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Editorial

There is only but one single truth. God, who is *al-Haqq*, is at once the only Truth and the only Reality; there being none other. This divine unicity and cognitive unity calls forth in man a single-minded and whole-hearted attachment to the Truth as such. This is as it should be. But God in His infinite perfections is essentially unfathomable. Being separated from Him, we can only know Him through His names, signs, and creations, which are apparently not ‘one’ but rather multiple and multifarious. The multiplicity of the created order makes the single-minded attachment to the One Truth a difficult and somewhat perilous endeavour. To the degree that we become attached to any one particular sign or manifestation and lose sight of its essential identity with the Essence, and hence with all other manifestations, we are not giving God His due and are in reality trying to limit the nondelimited Totality. This truth applies to all things that are primarily connected with the divine and constitute the ways and means by which He is approached. Hence religion, when it is humanized and seen as an ideology that is on par with and in opposition to other religions, acts as an obstacle and barrier to the whole-hearted worship of God immaculate—a worship that would constitute what the Qur’ān calls the “upright religion” that was brought by all prophets.¹

The sign which tells us that our hearts are no longer open to the infinite nature of the divine and which warns us that veils have entrapped them is complacency. When we are complacent and comfortable with our religion, being smug with the “fact” that we and only we are in possession of the “whole” truth, that is when the true worship of God ceases and the *raison d’être* of religion is no longer in place. Such complacency brings about a false sense of euphoria and happiness. The Qur’ān speaks of this happiness as a quality possessed by the *mushrikīn* in the following verses:

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا
تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ

¹ In many of his speeches Imam Khumaynī (r) reminded his audience that if all of the prophets were to be gathered in one place and at one time, they would not have any conflicts or discords with one another. See: <http://www.hawzah.net/Hawzah/Magazines/MagArt.aspx?MagazineNumberID=4334&id=28408>

لَا يَعْلَمُونَ مُنِيبِينَ إِلَيْهِ وَاتَّقُوهُ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ
 الْمُشْرِكِينَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيعًا كُلُّ
 حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ

So set your heart on the religion as a people of pure faith, the origination of Allah according to which He originated mankind (There is no altering Allah's creation; that is the upright religion, but most people do not know)—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.. (30:30-32)

Sulṭān Muḥammad Gunābādī, a mystic of the 19th century, comments on this verse in his exegesis of the Qur'an:

Know that on account of his human nature man is predisposed to attachment and association. If he were to become aware, he would know that he has not achieved human perfections per se, and that which he has achieved is not his complete perfection; rather, there exist for him boundless "lost" perfections [of which he is presently deprived]. So, if he is in search of that which he has lost—the seeker being none other than the Wayfarer journeying to God in all sincerity—then he will not be happy with that which is [presently] with himself, but rather, he will abhor it and will turn away from it. But he who is not in search of that which he has lost will become attached to nothing but that which he has achieved of superficial perfections such as sciences, beliefs, qualities, moral virtues, mystical disclosures, wealth and children. It is in this way that "every faction exults in that which it possesses"; the street-sweeper exults in the perfection of his sweeping, the magician of his magic, the businessman of his business, the scholar of his knowledge, the worshiper of his worship, the ascetic of his asceticism, and the mystic of his mysticism.²

Now this should not be taken to mean that the "superficial perfections" are not perfections, or that which a person has achieved and acquired of the truth is not the truth, so as to imply either the relativity of knowledge or

² Sulṭān Muḥammad Gunābādī, *Tafsīr bayān al-sa'ādah fī maqāmāt al-'ibādah*, (Beirut, 1988), vol. 3, p. 221.

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the relativity of truth and bring about a debilitating scepticism cum pluralism. Rather, what this quote is emphasizing is the *limitation of knowledge* that comes with the human state, and the truth that awareness of this limitation is quintessential to the spiritual life of the individual soul as well as the religion as a whole. For it is only when man comes to know that he does not know, that he acquires the necessary humility to turn to God in penitence. The awareness of his ignorance with respect to reality and the Real allows him to be truly wary of God (*ittaqūhu*) and consequently to continuously aspire to maintain His remembrance by maintaining the prayer.

On the contrary, when man is oblivious to the limitations of his knowledge and claims to possess it in an absolute and exclusive sense—this is when he is making the relative to be the absolute and the limited to be the unlimited, and this is nothing other than *shirk*.

وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ

And most of them do not believe in Allah without doing *shirk*.
(12:106)

When this is done in the case of religion, which is the Way to God, it leads to sectarianism. In sectarianism the *madhāhib* are absolutized to the extent that there remains no room for any other manifestation of God's infinite Truth.

This does not mean that man cannot know and must remain oblivious of the possibility of deviation in any religion and the coming to the scene of heterodoxies and heresies—for error does exist and it can be recognized. Hence any error posing as a religion or a *madhhab* must be exposed. When any sect moves away from the guiding principles of the religion in which it is based, it becomes a heterodoxy and eventually a heresy. In the case of Islam the essential and substantial principles of the Truth are succinctly expressed in the *shahādātayn*. Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (‘a) defines the Muḥammadan Islam and its canonical consequences in the following manner:

الْإِسْلَامُ شَهَادَةٌ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالتَّصْدِيقُ بِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ ص بِهِ حَقَّتِ
الدِّمَاءُ وَعَلَيْهِ جَرَّتِ الْمَنَاجِحُ وَالْمَوَارِيثُ وَعَلَى ظَاهِرِهِ جَمَاعَةُ النَّاسِ

Islam is the testimony 'there is no god but Allah' and the affirmation of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ); because of it blood is spared, upon it

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marriages and inheritances take place; and on its apparentness the congregation of people [as an Ummah] transpires.³

This “simple” criterion of the *shahādatayn* is in fact extremely profound and full of wisdom. On the one hand, it reflects the breadth and horizontal scope that God wishes Islam to have, whereby anyone who even verbally consents to these truths is included in the fold of God’s infinite mercy and generosity. Allowing for this is to say that the limited understanding of any believer, no matter how weak, is still a truth and an instance of an understanding that is valid. For though it might be weak and low, because it is pointing to something higher and hence “open-ended”—and while it is not in conflict with the basic principles—it is an authentic representation of the truth and is spiritually efficacious.

On the other hand, the criterion of the *shahādatayn* reflects the great depth and the vertical infinitude of the truth of Islam and God. It is because *tawḥīd*, or God’s unicity, ultimately pertains to His Essence, which *de facto* cannot be fathomed, and because the inner substance of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is beyond the reach of lesser men, that the *shahādatayn* remind us of divine Mystery and our limitations with regard to it. To rephrase, speculatively (*theoria*) the divine Essence is unknowable and Its infinite words or signs are inexhaustible, and practically (*praxis*) the prophetic Substance is superabundant and the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) cannot be practiced by imperfect men in its totality.

To repeat, on the one hand, the limited truth is true in reality (it is not a construct and creation of the human mind as asserted by sceptics, relativists, and pluralists), and this leads to certainty on the cognitive plane and resolve on the volitional level. With regards to the *madhhab* that any believer might be following, it brings about a surety and determination that is characteristic of those that worship God. On the other hand, the limited truth is limited due to man’s limitation of knowledge, and upon introspection, he knows that he does not know the total Truth, and this leads to a sacred perplexity (*taḥayyur*) on the noetic plane and to humility on the plane of the will. Such an awareness ensures that the follower of a *madhhab* does not absolutize it and take it to be *the* Truth. But if he were to put humility aside and feign to own the “truth,” then the ingrained sectarianism that would ensue would initially set him at odds with other sects, but eventually it would put him in conflict with other followers of his own sect as he would see their version or reading of the sect to be “wrong” precisely because it is against *his own* understanding and the one that he “possesses.”

³ Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 2, p. 25.

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The allure of this spirit of “possessing” the truth is so great that it is ubiquitously found in all religious movements—especially those that claim to be the defenders of the true doctrine. Such claims are more predominant amongst the ideologues, activists, and the politicians, as their predilection for the pole of action over contemplation, or for the level of the rational over the properly intellectual, does not give them the necessary depth of understanding to have an awareness of the truth that is *not* in their possession (*ladayhim*) and that is principally with God (*‘ind Allah*). The recent claims of a government official in Iran, Esfandiar Rahim Mashaei, to the ascendancy of the “school of Iran” over the “school of Islam,” can be understood in this light, as can the outrageous statements of the Kuwaiti-born demagogue, Yāsir al-Ḥabīb, on one side, as well as the diatribe of Wahhabi pulpiteers, on the other.

On a positive note, there are in the Ummah more balanced voices of greater intellectuality. The most recent of these is the historic fatwa of the Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Āyatullāh al-‘Uẓmā Sayyid ‘Alī Khamenei, in which he decreed:

[Even] the depreciation of the notables of our Sunni brothers is forbidden (*ḥarām*), to say nothing of the denunciation of the wife of the Prophet (the blessings of Allah upon him and his Progeny) so as to violate her honour—this is rather not even possible in respect of the wives of the prophets [in general] and especially in the case of their master, the Greatest Messenger (the blessings of Allah upon him and his Progeny).⁴

Now, those sectarians who are sincere in their defence of their limited version of truth bring forth from traditional sources proofs for their perspective. On one level, it is easy to respond to them by saying that they are only seeing one side of the story and are not giving due attention to other traditions which oppose and may even abrogate their own proofs. But this, though perhaps sufficient for some, would be a superficial response. For while it is true that such individuals are guilty of absolutizing the limited truth that is in their possession, the very existence of such traditions which allow them to do so is a matter that is open to questioning. Why do there exist narrations and traditions in the Shia corpus that would be found of-

⁴ The Arabic text [<http://www.leader.ir/tree/index.php?catid=52>]:

يحرم النيل من رموز إخواننا السنة فضلاً عن اتهام زوج النبي (صلى الله عليه وآله) بما يخل بشرفها بل هذا الأمر ممتنع على نساء الأنبياء وخصوصاً سيدهم الرسول الأعظم (صلى الله عليه وآله).

fensive to Sunnis and vice versa? Is it the case that these traditions have simply been fabricated? Do they, as the sectarians would have us believe, allude to the fact that the other side is totally wrong and that there is only one sect that will be saved, all the others deserving only hellfire? Or can there be another explanation for these polemical traditions?

One possible explanation comes from the mystics of Islam. In their discussions on the beautiful names of Allah, they talk of two different realities which they refer to with the expressions, “the marriage of the names” and the “opposition of the names.”⁵ The latter phrase outlines the necessity of the opposition of certain names with others on the plane of manifestation. They stress the fact that this opposition here only highlights the greatness of the unity that prevails on the higher planes. To them the qualitative plenitude of God’s unicity directly implies His rich multiplicity, along with its apparent conflicts and differences.

It is in this light that there can be “necessary antagonisms” amongst the *madhāhib*; for in its attempt to fully manifest its idea and “name”, each *madhhab* seeks to forge an identity that is “separate” from the others. The polemics that follow serve to maintain its integrity and allow for the *madhhab* to display its particular genius. Hence the existence of certain divisive traditions—usually based on historical details and facts—is perhaps the *madhhab*’s way of keeping the lowest of their adherents within the fold.

However, what kept these traditions from feeding the flames of rampant sectarianism in the past was the existence of higher levels of intellectuality and a living spirituality as embodied in the ‘ulamā and the saints of Islam. These accomplished souls made sure that the *madhhab* was firmly grounded in the doctrines and principles of Islam formally speaking, that it was in continuous communion with the Prophetic presence on the substantial level, and that it was open to spiritual Wayfaring on the essential plane. Of course, those who could reach this last stage were few indeed, but it was they who used the full capacity of their intellect to see the unity that lies beyond the opposition and antagonism in the manifested order, and it is they who would then (re)turn to the people to enjoin them to work towards unity.

تَحْسَبُهُمْ جَمِيعًا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ شَتَّىٰ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَّا يَعْقِلُونَ

You suppose them to be a united body, but their hearts are disunited. That is because they are a lot who do not intellect. (59:14)

⁵ تناكح بين الاسماء والتقابل الذى فى الاسماء

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Unity is based upon the coming together of the hearts; disunity is their being dispersed. Disunity is a sign of an absence of true intellectuality. Imam ‘Alī (‘a), who was the very embodiment of principled intellectuality after the Prophet (ﷺ), wholeheartedly practiced the Qur’ānic imperative of unity and avoided creating disunity at all costs. Āyatullah Jawādī Āmulī writes:

Ḥaḍrat Amīr al-Mu’minīn (‘a) was foremost in not being tainted by any type of sectarianism nor sullied by any kind of internecine discord; his way was always in line with universal agreement [and general consent].”⁶

Hence, in a letter to Abū Mūsā Ash‘arī, Imam ‘Alī (‘a) wrote:

وَلَيْسَ رَجُلٌ فَاعْلَمَ أَحْرَصَ عَلَى جَمَاعَةِ أُمَّةٍ مُحَمَّدٍ صَ وَ أَلْفَتْهَا مِنِّي
أَبْتَعِي بِذَلِكَ حَسَنَ الثَّوَابِ وَ كَرَمَ الْمَأْبِ

There is not a man—heed this—more anxious to preserve the integrity and union of the *ummah* of Muḥammad (ﷺ) than I. I seek for this [nothing but] a goodly reward and a noble end [with Allah].⁷

The Imam warned of the dangers of disunity in this way:

فَأَيَّاكُمْ وَ التَّلَوْنَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ جَمَاعَةً فِيمَا تَكْرَهُونَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ خَيْرٌ
مِنْ فُرْقَةٍ فِيمَا تُحِبُّونَ مِنَ الْبَاطِلِ وَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَبْحَانَهُ لَمْ يُعْطِ أَحَدًا
بِفُرْقَةٍ خَيْرًا مِمَّنْ مَضَى وَ لَا مِمَّنْ بَقِيَ

Beware of subjecting God’s religion to vagaries [and whims]. Indeed unity for the truth, though disliked by you, is better than divisiveness for a falsehood that you like; and indeed Allah, glory be to Him, has given no good to anyone on account of division and disunity—neither in the past nor in the future.⁸

Hence, when we give our own “colour” (*talawwun*) to religion and limit it by forcing it to confine to the limits of our human imperfections and *nafsānī* predilections, we open the way to a false happiness or smugness with regards to the product of our caprice. We label this created sect and contrived faction with the word “religion”, not realising that in doing so we effectively put an end to the true nature of religion and stifle its ability

⁶ Jawādī Āmulī, *The Expectation of Mankind from Religion*, p. 127.

⁷ *Nahj al-balāghah*, Sermon 78.

⁸ *Nahj al-balāghah*, Sermon 176.

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to act as an open-ended vehicle of transformation (an *upaya*, as the “upper” end of religion must necessarily involve the unlimited, infinite, and mysterious). This caricature of religion, being thus delimited and cut off vertically from its infinite source, the Real, is also cut off horizontally from other such caricatures, leading to contrariety and opposition with them.⁹

Such division and divisiveness is liked by the lower soul as it is “happy” with its “own” creation and wishes for it to supersede all others.

فَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ زُبُرًا كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ

But they fragmented their religion among themselves, each party
exulting in what it had. (23:53)

If on the other hand, we do not colour the religion of Allah with our own hands, and we take what has come to us of the truth from Him—knowing it to be both the truth and limited—and use it to transcend ourselves by going beyond the lower caprice of our souls¹⁰ (though difficult and disliked by them) we will be able to see the limited truth in other divine dispensations and in other religious people. This subtle and sublime vision might enable us to unite with them for the sake of the higher Truth and His wish to be known in His infinite plenitude; but failing that, it must at the very least make us refrain from indulging in sectarianism that is the kiss of death of spirituality as such.

Dhu al-Hijjah 1431/ November 2010

⁹ چون که بی رنگی اسیر رنگ شد موسیقی با موسیقی در جنگ شد

¹⁰ إِنَّمَا أَنْتُمْ إِخْوَانٌ عَلَى دِينِ اللَّهِ مَا فَرَّقَ بَيْنَكُمْ إِلَّا حُبُّ السَّرَائِرِ وَ سَوْءُ الضَّمَائِرِ: *Nahj al-balāgha*, s.113

Tolerance in the Teachings of the Great Prophet (ﷺ) and in Liberalism: A Contrastive Analysis

‘Abbās Nikzād¹

Translated by Abuzar Ahmadi

Abstract

This paper addresses the issue of tolerance in Islam and the teachings of the holy Prophet (ﷺ) in this regard. After examining the semantics of *tasāmuḥ* and *tasāḥul* (tolerance), the view of Islam and the teachings of the Prophet (ﷺ) will be discussed. Tolerance is herein divided into positive and negative types, with positive tolerance referring to cases that Islam views favourably and negative tolerance referring to the exact opposite. In précis, Islam neither absolutely validates tolerance nor does it absolutely reject it. Finally, the fundamental differences between the views of Islam and liberalism regarding tolerance will be contrastively analysed.

Keywords: tolerance, lenience, moderateness, aggression, the holy Prophet (ﷺ), liberalism

INTRODUCTION

One of the issues to which Western thinkers have devoted meticulous attention is that of tolerance. The prevailing tendency among them is the liberalist view, which advocates tolerance in the extreme. The issue of tolerance has also been dealt with in Islam and in the teachings of the Prophet (ﷺ). In this respect, Islam and liberalism have markedly different opinions in both concept and fundamentals.

Considering the popularity of this discourse among Muslim intellectuals and the differences of opinion thereof, a thorough analytic treatment of the issue is inevitable. In addition to referring to the traditions and Narrations of the holy Prophet (ﷺ), for the purpose of comprehensiveness, we will cite Quranic verses as well as other Narrations.

The historical antecedents of the Western idea of tolerance date back to the 16th and 17th century AD—there being no indications of this thought

¹ Faculty member of the Babol University of Medical Sciences and a senior professor in the Hawzah ‘Ilmiyyah of Qum.

before that. The Christians of the Middle Ages brooked no adversaries, and Augustine, for example, supported corporeal punishment of dissenters and heretics. This trend continued throughout most of the Middle Ages. The best evidence of the absence of tolerance is the phenomena of the Inquisition during this period. Even Luther and Calvin did not believe in tolerance and lenience in the modern sense.

In the 17th century, after enduring through the Thirty Years' War and the bitter religious hostilities that came to no effect, people became aware that religious altercation was disadvantageous for all parties involved. This resulted in a tendency towards toleration. It is said that John Locke in his *Letters Concerning Toleration* first propounded the concept of tolerance. Not long after, in the 17th century, the concept of religious toleration came into being. Eventually, in the 19th century, the policy of religious toleration prevailed in most European countries resulting in widespread indifference and apathy towards religion.

SEMANTICS OF TASĀMUḤ AND TASĀHUL (TOLERANCE)

Tasāhul, derived from the root *sahl*, means 'lenience,' 'acting in a gentle manner,' 'going easy on one another,' and 'unconcern.' *Tasāmuḥ* comes from the root *samḥ*, denoting 'moderateness,' 'forbearance,' 'leniency,' and 'magnanimity' (see: *Mu'in*, 1981, vol. 1, p. 1078; *Firūzābādī*, vol. 3, p. 583; and *Dehkhoda*, 1964:668). These two words are generally used synonymously. However, bearing in mind the philological roots, there is a subtle difference between *tasāmuḥ* and *tasāhul*: *tasāmuḥ* is not merely moderateness and easy-goingness but encompasses moderateness along with forgiveness and magnanimity. In English, tolerance (from Latin *tolerat*-) is used as the equivalent of the words *tasāmuḥ* and *tasāhul*. It is defined as the willingness to accept or tolerate. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1998-99:1258) cites three meanings for tolerance:

1. The willingness to accept or tolerate somebody/something, especially opinions or behaviour that you may not agree with, or people who are not like you.
2. The ability to suffer something, especially pain, difficult conditions, etc. without being harmed.
3. The amount by which the measurement of a value can vary without causing problems.

This word is related with the infinitive 'tollo' meaning to carry, bear, or allow. It seems that a person who tolerates something bears a load. Therefore, some believe that the closest Arabic/Persian equivalent to tolerance is

hilm, which means to bear unpleasant things though one has power to change the situation.

Terminologically, *tasāmuḥ* and *tasābul* mean intentional and conscious non-interference with or allowance of actions and beliefs that one does not agree with or approve. In other words, it is a kind of patience that a person shows regarding the disagreeable beliefs, behaviours, and words of others (see: Saada-Gendron, 1999:17).

In view of the above, the following elements are requisites of tolerance:

1. The existence of difference of opinion. Hence, harmony in a population with concordant beliefs cannot be termed tolerance.
2. Unhappiness and dissatisfaction. Accordingly, tolerance does not mean indifference or apathy nor does it denote acceptance of other beliefs or behaviours.
3. Awareness and intention. Therefore, lack of reaction to the beliefs and behaviours of others that results from ignorance or carelessness is not tolerance.
4. Power and authority. Thus, acquiescent or helpless moderation is not tolerance.

The opposite of *tasāmuḥ* and *tasābul* is *khushūnat* (aggression). The word *khushūnat* means harshness, violence, firmness, forcefulness, and intransigence. Terminologically, it is any action against another that causes fear or distress, or at the very least is not desirable or pleasing for the other party. This action may be physical such as assault and battery or murder, or it may be mental such as intimidation, insult, humiliation, or even relentless pertinacity regarding a belief or behaviour regarding others. The word *ghilḡat* (coarseness) also has a meaning similar to *khushūnat* (see: *Dibkhubā*, *Mu‘īn*, and *Al-Munjid*).

