does the newly revived proclivity toward Islamism thriving in Turkey indicate another transformation—a new movement toward the development of religious culture in various areas?

#### **Followers of Various Religions, Sects, and Religious Groups**

In Turkey there is not much unity in the way of religious beliefs. Support of diverse sects among the people is one of the characteristics of the religious structure of the Turkish society. Even so, according to academic studies performed in 1990, it was revealed that approximately 98% of the population of Turkey consists of Muslims while the remaining 2% are composed of Christians, Jews, and followers of other religions. Despite the high percentage of Muslims in Turkey, many Churches are active in Istanbul.<sup>12</sup>

In a general description, the religious people of Turkey may be classified thus:

1. Followers of Islam who are divided into several sects such as Hanafī, Shāfi'ī, Alevi, and the Shī'ah.
2. Followers of other religions such as Christians (i.e. Protestants, Catholics, and Gregorian Armenians), Jews, and followers of other religions.

Today, the Alevi population has been estimated at 15 to 20 million. The Alevi consider themselves affiliated to Imam Alī (peace be upon him) and

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<sup>12</sup> For more information see: <http://www.turkeytravelplanner.com/Religion/Index.html>

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his descendants. They recognize the caliphate of Ali (peace be upon him) and his lineage and regard them as having a superior status. Alevis perform their religious rituals in unique manners. One of their most important principles is the mastery of the individual over his or her tongue, hands, and back. According to their belief, this causes immunity from sin. The Pact of Brotherhood is yet another part of their tradition. Although the principles of their belief have been adopted from the Shī'ah, these beliefs have been influenced by various sources, becoming intermingled with those of Anatolia. Thus, they have gradually become distanced from the beliefs of the Shī'ah. The Alevi are composed of four sects.

### **The Entrance of Islam into Turkey**

The Turks of central Asia embraced Islam at the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century and by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Islam had virtually supplanted all previous religions of this land. In the Byzantine era, known as Asia Minor's time of peace, the attacks of Persians and Arabs which were aimed at spreading Islamic beliefs caused vast changes in the region. The Arabs numerously assailed Anatolia and assorted nomadic tribes were the first to accept Islam.

### **Islamic Sects**

The majority of Turkey's Muslims conform to the Sunnī school among which the Ḥanafīs are considered the most numerous. The Ḥanafīs mostly live in central and western Turkey. The less populous Shāfi'īs live in the eastern regions of Turkey and outnumber the Kurds (Parand & Sobhani, 1994-5:79). The number of Ḥanbal's followers are few and believers in the Ithnā 'Asharī Shī'ah school add up to close to one million. Of Turkey's population, 65% are Sunnī (with the aforementioned persuasions) while Alevis comprise 33% of the country's population.<sup>13</sup>

### **Status of Muslims**

Before the appearance of Islam in Turkey, Christianity was its state religion. With the increasing Seljuk influence the people's religion changed, Islam becoming the official religion. Nowadays, most people of Turkey are Muslim and other religions have little sway. After years of diminished authority, Turkey's Islamists of the National Salvation Party (MSP), the Welfare Party, and the Felicity Party were successful in attaining seats in the parliament. However, in recent years, with the help of the army, the secular

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<sup>13</sup> For more information see: <http://international.loc.gov/frd/cs/trtoc.html>

government has sabotaged the country's religious identity, banned Islamic hijāb, and limited Quran lessons, which was the only thread of continuity between the generations.

Throughout the history of Islam in Turkey, especially in the republic era, Muslims have been faced with various antireligious and heretical currents.

### Unique Religious Beliefs

In Turkey, followers of Islam and other religions live in peaceful coexistence. However, as a result of principally interreligious interactions and marriages, a rift has been created between them. Shī'ahs only attend their own mosques, rarely marry outside their persuasion, and mostly do not include others in their religious ceremonies. Even so, this distancing of religious persuasions has not caused discord among them such that cordial relationships prevail between Alevi and Shī'ahs. Both Sunnī and Shī'ah Muslims of Turkey congregate in mosques; however, Alevi congregate in 'cem houses' instead of mosques.

It is interesting to note that even though some Turkish women do not observe hijāb, they consider themselves true Muslims and do not regard their lack of hijāb as negligence of God's religion. Also, eating pork is forbidden for Muslims hence it is not supplied in butcher shops (Hakimpur & Marjani, 1994-5:31).

Followers of Bektashism in Turkey do not perform their worship in the Arabic tongue; rather, they worship God in Turkish. Moreover, they do not go to the mosque to worship, preferring to worship at home or special gathering places. This sect imposes no prohibition against the use of alcoholic beverages. Interestingly, proponents of Bektashism do not fast in the holy month of Ramadan but in Muharram and fifteen days afterwards.<sup>14</sup>

### Authoritative and Reputable Islamic Books by Turkish Authors

Muslim scholars of Turkey have left behind fascinating and praiseworthy religious works; some of the most prominent of which are as follows.

- *Ghurar al-Hikam wa Durar al-Kalim* by Amidi
- *Yunābī' al-Marwaddah* by Ganduzi Hanafi
- *Ahl ash-Shī'ah wa Uṣūlūhā* by Prof. Abdul-Bāqī
- *Miṣbāh al-Uns* by Muhammad ibn Hamzah al-Fanari al-Rumi

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<sup>14</sup> For further information see: <http://www.Adiyamanli.org/travel/index.php?s=1e507ee63aa1035097d7a5969317e8e9&showtopic=&pid=107&st=0&#entry107>

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- *Ma'rifat Nāmah* by Ibrāhīm Ḥaqqī
- *Risālah Nūr* by Sa'īd Nūrsī (Hakimpur & Marjani, 1994-5:34).

### Important Educational and Islamic Centres

There are several Islamic organizations in Turkey that have international activities. The National Gurush (Outlook), the Turkish Federation, the Union of Islamic Communities, Suleimanjis, and Nurjis are several of the groups that work within the Islamic confines and have followings in both Turkey and Europe (Parand & Sobhani, 1994-5:93).

**National Gurush** (where Gurush means outlook) is one of the large Islamic groups that holds smaller groups and assemblies under its wing, including Turkish Labourers, Union of European Muslim Youths, Islamic Centre, European Turks Union, and the mosques of Hamburg, Germany. This group supports Necmettin Erbakan.

**The Turkish Federation** is centred in Frankfurt and possesses various branches. Members of this federation advocate the National Action Party, style themselves as the 'Grey Wolf', believe the Turk ethnicity to be superior, and desire the union of all young Turks and the formation of a united government.

**The Union of Islamic Communities** is an offshoot of the National Gurush Group. This union promotes Islamic solidarity, maintaining that modern means must be used to achieve this aim (Qasemi, 1995-6:32).

**The Islamic Academy of Higher Education** is an Islamic educational centre in Turkey. This institution deals in education of religious subject matters. Also, Imam Hatip schools teach Quranic subjects and train religious preachers.

### Religious Education in Schools

For quite some time since the establishment of the republic, religious education has been banned. However, religious education was implemented unofficially and gradually attained relative legitimacy in Imam Hatip and Ilāhiyyāt schools. In public schools, one hour every week is given to teaching the Quran. Furthermore, Quran educational institutions have progressively gained popularity.

After installation of a centralized educational system in 1924, religious education in independent religious schools was banned. Two years later, Imam Hatip schools were set up in several cities including Ankara, Istanbul, Adana, and Konya. While conforming to secular principals, these schools started educating students in disciplines such as imamate, sermon-

izing, and Quran training (Qasemi, 1995-6:52). Requirements for enrolling in these schools include possessing a diploma for the first year of high school, belief in and practice of religious principles, and patriotism. By attaining a diploma in these schools, graduates may continue their studies in the Association of Higher Islamic Education or engage in imamate, sermonizing, or training of the Quran.