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE TOLERANCE IN ISLAM

Though the words *tasāmuḥ* and *tasābul* are not used in religious texts, other words are used in our Narrations that can be considered approximate synonyms with these two words, including *rifq* (gentleness), *mudārā* (moderateness), *hilm* (forbearance), and *taysīr* (easygoingness).

Various Quranic verses and Narrations indicate that in some cases tolerance is desirable and praiseworthy. We call these instances ‘positive tolerance’. In other cases, that we term ‘negative tolerance’, the act of tolerance is undesirable and unfitting. Here, I shall speak both of instances of positive and negative tolerance. As previously stated, my main emphasis is upon relevant Narrations, the teachings and practice of the holy Prophet (ﷺ),

and Quranic verses. However, for comprehensiveness of the discourse, I will also discuss other verses and Narrations that are tangential to the subject at hand.

POSITIVE TOLERANCE IN ISLAM

Some instances of positive tolerance in Islam are as follows:

i. Tolerance in Confronting People

Quranic verses and Narrations about the gentleness, easygoingness, and moderateness of the holy Prophet (ﷺ) and Infallible Imams (‘a) or others that recommend these matters indicate that individuals must act tolerantly in their encounters with others.

Regarding the key to the Prophet’s (ﷺ) success, the Quran declares:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ
لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ

It is by Allah’s mercy that you are gentle to them; and had you been harsh and hardhearted, surely they would have scattered from around you. So excuse them and plead for forgiveness for them, and consult them in the affairs (3:159).

In this verse, in addition to God revealing the holy Prophet’s (ﷺ) gentleness to the people as his key to success, He commands the Prophet to forgive the mistakes of the people, ask God for their forgiveness, and consult with them in various affairs. All these guidelines reflect the necessity of positive tolerance with people.

The greatest example of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) forgiveness is the mass forgiveness of the people of Mecca after its conquest. The people of Mecca had had the worst possible attitude, hurled the most terrible of insults, and waged the most aggressive of wars upon the Prophet (ﷺ) and his followers. This, however, did not cause the Prophet (ﷺ) to digress from the path of Islamic kindness after his victory.

In a Narration from the holy Prophet (ﷺ), it has been stated:

امرت بمداراة الناس كما امرت بتبليغ الرسالة

TOLERANCE IN THE TEACHINGS OF THE PROPHET (ﷺ)

I have been commanded to moderation with the people just as I have been commanded to disseminate the Message.²

In this Narration, moderation with the people has been enumerated as a chief mission of the Prophet (ﷺ) on the same lines as promotion of the divine message, indicating its considerable importance.

In another Narration, he has declared:

ان الله عزّ و جلّ لم يبعثني معنفاً ولكن بعثني معلماً و ميسراً

Allah Almighty has not appointed me to coerce the people; rather, He has appointed me as a lenient teacher.³

It has also been cited that Gabriel came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said to him:

O Muhammad! Your Lord has sent His salām and has said: ‘Act moderately with My creatures’.⁴

In another Narration from the Prophet (ﷺ), it is quoted:

Gentleness and moderateness are blessed whereas strictness is accursed.⁵

Yet a further Narration from the Prophet (ﷺ) is cited thus:

Whatever moderateness and mildness are applied to, they serve as its ornamentations, and whatever they are taken away from, becomes ugly.⁶

Moreover, the Prophet (ﷺ) has stated:

If gentleness and moderateness could be seen with the eyes, there would be no creature more beautiful and magnificent.⁷

2. Tolerance in Islamic Law [TASHRĪ‘]

God’s mildness in the legislation of religious laws is an additional shining example of religious tolerance. In the Holy Quran, it is stated:

² *Nahj al-Faṣāḥah* 2000:580

³ *Musnad Ḥanbal*, vol. 5, p. 79.

⁴ Kulaynī, 1986, vol. 4, p. 354.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 359.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 363.

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يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمْ الْعُسْرَ

Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire hardship for you (2:185).

وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ

He has not placed for you any hardship in the religion (22:78).

It has been cited from the holy Prophet (ﷺ) that:

لم يرسلني الله تعالى بالرهبانية ولكن بعثني بالحنيفية السهلة
السمحة

Allah Almighty has not appointed me for monastic life; rather, He has appointed me with the Primordial religion—easy and mild.⁸

In this Narration, the words *samḥab* and *sahlab* have been used which are derived from the same root as *tasāmuḥ* and *tasābul*.

The word *sahl* denotes level land in which movement is easy. *Samāḥab* means mildness or forgiveness together with magnanimity. Therefore, this Narration indicates that Islam is an easy, facile, and merciful religion. Another interpretation is that in Islam there are no arduous laws. In the exegesis of this hadith, Martyr Muṭahharī writes:

In this religion, because it is ‘*sahlab*’, no taxing or formidable duties have been mandated. Furthermore, because it is ‘*samḥab*’ (merciful), whenever a duty becomes entwined with great difficulty and strain that duty is abrogated.⁹

These Quranic verses and Narrations signify that the religion of Islam, i.e. the methodology of the Prophet of Islam (ﷺ) and the entirety of God’s teachings bestowed upon the Prophet (ﷺ), is founded upon positive tolerance.

Interestingly, in Islamic jurisprudence [*fiqh*] there are rules such as *lā ḥaraj* (no hardship); *lā ḍarar* (no harm); negation of constraint, ignorance, forgetfulness, and coercion; primacy of acquittal; primacy of legitimacy; primacy of purity; primacy of correctness; the rule of possession [*qā’idah yad*]; and halalness of what is bought on the Muslim market [*sawq mus-*

⁸ Kulaynī, vol. 5, p. 493.

⁹ Muṭahharī, 1999, vol. 2, p. 241.

limin] all of which are indicative of the leniency and ease of Islamic law. Explanation of these important and effective laws of Islamic jurisprudence is beyond the scope of this discourse.

3. Tolerance in Inviting People to the Religion

Islam's tolerance in inviting people to the religion is another indicator of its religious tolerance. Addressing the Prophet (ﷺ), the Holy Quran declares:

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَدِلْ لَهُم بِالَّتِي
هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good advice and
debate with them in a manner that is best (16:125).

Regarding methods of inviting people to the religion of God, this verse refers to wisdom, good advice, and debate as the best. This shows that other methods of making people religious, such as coercion and force, are unacceptable. It is worthy of note that advice is modified with the adverbial *ḥasanah* (good) and debate is modified with *billatī hā aḥsan* (in a manner that is best) which means that in inviting people to the religion, all types of advice or debate are not endorsed.

In numerous Quranic verses addressing the holy Prophet (ﷺ), application of force and compulsion in the call to religion has been prohibited (see: *Baqarah* 2:256, *An'ām* 6:35, *Yūnus* 10:108, and *Shu'arā'* 26:3).

The Prophet of Islam (ﷺ) and his successors never used force in their invitation of the people to Islam. They gave the people of conquered territories the option of becoming Muslim or retaining and following the laws of their own religion while accepting the Islamic political administration.

The Infallible Imams created such an open and liberal atmosphere in their debates that other parties plainly spoke and defended their beliefs and opinions without fear. Examples of this may be found in the debates of Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa) with Ibn Abi al-ʿAwjāʿ, Ibn Muqaffaʿ, and Dayṣānī who were leaders of heresy [*ilḥād*] and atheism [*zandaqāb*].¹⁰

According to Islam, Muslims are duty-bound to insure the safety of unbelievers that come among Muslims to research Islam and to abstain from

¹⁰ Kulaynī, vol. 1, pp. 72-82.

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aggression against them. Addressing the Prophet (ﷺ), the Noble Quran states:

وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّىٰ يَسْمَعَ كَلِمَ اللَّهِ

ثُمَّ أَبْلِغْهُ مَأْمَنَهُ، ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

If any of the polytheists seeks asylum from you, grant them asylum until they hear the Word of Allah. Then convey them to their place of safety. That is because they are a people who do not know (9:6).

4. Islam's Tolerance in Peaceful Coexistence of Muslims with Followers of Other Religions

Peaceful coexistence is one of the most important human ideals. Islam has laid the foundation of peace and has thus levelled the path to peaceful coexistence. Peace and tranquillity constitute the soul of Islam. The word 'Islam' is derived from the root *silim*, which subsumes the concepts of health, safety, peace, and tranquillity. The Holy Quran instructs its followers to collectively enter peace and *silim*:

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَدْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَآفَّةً

O you who have faith! Enter into *silim*, all together (2:208).

God commands the Prophet (ﷺ) to seize the opportunity if his enemies take up the path of peace and reconciliation and positively respond to their overtures:

وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ

الْعَلِيمُ وَإِنْ يُرِيدُوا أَن يَخْدَعُوكَ فَإِنَّ حَسْبَكَ اللَّهُ

And if they incline toward peace, then you [too] incline toward it, and put your trust in Allah. Indeed He is the All-hearing, the All-knowing. But if they desire to deceive you, Allah is indeed sufficient for you (8:61-62).

Moreover, the Quran elsewhere directs the Prophet (ﷺ) and Muslims in general thus:

TOLERANCE IN THE TEACHINGS OF THE PROPHET (ﷺ)

فَإِنْ أَعْتَزَلُوكُمْ فَلَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ وَالْقَوَا إِلَيْكُمْ أَسْلَمَ فَمَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ
لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سَبِيلًا

So if they keep out of your way and do not fight you, and offer you peace, then Allah does not allow you any course [of action] against them (4:90).

Islam's desire for peace is so strong that it informs Muslims that their behaviour may bring about a bond of friendship between them and their enemies:

عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَجْعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ عَادَيْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ مَوْدَّةً وَاللَّهُ
قَدِيرٌ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

It may be that Allah will bring about affection between you and those with whom you are at enmity, and Allah is all-powerful, and Allah is all-forgiving, all-merciful (60:7).

With the following statement, the Noble Quran has determined peace as a better course of action above and beyond all personal and social relations prevailing between humans:

وَالصُّلْحُ خَيْرٌ

And reconciliation is better (4:128).

Islam has introduced the idea of peaceful coexistence among followers of divine religions as a global declaration. By proclaiming the common ground of 'belief in the One God and the negation of polytheism and existence of divinity apart from God', Islam invites everyone to global unity. By God's command, the holy Prophet (ﷺ) has also announced to all followers of divine religions to submit to a great monotheistic convergence and unification (see: *Āli Imrān* 3:64).

The policy of the Prophet of Islam (ﷺ) in the negotiation of peace and non-aggression treaties with various followers of divine religions and even polytheists denotes Islam's peaceful spirit and the necessity of peaceful coexistence in Islam. The ten-year armistice the Prophet negotiated with the polytheists of Mecca (i.e. the *Hudaybiyyah* Truce), in addition to other treaties, are signs of the endeavours of Islam to prevent aggression among hu-

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mans. The Quran advises Muslims that as long as their enemies adhere to non-aggression treaties, their pacts are to be respected (*Tawbah* 9:4). The performance of the holy Prophet (ﷺ) during the Meccan conquest with regard to the polytheists of Mecca and the following slogan bespeak of his peaceful attitude concerning enemies and opponents:

اليوم يوم المرحمه اليوم اعز الله قريشا

Today is a day of mercy; today Allah has honoured the Quraysh!

The most coherent of statements in this regard are those of Imam ‘Alī (‘a), the most illustrious disciple of the Prophet (ﷺ), in the *Nahj al-Balāghah*:

Never reject a peace proposal from the enemy that involves the satisfaction of God since the ease of warriors and the peace of mind and security of the country are ensured in peace....If a pact is agreed upon between you and your enemy or you have granted them your protection, be loyal to your pledge, be reliable in what you have taken on, and make your soul a shield for your covenant since there is no divine obligation on the same level as faithfulness to promises; all people of the world, with all their differences, are unanimous in this opinion....Therefore, never be an oath-breaker, never betray your pledge, and never deceive your enemy....After precautionary measures and making certain about a treaty, do not seek excuses. Let not difficulties of a covenant you have entered into, for which God has made you duty-bound, lead you to break an oath.¹¹

5. Tolerance in Governance and Administration

Some Quranic verses and numerous Narrations indicate that conditions for success in administration and leadership include magnanimity as well as moderateness, easygoingness, and gentleness with the people. Therefore, the holy Prophet (ﷺ) and noble ‘Alī (‘a) have advised their governors to observe these important principles.

In verse 159 of surah *Āli ‘Imrān*, the key to the Prophet’s (ﷺ) success as the leader and head of government of the religious community was his gentleness and tact. In a Narration, it is cited:

آلة الرئاسة سعة الصدر

A tool of leadership is magnanimity.¹²

¹¹ *Nahj al-balāghah*, letter 53.

¹² *Nahj al-balāghah*, wisdom 176.

TOLERANCE IN THE TEACHINGS OF THE PROPHET (ﷺ)

When the holy Prophet (ﷺ) appointed Mu‘adh ibn Jabal as governor of Yemen, part of his recommendations was as follows:

عليك بالرفق و العفو في غير ترك الحق

I advise you to gentleness (with the people) and forgiveness in cases that do not involve the violation of a right [or truth].¹³

The Prophet (ﷺ) also instructed him thus:

يسر و لاتعسر، بشر و لاتنفر

Go easy and do not be strict, give glad tidings [and make (people) happy], and do not cause displeasure.¹⁴

Islam even stresses upon Imams of congregational prayer to go easy on the people in prayers. In a letter to Malik Ashtar, ‘Ali (‘a) declares:

When you hold group prayer for the people do not cause hate in people by prolonging it since there are some among them that are ailing or feeble. When the Prophet (ﷺ) dispatched me to Yemen, I asked him how I should pray with the people. He answered, “Pray within the limits of the most weak among them and be kind to the faithful”.¹⁵

Throughout the following letter, Imam ‘Ali accentuates gentleness, moderateness, and kindness above all else:

Give your heart to the people in the form of love, warmth, kindness, and grace. Do not be like a vampiric predator that sets great store by devouring them, as they are your siblings in faith or (at least) are similar to you in genesis. People stray from the path and become afflicted by blights. Either intentionally or unintentionally they perform certain deeds (that they should not). Treat them with magnanimity and forbearance just as you hope God treats you with magnanimity and forbearance.¹⁶

Elsewhere he instructs one of his governors thus:

Ask God for help in what you intend to do and integrate strictness with mildness. Wherever moderateness and gentleness are more appropriate, employ them and only resort to strictness when there is no

¹³ Bahrānī, 1979:25.

¹⁴ *Sirah ibn Hisbām*, 1998, vol. 1, hadith 237.

¹⁵ *Nahj al-balāghah*, letter 51.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, letter 53.

other way. Be humble before the people. In attention, in gaze, and in gesture treat the people equally.¹⁷

6. Islam's Requirement for Tolerance as a Moral Virtue

Many Narrations have emphasised the profound importance of moderateness, mildness, forgiveness, reprieve, and restraining one's anger regarding the people as well as the importance of obscuring faults and the illicitness of revealing them. All this is representative of the recommendation of Islam with respect to tolerance in dealing with others. The following has been cited from the Prophet of God (ﷺ):

Shall I notify you of the most beautiful behaviours in this world and the next? They include forgiving a person who has mistreated you, keeping in touch with relatives that have cut off relations, performing good deeds for a person who has wronged you, and giving benefactions to a person who has deprived you.¹⁸

It has also been narrated that:

Possession of the attributes of gentleness and moderateness with people is possession of faith.¹⁹

The following has been quoted of Imam 'Alī (‘a):

Whenever you overcome your enemy, let forgiveness be your gratitude (to God) for the blessing of power.²⁰

In a Narration from the holy Prophet (ﷺ), it is stated:

Do not be on the lookout for the mistakes of others. Whoever seeks out the mistakes of their brothers and sisters in faith, God shall be reciprocally in search of the former's mistakes. And one whose mistakes God seeks out, He will disgrace even if at home.²¹

He has also declared:

For those who reveal wrongful deeds, it is as if they had performed those deeds themselves, and persons who intend to disgrace someone

¹⁷ Ibid., letter 46.

¹⁸ Kulaynī, vol. 2, p. 107.

¹⁹ Muḥammad Rayshahrī 1983, vol. 4, p. 159.

²⁰ *Nahj al-balāghah*, wisdom 11.

²¹ Kulaynī, vol. 2, p. 354.

by revealing their mistakes will perform that mistake themselves before they die.²²

7. God's Tolerance in Reward and Punishment

All Quranic verses and Narrations regarding forgiveness, clemency, mercy, and those that convey that God is accepting of repentance mark the tolerance of God, i.e. His mildness, lenience, forgiveness, and indulgence, concerning sinners and wrongdoers. Likewise, intercession in the Hereafter, which is the greatest manifestation of God's forgiveness, also denotes this truth. Here, I shall only present one verse:

قُلْ يَاعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا

Say [that Allah declares,] 'O My servants who have committed excesses against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed Allah will forgive all sins' (39:53).

In similar fashion, Quranic verses and Narrations regarding God's double or inflated rewards for the good deeds of His servants signifies this truth as well. For example, it has been stated in the Quran:

مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرُ مِثَالِهَا وَمَنْ جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا يُجْزَىٰ
إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ

Whoever brings virtue shall receive ten times its like; but whoever brings vice shall not be requited except with its like, and they will not be wronged (6:160).

Moreover, the Quran draws an analogy between donating charity for God and a grain that grows seven offshoots each with one hundred seeds. Then the Quran states:

وَاللَّهُ يُضَعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ

Allah enhances manifoldly for whomever He wishes (2:261).

²² Ibid., p. 356.

In addition, in surah Qadr it is stated that good deeds performed on the Night of Qadr have been proclaimed to be better than those of one thousand months (see: *Qadr* 97:3).

RESOLUTENESS AND FIRMNESS IN ISLAM

The opposites of *tasāmuḥ* and *tasāḥul* are usually considered to be *qāṭi'iyat* (resoluteness), *ṣalābat* (firmness), *sarsakhtī* (obstinacy), and *khushūnat* (aggressiveness). After enumerating instances of positive tolerance in Islam, it is now apt that I point out occasions where Islam considers resoluteness, firmness, and inflexibility to be desirable. In fact, such cases may be considered negative tolerance. In other words, tolerance in these cases is undesirable and deplorable.

1. Resoluteness in Imparting the Divine Message

The prophets had unparalleled resolve in carrying out their divine commissions. They withstood the direst threats and schemes and the most alluring bribes without bending in the slightest. The Quran names numerous prophets including Noah, Abraham, Lot, Shu'ayb (the father-in-law of Moses), Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Moses, Jesus, and the Prophet of Islam who stood like mountains and carried out their missions without submitting to any deals (see: surahs *A'raf*, *Yunūs*, *Hūd*, and *Ibrāhīm*).

Martyr Muṭahharī considered unparalleled resolve to be one of the characteristics of divine prophets. He has stated:

Because prophets discern themselves to be 'appointed' and do not have the least amount of doubt about their mission, its necessity, and its worthwhileness, they promote and support their message with such resolve for which no likeness can be found....In the first years of his appointment, when the number of Muslims might not yet have surpassed ten, in a meeting recorded in history as the Day of Warning [*yawm al-indhār*], the holy Prophet (ṣ) gathered the notables of *Banī Hāshim* and presented his message to them. With clarity and resolution, he declared:

My religion will suffuse the world and your happiness is conditional upon accepting and upholding my invitation....In response to the request of the Quraysh, stating that they would appoint him as their king, wed him to their most beautiful girl, and make him the most wealthy person among them on the condition that he abandon his pronouncements, he said: I swear to God, if they place the sun in one hand and the moon in my other, I will never give up my invitation (*Muṭahharī*, p. 164-165).

2. Resoluteness in the Campaign against Wrongdoing and Announcement of Truth

Quranic verses and Narrations indicate that in the proclamation of truth and struggle against wrongdoing, especially in the case that a wrongful act might become part of the public culture, one must not be flexible. A shining example of this is the Prophet's (ﷺ) steadfast struggle against manifestations of unbelief and idolatry. When the polytheists of Mecca despaired at dissuading the Prophet because of his singular firmness of purpose, they proposed that each party assume flexibility and nonchalance regarding the religion of the other and abstain from attacking each other's beliefs. The Holy Quran announced to the Prophet (ﷺ):

فَلَا تُطِيعِ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ وَدُّوا لَوْ تَدَّهِنُ فَيُدَّهِنُونَ

So do not obey the deniers, who are eager that you should be pliable, so that they may be pliable [towards you] (68:8-9).

The polytheists of Mecca asked the Prophet (ﷺ) to accompany them in worshipping their idols so that they would accompany the Prophet of Islam in worshipping Almighty God. In response, God revealed surah *Kāfirūn* where He declared to the Prophet:

قُلْ يَتَّيْمِنُهَا الْكَافِرُونَ لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا

أَعْبُدُ وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَا عَبَدْتُمْ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ لَكُمْ

دِينِكُمْ وَإِلَىٰ دِينِ

Say, 'O faithless ones! I do not worship what you worship, nor do you worship what I worship; nor will I worship what you have worshiped; nor will you worship what I worship. To you your religion and to me my religion.' (109:1-6)

Elsewhere, addressing the Prophet (ﷺ), the Quran has pronounced:

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وَلَوْلَا أَنْ ثَبَّتْنَاكَ لَقَدْ كِدْتَ تَرْكَنُ إِلَيْهِمْ شَيْئًا قَلِيلًا إِذَا
لَأَذَقْنَاكَ ضِعْفَ الْحَيَاةِ وَضِعْفَ الْمَمَاتِ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ عَلَيْنَا
نَصِيرًا

Had We not fortified you, certainly you might have inclined toward them a bit. Then We would have surely made you taste a double [punishment] in this life and a double [punishment] after death, and then you would have not found for yourself any helper against Us (17:74-75).

As well, He proclaims to the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions:

قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ إِذْ قَالُوا
لِقَوْمِهِمْ إِنَّا بُرَّاءُ مِنْكُمْ وَمِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ كَفَرْنَا بِكُمْ
وَبَدَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ الْعَدَاوَةُ وَالْبَغْضَاءُ أَبَدًا حَتَّى تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ
وَحَدَّهُ

There is certainly a good exemplar for you in Abraham and those who were with him, when they said to their own people, 'Indeed we repudiate you and whatever you worship besides Allah. We disavow you, and between you and us there has appeared enmity and hate forever, unless you come to have faith in Allah alone' (60:4).

The stories of Abraham and the Prophet of Islam regarding the breaking of idols are clear examples of the resoluteness of the prophets.

In the *Nahj al-Balāghah*, is it written:

أَمَّا يَقِيمُ أَمْرَ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَهُ مِنْ لَا يَصَانَعُ وَ لَا يَضَارِعُ وَ لَا يَتَّبِعُ الْمَطَامِعَ
Only he upholds the command of God who does not make mutual concessions, does not conform [for conforming's sake], and does not follow desires (*Nahj al-Balāghah*, wisdom 11).

3. Resoluteness in Conveying Religious Teachings and Struggling against Distortion, Innovation, and Obscuration in the Religion

The crucial mission of religious scholars and leaders, who are in truth guards of the religious bounds, must brook not the least amount of flexibility or nonchalance with regard to safeguarding the reality of the religion and battling innovation, distortion, allegorical explanation, and false interpretations.

A Narration from the holy Prophet (ﷺ) cites:

When innovation appears in my ummah, it is the responsibility of cognizant and learned individuals to reveal their knowledge. If they do not, the damnation of God be upon them” (*Kulaynī*, vol. 1, p. 54).

Imam Ṣādiq (‘a) has declared:

Do not associate with innovators (*Kulaynī*, vol. 1, p. 54).

It is cited of Imam ‘Alī (‘a) that:

Whosoever goes to an innovator and shows them respect has surely endeavoured to destroy Islam (*Shaykh Ṣadūq* 1970, vol. 3, p. 572).

Regarding promoters of religion, the Quran states:

الَّذِينَ يُبَلِّغُونَ رِسَالَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَخْشَوْنَهُ وَلَا يَخْشَوْنَ أَحَدًا إِلَّا اللَّهَ

They are those who deliver the messages of Allah and fear Him, and fear no one except Allah (33:39).

Concerning this issue, Martyr Mutahhari has written:

There is a matter that I must explain—the matter of tolerance...Does the Quran reject it completely? I must answer that there are two different issues here. The first one the Quran rejects so completely that it does not even give prophets permission for its effectuation let alone others. This type is compromise in the area of policy and thought; that is, in modern terms, ideology. For instance, one might say: ‘You dispense with some of your beliefs and, reciprocally, we will forgo some of our beliefs.’ It is impossible for a righteous religion to allow such compromise with the enemy....No compromise is acceptable even in a minor recommended [*mustahabb*] or undesirable [*makrūh*] act much less an obligatory or forbidden act. Whatever is a part of divine revelation, even the slightest of recommended or undesirable actions, is uncompromisable. Indeed! There is, on the other hand, another issue in which compromise and forgiveness is tolerable. This issue relates to actions, not policies and ideology; it is a

kind of tactic. For instance, one might decide to temporarily postpone or advance the execution of a particular action. The Quran has not taken this option away from the Prophet (*Muṭabharī*, vol. 17, p. 247).

4. Resoluteness of the Government in Safeguarding the Rights of the People, Establishing Justice, and Campaigning against Oppression

The Holy Quran introduces one of the most important aims of the appointment of messengers and the revelation of scripture to be establishing social justice and struggling against oppression (see: *Ḥadīd* 57:25).

Imam ‘Alī (‘a) has declared that the most important reasons for which he accepted rule after 25 years of withdrawal were to establish justice, fight against oppression, and defend the oppressed (*Nahj al-Balāghah*, sermon 3). After he assumed the office of the caliphate, with singular resolve, he commanded that the wealth that had been wrongly given to various persons from the Muslim treasury [*bayt al-māl*] be retrieved and restored to the treasury (ibid, sermon 15).

His plan was to divide the public wealth equally among Muslims. In the face of the supposed well-wishers that advised the Imam against this measure, he announced:

Do you instruct me to seek victory for myself by oppressing those over whom I have become ruler? By God, for as long as I live and night and day endure and the stars rise and set one after another, I will never do such a thing. If this wealth was my own personal property I would share it out equally let alone now that this wealth belongs to God and pertains to all people (ibid, sermon 126).

The Imam’s resolve in safeguarding public wealth was so great that he withstood his brother ‘Aqīl’s repeated appeals to be given a greater portion from the treasury due to his extreme need and turned his brother’s hope into despair (ibid, sermon 224).

In a letter to one of his commanders, he wrote thus:

Fear God and return the property of these people. If you do not and God gives me the power to do so, I will perform my duty to God regarding you and with this sword, with which I have struck no one save that they entered Hell, I will strike you....By God, if Ḥasan and Ḥusayn (his sons) had done this they would receive no favouritism from me and they would not sway my resolve until I had retrieved the rights they had misappropriated and had repelled their wrongful oppressions... (ibid, letter 41. See also: letters 20, 43, and 53).

Regarding the administration of rights and justice, Imam ‘Alī has declared:

The commandments of God may only be carried out by those who are uncompromising and unbiased, and do not follow their desires (ibid, wisdom 107).

The holy Prophet (ﷺ) dispatched Noble ‘Alī (‘a) to Yemen to invite the people to Islam. On his way back, he collected some fine silks from the people of Najrān by way of the tax specified in the treaty of the Day of *Mu-bāhilah* (mutual cursing) and then went on to Medina. On the way, he was informed that the Prophet had set out for Mecca to take part in Hajj, so he handed the command of the soldiers over to one of the officers and hastened toward Mecca. He reached the Prophet near Mecca whereby, after conversing with the Prophet, he was commanded to return to his forces and bring them to Mecca. When he got back to his troops, he saw that they had divided the silk cloth among themselves to use them as pilgrim’s garb for Hajj. Noble ‘Alī was deeply angered at this act of his deputy and commanded that all the fabric be returned and packed. Some became upset about this decisive command and expressed their anger about ‘Alī’s (‘a) behaviour to the Prophet (ﷺ) when they reached him. He replied:

ارفعوا السننكم عن علي فإنه خشن في ذات الله عز وجل غير
مداهن في دينه

Stop your tongues from speaking ill of ‘Alī for he is strict in the path of God Almighty and does not compromise in His religion (*Majlisī*, vol. 21, p. 385; also vol. 41, p. 115).

The strict decrees in Islam about insurrectionists [*muḥārib*], those who create corruption on Earth [*muḥsid fil-arḍ*], thieves, bandits, fornicators, and those who falsely accuse others of fornication indicate the decisiveness of Islam in maintaining public security and safeguarding the rights of the general public (see: *Mā’idah* 5:33, 38; *Nūr* 24:1-4, 6, 23; and *Hurr ‘Āmulī*, 1990, vol. 28, p. 310).

5. Resoluteness of the Government in Executing Divinely Decreed Punishment [ḤUDŪD/ḤADD ILĀHĪ]

Regarding divinely decreed punishment or *ḥadd*, two distinct issues must be clarified: substantiation and execution. Islam is lenient regarding the substantiation of the necessity of punishment. In other words, it intends that to the extent possible no *ḥadd* be established. Therefore, firstly,

Islam has specified difficult conditions for the establishment of *ḥadd*. For instance, for the substantiation of fornication and its *ḥadd* the testimony of four just individuals is necessary, such that if the group of four is incomplete not only will the necessity of the *ḥadd* of fornication remain unsubstantiated, but the *ḥadd* for slander of fornication [*qadhaf*] will be executed upon the insufficient witnesses. Moreover, for the *ḥadd* of theft, other conditions have been stipulated in addition to the testimony of two just witnesses. Secondly, with the slightest of doubt the *ḥadd* is dropped. The rule of ‘*ḥadd*s are dropped in cases of doubt’ [*al-ḥudūd tadra’ bi-shubuhāt*] has been ratified by all jurists. Thirdly, not only does Islam not advise sinners to confess to crimes relating to the rights of God (vis-à-vis the rights of people) but rather it advises them not to confess. Furthermore, as opposed to advising us to endeavour in proving the perpetration of sins, Islam forbids us from seeking out and revealing the mistakes of others.

On the other hand, in the execution of divinely determined punishment after substantiation, Islam is adamant and brooks no flexibility or nonchalance. Concerning execution of the *ḥadd* for fornication the Quran declares:

الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُمْ
بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَيْشَهَدَ
عَذَابُهُمَا طَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

As for the fornicatress and the fornicator, strike each of them a hundred lashes, and let not pity for them overcome you in Allah’s law, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day, and let their punishment be witnessed by a group of the faithful (24:2).

In some Narrations about the execution of divine punishment it has been cited that some persons went to the Prophet (ﷺ) or noble ‘Alī (‘a) to intercede on the behalf of the offenders but were ignored (see: *Nūrī*, 1986, vol. 12, p. 48). Many Narrations indicate that we should not be affected by sentiments in the implementation of divine punishment and through negligence, underpin the foundations of corruption in the society.

6. Resoluteness against the Subversive Enemies of Islam and Muslims

Describing the Islamic umma, the Holy Quran states:

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أَشَدَّاءٌ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءٌ بَيْنَهُمْ

...are hard against the faithless and merciful amongst themselves
(48:29).

The Holy Quran likens a Muslim to a seed that sprouts from under the earth, gradually develops, grows to have a robust trunk—standing firm on its own—and incites the anger of the unbelievers with his strength and firmness (ibid). About enemies that violate treaties or incite sedition, the Quran declares:

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا
يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِّنْ
حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمْ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا تَقَاتِلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ
الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّى يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ فَإِنْ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ كَذَلِكَ
جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ

Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress. Indeed Allah does not like transgressors. And kill them wherever you confront them, and expel them from where they expelled you, for faithlessness is graver than killing. But do not fight them near the Holy Mosque unless they fight you therein; but if they fight you, kill them; such is the requital of the faithless (2:190-191).

In addition, it states:

يَأَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وَاغْلُظْ عَلَيْهِمْ

O Prophet! Wage jihad against the faithless and the hypocrites,
and be severe with them (9:73).

The severe conduct of the holy Prophet (ﷺ) with the Jews of *Banī Qurayzah*—after they violated their treaty mentioned in the Quran in verses 26 and 27 of surah *Ahḏāb*—and also with the Jews of *Banī Naḏīr*—after their trickery and breach of treaty—are indicative of Islam's decisive, harsh, and

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inflexible treatment of conspirators and pledge-breakers (see: *Sīrah ibn Hishām*, vol. 3, p. 252; and *Āyatī*, pp. 365, 413).

The Holy Quran strictly forbids friendly relations with the enemies of Islam and reproaches hypocrites who endeavour to establish relations with them.

لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ
اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ
عَشِيرَتَهُمْ

You will not find a people believing in Allah and the Last Day en-
dearing those who oppose Allah and His Apostle even though
they were their own parents, or children, or brothers, or kinsfolk
(58:22).

يَتَّيِبُوا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ

O you who have faith! Do not take My enemy and your enemy
for friends (60:1).

لَا يَتَّخِذِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَمَنْ

يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ

The faithful should not take the faithless for allies instead of the
faithful, and whoever does that Allah will have nothing to do with
them (3:28).

The Quran plainly informs that the hearts of unbelievers and the ene-
mies of Islam permeate with hate for Muslims. For this reason, it rebukes
some Muslims for their naiveté in trusting and establishing strong friendly
relations with them (see: *Āl Imrān* 3:118-119).

7. Resoluteness in Eschewal of the Leadership of Unbelievers over Mus- lims

The Holy Quran has declared the leadership or supervision of unbeliev-
ers over Muslims to be forbidden and has made submittal to them *ḥarām*.

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It has also condemned having affection for unbelievers and seeking greatness through friendly relations with them:

وَلَنْ تَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلًا

Allah will never provide the faithless any way [to prevail] over the faithful (4:141).

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن تَطِيعُوا فَرِيقًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ

يُرُدُّوكُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ كَافِرِينَ

O you who have faith, if you obey some of those who were given the Book, they will turn you back, after your faith, into faithless ones (3:100).

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن تَطِيعُوا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُرُدُّوكُمْ عَلَىٰ

أَعْقَابِكُمْ فَتَنْقَلِبُوا خَاسِرِينَ

O you who have faith! If you obey the faithless, they will turn you back on your heels, and you will become losers (3:149).

الَّذِينَ يَتَّخِذُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِن دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَيْبَتُهُمْ

عِنْدَهُمُ الْعِزَّةُ فَإِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا

Those who take the faithless for allies instead of the faithful, do they seek honour with them? [If so,] indeed all honour belongs to Allah (4:139).

The Quran forbids Muslims from giving secret information to unbelievers that can cause their domination:

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يَتَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا بِطَانَةَ مِّنْ دُونِكُمْ لَا يَأْلُونَكُمْ خَبَالًا
وَدُّوا مَا عَنِتُّمْ قَدْ بَدَتِ الْبَغْضَاءُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَمَا تُخْفَى
صُدُورُهُمْ أَكْبَرُ

O you who have faith! Do not take your confidants from others than yourselves; they will spare nothing to ruin you. They are eager to see you in distress. Hatred has already shown itself from their mouths, and what their breasts hide [within] is yet worse (3:118).

According to the above, neither is tolerance absolutely approved nor is harshness absolutely condemned; rather, each is acceptable in its own circumstances. Where tolerance is acceptable harshness is deplorable and where harshness is acceptable tolerance is deplorable. A religion that does not embody tolerance is faulty and inhumane. Likewise, a religion that utterly condemns harshness, aggressiveness, and resoluteness is weak and impracticable.

TOLERANCE IN ISLAM AND LIBERALISM

There are major differences between tolerance in the Islamic culture and in liberalism. Thus, by accepting the existence of positive tolerance in Islam as explained, we cannot conclude that Islam uses the same approach as liberalism. In order to prevent any kind of paralogism, misunderstanding or misuse, these differences must be pointed out.

The contradistinction between Islam and liberalism with regard to tolerance prevails both in concept and in fundamentals.

In concept, the differences are as follows. First, Islam does not approve tolerance in an absolute manner but considers it as undesirable and unreasonable in some cases. In such situations, Islam sees the acceptance of tolerance to be a sign of weakness and superficiality of that ideology. This contrasts with liberalism in that it utterly sanctions and even requires tolerance in all areas or at the very least in the areas of religion, culture, and morals. Additionally, liberalism holds aggression and harshness to be undesirable, illogical, and immoral.

Second, in Islam, the meaning of tolerance is related with gentleness, moderateness, kindness, patience, and reconciliation. To state matters differently, though a unitary, discoverable truth exists, Islam has advised tol-

erance because people's capacities differ and the same cannot be expected of everyone, because in some cases application of tolerance can have valuable, constructive effects upon the other party not to mention that exercising aggression and intolerance causes more detrimental and unsavoury consequences than tolerance.

However, in liberalism the logic behind tolerance is either that there is no truth, truth and error being illusionary or mentally posited and customary; or that if truth and falsehood do indeed exist, due to their being metaphorical and ambiguous, they are given to divergent readings and no one can claim to have correctly discovered them; or that due to the multifarious nature of truth each person can only discover a part of it—therefore, everyone holds only a partial share of the truth [that remains unconnected to the whole or total truth]. Finally, it is argued in the liberal paradigm that even if there exists a singular fathomable truth, the concept of truth and falsehood is not important enough to warrant moral alignment along the lines of “us” and “them” leading to discrimination and aggression.

As previously stated, Islam and liberalism also have differing views concerning the fundamentals of tolerance. Tolerance in liberalism is under the influence of relativity of knowledge, pluralism, humanism, and secularism. However, tolerance in Islam derives from the expediency of moderation, going easy on God's servants, and concord. Clearly, there is much difference between these fundamentals.

FUNDAMENTALS OF TOLERANCE IN LIBERALISM

As I have pointed out, liberalistic tolerance is based upon specific fundamentals. Here, I shall first concisely describe these fundamentals and then critically assess them.

i. Relativity of Knowledge

One of the principal rudiments of tolerance in liberalism is belief in the relativity of knowledge. Prevalence of scepticism in the West, dominance of positivism (or empiricism), anti-rationalism, Kant's theory of phenomenology, and materialism as well as the rejection of intuitive and pure intellectual knowledge lead to the acceptance of epistemological nihilism among Western thinkers. According to this thought, humans cannot consider knowledge to have realistic and discoverable value. In other words, all human endeavours to fathom truth are in vain.

Furthermore, according to this ideology, it is not fitting to give the name of knowledge to religious and moral statements. Since they do not reveal truths or realities, one cannot debate their verity or falsehood. Religious, moral, and cultural concepts are subjective and mentally posited; they may be signifiers of human sentiments, emotions and desires or might be products of social conventions. Therefore, in this area discourse about truth and falsehood or right and wrong is improper and futile. As a result, making assessments or judgements about these matters or speaking about the superiority of a religion, moral framework, or cultural system is pointless and illogical.

As per liberalism, there is no room for aggression, firmness, or resoluteness because these concepts stem from the fountainhead of certitude, absolutism, and belief in the possibility of realizing truth and falsehood. When certitude is uprooted, relativism is substituted for absolutism, and there are no means to apprehend truth or falsehood, clearly aggression and firmness are illogical approaches. Where there is no way to assess opinions, cultures, and moral systems, there is certainly no place for persons to believe in their own primacy or to insist upon their own righteousness and the wickedness of others so that they may then resort to aggression. Thus, the only recourse is collective tolerance, and everyone must refrain from encroaching on one another.

As cited by Saada-Gendron (1999:119-120) to paraphrase Walters:

The instability of humankind and the narrowness of the scope of our knowledge force us to accept uncertain beliefs. There is nothing beyond the very limited truths that we humans can attain save beliefs, factions, and a series of doubts and errors. Wrongness of religion is natural because religion originates from the limited nature of our minds and from this derives the proper meaning of tolerance. On the other hand, fanaticism leads to disease as it denotes believing that one's opinion is the only truth and taking up arms to defend it. It is clear that we must all show tolerance owing to the fact that we are all inadequate, naive, and subject to error and change. Can a reed that has been blown into the mud demand of a neighbouring reed laying the other way, "Be like me or I'll order you uprooted and burnt!" Since tolerance is mutual, it goes hand in hand with forgiveness.

2. Pluralism

Another fundamental of tolerance in liberalism is belief in pluralism. Pluralism may be considered in various areas. In politics, pluralism means recognizing different opinions, views, and parties. Pluralists in the politi-

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cal arena believe that the political flow is administrated from a multi-channelled source without which the political system is unacceptable.

In the area of morals and cultures, pluralism means recognizing different cultural and moral systems. This implies that there is no difference between various systems in the development of humankind and the society.

Religious pluralism may be divided into two categories: religion per se and understanding religion. Pluralism in religion per se means that the various religions are different paths to a singular truth. Each person sees the truth from their own perspective and understands it differently. In other words, every religion can equally lead its followers to happiness, salvation, and truth. According to John Hick, one cannot give one religion a rating that cannot be given to all others.

In the understanding of religion, pluralism denotes that all construals of religion must be equally recognized. One cannot consider a single interpretation of religion to be true and all the rest wrong. A person cannot even consider one interpretation of religion to be closer to the intent of the religion than other readings. Since the texts of religion are silent and we continually make use of our expectations, questions, and assumptions in our understanding and since our expectations, questions, and assumptions are different, it is certain that our interpretation of religious texts will be different.

Tolerance is a necessity for pluralistic tendencies. This is because when all views, cultures, moral and political systems, religions, and interpretations of religion enjoy an equal share of truth, no place remains for dispute, disunity, hostility, or aggression.

To paraphrase Walters (as cited by Saada-Gendron, 1999:203-204) in a treatise written on tolerance:

When differences are so widespread that borderlines no longer exist between groups but between individuals, we are witness to a pervasive polyculture. This polyculture would not only necessitate tolerance among groups but among individuals as well. The amalgamation of individuals with different identities making up the postmodern society is indicative of a new world polyculturalism that requires a special kind of tolerance in the tension between individualism and collectivism.

Nigel (as cited by Saada-Gendron, 1999:198) proposes liberal tolerance by establishing a type of higher-level neutrality in order to resolve the struggle between people and groups. Nigel is of the opinion that this neutrality will lead us to believe that all lifestyles possess equal value.

3. Humanism

A further fundamental of tolerance as per liberalism is humanism. Humanism may be considered the very soul of Western culture. In this culture, the human being is the criterion for all things. The human is supreme no matter what it is compared with. Human beings are creators of values and are the standard against which truth is measured. In this view, humans and their carnal desires enjoy primacy.

Basically, humans are visceral creatures. This conveys that their instincts and desires not their reason and intellect, nor God or invisible powers rules them. The human intellect is merely a tool for procuring that which is called for by the instincts and desires. Therefore they do not assent to the existence of any intellectuality beyond instrumental reason. The result of this anthropological view is that a line must be crossed through all differences, all ideological, theoretical, and moral tendencies, and all religious alignments (see: *Insānshināsī*, p. 14; and *Kitāb Naqd*, issue 14-15, p. 100-101).