### **System of Religious Promotion**

Regarding religious promotion, article 24 of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey states:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religious belief and conviction....Education and instruction in religion and ethics shall be conducted under state supervision and control....No one shall be allowed to exploit or abuse religion or religious feelings, or things held sacred by religion, in any manner whatsoever, for the purpose of personal or political influence, or for even partially basing the fundamental, social, economic, political, and legal order of the state on religious tenets.”<sup>15</sup>

Additionally, article 136 of the constitution states:

“The Department of Religious Affairs, which is within the general administration, shall exercise its duties prescribed in its particular law, in accordance with the principles of secularism, removed from all political views and ideas, and aiming at national solidarity and integrity.”

In the Republic of Turkey, religion is a controlled affair which is the duty of a division of the Prime Ministry, the Department of Religious Affairs. Maintenance of mosques and religious centres and activities related to these establishments are responsibilities of the head of the Department of Religious Affairs (Hakimpur & Marjani, 1994-5:32).

The Department of Religious Affairs itself proselytizes the Ḥanafī creed and has continually striven to weaken the status of other faiths in Turkey. Its publishing house is highly active and has translated and printed many books from Persian and Arabic into Turkish. It has also published books with antagonistic positions to the Shī‘ah.

The general policy of the Turkish government is non-interference of religious affairs in government and politics, though the government is required to provide for the religious needs of citizens. This represents the isolation of religion from politics in this country. However, religious promotion is allowed as long as it does not encroach upon the domain of

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<sup>15</sup> For the full Turkish constitution see: <http://www.byegm.gov.tr/sayfa.aspx?Id=78>



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politics. Thus, followers of all religions may have independent religious and evangelization centres.

### Important Mosques

There are approximately 90,000 mosques in Turkey; a number that on average increases 1,600 to 1,700 every year (Abulqasemi & Hossein, 1999-2000:248). The following may be considered several of the important mosques in the country.

- Ankara: Kūjātapah, Ḥājī Bāyrān, and Allahu Akbar<sup>16</sup> mosques.
- Istanbul: Ayyūb Sultān, Sultān Ahmad, Fatih, Bāyazīd, Sultān Salīm, Sulaymāniyyah, Nūr ‘Uthmāniyyah, Lālilah, Wālidah Khān, and Ayasofya<sup>17</sup> mosques.
- Konya: Salīmiyyah and Jāmi‘ mosques.
- Manisa: Marīdiyyah Mosque.
- Erzurum: Yāqūtiyyah and Lālih Pasha mosques.
- Bursa: Jami‘ al-Widā‘ and Amīr Sultān mosques.
- Izmir: Isā Bī Mosque.
- Urfa: Khalīl Raḥmān Mosque (Hakimpur & Marjani, 1994-5:35).

It must be noted that the mosques of Turkey may be visited by both Muslims and non-Muslim tourists although tourists are denied entry in times of prayer. Tourists are obliged to wear appropriate clothing when visiting mosques. Men must not wear shorts and women must observe hijab as much as possible.<sup>18</sup>

### ISLAMIC PARTIES

**Turkey’s Islamist Welfare Party:** This right-wing party was established after the ban of the National Order Party in 1971 under the name National Salvation Party. This party has religious tendencies and aspires to establish religious rule. It believes in parliamentary campaigning, effecting pro-Islamic change, and correcting national laws to conform to Islam. Currently, the party is active under the name Felicity Party.

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<sup>16</sup> This mosque is a Shia mosque.

<sup>17</sup> This was the first church to be changed into a mosque after Muslims took over Turkey. Recently, it has been converted into a museum.

<sup>18</sup> For more information see: [http://www.turkeytravelplanner.com/Religion/mosque\\_etiquette.html](http://www.turkeytravelplanner.com/Religion/mosque_etiquette.html).