In the wording of some writers, the humanity of humans is superior to their beliefs, faiths, and morals and no one may be reproached for having a specific belief or behaviour. Hence, it could be said that tolerance is a product of liberalistic anthropology (*Kitāb Naqd*, Spring and Summer 2000, p. 100-101).

4. Secularism

One other fundamental of tolerance in liberalism is belief in secularism. Secularism is desacralisation of politics, government, and everything that relates to human social and worldly life and prevention of the interference of religion and sanctities in these areas. In a simplistic description, secularism is the dissociation of religion from politics, government, and social life.

In this viewpoint, religion—on the assumption that the basic idea of religion is even accepted—consists of a series of teachings that only relate to the areas of worship, spirituality, and otherworldly life, not to worldly and social affairs.

Liberalism claims that by adhering to secularism, one of the important factors for aggression, i.e. the differences between followers of various religions or differing readings of a single religion, is eradicated. That is to say, in view of the variety of religions and the sundry of religious interpretations, entry of religion into the worldly life of people and the political and governmental arenas (whether in matters of legitimacy, policymaking, or

implementation) is an important factor in the aggression of followers of various religions towards one another as well as towards opponents of religion. Therefore, liberalism maintains that by believing in secularism, the foundation will be laid for religious tolerance.

CRITIQUE OF THE FUNDAMENTALS OF LIBERALISTIC TOLERANCE

Here, I will succinctly review the fundamentals of tolerance in liberalism, but first I must note that none of these fundamentals is acceptable according to Islam.

In the view of Islam, right and wrong, truth and untruth are real. They can be discovered and attained. Self-evident principles and innate, real values leave no room for delusions of the relativity of knowledge or of values.

In the view of Islam, in all eras and all times the true religion, the Straight Path, the way to salvation, is one. In the manner, among differing and contradicting interpretations, there is just one correct one, which may be realized using specific methods.

In the view of Islam, Islam is a comprehensive religion that deals with both the people's otherworldly needs as well as their needs in this world. Religion exists to grant happiness both in this world and beyond. In truth, the people's happiness in the Hereafter is not separate from their worldly happiness.

In the view of Islam, everything revolves around God. He is the source of all perfection and beauty. Hence, the perfection and happiness of humans rests upon awareness of, nearness to, and reliance upon Him.

CRITIQUE OF THE RELATIVITY OF KNOWLEDGE

First, the foremost fault of the relativity of human knowledge is that of self-inclusion or self-subversion, which holds this theory by the throat, strangling it. If all human knowledge is relative and no absolute knowledge exists, this theory itself would also be relative. Therefore, it cannot be regarded as an absolute item of knowledge. If there are no such things as truth and untruth, speaking about the truth of this theory and the untruth of opposing theories is illogical. If evaluation of differing views is impossible, there is also no way to evaluate or prefer the theory of the relativity of knowledge to incompatible theories. If due to the relativity of knowledge all knowledge is in doubt and not certain, perforce the theory of the relativity of knowledge is also dubious. If we are to keep away from firmness, resoluteness, and inflexibility, then we must necessarily avoid speaking resolutely about relativity of knowledge. Therefore, we should altogether re-

frain from any kind of opinion. This is in contradiction with the theory of liberalism, which opines with absolute decisiveness about its “principles”.

Interestingly, in their philosophical theorizing and speculation on rights, relativists, who regard all principles about ‘truth’, ‘morality’, and ‘rights’ to be doubtful, disallow doubt or even enquiries about their philosophical and human rights fundamentals. They speak of worldwide standards of human rights, global charters, and discovery of liberal human rights. In these global standards, these discovered rights are discussed as absolute, unconditional assertions. This is a great enigma that must be solved by the ‘Party of Sceptics and Relativists’ in the ‘Parliament of Knowledge’!

Second, the truth is that tolerance cannot be achieved using the ladder of relativity. Quite the opposite, advocates of aggression can legitimize their aggressiveness using this theory since it can be asked: If all knowledge is relative, then by what logic can we consider aggression to be a general, absolute evil? If there is no clear, arbitrable truth beyond individual taste or understanding and if everyone has the right to their own personal interpretations and preferences without there being any absolute criterion for judgement, we must give aggressive and despotic persons the right to utilize their own interpretation. Thus, relativism justifies violence and tyranny. If one considers all criteria to be unwarranted and non-inclusive and regards no view to be provable, and if one does not even consider the most basic rules of knowledge and morality to be acceptable believing in no self-evident, constant, and necessary essence, then what ‘truth’ is it that aggression might crush under its feet? What benefit does this fluid truth have for humanity that anyone can claim or debunk and no one can claim or debunk at the same time? What is this natural right and human privacy spoken of that is in danger from aggression?

Third, by diminishing truths and moral values in the minds of people, self-serving human instincts enter the scene like unleashed wild beasts. To explain, with the denial of all truths and moral values, human instincts are left unbound. As a result, without any philosophical or moral enquiries, in order to satisfy these instincts people resort to aggression and by doing that, sow the seeds of thousands of other belligerent acts by other people. The reality of the Western liberalist world is a testament to this truth. Why are the relativistic liberal societies of today among the most violent and unsafe human societies in the modern world, displaying sustained aggression both against themselves and against others? Has the relativist paradigm not institutionalised aggression in the contemporary world?

Indeed, a regime that considers itself only responsible for the welfare of citizens and does not recognize morality, the order of truth and falsehood, and the system of spiritual happiness and adversity as criteria of communal life can have no other fate.

Radical emphasis upon relativity of all humane and moral principles and all social structures changes the map of morality and truth into something mercurial. This is negation of morality, which can have no end but aggression (see: *Kitāb Naqd*, issue 14-15, pp. 24-30).

CRITIQUE OF PLURALISM

First, the claim of pluralism lacks any grounds and it contradicts rational requisites and axioms as well. In many cases, there are contradictions between the claims and beliefs of religions. To judge any one of these religions to be true would necessitate a contradiction, which is at odds with axiomatic reason. For instance, how can one postulate that the Islamic *tawḥīd* (i.e. monotheism), the Christian Trinity, and the Zoroastrian duality are all true? Likewise, how can one say that the beliefs of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims that, respectively, Moses (‘a), Jesus (‘a), and Muḥammad (ﷺ) are prophets of, are all true? Alternatively, how can the Christian belief that Jesus (‘a) is the son of God and the emphasis of Muslims that he is not the son of God both be true? Or, how can the account of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus (‘a) believed by Christians and its rejection by Muslims both be true? How can the Protestant belief that deems salvation to lie in faith in Jesus and his sacrifice and the Catholic belief that considers, in addition to faith, carrying out special rituals such as baptism to be necessary for salvation both be true?

Second, an important criticism of this theory is self-inclusion. In explanation, if all views and theories are dependent upon the characteristic and spiritual mould of individuals, then this view is included in this principle as well; that is, these views and theories are subject to the mental, spiritual, and personality frameworks of each respective person and cannot represent actual truth. Thus, in this respect there is no difference between this theory and opposing ones.

Third, this theory necessitates acceptance of relativity of knowledge or scepticism. This same criticism has also been levelled at Kant’s theory.

The criticism directed against pluralism is more severe than that made against the theory of Kant because he posited that *a priori* forms are the same for all intellects saying that all humans perceive world objects using the same forms. On the other hand, pluralists believe that there are as

many mental forms as the number of persons in existence and that each person perceives phenomena and truths corresponding with their individual mental forms. Therefore, not only is there difference between our perceptions and reality but also between the perceptions of different individuals. On this account, there are as many differing perceptions of the external reality as there are human beings. This means not increased relativity or scepticism but absolute ignorance (*Subhānī*, 2002:30).

CRITIQUE OF HUMANISM

First, the idea of humanism in Western liberalism, denying the primacy of God as found in religions, finds its origins in the pride, selfishness, and alienation of modern man that resulted upon his achieving considerable “knowledge” and advanced technology, discovering the “causes” of natural phenomena, and the prevalence of belief in the primacy of matter. Of course, what were deemed to be the irrational teachings in the Bible about man and the hostility of the Church to scientists in the Middle Ages on account of their scientific innovations on the pretext of heresy, are also factors that have contributed to this viewpoint.

These factors gradually brought about the mindset in Western people that there is no longer any need for the presence of God either in the natural world or in human life. The humans of today feel that they have reached mature self-sufficiency and are no longer like the children of yesterday who had to hope for an invisible hand to reach out and do something. Modern humans believe they have achieved the key to solving all problems and can resolve all their difficulties by themselves. No longer is it necessary to worry about performing tasks set by God or heeding His rights upon us. Instead we must worry about our own rights—human rights. No longer must we define humans as responsible creatures but as rightful creatures. Rather than fretting over fulfilling God-given duties, we must concern ourselves with asserting our inalienable human rights.

Therefore, as noted, humanism in the West derives its basis from the pride, neglect, and rebelliousness of humans as well as inimical religious ideology and the misbehaviour of religious authorities while no positive basis that is founded in reason or logic may be found for this belief.

Second, even though liberalism speaks considerably of the primacy of man, it unfortunately does not present a clear description of humanity. What manner of human sits in sovereignty and is served by all things? For which human are the sun, moon, clouds, and wind in action to serve?

What are the criteria of humanity? What parameters elevate humans over mere animals?

How can humans deprived of belief, faith, and morality be the greatest of all creatures and masters of the universe?! Are humans merely instinctive creatures? Does our humanity derive from our form or our character? Are humans the noblest of all creatures and liege of the cosmos because they can control everything using technology and armaments? Does the humanity of humans, as some Western thinkers have said, come from their power and force?

Third, with this portrayal of humanity and attachment of primacy to the instincts and carnal desires of humans, we not only have not obstructed the path to bellicosity but have opened the doors to the predominance of militancy and added fuel to the fire. If we consider humans to be instinctive creatures; grant primacy to their carnal instincts; eliminate thought, belief, and morality under the pretence of human superiority over faith and ethics; and allow unchecked satisfaction of instincts without any ideological or moral limits, we have certainly laid the foundation for caprice, carnal excess and utilization of aggression to achieve such aims. Aggression is the spawn of unbridled instincts.

Fourth, though Islam has a God-centred view about the world of existence, this view does not run counter to the primacy of humans over all other creatures. In this view, humans are the vicegerents of God, are blessed with His spirit, have been bowed to by the angels, bear the divine charge, and enjoy nobility and virtue. In this view, not only does God not see humans as rivals but also introduces them as His surrogates and asks some of the noblest of His creations, i.e. angels, to confess their smallness before them and their appointment as His vicegerents. God spurned Satan due to his insolence regarding this command, even though he had a laudable history before God and in the Heavens, and condemned him to eternal damnation. In the Islamic view, not only is God not worried about human acquisition of knowledge and wisdom, He has also taught humans the Names (or concepts according to some interpretations) and presents this comprehension as the criterion for human vicegerency in an encounter with the angels.

In this view, God has created everything in service to humankind. In return, humans can attain nearness to God and thus exert their will to appropriate and subdue all worldly phenomena.

CRITIQUE OF SECULARISM

Secularism is based upon specific epistemological, ontological, and anthropological fundamentals that are essentially different from religious epistemology, ontology, and anthropology. The definitions presented by secularism about humankind, the world, human life, human rights, as well as their benefits, detriments, expediencies, corruptions, happiness, and wretchedness are very different from those presented by religion. Therefore, we can never welcome secularism with a religion-centred ideology. Religious ideologies are insistent upon having an active presence in all areas of human life. They do not deprive humans of their presence in the most esoteric of spiritual and intellectual areas nor do they consent to their absence from the most basic and mundane matters of life. However, secularism in fact means obscuring religion from all scenes of life whether personal, social, theoretical, or practical.

Secularism signifies rejection of the interference of invisible, holy, or supernatural entities in human life. This means that God, religion, and invisible phenomena do not exist or, if they do, they do not have the right to influence or interfere in any aspects—whether theoretical or practical—of human life.

In truth, just as religion attempts to organize human life in all areas of thought, morality, and society, secularism also seeks to manage human life but in a manner that the presence of God, religion, and holy issues not be felt in any area and that humans get used to handling their affairs in the absence of these matters. Hence, if humans desire science, philosophy, art, literature, education, technology, marriage, family, work, production, distribution, consumption, social organizations, government, etc. they must seek them all out in the pavilion of secularism and in the absence of God and religion.

We could say that secularism is itself an ideology—the ideology of refusing the interference of sanctities, divinity, and the supernatural in all areas of human life. Therefore, a secular society or government is ideological just like a religious society or government. Actually, even though it seems that secularism desires to eliminate any kind of ideology from the government and society, it is underhandedly working towards establishing itself as the comprehensive, universal ideology for human life. Despite the fact that secularism advises everyone to tolerance and flexibility, it has never practiced them itself.

Even though secularism invites the world to pluralism, it does not recognize any other ideology than itself. It can even be said about liberalist

societies that whenever there is any mismatch between secularism and other liberalistic principles such as freedom, democracy, tolerance or pluralism, secularism always wins out and the rest must fall back to the extent necessary in favour of secularism.

CONCLUSION

The outcome of this paper is that tolerance means going easy, magnanimity, and moderateness. Tolerance is desirable in encounters with people, in invitation to the religion, in peaceful coexistence with followers of other religions, and in government and administration. God also advocates tolerance in His divine laws as well as in reward and punishment to the extent that is expedient.

On the other hand, tolerance in effectuation of the divine mission; communication of the heavenly message; announcing the truth; struggling against falsehood, distortion, and innovation in religion; defending the rights of the people; establishing justice; battling oppression, oppressors, and religious sedition; executing divine punishment; and shunning the dominance of unbelievers over Muslims are all inappropriate and unacceptable.

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The Phenomenon of Emotion in the Normative Conduct and Precedents of the Noble Prophet (ﷺ)

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Abstract:

Emotion comprises a significant part of the human psyche, and the course of nurturing one’s sentiments and feelings with the intention of implanting and strengthening faith in God encompasses all perfections, the most important of which are truth, justice, love, affection, and devotion. When emotion and thought become rooted in such an atmosphere the path of perfection can be treaded upon. The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) is the pre-eminent epitome of these ideals and his normative conduct and precedents aim at establishing and presenting an exact embodiment of these lofty notions. In this exposition, after delineating the foregoing notions, various instances of the Noble Prophet’s comportment—both private and public, as well as in different conditions—have been examined.

Keywords: Prophet Muḥammad, *sīrah*, *sunnah*, emotion, love, mercy.

In so far as emotion comprises a significant part of the human psyche, and in so far as Islam is a religion grounded in reality, it behoves us to pay more attention to this topic. Imām ‘Alī (‘a), while describing the pre-existing harmony between the constituent elements of the human personality—namely, intellect, thought, emotion, the senses, and willed action—has said, “The intellects are the masters of thoughts, and thoughts are the masters of the hearts, and hearts are the masters of the senses, and the senses are the masters of the limbs.” (Majlisī, vol. 1, p. 98). Through each one of these five levels, Islam makes every effort to nurture man:

1. It nurtures the element of instinctive intellection in man and propels him towards reflection, meditation, contemplation, ratiocination, and the like.
2. It lays emphasis on logical methods of reasoning and eschews every method that is against sound discussion or damages the results thereof.

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3. It fosters the emotional element [in man] and satiates it with pure and original love for the Noblest Beloved, namely God Almighty, who encompasses all absolute perfection; it also takes sentiment to the apex of height and magnificence.
4. It endows its divine code of law (the *shari'ah*) to be in line with man's innate disposition which regulates his modes of conduct and draws up a plan for his felicity and well-being.
5. It nourishes a strong will and awareness in man which, more than any [other] kindled sentimental motive, gives man the surety that an orientation towards emotion is correct. At the same time, it protects his freedom in shaping his conduct, and it is from this very freedom that responsibility is born. We are not of those who portray 'will' as 'kindled sentiments', for by doing so we will get entrapped [and enmeshed] in 'determinism'—a doctrine which both our conscience and the Islamic faith rejects. Emotions and feelings too play an effective role in [shaping] man's will and comportment, and that is why Islam lays emphasis on them through a variety of ways and methods, such as:

- a) Direct instructional mandates which warn us against unbridled desires and rebelliousness. The Glorious Qur'an says:

أَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ أَفَأَنْتَ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِ وَكِيلًا

Have you seen him who has taken his desire to be his god? Is
it your duty to watch over him? (25:43)

- b) Indirect [instructional] allusions, including the use of allegories and stories which praise people like the prophets ('*a*) who had gained mastery over their carnal desires and wills and had taken control over their own lives.
- c) The presentation of the practical examples from the conduct of the Noble Prophet (*s*) and other key figures from the magnanimous Ahl al-Bayt (his household) and his noble companions who were nurtured within his school [of thought].
- d) The call to Muslims to heighten and magnify [their] love for God, the Noble Prophet (*s*), the impeccable Ahl al-Bayt ('*a*), and the sincere companions of the Prophet (*s*) to the greatest extent possible; it is only in this case that emotions and sentiments can be well-regulated within an illuminated order that is compatible with reason and engenders good actions.

On the one hand, this course of nurturing emotions and sentiments with the intention of implanting and strengthening faith in God encompasses all perfections and is also man's strongest connection with Him. On the other hand, such a course fosters his conceptions of existence and life with a focus on basing these two conceptions on certain principles, the most important of which are truth, justice, love, affection and devotion. The Noble Prophet's mode of conduct and normative traditions are also discussed with the aim of firmly establishing these principles and lofty notions and presenting a higher objective epitome of them. To expound on this further, we will make reference to each one of these principles:

I. ḤAQQ (RIGHT, OR TRUTH, OR REALITY) IS THE SECRET OF BEING

In his *Mufradāt*, Rāghib Iṣḥāḥānī says that *ḥaqq* means conformity and agreement, like the conformity between the hinge of a door and its constant rotation (Rāghib Iṣḥāḥānī, p. 125). Iṣḥāḥānī then goes on to relate a number of meanings for *ḥaqq* which is summarized below:

The first meaning refers to the existence of a thing which is necessitated by wisdom. It is for this reason that God is called *al-Ḥaqq* (i.e. the Truth, or the Real):

ثُمَّ رُدُّوْا۟ اِلَى اللّٰهِ مَوْلٰهُمُ الْحَقِّۙ

Then they are returned to Allah, their real master ... (6:62)

The second meaning connotes the one who brings [a thing] into being as necessitated by wisdom. It is for this reason that the actions of God the Almighty is all true:

وَ اِنَّهُۥٓ لَلْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّكَۙ

... Indeed it is the truth from your Lord ... (2:149)

The third meaning connotes belief in a thing [that is] in agreement with what one has [been convinced of] in their [inner] self, like our saying that our belief in the Resurrection and divine reward (and retribution) is true:

فَهَدٰى اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا۟ لِمَا اٰخْتَلَفُوْا فِيْهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّۙ

... Then Allah guided those who had faith to the truth of what they differed in ... (2:213).

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The fourth meaning connotes transpired action or speech that is in accord with what is necessary, to the degree that it is necessary, and at the time in which it is necessary, like our saying that someone's deeds are true (i.e., they will transpire).

حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ مِنِّي لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ

... My word became due: 'Surely I will fill hell ...' (32:13)

It can be concluded from the foregoing applications that *haqq*, in short, means 'fact and reality'. What is meant by 'fact' is that very same being [that is] delimited in objective reality or the world independent of mental conception. And what is meant by 'reality' is a thing that is in agreement with the requirements of external actuality.

The greatest correspondence of *haqq* is in the Divine Essence—it is so manifest and clear to the human innate disposition (*fitrah*) that belief in it is an absolutely self-evident conviction. For instance, the lights of God the Almighty have embraced the whole of being to such an extent that it is only Him that is seen in all things and is thus manifested as the Undoubted Truth and the Indisputable Reality.

Creation and divine codes of law, which have been referred to as *haqq* in the noble Qur'an, have derived this attribute of *haqq* from the following two aspects:

From the aspect that they are (tangible) realities though perhaps concealed from man's senses ...

From the aspect that they have appeared within the framework of God's universal plan for the world of existence wherein each of their parts is necessary for the perpetuation of existential motion along with the fact that they have a role to play in realizing the very goal of Creation; all things, whether engendered creatures or legislated laws, fall within this domain. God the Almighty says:

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ نَزَّلَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ

That is so because Allah has sent down the Book with the truth

... (2:176)

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ

EMOTION IN THE SUNNAH OF THE PROPHET (ﷺ)

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

وَالْوَزْنَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقِّ

The weighing [of deeds] on that Day is a truth ... (7:8)

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ

It is He who has sent His Apostle with the guidance and the religion of truth ... (9:33)

قُلِ اللَّهُ يَهْدِي لِلْحَقِّ

Say, 'Allah guides to the truth ...' (10:35)

وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

... and enjoin one another to [follow] the truth, and enjoin one another to patience. (103:3).

2. JUSTICE IS CURRENT THROUGHOUT EXISTENCE

Despite the fact that theological discussions and disputations which took place among Islamic schools of thought would sometimes arrive at definitive conclusions wherein at times proponents of justice would emerge as victors in the debates and at other times their opponents (albeit by instilling doubts), what is indisputable from the viewpoint of a Muslim is that justice, in whichever sense it is construed, begins with divine justice. Moreover, the term is understood with the very same meaning which the Glorious Qur'an has explained and which has both an essential and practical manifestation in each and every atom of being.

The point is that the concept of 'universal justice' is a powerful spiritual force and factor in the beliefs of Muslims. It plays a role in the question of whether there is justice in the world. In contrast, injustice and oppression, viewed independently, are considered as causes of annihilation and degeneration.

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This is a brief account of the Muslims' general viewpoint with regard to this issue and we will suffice it to that. Let us end this section with a few verses on this topic:

وَأْمُرْتُ لِأَعْدِلَ بَيْنَكُمُ

... I have been commanded to do justice among you ... (42:15)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ

Indeed Allah enjoins justice and kindness ... (16:90).

وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ

The word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and justice.
Nothing can change His words ... (6:115)

وَمَا ظَلَمْنَاهُمْ وَلَكِنْ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ

We did not wrong them, but they wronged themselves. (11:101)

قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ

... from among my descendants?' He said, 'My pledge does not extend to the unjust.' (2:124)

فَتَلَكُ بُيُوتُهُمْ خَاوِيَةً بِمَا ظَلَمُوا

So there lay their houses, fallen in ruin, because of their wrongdoing. (27:52)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ

Indeed Allah does not wrong [anyone] [even to the extent of] an atom's weight ... (4:40)

وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا وَلَا يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا

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... They will find present whatever they had done, and your Lord does not wrong anyone. (18:49)

وَنَضَعُ الْمَوَازِينَ الْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ فَلَا تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْئًا

We shall set up the scales of justice on the Day of Resurrection, and no soul will be wronged in the least ... (21:47)

لَا ظُلْمَ الْيَوْمَ

... There will be no injustice today ... (40:17)

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا
بِالْقِسْطِ

Allah bears witness that there is no god except Him—and [so do] the angels and those who possess knowledge—maintainer of justice ... (3:18)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ

O you who have faith! Be maintainers of justice and witnesses for the sake of Allah ... (4:135)

3. LOVE IS THE BASIS OF THE BOND THAT TIES THE VARIOUS PARTS OF BEING TOGETHER

A Muslim, under the aegis of the Glorious Qur'an, believes that the world of being is founded on kindness and affection and [that] relations between the Creator and His Creation are based on [mutual] love and devotion. The essence of the relations between created beings having a common goal and instilled with divine values is also based on love and devotion. The relationship that the believers of the world have with the various parts of the world of existence which are not endowed with human reason is based on reciprocal and affectionate love as well.

The reasons and grounds for this love are, under the auspices of Islamic beliefs and Qur'anic teachings, completely clear and manifest. If we look at

the amiable and loving relations that exist between man and his Creator, we will see a most noble loving relationship whose levels differ depending on the individual in question: it begins from the expediential, albeit overflowing love, of the common man, to the pure and conscious love—which itself is expressive of the pinnacle of this lofty meaning—of the saints and sincere servants of God.

Islam is endowed with the characteristic of ‘starting everything with the basics’. This applies to the amiable and loving relationship between man and God, which it initially bases on expediency and then raises it [to a higher level] by making it part and parcel of man’s being. Thereafter, it brings it out as an inner motive in controlling man’s conduct and as his guidance to the benefit of humanity. But the love and affection which is from God the Almighty, no matter how simple in the hearts of the believers, evokes the very same human resonations and conceptions of love among living creatures. In reality, however, it shows the mode of expressing God’s love and bestowal and the ever-increasing volume of His kindness and generosity.

That initial conception or understanding at first glance exists even in the most devout believers of God. This conception is, in its turn, ideal and desirable, because in one sense love denotes ecstasy, ardour, eagerness, and a burning desire, and Qur’anic verses have always emphasized different ways of evoking emotions and kindling feelings for God the Almighty. One example is the very conception that God the Glorified spreads the shade of His love on His devoted servants. Every human being can, by recourse to their readily disposed conscience in such circumstances, attain certitude with respect to this matter.

Islamic sources verify the existence of a loving relationship among informed believers—which include the righteous, the penitent, the immaculate, the abstemious, the forbearing, those who put their trust in God, and those who fight in the way of God:

يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِّمَّا
أُوتُوا وَيُؤْتِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ

... who love those who migrate toward them, and do not find in their breasts any need for that which is given to them, but prefer [the Immigrants] to themselves, though poverty be their own lot ... (59:9)

Qur'ānic verses and [Prophetic] traditions have also established [the existence of] an amiable and loving relationship between man and nature. It considers man's emotion from the perspective that nature is at his service and [it] is for his convenience and that God's gracious hand has blessed the earth and its produce.

It has been reported that the Noble Prophet (ﷺ), when returning from the battle of Tabūk and on reaching the threshold of Madinah, said: This is Ṭāba and this is also Mount Uḥud which love us and which we also love. (*Safīnah al-baḥār*, p. 668; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 2, p. 1011 and *Sunun Bayhaqī*, vol. 6, p. 72). The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) has also said: Love and affection for one's motherland is a part of (or emanates from) faith. (*Mīzān al-ḥikmah*, vol. 10, p. 522).

One of the most magnificent rings of this love which the Glorious Qur'ān has considered to be equivalent to the reward for the Prophetic Mission of Islam and for the Prophet's services to this community (*ummah*) is the following: the ring which connects the whole Islamic community with the *Ahl al-Bayt* ('a), a family which comprises the most competent people to lead the Islamic community and a household which is, in fact, considered as the ship of deliverance and the coast of safety:

قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ

... Say, 'I do not ask you any reward for it except love of [my] relatives.' ... (42:23)

As for the smallest ring of love, namely the love and friendship between husband and wife, the Qur'ān says:

وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً

... and He ordained affection and mercy between you ... (30:21)

Islamic sources (Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic traditions) have sometimes spoken about the rupture [that occurs] in the relationship between God and people who are outside [the embrace] of His commands—trespassers, unbelievers, oppressors, egoists, traitors, sinners, mischief-makers, the arrogant, and pleasure-seekers. These sources have also spoken about the break-up of relations between people who follow God and those who follow Satan:

لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ
اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ

You will not find a people believing in Allah and the Last Day en-
dearing those who oppose Allah and His Apostle ... (58:22)

The conclusion that is drawn from the foregoing discourse is that Muslims believe that they live in world of reciprocal love and friendship. This belief has significant influence in producing hope in man's heart—constructive hope which gives him zeal in the pursuit of felicity and well-being.

4. MERCY AND KINDNESS ARE THE ORIGIN OF THE WHOLE OF BE- ING

This section explains the most splendid part, as well as the secret and key, of Islamic belief. It has been narrated in some traditions that the whole Qur'an has been summed up in the Opening Chapter (*Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*) and that the Opening Chapter has been summed up in *Bismillahi al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* ("In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful"). These traditions indicate that the Opening Chapter has been considered the heart and soul of the Glorious Qur'an because it contains a summary of the basic principles and tenets of Islamic belief—i.e., it acts as the ideological framework of all that the Glorious Qur'an has uttered.

Now if we move to the second level, we will see that on its own *Bismillahi al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* also constitutes the heart and foundation of Islam because it stresses the point that in the first stage everything in the world of being has emanated from the Name of God the Almighty and in the last stage everything has issued from the framework wherefrom this origin has sprung from. The origin of all things is *Bismillah* and its concomitant is infinite mercy.

We perceive that this reality corresponds with the various parts of the Glorious Qur'an which are expressive of one of the manifestations of perfection in the Essence of God. The Qur'an establishes firm belief among Muslims that man has his origins in the fountainhead of mercy, has been settled in a world of mercy, and moves in the discomfiture of the protection of this mercy, which in many instances possibly overlooks and forgives deviations in his conduct.

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When we examine the effects of supplication, particularly in the supplications transmitted from the Imams (‘a), we come across many pedagogical tools of an ideological nature which put emphasis on this aspect [of the role of mercy]. In the Glorious Qur’ān as well, we come across many noble verses which harmonize God’s attribute of glory with that of His mercy and graciousness. These include the following examples:

إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

Indeed He is the All-mighty, the All-merciful. (44:42)

وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّحِيمِينَ

... You are the best of the merciful. (23:109 & 118)

كَتَبَ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ

... He has made mercy incumbent upon Himself ... (6:12)

وَرَبُّكَ الْغَنِيُّ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ

Your Lord is the All-sufficient dispenser of mercy ... (6:133)

فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ

... There has already come to you a manifest proof from your Lord and a guidance and mercy ... (6:157)

إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

... Indeed Allah’s mercy is close to the virtuous. (7:57)

فَأَنْظِرْ إِلَىٰ آثَرِ رَحْمَتِ اللَّهِ كَيْفَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا

So observe the effects of Allah’s mercy: how He revives the earth after its death ... (30:50)

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قُلْ يَاعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ
اللَّهِ

Say [that Allah declares,] ‘O My servants who have committed excesses against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah ... (39:53)

الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَىٰ

The All-beneficent, settled on the Throne. (20:5)

Even on the most difficult and most frightening of occasions, the quality and attribute of mercy is mentioned:

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَّبِعُونَ الدَّاعِيَ لَا عِوَجَ لَهُ وَخَشَعَتِ الْأَصْوَاتُ
لِلرَّحْمَنِ فَلَا تَسْمَعُ إِلَّا هَمْسًا

On that day they will follow a summoner in whom there will be no deviousness. The voices will be muted before the All-beneficent, and you will hear nothing but a murmur. (20:108)

Therefore, besides the two elements of right and justice—which more than anything else denote balance and parity—Muslims also believe in two other elements, namely love and mercy, which denote ever-increasing goodness and more than deserved generosity.

Till now, we have become acquainted with the fundamental laws governing the world of being, namely truth, justice, love, and mercy. [What is important to note is that] Islam has placed its noble messenger to be the model par excellence of these fundamental realities and his conduct and precedents have deeply infused these essentials into the hearts of Muslims.

THE NOBLE PROPHET (ﷺ) IS THE GREATEST EMBODIMENT OF THESE NOTIONS

If we take a look at the normative conduct and precedents of the Noble Prophet (ﷺ), we will see them as the clear manifestation of these realities—i.e., truth, justice, love, and mercy—and we will see him (ﷺ) as the rightful completer of noble ethical traits as well as a mercy bestowed to mankind.

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We will examine this point in the following sections, particularly through various traditions, but first we wish to quote sayings from the *Nahj al-balāgha* wherein Imam ‘Alī (‘a) has ascribed the most magnificent attributes to the Apostle of God and has described him (ﷺ) as his own mentor, teacher, prophet, and beloved one. Imam ‘Alī (‘a) says,

God the Glorified raised Muḥammad (ﷺ) to the prophetic mission in order to actualize His promise and culminate His delegation of prophets (‘a). He had gotten pledges from the former prophets (‘a) regarding him (ﷺ). His characteristics which had been explicitly stated in the [Divine] Books of former prophets and of which they had given glad tidings were well known.’ (*Nahj al-balāgha*, p. 44).

He fulfilled Your command to the fullest possible extent and strived more than any man to please You. He guided the people without resting for one moment, and he was never lax in this regard. He did not conceal Your message from anyone, a message he [himself] accepted wholeheartedly. He persevered in executing Your orders until people’s inner beings became illuminated under the auspices of Your creed. He taught all people the secret of Creation and existence and lit the dark facets of life with his effulgence. Those who had gotten submerged in the morass of sedition and insurrection became peaceful and tranquil, and people who were plunged in ignorance were set free. (Ibid., p. 101).

His course of action is resistance and fortitude and his method is guidance and beneficence. His speech is victorious and audible, and his command is fluent and just. (Ibid., p. 139).

The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) persisted a lot in giving advice and instruction and continued on this course of action and called on all people to [see] reason, wisdom, and goodly exhortation. (Ibid., p. 140).

...until God appointed Muḥammad (ﷺ) to the Prophetic Mission and gave him the certification of all people and ordered him to give the good tidings of divine reward to doers of good and to warn the malevolent of divine retribution. In his infancy, he was the best of created beings and in his old age, he was the most beloved of all. His temperament was purer than that of any impeccable man, and his acts of generosity were carried out secretly and far beyond the expectations of the requesters. (Ibid., p. 151).

...his mission in life is performing the good, and his anticipation is death with salvation. He considers the world a place of suffering and

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describes the resurrection as a court of justice and a place of giving account of one's actions; he calls heaven his reward and the recompense of other immaculate people ... O God! Make this magnanimous messenger the source of blessings, happiness, and tranquility for Your creatures. (Ibid., pp. 153, 154).

A wise doctor who prepared his ointments, lancet, and other tools to the best possible extent and placed them in blind hearts, deaf ears, and dumb tongues. (Ibid., p. 156).

And Muḥammad is that same chosen, immaculate servant and messenger of His. His virtue and magnanimity are far beyond measure and his prophethood cannot be compensated with anything. In his presence, this boundary and borderline was transformed into light after being infected with misguidance and darkness; he banished ignorance, cruelty and disorder from it... (Ibid., p. 210).

He (ﷺ) used to sit on the ground and eat like a slave. He would sit on the ground on his two knees and tie his shoes with his own hands. He used to sew the patches on his clothes. He used to ride on an unsaddled donkey and would carry an extra man with him. (Ibid., p. 229).

... he [is] the Seal of the Prophets (ʿa) and the one entrusted with divine revelation. He is the giver of the glad tidings of God's mercy to the pious and the warner of the divine retribution in that world to the impious. (Ibid., p. 247).

More beautiful and perfect descriptions [of the Prophet] cannot be found than these, and there is no particular one amongst them that can be preferred over another. We will now quote some traditions on this topic with brief explanatory remarks after each series. They have been classified under the following titles as general examples in the life of the Noble Prophet (ﷺ):

One: General Customary Mercy and Kindness to One and All

It has been reported that the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) said, 'When God created the world, He wrote in the Book that is with Him on the Throne: My mercy and kindness precede My wrath.' (Ibn Ḥanbal, vol. 2, p. 260; Muslim, vol. 4, p. 2107, ḥadith no. 14; Majlisi, vol. 11, p. 182).

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This notion is also commonly found in the supplications of the Imāms (‘a) from the Ahl al-Bayt.

It has also been reported that the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) said, ‘On the day that God created the heavens and the earth, he also created a hundred mercies, each of which is in a layer between the sky and the earth. From among these mercies, He placed a [particular kind of] mercy for the earth from which a mother shows mercy to her child and wild animals and birds show mercy to each other, and when the day of resurrection comes He will complete it with this mercy.’ (Muslim, *ibid.*, p. 2109, ḥadīth no. 21; *Mustadrak al-Ḥākim*, vols. 1, p. 56, 4. p. 247).

This is [God’s] custom pertaining to existential matters; the legislative (*shar‘ī*) implication, however, must also be in line with and equivalent to this existential fact.

According to Ibn Mas‘ūd, ‘Thus we see the Prophet of God narrating the story of Prophethood when his people [physically] hit him and whilst cleaning the blood from his face, he was saying, “Forgive my people for they do not know what they are doing”.’ (Ibn Ḥanbal, *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 441, Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1917, ḥadīth no. 1792).

This same mercy and kindness is extended even to aggressive unbelievers.

Jābir ibn Samarah has narrated, ‘I performed my first ritual prayer with the Noble Prophet (ﷺ). After the prayers he went to see his family, and I followed him. Two of his children came to welcome him. He caressed their cheeks and then caressed mine as well, and I smelled something like a perfume in his hands.’ (Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1814, ḥadīth no. 80).

The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) says, ‘You see the believers being merciful and kind to each. The reason is because they are one body; when one of the bodily limbs has pain, the other members cannot be calm.’ (Muslim, *ibid.*, p. 1999, ḥadīth no. 66; Majlisī, vol. 74, p. 274).

The strongest affectionate relations, therefore, are established among believers.

The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) has also said, ‘When one is leading people in ritual prayers, he should not prolong them because there are among them weak, sick or old people. But if one is praying alone, they can prolong the prayers for as long as they want.’ (Muslim, vol. 1, p. 341, ḥadīth no. 185; *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*, vol. 3, p. 283, ḥadīth no. 1139).

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Mālik ibn al-Ḥawīrth has narrated, ‘We, a number of youths of the same age, went to see the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) and stayed twenty nights with him. The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) thought we were missing our families, so he asked us about our families and each one of us told him [about our family]. The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) was full of affection and love, and said, “Go back to your families and teach them Islamic instructions. You should perform the ritual prayers in the same way that you saw me performing them. When the time for prayer comes, one of you should stand up and recite the call to prayer and the eldest of you should take charge of leadership of the prayers”.’ (Muslim, *ibid.*, p. 465, ḥadīth no. 466; *Ṭal al-sharā’i*, p. 326, ḥadīth no. 2).

Some Muslims brought some captives of war to the Noble Prophet (ﷺ). Among the captives was a woman with breasts full of milk and whenever a child among the captives cried she would carry them and nurse them. The Noble Prophet asked, ‘Do you think this woman has cast her own child in the fire?’ The Prophet’s Companions answered, ‘No, and she is able to not do it.’ The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) said, ‘God is more kind to his creatures than this woman is to her child.’ (Muslim, vol. 4, p. 2109, ḥadīth no. 22; *al-Mu’jam al-ṣaghīr*, vol. 1, p. 98).

After the battle of Uḥud the angels descended on the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) with the message that if he so wished they could curse his enemies. The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) said, ‘No, [I do not wish to curse them]. I only desire that God should raise from among their progeny people who will worship none other than God the Almighty and who will not associate anyone (or anything) with Him.’ (*Sharḥ al-sunnah al-Baghawī*, vol. 13, p. 214-333).

The Prophet of God said, ‘While a dog was dying of unbearable thirst, one of the Children of Israel felt pity for it and gave it water, and thus earned God’s forgiveness.’ (Bukhārī, vol. 3, p. 1279, ḥadīth no. 52; Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1761, ḥadīth no. 155).

Osāma ibn Zayd has narrated, ‘The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) used to take me in his hands and make me sit on his legs, and he would take Ḥasan and Ḥussein and put them on his other leg. He would then bring both legs close together and say, “O my Lord! Be kind to them since I too am showing them kindness.”’ (Bukhārī, vol. 5, p. 2236; Shaykh Ṣadūq, p. 34, ḥadīth no. 153).

The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) performed the funeral rites and prayers over the body of a deceased individual and [then] said, “O God! Forgive

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him and be kind to him.’ (Muslim, vol. 2, p. 662, ḥadīth no. 85; *Fiqh al-Riḍā*, p. 19; *ʿAwālī al-Li’ālī*, vol. 2).

The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) says, ‘I, Muḥammad, Aḥmad, ... am the gatherer and the prophet of repentance and mercy.’ (Muslim, vol. 4, 1828, ḥadīth 126; *ʿIlal al-Sharāʿi*, vol. 1, p. 128, ḥadīth no. 2; Majlisī, vol. 103, p. 104).

The Prophet of God (ﷺ) has likewise said, ‘May God have mercy on one who is just in business transactions and judgement.’ (Bukhārī, vol. 2, p. 730, ḥadīth no. 1970).

The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) also used to say, ‘God does not forgive a person who does not forgive other people.’ (Bayhaqī, vol. 9, p. 41, Ray Shahrī, vol. 4, p. 1416).

Some people said to the Noble Prophet (ﷺ), ‘O Prophet of God! Curse the polytheists.’ He answered, ‘I have not been raised to prophethood to be a curser [of people]. On the contrary, I am a mercy for all inhabitants of the earth.’ (Muslim, vol. 4, p. 2006, ḥadīth no. 87; Ray Shahrī, vol. 9, p. 3684, ḥadīth no. 18234).

Islamic mercy and kindness, therefore, embraces all creation and even the whole order of existence, and this is the point that can be inferred from the expression *Bismillahi al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* (In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful) in the Glorious Qur’ān and from the tradition which says that everything begins in the Name of God Who has been described as the All-beneficent, the All-merciful. This mercy and kindness encompasses aggressive unbelievers; it embraces all Islamic social relations between the believers; it also applies to children and even animals; in general, it envelops all things. In reality, a knowledgeable Muslim is an individual who is merciful and kind vis-à-vis all people and all things.

Two: Benevolence and Altruism are Manifestations of Mercy

A look at the normative precedents and conduct of the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) clearly shows that benevolence and altruism are as universal as mercy and kindness. Attention to the following set of traditions clarifies this matter further:

Acting humanely to every man and being good to any living animal earns divine reward. (Ibn Ḥanbal, vol. 2, p. 735; Bayhaqī, vol. 4, p. 186 and vol. 8, p. 14; Ṣadr, p. 160).

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By citing this same tradition, Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (‘a), considered it permissible to give food to the Kharijites—the fiercest enemies of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a).

Every good deed is [an act of] charity. (Muslim, vol. 2, p. 697, ḥadīth no. 52; *Mustadrak al-wasā’il*, vol. 12, p. 343, ḥadīth no. 20).

Do not undervalue any good deed, even if [it means] meeting your brother with a happy face. (Muslim, vol. 4, p. 2026, ḥadīth no. 144; *Thawāb al-a‘māl*, vol. 2, p. 1240, ḥadīth no. 7).

Muslims are brothers to each other; no Muslim oppresses or abandons a fellow Muslim, and God obviates the needs of anyone who tries to obviate needs of their brother. On the Day of Resurrection, God will solve the problems of whoever solves the problems of a fellow Muslim, and on that Day, He will clothe whoever clothes a Muslim. (Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1996, vol. 58).

A believer is a mirror of another believer, and a believer is a brother of another believer; he takes care of his brother and defends him in his absence. (Abū Dāwūd, vol. 4, p. 280, ḥadīth no. 4918; Ahwāzī, p. 41).

Whenever the Ash‘arites become widowed or whenever the food for their families diminishes, they share whatever they have equally among themselves; they are from me and I am from them. (Muslim, vol. 4, p. 1944, ch. 39).