**Justice and Development Party:** This party stresses the necessity of the government's secularity. Even so, it opposes elimination of religious symbols from public places such as the hijab ban in government departments (e.g. universities). After the ban of the Virtue Party, Islamists manifested in two new parties namely (a) the Felicity Party established by conservative Islamists under the leadership of Recai Kutan and (b) the Justice and Development Party, an activist party under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül. The latter gained the majority vote in the previous parliament election and currently controls the government.

**Department of Religious Affairs:** While the government is secular, religious institutions are supervised by the government. The Department of Religious Affairs is the only official religious institution in the Republic of Turkey. This office supplanted the Shari'ah wa Awqaf (i.e. Mortmain and Sharia) Ministry at the start of the republic era. Choosing imams for group prayer in mosques, coordinating Quran classes, planning the administration of Imam Hatip religious schools, and clarifying cultural issues are responsibilities of this office (Abulqasemi & Hossein, 1999-2000:124). Over 100,000 personnel work for this office.

**Organization for Mortmain-related Affairs:** During the Ottoman era, this institution developed considerably since a major part of cultural and social services were conducted through endowments and mortmain (i.e. copying the Quran, publishing books, etc.). After establishment of the republic government, many of these cultural services were ceded to the Ministry of National Education. Thus, a substantial proportion of mortmain activities diminished and the office gradually became a charity organization.

The cultural activities of the mortmain organization in Turkey are now mostly limited to management of three important historical libraries, the Museum of Turkish Civilization Manuscripts, a great cultural collection of Mawlānā in Konya, preservation and renovation of historical and artistic legacies, 38 mortmain publications, construction of village mosques and university dormitories, and support of orphans and the poor. Also of note are the extensive and multifarious cultural activities of the Mortmain Bank and the Property Bank which work under the mantle of the mortmain office.

Turkish sources citing active Islamist groups and institutions in Turkey, enumerate the following organizations, some of which are fabrications of the country's security agencies with the aim of creating a terrorist mindset regarding domestic Islamist societies: Hizbollah, Islamic Jihad, Islamic Movement Party, Al-Wa'dah Party, At-Tahrir Party, Rabita al-Alam al-

Islamiyyah, World Sharia Liberty Army, Islamic Mujahidin, Turkey's Islamic Liberation Army, Islamic Liberation Party, Turkey's Islamic Liberation Union, Turkey's Islamic Liberation Crusade, Kurdistan Islamic Party, Great East Islamic Aggressors Action Crusade, and Kurdistan Religious Patriots Union (Parand & Sobhani, 1994-5:111).

### **Sufism and Gnostic Proclivities**

With the spread of Islam in Anatolia, Iranian Sufis scattered throughout Anatolian regions, establishing Sufism in the land. Sufism held a strong attraction for Turks. However, with the institution of republic rule in Turkey and implementation of anti-Islamic projects, the campaign against Sufi persuasions was added to the new government's agenda. On November 30, 1925, the Turkish parliament shut down the monasteries and holy places of all Sufi orders, many of which were shrines of Sufi spiritual leaders (i.e. pirs and shaykhs).

Even though following Sufi orders was banned, they were not eliminated from the society; rather, these orders turned to underground activities and secret gatherings of devotional prayers and eulogies.

As opposed to the Ottoman era, in the republic era of Turkey Sufi orders essentially cannot exist side-by-side with the Turkish government. Even so, this does not mean that political parties do not endeavour to make use of followers of Sufi orders. Reputedly, one of the reasons for the stunning victory of the Welfare Party in the 1995 parliamentary elections was the wholehearted support of many Sufi orders.

Major Sufi orders in modern Turkey are divided into various groups, the most important of which are as follows:

**Naqshbandiyyah:** This order is attributed to “Khājah Bahā’ al-Dīn” Muḥammad Bukhārā’ī Naqshbandī,<sup>19</sup> widely known as the King of Naqshband. This order is one of the most celebrated Sufi orders in the Sunnī world, especially in Turkish territories, Transoxiana, India, and the Ottoman Empire. Some of Khājah Bahā’ al-Dīn’s disciples (i.e. murīds) have cited the reason for his denomination (i.e. Naqshband; literally translated as ‘pattern-maker’) as being due to his superabundance of divine praise (or remembrance), such that he had attained the rank where divine praise and remembrance became patterned upon his heart.