Food for two people is sufficient for three people and food for three people is sufficient for four people. (Bukhārī, vol. 5, p. 2061, ḥadīth no. 5077; *Du‘ā’im al-Islām*, vol. 2, p. 16).

There are forty virtues, the best of which is donating a goat to be used for the provision of milk. God will take into paradise whoever harbours hope of attaining the reward for one of those virtues. (Bukhārī, vol. 2, p. 927, ḥadīth no. 2488; Ṣadūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, vol. 2, p. 1543, ḥadīth no. 1).

Those who attend to the needs of widows and the poor are like those who fight in the way of God. (Bukhārī, vol. 5, p. 3048, ḥadīth no. 5037; Muslim, vol. 1).

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Your slaves are your brothers. (Bukhārī, vol. 1, p. 20, ḥadīth no. 30; Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1382, ḥadīth no. 28; *Tanbīh al-khawāṭir*, vol. 1, p. 57).

Whoever wishes that God solve their problems on the Day of Resurrection should solve other people's problems [in this world]. (Muslim, vol. 3, p. 1196, ḥadīth no. 32; *Thawāb al-a'māl*, vol. 1, p. 179, ḥadīth no. 1).

Thus, a Muslim who follows the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) is transformed into a beneficent man who acts humanely towards other human beings and does good—no matter how small it may look—to any living animal. Such a Muslim also shares in the joys and sorrows of his brother and considers him to be his own mirror, and, like the Ash'arites, he shares his bread with other people and helps widows and the poor.

Three: Some Attributes of the Noble Prophet (ﷺ)—Veneration, Generosity, Good Speech, Tolerance, and Trust

All these are indications of the Noble Prophet's emotion, love, and affection, and the following traditions bespeak this:

It has been reported from Jābir ibn 'Abdullah ('a) that at 'Arafa the Noble Prophet said in a sermon, "Your blood and wealth is as inviolable (*ḥarām*) as the inviolability of this day, this month and this place." (Muslim, vol. 2, p. 889, ḥadīth no. 147, *Du'ā'im al-islām*, vol. 2, p. 413, ḥadīth no. 410; *Mustadrak al-wasā'il*, vol. 18, p. 206).

Fear God with respect to your women whom you have taken under the protection of God and who have become permissible to you by the Name of God. (*Du'ā'im al-islām*, vol. 2, p. 214, ḥadīth no. 789).

Advise [men] to be good to women. (Bukhārī, vol. 3, p. 1212, ḥadīth no. 3154).

Whoever kills an ally will never smell the scent of paradise; he will smell it from a distance of forty years. (Bukhārī, *ibid.*, p. 1155, ḥadīth no. 2995; Majlisī, vol. 16, p. 217).

The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) used to advise the Muslim soldiers thus: "Fight, but do not commit treason and excesses, and do not mutilate the slain, and do not kill children." (*Naṣb al-rāyah*, vol. 3, p. 380; *Du'ā'im al-islām*, vol. 1, p. 369).

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Greet people audibly, speak goodly words, maintain family ties, and pray at night when people are sleeping. You will enter paradise if you do this. (Ibn Ḥanbal, vol. 2, p. 493; Rāzī, vol. 2, p. 17; *Mustadrak al-wasā'il*, vol. 8, p. 364).

Soft words are [acts of] charity. (Ibn Ḥanbal, *ibid.*, p. 213; *Kāfi*, vol. 2, p. 103, ḥadīth no. 4).

We smile to a people whom we curse in [our] hearts. (Bayhaqī, vol. 8, p. 197).

Tolerance towards people is [an act of] charity. (Ibn Ḥabān, vol. 2, p. 216; Ray Shahrī, vol. 27, p. 1154, ḥadīth no. 5496).

It can be seen that the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) used to advise people to respect every individual. He would preach civility, peace, and security among Muslims, and used to advise men to be good to women. Likewise he used to preach that one ought not to betray their ally and that human etiquettes must be observed during war. He would say that good attributes—such as mutual peace, good speech, observance of familial ties, prayer in the depth of the night, soft words, and tolerance with people against whom we have grudges in our hearts—have to become widespread in the Islamic community. These are attributes that we are in need of today more so than any other time.

Four: During Times of Difficulty, the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) used to Seek Assistance from Human Emotion

When we look at the Noble Prophet's conduct and comportment, we see that he was full of affection and love. He used to work alongside his companions in all ventures. He would be able to rouse their vigour and zeal so much so that they would forget the hardships of the way and get drawn towards self-sacrifice and altruism. In this regard, the third caliph, 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān, said:

I swear upon God that we were in the company of the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) both at home and on journeys; he used to visit our sick people, bury our dead, take part in war together with us, and would be content with whatever we had. (Ibn Ḥanbal, vol. 1, p. 70, Rāzī, sermon no. 100).

It has also been reported that Imām Ṣādiq (ʿa) said:

Poor and indigent people used to spend their nights in the Mosque. One night the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) broke his fast with them near the

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pulpit. He used their own particular plate to break their fast—thirty men partook of the food from that plate and then went home (with the remaining food) by which their wives were also fed and their hunger was satisfied. (Majlisī, vol. 16, p. 219).

The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions were together digging the trench of Khandaq and suffered many inconveniences, one of which was acute hunger. It has been reported that Imām Riḍā (‘a) quoted his forefathers as saying that Imām ‘Alī (‘a) said:

We were together with the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) when digging the trench of Khandaq. Then Faṭīma Zahrā (‘a) came with a piece of bread and gave it to the Noble Prophet (ﷺ). The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) asked her, “What is this piece of bread of for?” Faṭīma Zahrā (‘a) answered, “I baked a loaf of bread for Ḥasan and another one for Ḥusayn and brought this one for you.” The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) said, “O Faṭīma! This is the first food that will enter your father’s stomach in three consecutive days”. (Majlisī, vol. 16, p. 225; *Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa‘d*, vol. 2, p. 114).

The most impressive aspect of the Noble Prophet’s conduct was that on sensitive matters, he would interact in an affectionate and intellectual manner. He used to make people ecstatic and awaken the vigour and zeal in their hearts, encouraging them towards altruism and self-sacrifice. Imam ‘Alī (‘a) says:

With the Noble Prophet (ﷺ), we used to go to war and kill our fathers, brothers, and uncles [who were antagonistic towards Muslims and Islam] in the way of God. This would show our faith, obedience and fortitude, prove our endurance in the face of pain, and increase our efforts in the holy war against the unbelievers. Each one of us would bravely face his rival and courageously fight the unbeliever until he killed him; in these fights sometimes we would kill the rival and at times we would lose the fight. When God saw our firmness and rightness, He humiliated our enemy and made us victorious. (*Nahj al-Balāgha*, p. 92).

Hereunder we will mention two interesting examples of the Prophet’s conduct [during difficult occasions]:

1) Ḥamra’ al-Aswad

It has been narrated in history that the Quraysh, after killing and defeating the Muslim soldiers in the Battle of Uḥud, left the battlefield in jubilation on account of having achieved victory. When they reached an area called al-Rūḥā’, they realized (or rather, some of the evil-minded amongst

them suggested it to them) that they would not reap the full benefits of this victory unless they returned to Madinah and massacre all the Muslims in accordance with the orders of their commander, Abū Sufyān. This news was relayed to the Noble Prophet (ﷺ), whereupon he began to mobilize the Muslims and prepare them for war. He encouraged and incited them to fight, arousing the strongest ideological feelings in them. Then he accompanied them into the battlefield. The Muslim soldiers, despite the wounds and blows they had suffered [earlier], left for war like wounded lions and arrived at an area they used to call Ḥamrā' al-Aswad, ready for any kind of self-sacrifice for their beliefs. Abū Sufyān understood that it was not possible to defeat this excited and self-sacrificing group. When he asked Ma'bad al-Khazā'ī what was transpiring in the Prophet's camp, he answered, "I swear that I left Muḥammad and his Companions very eager [for war] and zealously awaiting to fight you." In *Sīrah Ibn Hishām*, it has been reported that Ma'bad al-Khazā'ī said:

Muḥammad and his companions are overfilled with valour and zeal to pursue and fight you. Those who had left and abandoned him on that day have regretted their deeds and are [now] as overfilled with enmity against you as I have never seen before. (Ibn Hishām, vol. 3, p. 108; Majlisī, vol. 20, p. 99).

In such a manner, he frightened Abū Sufyān so much that he sent a letter to the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) through his commander 'Abd alQays informing the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) that he had changed his mind [with respect to fighting the Muslims]. At this the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) said, "I swear upon the God who controls my life that I had prepared them so well that had they carried out their wishes, the enemies would have been badly defeated." Then twice he recited the Qur'ānic verse "Allah is sufficient for us, and He is an excellent trustee."

Through this, the Prophet (ﷺ) showed his adherence to the Qur'ānic teachings in *Sūrah al-An'ām* and also [other] tens of verses, each of which was given to Muslims after the defeat of Uḥud, and called upon them to fight and mobilize their forces. Among the noble verses include the following:

الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ
فَزَادَهُمْ إِيْمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ فَانْقَلَبُوا

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بِنِعْمَةِ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلِ لَّمْ يَمَسَّسَهُمْ سُوءٌ وَاتَّبَعُوا رِضْوَانَ اللَّهِ
وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَظِيمٍ

Those to whom the people said, ‘All the people have gathered against you; so fear them.’ That only increased them in faith, and they said, ‘Allah is sufficient for us, and He is an excellent trustee.’

So they returned with Allah’s blessing and grace, untouched by any evil. They pursued the pleasure of Allah, and Allah is dispenser of a great grace. (3:173-174).

These verses and lessons have nurtured Muslims to the extent that, under the auspices of God’s help and by dint of putting their trust in Him, they are able to change trying times into opportunities.

In books of history, the heroism of the Prophet’s companions have been narrated in the most splendid manner. Take the following historical narrative as an example: Zāmira ibn Sa‘id quotes his grandmother, who was giving water to Muslim soldiers during the Battle of Uḥud, as saying:

I heard the Prophet of God say, “The position of Nasība daughter of Ka‘b is higher than the position of so and so and Bahmān.” He was referring to a woman who was fighting bravely and fiercely. She had tied a piece of cloth around her stomach and finally suffered thirteen wounds. When this woman was on her death bed, I was one of the people bathing her, so I counted her wounds and found out that they were thirteen wounds in all. She would say, “I was looking at Ibn Qamī’ah while her shoulder was hit and this was the worst wound she had—a wound she would treat for one year. Then the Prophet’s caller called, “Forward to Ḥamrā’ al-Aswad!” This woman covered her wounds with her cloth but was not able accompany the Prophet’s companions because of the intensity of the bleeding. (*Wāqidi*, vol. 1, p. 270).

The Prophet’s valour and zeal was so great that he is reported to have said, “I swear upon Him who controls my life that if no one accompanies me I will go by myself.” (Ibid., vol. 2, p. 327).

One of the most splendid summits of this story is that the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) ordered his caller to announce, “The Prophet of God calls on you to search your enemies out and only those people who took part in the battle yesterday should accompany us.” In response, Sa‘d ibn Khazīr, who had suffered seven wounds and was intending to treat them, said, “We have

heard and we obey God and His Prophet!” Then he got his sword and did not wait for the treatment of his wounds.

When the Prophet’s call reached the ears of two wounded Muslims, one of them said to the other, “I swear upon God that we will be losers if we do not accompany the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) even in one war.” And thus, while carrying each other on their shoulders in turns, they accompanied the Noble Prophet (Ibid., p. 335).

2) After the War of Hawāzin

Here we will reflect on the Prophet’s manner of dealing with the state of weakness that arose among some Muslims following his distribution and apportionment of the booty and spoils of Banī Hawāzin. The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) gave a large portion of these spoils to the migrants from Mecca who had participated with him in this war at the beginning of their Islamic life and who had fought against the unbelievers despite the fact that they themselves were the leaders of the unbelievers; this generous bestowal was, in fact, socially and politically motivated as he was trying to win their hearts and show them the difference between the profit-seeking life of the Age of Ignorance and the dignified life of Islam. The hypocrites among the *Anṣār* (the Helpers, or the Muslims of Medinah) spread [malicious] rumours that the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) was favouring his relatives. These rumours produced a state of weakness among the *Anṣār* and produced a wave of questions and anger.

The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) found it hard to bear this condition in a society that he was just beginning to establish and which was to be the cornerstone of his great apostolic mission to the world. For this reason, he gathered them together and this conversation took place between them: The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) said, “O group of Anṣār! What are these words I have heard from you and what is this you have taken to heart? Were you not lost and God guided you? Were you not in need and God made you self-sufficient? Were you not enemies of one another and God inclined your hearts to one another?” The Anṣār replied, “Yes, O Prophet of God! Do whatever you want and give whomever you want.” The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Why don’t you answer me, O group of the Anṣār?” The Anṣār said, “What response should we give of Prophet of God? Whatever God and His Prophet do is right.” The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) said:

I swear upon God that if you had wanted you could say the following (and you would be speaking the truth and I would believe you): “all people called you a liar and yet we believed in you; all people deserted you but we made haste to help you; you were driven from your

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home and were homeless, but we provided you with refuge and gave you shelter; you were poor and we obviated your needs ...”

After these words, he (ﷺ) added:

O group of the Anṣār! Now you have set your eyes on a trifle of worldly things and some people have tied their Islam to it but I have brought you Islam. Will you be happy to earn sheep and camels but revert with the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) to the old covenant? I swear upon He who controls Muḥammad’s life that if there had not been the *Hijrah* (the migration from Makkah to Madinah), I too would have been one of the Anṣār and if other people followed another path I would have followed the path of the Anṣār. O God! Have mercy on the Anṣār and their children and their grandchildren and their great-grandchildren.

Here the Anṣār were greatly affected and their emotions were aroused and, while crying, announced that they were pleased with the Prophet’s manner of distribution and apportionment of the booty and spoils. (Ibn Hishām, p. 142).

This sensitive condition had the least conformity with their ideological backgrounds and also with their experience of the relatively long presence of the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) and their opinion of the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) as the most just and informed person.

In order to prevail over this condition, there are two types of solutions: the first is a long term solution, namely putting emphasis on belief and removing all flaws of weakness of the human soul; the other is concentrating on the issue [at hand]. The second solution mainly depends on emotional aspects, because the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) said to them, “O group of the Anṣār! Will you be happy to earn sheep and camels but revert with the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) to the old covenant?” Before these words he had praised them and their position regarding the prophethood and their ideological viewpoint and aroused their sentiments and feelings so much that they too were influenced and, while crying, announced that they were happy and pleased with the Prophet’s manner of distributing and apportioning the booty and spoils.

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Imam ‘Alī’s (‘A) Transactions with the Caliphs for Islamic Unity

Isma‘īl Dānish

Translated by Abuzar Ahmadi

Abstract:

Apart from the noble Qur’ān and the conduct of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), the example set by the immaculate leaders (‘a) provides yet another reason for the importance and necessity of working towards Islamic unity. This article focuses on the way in which Imam ‘Alī (‘a) interacted with the Caliphs after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ). Despite having his right usurped, Imam ‘Alī (‘a) willingly offered his assistance and support to the Caliphs in political, economic, military, judicial, and religious matters. His intention was the preservation of the unity and stability of the Islamic Ummah from the dangers of division, disintegration, and destruction. Instead of being a point of division, Imam ‘Alī (‘a) can become the pivot of unity for us today, at a time when the Muslim Ummah is weakened both from within and without.

Keywords: Imam ‘Alī, Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, Transaction, Caliphate, Islamic unity, consultation, Ummah.

The Unity of Muslims is a basic issue of paramount importance emphasized in the Word of God and the Tradition of the Prophet (ﷺ). The invigorating call for unity was announced by the Prophet (ﷺ) and his loyal followers at a time when the whispers of discord abounded—its roots tracing back to ancient traditions and feuds from the Age of Ignorance.

With the passing of the Prophet (ﷺ), the grounds were laid for the return of tribal and racial supremacy thus leading to the first schism between Muslims over the issue of succession. People became involved in this issue for different reasons. After the affair of Saqīfah and the appointment of the first caliph, in spite of their differences of opinion, many of the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) remained quiet in the interest of Islam and the unity of the Islamic Ummah, thereby preventing division therein.

In order to protect the unity of the Ummah, ‘Alī (‘a) advised his followers against undertaking any action that would lead to the weakening of Islam and disunity among the Muslim ranks. Additionally, he never failed to

intellectually aid the caliphs in any matter. Historical reports indicate that 'Ali's ('a) counsel with the caliphs in important affairs kept the caliphate from critical blunders, contributing especially towards protecting the rights of the people within the judicial system.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS TOPIC

Today, at a time when arrogant global hegemonies have aimed their attention at the Islamic world with all their might and have flauntingly dominated some Islamic countries, the unity of the Islamic Ummah is all the more necessary. The only way to shake off current difficulties is through the unification of Muslims.

The Qur'an and the *ḥadīth* of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) demonstrate that Islamic unity is essential.

تَفَرَّقُوا وَلَا جَمِيعًا لِلَّهِ يَحْتَبِلُ وَأَعْتَصِمُوا

Hold fast, all together, to Allah's cord, and do not be divided [into sects]. (3:103)

In the view of Imam Ṣādiq ('a), those who separate themselves from the Muslim society even as much as a hand's length have torn the thread of Islam from their necks.¹

Thus, unity is first and foremost a logical necessity, and second, it is an essential reality according to numerous Qur'ānic verses and *aḥādīth* of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

AIMS OF THIS PAPER

One of the aims of this discourse is to create unity among the followers of the Muslim Ummah and the various Islamic schools of thought. Through consideration of the customs and methods of Imam 'Ali ('a) in his conduct with the caliphs and the various instances of his aid and counsel to them, this paper asserts that attaining this holy goal is not only possible, but also quite simple as well.

¹ Kulaynī, Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb (n.d.), *Uṣūl Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 405.

TERMINOLOGY

Explanation of the concepts and terms used in social or academic discourse is an important component of any serious treatise. Therefore, it is first necessary to define some terms.

I. Unity [*waḥdah*] and Union [*ittihād*]

Philological meaning: The word unity [*waḥdah*] means to become one; the state of being one; similarity of a group in a doctrine and/or goal; and similarity of a nation in desires and aims so as to be considered a singular group.²

The word union [*ittihād*] means to become one,³ unanimity, sincerity, sameness of aims, and consonance of opinions.⁴

Terminological meaning: Terminologically, unity and union designate a situation where several things become one while their individual characteristics are simultaneously preserved.⁵

Therefore, unity of the Islamic Ummah indicates solidarity and cooperation of all Muslims together with preservation of doctrinal identity against common opponents. The Infallible Imams (‘a), who were the rulers explicitly appointed by God over the Ummah of Muslims, interacted and cooperated with the governors of their times with the aim of preserving this notion of unity.

II. Transaction [*ta‘āmul*]

Ta‘āmul signifies the mutual transactions of people with one another.⁶ Thus, *ta‘āmul* is two-sided, i.e. there have to be at least two parties for *ta‘āmul* to occur. Of course, transactions are not limited to the domain of buying and selling materials but also encompass the intellectual and scientific realms as well.

A DEFENDER OF THE INTERESTS OF ISLAM

In the time of the Prophet (ṣ), the newly established Islamic society was threatened continuously by the Roman and Persian empires as well as by dissemblers (*munāfiqīn*) within. The threat of an impending invasion by the

² Moein, Mohammad (1981), *Farhang-e Moein*, vol. 4, p. 4989.

³ Tarayhi, Fakh al-Dīn (n.d.), *Majma‘ al-Baḥrayn*, vol. 4, p. 476.

⁴ Moein, Mohammad (1981), *Farhang-e Moein*, vol. 1, p. 14.

⁵ Band ‘Alī, Sa‘id (2001), *Vahdat-e javāme dar nahj al-Balāghah bargerefteh az asār-e Ayatollah Javādi Āmoli* [*The Unity of Societies in the Nahj al-Balaghah Gleaned from the Works of Ayatollah Javādi Āmoli*], p. 14.

⁶ Jarr, Khalil (1988), *Farhang-e Lārus* [*Larousse Dictionary*], Sayyid Hamid Tabibian [tr.], vol. 1, p. 595.

Roman emperor was continually on the Prophet's (ﷺ) mind and he was concerned about this issue to the very end of his mission.

The first military encounter of the Muslims with the Roman army occurred in the eighth year of the Hijra in the region of Palestine and this led to the defeat of the army of Islam. It was possible that at any moment the heart of the Islamic territory could be attacked. In the ninth year of the Hijra, the Prophet of Islam advanced an army to the outskirts of Damascus and was eventually able to win back his lost standing.⁷ This victory did not satisfy the Prophet (ﷺ) and, a few days before the onset of his fatal sickness, he again sent the army of Islam, this time commanded by Usāma, to the frontier of Damascus.⁸

The second threat was the Persian Empire. Enraged after receiving a letter from the Prophet (ﷺ), the Khosrow of Persia tore it up and disrespectfully cast out the Muslim envoy. The Persian king subsequently wrote a letter to the governor of Yemen to seize the Prophet, dead or alive.⁹ However, Khosrow Parvīz did not live much longer and died in the Prophet's (ﷺ) lifetime.

The third threat was from the hypocrites and dissemblers who, working as secret agents, incessantly infiltrated parties of Muslims to such an extent that they even attempted to assassinate the Prophet (ﷺ) on the road of Tabūk towards Madinah.