**Bektashism (Baktāshīyyah):** This order is attributed to Haji Bektash Wali, the highly acclaimed Sufi of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and contemporary of Jalāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad Balkhī al-Rūmī (Mawlānā). He was born in

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<sup>19</sup> Also written as Baha-ud-Din Naqshband Bukhari.

Nishabur of the Khurasan region in Iran but migrated to Anatolia in his youth and passed away in approximately 1271 CE. Haji Bektash studied under the tutelage of Khwaja Ali Ahmad Yasavi. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Bektash order became popular in Anatolia. Though in general Bektashists regard themselves as Sunnī, their behaviour does not conform to the Sunnī creed. Followers of this order do not practice Islamic worship (i.e. ritual prayer, fasting, hajj, and zakāt or alms-tax). They confess their sins before their spiritual leader who they call Bābā (literally father) and ask him for forgiveness (Mashkur, 1996-7:105-6).

Bektashism may be considered a harsh, esoteric, reserved order with a relatively limited number of written works. It is of note that many people in Turkey regard Bektashism as synonymous with Alevism.

**Mawlawi (Mawlāwiyyah):** Like Bektashism, this order appeared in Anatolia. It is divided into two sects: the Pūstīniyyah and the Irshādiyyah. Some believe that the original founder of the order was Jalāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad Balkhī al-Rūmī, widely known as Mawlawī or Mawlānā (1207-1273) (Mashkur, 1996-7:317-8). However, most are of the opinion that its original founder was not Mawlānā but some of his followers who, due to their deep devotion, built a green dome over his grave and became recognized for this deed. The Mawlawi order is moderate and unambiguous, and enjoys exceptionally rich theoretical Gnostic works (Abulqasemi & Hossein, 1999-2000:166).

**Qādiriyyah:** The jurispudent ‘Abdul-Qādir Gīlānī founded the Qādiriyyah order, the oldest of Sufi orders. Qādiriyyah is a chain of Sufism that finds its roots in the Junaydiyyah school (Abulqasemi & Hossein, 1999-2000:316). This order had an influential role in the spread of Islam in Africa. One of the manifest characteristics of this order is performance of extraordinary acts in gatherings of Dhikr (i.e. remembrance of God), such as driving metal shafts into the body, swallowing swords, and hammering nails into the skull. Of course, in modern times, these ceremonies are performed for display.

**Rifā’iyyah:** This order is attributed to Abul-‘Abbās Ahmad Rifā’ī. He lived in Basra, Iraq. Like Qādiriyyah, followers of this order occasionally enter a state of ecstasy where they do not feel the pain of sword blows. The most significant influence of Rifā’iyyah in Turkey lies in the southeastern Kurd-dwelling provinces. It is of note that followers of this order hold much respect for the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them).

**Nūrjiyyah:** This order can be considered the most active and influential order in Turkey. It is attributed to Mullah Said Nursi, commonly known as Bediüzzaman (1876?-1960). Mullah Said was a shaykh of the Naqshbandi

#### COUNTRY PROFILE: TURKEY

order wherein he made innovations. The eventful life of this mysterious personage has made him into one of the most interesting figures of modern Turkish history. The most important divisions of Nurjiyyah are the Fethullah Gülen movement, Madrisat az-Zahrā, the Yeni Asia group, the Yeni Nesil group, and the Charity Assembly.

**Sülaymaniyah:** The founder of this order, whose followers are called Suleymanci Lur, was Shaykh Süleyman Hilmi Tuna Khan. He was considered one of the important shaykhs of the Naqshbandi order but took a different path due to his differences of opinion with the order's prevailing attitudes regarding their activities. Kemalists consider this order as an implacable enemy of Atatürk's legacy.

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AL-TAQRIB

## خلاصة المقالات

### ملف البلدان: تركيا

أ. ر. أمر دهي

الخلاصة: المقال يغطّي نقطة بارزة في جغرافيا وتاريخ تركيا، فهو يتدارس سياسياً حدث تحوّل تركيا الى دولة علمانية من الخلافة العثمانية، وهي تعيش منذ ذلك الحين مأزق العلمانية. وتنافس مؤخراً عدد من الأحزاب الاسلامية للسيطرة على سدة الحكم ليحلّوا محلّ الأعضاء ذوي النزعة العلمانية من النخبة الحاكمة. المقال يتناول كذلك الطبيعة المتعدّدة للمجتمع التركي من الجهة الاثنية والدينية، مؤكّداً على الدور الذي يلعبه مختلف الأعضاء الاسلاميين في الحكومة مضافاً الى القاعدة الشعبية والحركات الاسلامية وبخاصة الفرق والجماعات الصوفية. ويشير كاتب المقال الى القابلية الكامنة في تركيا العلمانية ملامحاً الى امكانية استعادة تركيا المسلمة دورها ومكانتها واحترامها ونفوذها في الأمة.

الكلمات الرئيسية: تركيا، تاريخ تركيا، سياسات تركيا، الأحزاب الاسلامية التركية، الفرق والجماعات الصوفية.

## التقريب

### كلمة الله والفن الإسلامي

سيد حسين نصر

**الخلاصة:** كلمة الله هي الأصل والمبدأ والقمّة للفنّ الإسلامي، فهي الكلمة الهابطة من النظام غير المصوّر وغير المرئي الى نظام التصوير وعالم المادة، والذي يفعله الفنّ المنحدر من هناك هو التشكيل من عالم اللاتشكل والتجسيد من عالم اللاتجسيد. ويمثّل لذلك بخط اليد الذي يمتد بنحو أفقي ليأخذ أشكالاً معقّدة تدريجياً، ويرى كاتب المقال الفنّ الإسلامي استطاع أن يعكس التنوّع الثقافي للمسلمين على طول التاريخ. ومن خلال التأكيد على الوحدة في الكثرة والاتحاد في الاختلاف سمح الفنّ الإسلامي لبلورة أشكال متعدّدة للفن للوصول الى سياحة روحية تعيد الانسان للأصل الذي نشأت منه كلمة الله.

**الكلمات الرئيسية:** الفن الإسلامي، كلمة الله، الفن المقدس، الفن التقليدي، تطوّر الفنّ، الخط، الفنّ القرآني، الفن الجمهوري، قراءة القرآن.

### رؤية الامام الخميني تجاه الوحدة الاسلامية

د. محمد رحيم عيوضي

**الخلاصة:** في الوقت الذي كانت الامة تواجه تهديدات داخلية من قبيل الانقسامات والاختلافات وتهديدات خارجية متمثلة في الهيمنة الأجنبية للحدّ من نطاق تأثيرها ونفوذها وتضييق الخناق عليها برزت دعوة الامام الخميني للوحدة الاسلامية مواجهة مشاكل ومعضلات سبقت الدعوة. كانت دعوة الامام الخميني للوحدة الاسلامية - ضمن نشاطاته لاحياء الدين - تعتمد مبدأ التوحيد. وفي هذا المجال سعى لاعادة بناء الامة ولمّ بثملها واعادة كرامتها التي أنعمها الله عليها من خلال الاسلام، معدداً آياها لتحمل مسؤولية ومشاق مواجهة العدو المشترك. سعى كاتب المقال، ومن خلال دراسة كلمات الامام الخميني لايضاح الأهداف التي تابعها الامام وتحديد وجهة نظره فيما يخصّ الوحدة الاسلامية، موضحاً بعض إنجازاته العملية والخطوات التي خطاها لأجل تحقيق هذه الوحدة.