The potential damage caused by hypocrites can be so great that the Qur'ān speaks of them in many different chapters including Baqarah, Āl 'Imrān, Nisā', Mā'idah, Anfāl, Tawbah, 'Ankabūt, Aḥzāb, Muḥammad (ﷺ), Fath, Mujādalah, Ḥadīd, Munāfiqūn, and Ḥashr.¹⁰

After the heart-rending death of the Prophet (ﷺ), the Islamic Ummah was faced with a fierce dispute over the issue of succession. The Shia believed that the Prophet (ﷺ) had appointed 'Alī ('a) as his successor on many occasions, particularly at Ghadīr Khum. However, the Sunnī held that he had not chosen any particular person as his successor.

In any event, after much discussion in Saqīfah, a caliph was chosen for the whole Ummah from among a number of Muslims present, even though a large number of the companions and followers of the Prophet (ﷺ) were

⁷ Ibn Hishām, 'Abd al-Malik (1989), *al-Sirah an-nabawīyyah*, vol. 4, pp. 11-28; also Ṭabarī, Muḥammad (n.d.), *Tārīkh Ṭabarī [The History of Ṭabarī]*, vol. 3, pp. 36-42.

⁸ Ibn Hishām, 'Abd al-Malik (1989), *al-Sirah al-nabawīyyah*, p. 288; Ibn Athīr, 'Alī (1989), *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh*, vol. 2, p. 5; and Ṭabarī, Muḥammad (n.d.), *Tārīkh Ṭabarī [The History of Ṭabarī]*, vol. 3, p. 183.

⁹ Ibn Sa'd, Muḥammad (n.d.), *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, vol. 1, p. 260; also Majlisī, Muḥammad Bāqir (1983), *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 20, p. 389.

¹⁰ Subḥānī, Ja'far (1991), *Mabānī Ḥukūmat Islāmī [Fundamentals of Islamic Government]*, Dāvūd Ilhāmī [tr.], p. 130 (footnotes).

absent.¹¹ After this event, conflict ignited among Muslims and, in addition to these conditions, Islam was consistently threatened by internal and external enemies.

Imam ‘Alī (‘a) who regarded himself as having the sole right to rule, did not press his rightful claim and remained silent on the issue in these troubled times. If he had taken up arms to enforce his right, the following consequences would have ensued:

1. In such an uprising, Imam ‘Alī (‘a) would have lost many of his followers who believed heart and soul in the fact that he was the Imam. Though martyrdom and sacrifice on the path of God are desirable in Islam, the legitimate rights of the rightful could not be returned with the deaths of these persons.
2. In addition to losing these dear personages, an uprising of Banī Hāshim and the rest of the Imam’s followers would cause the deaths of many other Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) who opposed the caliphate of the Imam. Thus, the powerbase of the Muslims would weaken considerably. Though this group had taken a stance against the Imam on the issue of leadership, they were not contrary to the Imam in other matters and were a strong source of power against opposing forces.
3. Further weakness of the Muslims might have caused distant tribes that had not completely assimilated Islam into their hearts to join the ranks of the apostates and those in opposition to Islam. The considerable power of the antagonists of Islam and an absence of central leadership could have led the monotheistic flame to be extinguished forever.¹²

The Commander of the Faithful had understood well the threat of the enemies and these bitter truths, and so he preferred silence over armed rebellion.

PRESERVATION OF UNITY

The unity of the Islamic Ummah was of core value to ‘Alī (‘a). This is why he sought leadership and why he endured so many hardships and adversities.

¹¹ Some of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) who did not swear fealty include Abū dhar, Salmān, Miqdād, ‘Ammār, Abū Ayyūb Anṣārī, ‘Abbās (the Prophet’s (ﷺ) paternal uncle), Farwah ibn ‘Amr, Abī ibn Ka‘b, Barā’ ibn ‘Āzib, Abū al-Haytham ibn al-Tayhān, Khālid ibn Sa‘id, Buraydah Aslamī, Khaziah ibn Thābit. (Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, Aḥmad (1989), *Aqd al-farīd*, vol. 4, p. 247).

¹² Ja‘far Subḥānī, *Furūgh-e Vilāyat (The Refulgence of Leadership)*, p. 166.

While 'Alī ('a) was readying the holy Prophet's (s) body for burial, a gathering was convened in Saqīfah to choose a caliph. When Abū Sufyān, who possessed a strong political awareness, heard of the people's allegiance to Abū Bakr, he realized that conditions were favourable for disunity among Muslims. In addition to the danger of apostasy, the dispute between the Emigrants or Muhājirīn [those who had emigrated from Makkah] and the Helpers or Anṣār [those who aided the Prophet in Madinah] in the capital of the Islamic territory was evident. The stances of the *Muhājirīn* and Anṣār in the Saqīfah affair, which led to the slogan of "Let there be from us an representative and from you an representative" [*minnā amīr wa minkum amīr*] was an obvious manifestation of the dispute between these groups.

Even though the Prophet (s) made unceasing endeavours to create fellowship and devotion between the Muhājirīn and Anṣār,¹³ the fanaticism and racism of some gave rise to mutual threats of war between the two parties after the passing of the Prophet (s).

As Abū Sufyān had clearly perceived the rudiments of the dispute, he declared, "I see a storm which cannot end without bloodshed."¹⁴ In order to reach his evil goal, he went to Imam 'Alī ('a) and proposed, "Give me your hand so I swear allegiance with you and clasp your hand as the caliph of the Muslims since if I swear allegiance to you no child of 'Abd Manāf will oppose you and if the children of 'Abd Manāf swear allegiance to you, no one from the Quraysh will refrain from giving you their allegiance and eventually all Arabs will accept you as their ruler."¹⁵

At that moment, the Commander of the Faithful made his historic statement about Abū Sufyān:

مازلت عدواً للإسلام و أهله

Your enmity with Islam and Muslims remains.¹⁶

Abū Sufyān then recited a poem to provoke Imam 'Alī ('a) and his followers, purporting that they should not remain quiet regarding their clear rights.

¹³ See for example *Sūrah Anfāl* (8:63).

¹⁴ Ibn Abī al-Hadīd Mada'inī, *Sharḥ nahj al-balāghah* (Commentary on the *Nahj al-Balāghah*), vol. 2, p. 45; Aḥmad ibn 'Abd Rabbih Undulūsī, *al-'Aqd al-farīd*, vol. 4, p. 245; and Muḥammad ibn Jurayr ibn Yazīd, *Tārikh Ṭabarī* (The History of Ṭabarī), vol. 3, p. 209.

¹⁵ Ibn Shahr Āshūb, *al-Darajāt al-rafi'ah*, p. 77.

¹⁶ Yūsuf ibn 'Abd al-Bir Qurtābi Māliki, *Al-Istī'āb fī Ma'rifa al-Aṣḥāb*, vol. 2, p. 690.

AL-TAQRIB

بني هاشم لاتطمعوا الناس فيكم
ولا سيّما تيم ابن مرّة او عدي
فما الامر الا فيكم و اليكم
و ليس لها الا ابو حسن علي

O Children of Hāshim! Let not the people covet what belongs to you, particularly the tribes of Tīm and ‘Uday. The rule is yours alone and in your direction; no one save the father of Ḥasan, ‘Alī, is worthy of it.¹⁷

‘Alī was well aware of the evil intentions of Abū Sufyān: to cause insurrection, to shrivel the young shoot of Islam, and to restore the Age of Ignorance. Thus, ‘Alī refused his proposition saying:

You have no aim except sedition and disturbance. You have been malevolent towards Islam for a long time. I have no need of your advice or your troops.¹⁸

In addition, as cited in the *Nahj al-Balāghah*, the Imam responded to this action of Abū Sufyān by informing the people of the adverse consequences of dispute:

Split the waves of sedition with the Arks of Salvation. Steer clear of difference and division and dispense with expressions of vaunting ... If I say something, they say that he covets rule and if I stay silent, they say that he fears death. By God, the desire of the son of Abū Ṭalīb for death is greater than the desire of an infant for a mother’s breast. If I am silent, it is due to the special knowledge and awareness in which I am immersed. If you were also aware like me, you would become agitated and tremulous like a well rope.¹⁹

The awareness the Imam spoke of was insight into the horrible consequences of dispute and division among Muslims.

The Imam knew perfectly well that an uprising to claim rights could only conclude at the cost of Islam and with return of the people to their previous ignorant beliefs. Therefore, in order to protect Islam and the unity of the Islamic Ummah, he preferred to remain silent.

¹⁷ Ibn Shahr Āshūb, *ibid*, p. 87.

¹⁸ Muḥammad Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh Ṭabarī*, vol. 3, p. 209; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ nahj al-balāghah*, vol. 2, p. 45; and ‘Alī ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, p. 7.

¹⁹ *Nahj al-balāghah*, sermon 5.

IMAM 'ALI'S TRANSACTIONS WITH THE CALIPHS

In a letter to the people of Egypt, the Imam denoted the reason for his silence:

By God, I never thought that the Arabs would take the caliphate away from the Family of the Prophet (ﷺ) or that they would withhold it from me. Nothing astonished me save the people's favour for another whose hand they clasped in fealty. Therefore, I kept back seeing that some people had abandoned Islam and desired to wipe out the religion of Muḥammad (ﷺ). I feared that if I did not rush to the aid of Islam and Muslims, I would see breach and ruin in the body of Islam that would be a greater calamity and cause deeper grief than the loss of a few days rule, which would evanesce rapidly like a mirage or cloud. I then rose in opposition to these events and aided Muslims until the evil was eliminated and serenity returned to the bosom of Islam [and the Islamic society].²⁰

Clearly, in this letter the Imam highlights that when he perceived danger to Islam and the Islamic Ummah, he withdrew, disregarding his abused right and hastening to the succour of Islam and Muslims.

Another reason for withdrawing from demanding his right to the caliphate that is evident in the Imam's ('a) orations was to safeguard the unity of the Islamic Ummah in order to prevent religious harm and apostasy. He has declared:

Quraysh took our right after [the passing of] the Prophet (ﷺ) reserving it for themselves. After some contemplation, I decided that forbearance [on the abuse of my rights] is better than causing division among Muslims and shedding their blood. The people are new Muslims. The slightest laxness could destroy the religion and the most inconsequential person could devastate it.²¹

During the opening days of his rule, in relating the conditions after the passing of the Prophet (ﷺ) with regard to his right being abused, 'Alī ('a) stated:

After the Prophet (ﷺ), our right was usurped and we were positioned among the mass of traders and marketers. Our eyes shed tears and distress was caused. By God! If there was no fear of sedition among Muslims, return of unbelief, and ruination of the religion, we would act differently with them and we would wage war against them.²²

²⁰ Ibid., letter 62.

²¹ Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 308.

²² Ibid., p. 307; also Muḥammad ibn Na'mān Mufīd, *Muṣnifāt*, vol. 13, p. 155.

AL-TAQRIB

Not only did he prevent the people from dispute after the passing of the Prophet (ﷺ) but he also gave allegiance in the Assembly of Six even though he had perceived ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s fealty to ‘Uthmān as a ruse. In this way, he averted altercation among the people. He addressed the members of the assembly as follows:

Even though leadership is my right and your usurpation of it is oppression towards me, as long as the affairs of Muslims are in order and the oppression is only towards me, I will not mount opposition.²³

Before entering into the assembly, ‘Abbās, the Prophet’s (ﷺ) uncle, asked ‘Alī not to take part because he was positive that ‘Uthmān would be chosen. The Imam confirmed the outcome of the assembly but turned down his uncle’s suggestion. He said:

اني اكره الخلاف

I hate disagreement.²⁴

The day ‘Alī opted to do nothing about the issue of rule, noble Fāṭimah (‘a) asked him to rise up against the oppressors. At that moment, the call of the muezzin rose with the cry:

اشهد ان محمد رسول الله

I bear witness that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah

The Imam faced his noble wife and said, “Would you like this call to be extinguished upon the earth?” Fāṭimah (‘a) replied, “Never”. The Imam then said, “Therefore, the way is the one I have set upon”.²⁵

During the battle of Ṣiffīn, a man from the tribe of Banī Asad asked the Imam, “How did the Quraysh preclude you from the caliphate?” The Imam became upset at the inappropriateness of the man’s question since some of Imam ‘Alī’s soldiers believed in the previous caliphs and propounding such matters at that time could have caused division among their ranks. Thus, after expressing his vexation, the Imam stated:

In respect for the relation you have with the Prophet (ﷺ) and since every Muslim has the right to ask questions, I will succinctly answer you. Leadership of the Ummah belonged to us and our bond with

²³ *Nahj al-balāghah*, sermon 74; also Muḥammad ibn Jurayr ibn Yazīd, *Tārīkh Ṭabarī*, vol. 4, p. 228.

²⁴ Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 191; also Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Rabbih Undulūsī, *al-‘Aqd al-farīd*, vol. 4, p. 260.

²⁵ Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *ibid.*, vol. 11, p. 113.

IMAM 'ALĪ'S TRANSACTIONS WITH THE CALIPHS

the Prophet (ﷺ) was stronger than that of others but some were envious and others shut their eyes to the truth. The arbitrator between them and us is God and the return of everyone is to Him.²⁶

Hence, Imam 'Alī ('a) remained quiet to safeguard Islam and Islamic unity as he was well aware of the dangers that threatened the newly established Islamic society and religion. Of course, the Imam's silence meant desisting from armed contention. He never renounced his right and continuously verbalized his criticism of the issue throughout the rule of the caliphs as well as after.²⁷ Sometimes he would also show his dissatisfaction through his actions²⁸ but he never refused their requests for help.

'ALĪ'S COOPERATION WITH THE CALIPHS

After the passing of the Prophet (ﷺ), many problems assailed the recently established religion. Neglect of these issues could have posed a threat to the foundation of Islam and the Ummah.

During this sensitive period in history, 'Alī ('a) mainly exerted himself in carrying out of his divine mandate as well as his social responsibilities through counsel and scholarly collaboration in order to preserve the religion and maintain the stability within society. With the survival of Muslims and the new religion at stake, he could not be indifferent to the major difficulties that had befallen Islam and the Ummah, especially on the pretext that his rights had been usurped.

'ALĪ'S ('A) TRANSACTIONS WITH THE FIRST CALIPH

A. Political Counsel

Some opportunists sought to return to the religion of their ancestors after the passing of the Prophet (ﷺ). Their Islam was in a precarious state even when they had first accepted the religion. In order to subdue them, the first caliph was in dire need of the elite among the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), including 'Alī ('a) and the clan of Banī Hāshim. If 'Alī were to support the caliph in this area, many related problems could swiftly be resolved because notwithstanding his substantial credibility and reputation in the so-

²⁶ *Nahj al-Balāghah*, sermon 157.

²⁷ In sermon 3 of the *Nahj al-balāghah*, the Imam criticized the first caliph four times. Also, in parts 6 to 8 of the same sermon, the second caliph was criticized and in parts 10 to 11 the third caliph was criticized.

²⁸ By cleansing and burying the body of his wife at night, 'Alī ('a) proclaimed his own disapproval and that of the daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ). Muḥammad ibn Jurayr ibn Yazīd, *Tārīkh Ṭabarī*, vol. 3, p. 208; and Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, vol. 3, p. 142.

ciety, he was the chief of the great and well-respected clan of Banī Hāshim and many people supported and followed him.

Many of the advocates of Imam ‘Alī were elite companions that were highly respected and enjoyed an elevated status in society. ‘Ammār Yāsir, Miqdād, Abū Dhar Ghifārī, and Salmān number among these intimate Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ). In the event that ‘Alī were to support the caliph, naturally a great number of these personages accompanied by their clans would be a substantial source of power for the caliph.

Needless to say, after the cautious appearance of Imam ‘Alī (‘a) on the scene, the supporters and Shia of ‘Alī followed him into action to the extent that they considered it obligatory in order to defend Islam. Thus, they played an important role in the eradication of apostasy. In *Tārīkh al-Riddah*, Ḥudhayfah ibn Yamān and ‘Uday ibn Ḥātam Ṭā’ī (companions of ‘Alī) were named among those who endeavoured to prevent the apostasy of their clans.²⁹

Other companions of ‘Alī (‘a), including ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ūd, Ṭalḥah, and Zubayr, were among those who the first caliph stationed at the gates of Madinah to defend against attacks from apostate tribes. When Madinah was assaulted at night, they defended it with utmost bravery.³⁰

More important than all this was the Imam’s sound advice to the caliph at Dhū al-Qiṣṣah where he was stationed for battle. The Imam dissuaded the caliph from his resolution to fight himself by telling him that if he entered the fray personally, exiting the region, order would never return to the Islamic territories. Abū Bakr accepted the counsel of the Imam and sent Khālīd ibn Walīd to battle the apostates in his stead.³¹

B. Military Counsel

Over a year of Abū Bakr’s rule was spent in battle with apostates, false prophets³², and obstructers of zakāt³³ (religious tax). After the disturbances caused by the apostates were resolved, Abū Bakr was not able to attain any significant conquests (such as the ones after his reign). His military move-

²⁹ Kalā’ī al-Balansī and Hadhabah, *Tārīkh al-Raddah*, p. 17.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 5.

³¹ Ibn Kathīr al-Qarashī al-Dimishqī, *al-Bidāyah wa al-nihāyah fī al-tārīkh*, vol. 6, p. 315.

³² These included people such as Musaylamah Kadhdhāb, Ṭalḥah ibn Khuwaylid, and Sajāh bint Sulamī who had gathered to themselves various tribes namely Asad, Banī Salim, and Ghaṭafān. See: Aḥmad ibn Abī Ya‘qūb, *Tārīkh Ya‘qūbī*, Ibrāhīm Ayaṭī [trans.], vol. 2, p. 4.

³³ These include tribes such as Kandah, Ḥādrāmūt, and Banī Yarbū‘. Their chiefs included Mālik ibn Nuwayrah, Qays ibn ‘Aṣīm, and Ḥārithah ibn Surāqah. Kalā’ī al-Balansī and Hadhabah, *Tārīkh al-Raddah*, pp. 3 and 10.

ments went only as far as beginning the campaign against the Romans in Damascus and Syria.

Certainly, the caliph was fully acquainted with the necessary battle skills and experience as well as the selflessness and bravery of 'Alī ('a). He knew that the decisive role of 'Alī ('a) in battles against unbelievers had made him an uncontested military hero, something that could not be overlooked. However, his absence in wars and conquests and his withdrawal could cause great questions such as, "Why is 'Alī ('a) indifferent to unbelievers such as the Romans?" Beyond question, it was clear for everyone that fear of death³⁴ or indolence regarding jihad were not factors in the matter. Thus, what could cause such a war hero to withdraw in this manner? This question might have been considered by the society of the time.

For this reason, the caliph and his supporters endeavoured to make 'Alī participate in the wars and conquests so that such questions would not be raised. Also, the entrance of 'Alī ('a) into the war arena would bring substantial legitimacy to the matter in the minds of many, especially the Banī Hāshim.

'Alī ('a) did not want to sanction the policies of the caliph by directly participating in battles and conquests. However, in the interest of the future of the Islamic society, he preferred to adopt the role of a counsellor.

Dissemination of Islam in other countries is the desire of every Muslim. Therefore, though 'Alī ('a) did not personally take part in these battles, he sufficed himself with providing assistance in this regard in the form of counsel and deliberation.

As stated by Qazwīnī, the Imam remained in Madinah, engaging in matters of the Shari'ah as well as criticizing and solving the problems of the society in order to preserve the Islamic faith.³⁵

According to historical chronicles, after the passing of the Prophet (ﷺ) and in the wake of the political crises in Madinah, Abū Bakr was hesitant about carrying out the command of the Prophet (ﷺ) to wage war against the Romans. He took counsel with several of the companions each of whom gave opinions that did not satisfy him. He finally consulted with 'Alī ('a) who encouraged him to carry out the Prophet's (ﷺ) command, adding that if he battled the Romans he would be victorious. The caliph was pleased with

³⁴ 'Alī ('a) has declared: "By God! If all the Arabs face me in battle I shall not turn my back on them." (*Nahj al-balāghah 'Abdūh*, letter 45, p. 81.)

³⁵ Qazwīnī Rāzī, *Ba'd matālib al-nawāṣib*, Sayyid Jalāl ad-Dīn Muḥaddith [trans.], p. 310.

the encouragement of the Imam.³⁶ He subsequently addressed the people thus:

O Muslims! This [man], ‘Alī, is heir to the knowledge of the Prophet (ﷺ). Whoever doubts his veracity is a hypocrite. His words have incited and encouraged me to war against Rome and have made me extremely glad.³⁷

In this fierce battle, after valiant struggles and sacrifice, the army of Islam attained a great victory. In this battle, a number of the companions of ‘Alī were also present.

C. Intellectual Collaboration: Debate with Jewish Scholars

After the Prophet (ﷺ) passed away and Abū Bakr became caliph, various Jewish and Christian scholars came to the Islamic capital to weaken the morale of Muslims and ask scholarly questions from the caliph.

As an example, several rabbis entered Madinah to see the caliph. They said to him:

In the Torah, we read that the successors to the Prophets are the most learned of their nation. Now that you are the caliph of your prophet, tell us: Where is God; is He in the heavens or on the earth?

Abū Bakr presented an answer that did not satisfy the rabbis. He maintained that God was located in the throne of the heavens [*‘arsh*]. This triggered criticism from the rabbis who argued that in this case the world would be empty of God. In this critical moment, ‘Alī (‘a) came to the aid of Islam, protecting the honour of Islamic society. He declared:

God has created space. He is beyond that which space may encompass. He is everywhere though He never touches or draws nigh on any creature. He absolutely encompasses everything and nothing is beyond the realm of His authority.³⁸

In this wise reply, the Commander of the Faithful presented, in the clearest of manners, the non-encompassing nature of God within space. This answer amazed the rabbis to such an extent that they involuntarily confessed the verity of his words and his worthiness for being the caliph.