**الكلمات الرئيسية:** الامام الخميني، الوحدة، الأمة، الهيمنة العالمية، استقلال المسلمين.



## التقريب

### مبادئ لعالم جديد

جعفر غونثالث بورنث

**الخلاصة:** واجهت الهيمنة العالمية للغرب الرأسمالي وامبرياليته مؤخراً تحدياً في جبهات مختلفة بواسطة الصحوة الاسلامية في الشرق الأوسط التي بلغت ذروتها عام ١٩٧٩ حيث انتصرت الثورة الاسلامية في ايران، وقبلها بواسطة المجاميع الثورية التي تعرضت للاضطهاد والقمع في دول مثل دول أمريكا اللاتينية، وكذلك الحركات المضادة للعملة والتي تتمتع بقاعدة شعبية على مستوى واسع من العالم. والذي يوحد الجميع في هذه المواجهة هو رؤيتهم لايجاد عالم خالٍ من الاستبداد والقمع واللامساواة وما شابه ذلك. أكد كاتب هذا المقال على الحاجة لتوجه المسلمين الى الاسلام ونظرهم اليه لا كبديل ديني وخيار مستقل عن باقي الأديان بل في اعتباره امتداداً للرسالات التي بلغت لحقيقة التوحيد وأسست للعدالة. ومن خلال ذلك يمكنهم العمل سوية مع المجاميع غير المسلمة انطلاقاً من المبادئ المشتركة لبلورة ويجاد مجتمع وعالم جديد.

**الكلمات الرئيسية:** الثورة الاسلامية، عالم جديد، العدالة، الامبريالية، المسلمون الثوريون، الحركات المضادة للعملة، الوحدة.

### تنشأة ثقافة الوحدة

عبد الملك مجاهد

**الخلاصة:** لا شك أن فهم المبادئ العقائدية للوحدة الاسلامية والاجتهاد فيها يعدُّ عملاً مهماً. وبالفعل نجد أحياناً تجاهلاً وعدم ادراك لنتائج هذه المبادئ. هذا المقال المختصر يسرد عشرة طرق عملية تساعد على تنشأة وتطوير ثقافة الوحدة. منها: تنمية روحية التحمل والتسامح وعدم التركيز على جزئيات الاختلاف وتجاوز الموانع الأثنية. وفي ظل المساعي العملية يمكن أن تتمنى الوصول الى الوحدة في ضوء التعاليم والارشادات القرآنية.

**الكلمات الرئيسية:** ثقافة الوحدة - الحج - الاخوة الاسلامية.

### خلاصة المقالات

الوحدة للباحث عنها، في مختلف المجالات العقائدية والسياسية والشرعية والاجتماعية، حيث تحلوا في هذه المجالات بحسن التعامل والرأفة والاستقامة في الأخلاق، وذلك تمثيلاً مع الهدف الأساس الذي كانوا يسعون لأجله، وهو الارشاد نحو الحقيقة المطلقة.

**الكلمات الرئيسية:** أئمة الشيعة، الوحدة الاسلامية، أفعال أهل البيت وسيرتهم.

### الوحدة الاسلامية: الاخوة الاسلامية

محمد واعظ زادة الخراساني

**الخلاصة:** في ثاني بحث عن موضوع الوحدة يركّز كاتب المقال على مفهوم الاخوة الاسلامية وعلاقتها بوحدة الامة. ويوضح ضرورة هذه الاخوة من خلال آيات القرآن والوقائع التاريخية التي حصلت بعد بزوغ الاسلام، كما يرى الحاجة اليها الآن أوضح من ذي قبل، وذلك من خلال قراءة للأوضاع التي تعيشها الأمة. لقد عُدّ اتحاد قلوب المؤمنين في الاسلام أحد أكبر النعم التي منحها الله للمسلمين، لكنّ هناك ما يمكن أن يعدّ عائقاً أمامه ويكون بمثابة جحود لهذه النعمة، وهو من قبيل القومية والطائفية، فأنها تتعارض وهذه النعمة وتحول دون استمرارها.

**الكلمات الرئيسية:** الوحدة الاسلامية، الامة، الاخوة الاسلامية، القومية، اسبوع الوحدة.

### ابو حنيفة ورواية الحديث

عبد الصمد مرتضوي

**الخلاصة:** من المعروف ان ابا حنيفة كان فقيها لا يبدي اهتماما بالاحاديث النبوية، وقد افترط في الاعتماد على القياس، ومع ذلك فقد اعتبر الحديث نظير سائر فقهاء الاسلام — المصدر الثاني للتشريع، وراح يروي الحديث في نطاق محدود، حتى نقلت الكثير من الكتب الحديثية الشيعية — اضافة الى الكتب الحديثية لاهل السنة — روايات عنه، وقد بحث هذا المقال دور ابي حنيفة في رواية الحديث واستعرض الروايات المنقولة عنه في الكتب الحديثية للفريقين.

**الكلمات الرئيسية:** ابو حنيفة، رواية الحديث، المحدثين، الكتب الحديثية، فقهاء الاسلام.

## التقريب

### التنوع المذهبي عنصر للانسجام

آية الله محمد علي التسخيري

**الخلاصة:** ان من الخصوصيات العامة للاسلام، الواقعية و الفطرية و المرونة و الشمولية و الاعتدال و تعددية الابعاد، و يتيسر على ضوء تلك الخصوصيات وضع برامج اسلامية مع التاكيد على الوحدة الحقيقية في المجالات العملية. وعلى الاختلافات الفكرية ضمن الحدود والضوابط المقررة. من هنا كان من الطبيعي ظهور مذاهب اسلامية سائدة وبائدة ولاجل ان لاتكون الاختلافات المذهبية سببا يعوق تقدم المجتمع الاسلامي كان من الضروري لحركة التقريب بين المذاهب — مع الحفاظ على ثوابتها الخمسة التي جاءت في هذا المقال — الاستمرار في نشاطها والالتزام باصول وقيم التقريب التالية: التعاون في مواطن التوافق، التغاضي عن موارد الاختلاف، الاحتراز عن التكفير والتفسيق والانهزام بالبدعة، عدم ذم عواقب نظرة ما، التعامل البناء حين الحوار، الاحتراز عن اهانة المقدسات، اطلاق العنان لاختيار مذهب ما. من جهة اخرى يجب الاهتمام بدور العلماء في مسيرة التقريب وبموازاة ذلك تمت الاشارة في هذا المقال الى اثني عشرة نقطة بنحو الايجاز.

**الكلمات الرئيسية:** التنوع المذهبي، الواقعية الاسلامية، حركة التقريب بين المذاهب الاسلامية، الاختلافات المذهبية، ظهور المذاهب الاسلامية، الالتزام باصول التقريب.

### أئمة الشيعة والوحدة الاسلامية

علي آقا نوري

**الخلاصة:** المقال هو القسم الأول من سلسلة مقالات تعرض وجهة نظر ومواقف أئمة الشيعة من قضية الوحدة الاسلامية. يبدأ المقال بتعريف معنى الوحدة الاسلامية ثم يسرد مواصفات هكذا وحدة وبخاصة تلك التي نقتفي آثارها في الكتاب والسنة. ثم يعرض مناهج عملية للوحدة واجتناب الفرقة من خلال طرح نماذج من سيرة الرسول(ص). كما يشير المقال الى مسألة الغلو وتزوير ووضع وتحريف الروايات، وينتهي الى الحاجة للتمسك بسيرة أهل البيت في مجال

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# التقريب

رسالة متخصصة تعنى بقضايا التقريب بين المذاهب و  
وحدة الامة الإسلامية

العدد السادس

ربيع الاول ١٤٣١