It has been cited that a Jew entered Madinah seeking the leader of Muslims. The people brought him to Abū Bakr. He addressed the caliph saying,

³⁶ Ibn ‘Asākir ibn ‘Alī ibn Ḥasan al-Shāfi‘ī, *Tārīkh Madīnah Dimishq (The History of the City of Damascus)*, p. 444; also Azdī Baṣrī, *Futūḥ ash-Shām (The Conquests of Damascus)*, William N. Lees [ed.], p. 3.

³⁷ Ibn A‘tham Kūfī, *Al-Futūḥ (Conquests)*, vol. 1, p. 97.

³⁸ Muḥammad Muḥid, *Al-Irshād (Guidance)*, Al-Bāb al-thānī (section two), chap. 58, p. 108.

"I have several questions, the answers of which only a prophet or his successor know." He then asked the following three questions: 1) What is it that God does not possess? 2) What is it that does not exist in the Court of God? 3) What is it that God does not know?

Abū Bakr who had no answer said, "These questions are only propounded by the enemies and deniers of God". Then he decided to torture the man. Ibn 'Abbās who was present in the meeting protested, "You are not being fair with this man. Either answer him or take him to 'Alī ('a)".

Abū Bakr and others present in the meeting went to 'Alī ('a). The caliph said to the Imam ('a), "This Jew propounds blasphemous questions". Subsequently, the Imam answered the man's questions thus:

That which God does not know is the statement of you Jews who say that Ezra [*'uzayr*] is the son of God. God has no child and knows no such son as his own. That which does not exist in the Divine Court is oppression to His servants, and that which God does not have is a partner.

At that moment, the Jew declared the *Shahādatayn*³⁹ and identified the Imam ('a) as the successor to the Prophet (ﷺ). Moreover, Abū Bakr and the Muslims named 'Alī ('a) '*Mufarrij al-Karb*' (Banisher of Grief).⁴⁰

D. Judicial Cooperation

In the period of the first caliph's rule, Imam 'Alī ('a) also took part in judicial affairs and aided Islam in these matters. The following is an example:

It has been cited that in the time of Abū Bakr's caliphate, a man was brought to him on the charge of drinking alcohol. The man confessed to his sin saying, "I live in a place where they consider drinking alcohol and eating dead meat to be permissible. If I had known it was forbidden, I would not have persisted". The caliph asked 'Umar ibn Khaṭṭāb about how to rule in the matter. 'Umar said, "It is a problem that no one save Abū al-Ḥasan (the father of Ḥasan) can solve". Thus, the three of them left for the house of Imam 'Alī ('a).

The Imam said, "Take someone with him to show him to the Muhājirīn and Anṣār to see whether or not anyone recited the Qur'ānic verse banning

³⁹ The *shahādatayn* (literally: the two testimonies) are the testimonies a person makes to become Muslim: *Asbhadu an lā ilāha ill Allāh wa asbhadu anna Muḥammad al-Rasūlu-llāh* (I testify that there is no god save Allāh and I testify that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh). [Tr.]

⁴⁰ Muḥammad ibn Darid Azdi, *Al-Mujtabā (The Chosen)*, p. 44.

alcohol to him.” This was done but since no one among the Muhājirīn and Anṣār attested to reciting the verse to the man, he was released.⁴¹

‘ALĪ (‘A) IN THE TENURE OF THE SECOND CALIPH

The spread of Islam and protection of the essence of Islam were among the lofty aims of Imam ‘Alī (‘a). He considered himself the true appointed successor of the holy Prophet (ṣ). Even though his obvious right had been abused and the caliphate was usurped, whenever he saw a problem in the workings of the caliphate, he would resolve it in a way that revealed a perspective and train of thought that was both exalted and profound. Similar to the period of the first caliph, ‘Alī (‘a) was also a counsellor and trouble-shooter for many issues—military, political, scholarly, judicial, economic, or otherwise—that arose during the time of the second caliph.

A. Military Cooperation

In the term of the second caliph, battles and conquests were more extensive and thus the role of ‘Alī (‘a) was more apparent in this period. Considering the valour and battle experience of ‘Alī, the second caliph could not do without his guidance and cooperation. The caliph knew that ‘Alī (‘a) would not directly participate in battles. However, he endeavoured to make use of his counsel and informed assistance. Since the Imam could not neglect the fate of Islam and Muslims, he aided the caliph in the form of guidance and offering opinions. The following are several instances of such counsels:

1. The Battle of Jisr (Bridge)

In this battle, the Muslims were defeated. The caliph called upon the Muslims and encouraged them to *jihād*. He took counsel with various people including ‘Alī about whether he should take part personally in the battle or send someone in his stead. ‘Alī (‘a) proposed that he not participate personally.⁴²

2. War with the Romans

When the army of Islam encountered the army of Heraclius, Abū ‘Ubaydah wrote a letter to the caliph requesting orders and asking for reinforcements. The second caliph convened a meeting with the elite

⁴¹ Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-Abkām*, correction and gloss by ‘Alī Akbar Ghifārī, vol. 10, p. 108, Kitāb al-Ḥudūd (The Book of Punishment), ḥadīth 359.

⁴² Mas‘ūdī, *Murawwij al-dhābiḥ*, vol. 2, p. 318-9.

companions where he asked 'Alī ('a) about the matter. 'Alī('a) said, "Tell Abū 'Ubaydah to stand firm, victory will be that of the Muslims".⁴³

3. The Battle of Bayt al-Muqaddas (Jerusalem)

In the battle of Bayt al-Muqaddas, the caliph also took counsel with the companions including Imam 'Alī ('a). He was made glad by the words and advice of 'Alī ('a) and told the companions, "I shall not act against the counsel of 'Alī. I praise him in advice and see his brow to be white".⁴⁴

4. The War for Khurāsān

Regarding the war for Khurāsān, Imam 'Alī ('a) enumerated the features and strong points of each of the cities of the Khurāsān province and encouraged the second caliph to conquer it.⁴⁵

The Role of 'Alī's ('a) Followers in Battles

The companions and followers of 'Alī ('a) had key roles in the campaigns during the second caliph's tenure. The victories of Islam in conquering surrounding territories are indebted to the unceasing struggles of the heroic commanders that were companions of the Imam. Of course, the direct participation of the companions of 'Alī ('a) in conquests was not without their leader's approval. For instance, when the caliph tried to appoint Salmān Fārsī governor of Ctesiphon [*madā'in*], he did not accept until 'Alī ('a) gave him permission.⁴⁶

Mālik Ashtar took part in the Qādisyah battle.⁴⁷ He conquered Āmid and Naṣībīn.⁴⁸ Ḥudhayfah ibn Yamān was a commander in the battle of Nahāwand.⁴⁹ According to Dīnwarī, he took command of the army of Islam after Na'mān ibn Muqrīn.⁵⁰ In the conquest of Egypt, 'Ammār Yāsir commanded the cavalry.⁵¹ He was also present in the conquest of Diyarbakir (previously known as Amida) beside Miqdād ibn Aswad.⁵² Hāshim ibn 'Utbah Mirqāl, the nephew of Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ and an exceptionally

⁴³ Wāqidi, *Futūḥ ash-Shām (The Conquests of Damascus)*, p. 108.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 148.

⁴⁵ Ibn A'tham, *al-Futūḥ (Conquests)*, vol. 2, p. 78.

⁴⁶ Murtaḍā 'Āmulī, *Faṣḥnāmāh tārikh (History, Quarterly Journal)*, vol. 1, issue 3, p. 378.

⁴⁷ Aḥmad ibn Dawūd Dīnwarī, *Akhhbār al-ṭawāl (News of the Ages)*, p. 120.

⁴⁸ Ibn A'tham, *al-Futūḥ (Conquests)*, vol. 1, p. 34.

⁴⁹ Aḥmad ibn 'Uthmān Dhahabī, *al-Ibar fī Khabar Man 'Abar (Guidance from the Stories of those who have been Guided)*, vol. 1, p. 25.

⁵⁰ Aḥmad ibn Dawūd Dīnwarī, *Akhhbār al-ṭawāl (News of the Ages)*, p. 135.

⁵¹ Ibn A'tham, *al-Futūḥ (Conquests)*, vol. 2, p. 36.

⁵² Ibid., p. 59.

brave and selfless companion of ‘Alī (‘a), was appointed commander of a five thousand strong army in the time of the second caliph. He took part in the conquest of Bayt al-Muqaddas⁵³ and in the conquest of Azerbaijan and led a group of soldiers.⁵⁴ Jarīr ibn ‘Abdullāh Bajlī was a commander in the battle of Qādisiyyah (a city in southern Iraq) and was also present in the battle of Jalūla’. In the attack on Iraq and Ḥīrah, he commanded the army.⁵⁵

Obviously, the participation of ‘Alī’s (‘a) companions in the battles during the tenures of the caliphs did not indicate their endorsement of the caliphate. It was rather due to their interest in expanding and developing Islam beyond the Islamic borders.

The Companions of ‘Alī (‘a) and Governance

With his permission, some of the companions of ‘Alī (‘a) actively participated in the political and governance arenas with the aim of preserving unity. For instance, after Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ captured Ctesiphon, the caliph appointed Salmān Fārsī as the governor of the city.⁵⁶ In addition, the caliph appointed ‘Ammār Yāsir governor of Kufa.⁵⁷

The Presence of ‘Alī (‘a) in Governance

Imam ‘Alī (‘a) regarded his right to have been usurped. Even so, the solidarity of the Islamic Ummah was of vital importance to him. This is why, when the second caliph was planning to leave Madinah to attend to the affairs of Muslims and appointed ‘Alī (‘a) as his regent and obliged the people to follow him, ‘Alī (‘a) did not neglect his duty to the unity and fate of the Islamic Ummah in the least. For this reason, during the caliphate of ‘Umar ibn Khaṭṭāb, ‘Alī (‘a) was chosen as his regent in Madinah three times.

One of the instances where the caliph officially appointed ‘Alī (‘a) as his regent in Madinah was when he wanted to leave for Damascus.⁵⁸ Before he left, he made an oration for the army of Madinah. After praising the Lord, he said:

⁵³ Wāqidi, *Futūḥ ash-Shām (The Conquests of Damascus)*, p. 144.

⁵⁴ Ṭāhir ibn Muṭahhar Muqaddasi, *al-Badw al-tārikh (The Beginning of History)*, vol. 5, p. 182.

⁵⁵ Aḥmad ibn Ya‘qūb, *Tārikh Ya‘qūbī (Ya‘qūb’s History)*, vol. 2, p. 120.

⁵⁶ Ibn A‘tham Kūfī, *Al-Futūḥ (Conquests)*, vol. 1, p. 286.

⁵⁷ Ṭāhir ibn Muṭahhar Muqaddasi, *al-Badw al-tārikh (The Beginning of History)*, vol. 5, p. 180.

⁵⁸ Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-tārikh (The Complete History)*, vol. 2, p. 348, under: Dhikr Faṭḥ Bayt al-Muqaddas (On the Conquest of Bayt al-Muqaddas), Beirut: Dār al-Fikr; ‘Abdar-Raḥmān ibn Khuldūn, *Tārikh (History)*, vol. 2, part 2, p. 91; and Muḥammad Ṭabarī, *Tārikh Ṭabarī*, vol. 3, p. 480.

ايها الناس إني خارج الي الشام للامر الذي قد علمتم، ولو لا أني
 اخاف علي المسلمين لما خرجت، و هذا علي بن ابي طالب رضي الله
 عنه بالمدينه، فانظروا أن حزبكم امر عليكم به و احتكموا اليه في
 اموركم واسمعوا له و اطيعوا، أفهمتم ما امرتكم به؟ فقالوا: نعم سمعاً
 و طاعة.

O people! I leave for Damascus and if there were no danger to Muslims, I would never leave Madinah. 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a)—may God be pleased with him—is in Madinah. Look to him. I entrust your affairs to him. He is the governor among you. Listen to his words and follow him. Do you understand that which I have said to you?⁵⁹

The people answered, “Yes. We have heard and we shall obey”.

Another similar incident occurred when the caliph decided to leave Madinah after taking counsel with 'Alī ('a) about dispatching soldiers to reinforce the Islamic army for the battles of Qādisiyyah and Jisr. At that time also, he made 'Alī ('a) his regent in Madinah.⁶⁰

Yet another instance was when the caliph determined to go to Bayt al-Muqaddas after a meeting with 'Alī ('a). The reason for the trip was to carry out the conditions for peace with the people of that city, which could not take place without the presence of the caliph. Before he left for Palestine, he made 'Alī ('a) his regent in Madinah.⁶¹

The aforementioned cases of 'Alī's ('a) temporary presence in the government are according to authentic Sunnī sources. Some Shia historians such as Sharīf Raḍī also indicate the temporary involvement of 'Alī ('a) in governance.

When the caliph went to Damascus, 'Abbās was with him. The caliph said to him, “Maybe you think you are more deserving of this title than I am?” 'Abbās answered, “More deserving than you or I is the person who is your regent in Madinah—the man who struck us with his sword until we converted to Islam, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.”⁶²

⁵⁹ Aḥmad ibn A'tham Kūfi, *Al-futūḥ (Conquests)*, vol. 1, p. 225.

⁶⁰ Ibn Athīr, *Al-kāmil fī at-tārīkh (The Complete History)*, vol. 2, p. 309, under: Dhikr Ibtidā 'Amr al-Qādisiyyah (On the Beginning of the Qādisiyyah Issue).

⁶¹ Wāqidi, *Futūḥ ash-Shām (The Conquests of Damascus)*, p. 149.

⁶² Sharīf Raḍī, *Al-Khaṣā'is (The Characteristics)*, p. 77.

B. Political Advice

The second caliph was also in need of the guidance of ‘Alī (‘a) in political matters. The benevolence and profundity of his thought in various areas including political counsel continuously served to consolidate the Islamic nation.

It has been cited by some scholars that Iranians from various cities including Hamadan, Rey, Isfahan, and Nahāvand sent dispatches to other cities announcing that the Prophet (s) had passed away, that after him, Abū Bakr, who was their ruler had also died, and that ‘Umar, who would live long, would make transgressions against their cities. These letters asked the people to drive the armies of ‘Umar out of their cities and wage war against them.

After hearing this news, ‘Umar apprehensively went to the Mosque of the Prophet (s) and took counsel with several *Muhājireen* and *Anṣār*. Each said something that did not satisfy the caliph. Finally, ‘Alī (‘a) declared, “I counsel that you not move the people of Damascus, Yemen, Makkah, or Madinah but that you write to the men of Basra to divide into three parts: One to defend their women and children in Basra; one to preside over the Ahl al-Dhimmah⁶³ to keep them from breaking oath; and the third to hasten to the aid of their brothers.” ‘Umar answered, “Indeed, this is the correct opinion. I want to follow this opinion”. Afterwards, he kept on repeating the statements of ‘Alī (‘a) with astonishment.⁶⁴

In addition, after the conquest of Ctesiphon in the month of Rabī‘ al-Awwal of the 16th year of the Hijra, the caliph decided to record history. He finally accepted the idea of Imam ‘Alī (‘a) to specify history from the date of the Hijra of the Prophet (s).⁶⁵

C. Economic Advice

Without a doubt, the insight of ‘Alī (‘a) was more profound than that of all the companions of the Prophet (s). Thus, whenever the caliphs met with complications in any area they would refer to the Imam and ask him for a final solution. One such area was the area of economic issues regarding public and private wealth.

⁶³ The Ahl al-Dhimmah were non-Muslims who paid tribute to live in Islamic territories. [Tr.]

⁶⁴ Shaykh Muḥammad Mufid, *Al-Irshād (Guidance)*, Al-Bāb al-thānī (section two), chap. 60.

⁶⁵ Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh Madīnah (The History of Madīnah)*, vol. 1, p. 36, Damascus; and Ḥākīm Nayshābūrī, *al-Mustadrak ‘alā al-ṣaḥīḥayn*, vol. 2, p. 14.

Stipends from the Bayt al-Māl (Public Wealth)

A person that is charged with the leadership of a society must be given an amount of money for their livelihood. In his tenure as the caliph, 'Umar conferred with various companions including Imam 'Alī ('a) regarding this issue. He finally accepted the view of the Imam that, "Take only as much from the Bayt al-Māl as you need for you and your family's livelihood".⁶⁶

Use of the Jewellery of the Ka'bah

'Umar intended to use the jewels of the Ka'bah for the Islamic army. Imam ('a) said to him, "As the Prophet (ﷺ) did not touch them you must not either!" 'Umar accepted the words of the Imam and chanted the slogan:

لولاك لافتضحنا

If you did not exist, we would surely be disgraced.⁶⁷

Allotment of the Lands of Iraq

The second caliph asked 'Alī ('a) his opinion about the fertile lands surrounding Kufa after Muslims had captured the city. The Imam said to him, "If you divide the lands among the current generation of Muslims it shall not avail the Muslims of the future. However, if you leave the lands to the current owners for them to work on and pay taxes to the Islamic government, it will be beneficial to both the current generation and the future one". Thereafter 'Umar declared his consent.⁶⁸

D. 'Alī in Judicial Affairs

During this time, 'Alī ('a) also offered his guidance in judicial affairs and resolved quandaries faced by the caliph. The following are some examples:

A woman with a mental disorder who had committed adultery was brought to 'Umar. After consulting with the people, he ordered her to be stoned [*rajm*]. When the Imam ('a) heard of the incident, he instructed that the woman be brought back. He went to 'Umar and stated, "Do you not know that three groups of people have been absolved of responsibility? They are the insane until they recover, the unconscious until they wake, and

⁶⁶ Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ nahj al-balāghab (Commentary on the Nahj al-Balāghab)*, vol. 12, p. 220; also Abu al-Faraj Jawzī, *Tārīkh 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (The History of 'Umar ibn Khaṭṭāb)*, p. 97.

⁶⁷ Abd al-Husayn Amīnī, *Al-Ghadīr*, vol. 1, p. 177; also Sayyid Muḥsin Amīn, *A'yān asb-Shī'ah (The Notables of the Shī'ah)*, vol. 1, p. 436.

⁶⁸ Aḥmad ibn Ya'qub, *Tārīkh Ya'qūb*, vol. 2, p. 151.

the child until they mature". While chanting *takbīr* (i.e. Allāhu Akbar) 'Umar ordered that the woman be returned and not punished.⁶⁹

It has been cited that a woman who had married while she was still in her waiting period [*'iddah*]⁷⁰ was brought to 'Umar. He took the *mibr* (marriage portion) of the woman and put it in the treasury [*bayt al-māl*]. He also ordered that the marriage of the man and woman be permanently annulled without the possibility of remarriage and that they be punished. The Imam ('a) declared this verdict to be incorrect and instructed that they be separated and that the woman wait for the completion of the first *'iddah* as well as a second *'iddah* for the second marriage. In addition, he obligated the second husband to pay a customary marriage portion [*mibr al-mithl*] to the woman since they had consummated the marriage.⁷¹

'Umar punished drinkers of alcohol with forty lashes but drinking alcohol still became widespread. He consulted with the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) in this regard. 'Alī ('a) advised that they punish them with eighty lashes speaking thus, "Those who drink alcohol become intoxicated and lose their reasoning. They rave and slander people. Thus, their punishment must be as much as the punishment of calumny". The second caliph accepted the opinion of the Imam ('a) and, after that, the punishment of drinking alcohol became eighty lashes.⁷²

E. 'Alī ('a) as an Authority in the Field of Knowledge

The spread of Islam after the Prophet (ﷺ) gave rise to new issues encountered by Muslims, the precepts of which did not directly exist in the Qur'ān and the traditions of the Prophet (ﷺ). As a result, Muslims experienced problems in trying to solve such issues. Instead of utilizing the Qur'ān and traditions in such cases, some companions resorted to conjectures or personal opinions. 'Alī, ('a) who was the most knowledgeable in the Islamic Ummah and the gate to the city of the Prophet's (ﷺ) knowledge, would rush to the aid of the caliphs including 'Umar and state the related divine decree when new matters baffled them so that 'Umar came up with the slogan, "If there were no 'Alī, 'Umar would surely perish".⁷³

Many instances of 'Alī's ('a) support in this regard have been chronicled in history. Mu'āwiyah has also mentioned that whenever 'Umar had a

⁶⁹ Muḥammad Aūs Qal'ahchī, *Mausū'ah-ye 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib*, vol. 1, p. 29.

⁷⁰ *'Iddah* is the period that a woman must wait after the divorce or death of her husband before she can remarry. [Tr.]

⁷¹ Aḥmad ibn Ḥusayn Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā (Great Traditions)*, vol. 11, p. 436.

⁷² Muḥammad ibn Abī Ya'ālā al-Farrā, *al-Aḥkām as-sultāniyyah*, p. 228.

⁷³ "لو لاعلى لهلك عمر". Abd al-Ḥusayn Amini, *al-Ghadīr*, vol. 3, p. 97.

problem, he would go to 'Alī ('a), and the Imam would answer wisely every time⁷⁴

The caliphs did not shy away from asking about religious decrees from the Imam ('a) such that sometimes they even asked questions and were answered in the presence of other people. In some cases, they were even reproached by those around them. For instance, two people asked the second caliph about divorce. 'Umar looked around and asked, "O 'Alī ('a)! What is your opinion on this matter?" Imam gestured with his two fingers in answer. 'Umar communicated 'Alī's ('a) answer to the enquirers. They protested thus, "We asked you but you ask another?" 'Umar replied, "Do you know the answerer? He is 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and I heard from the Prophet (ṣ) that the faith of 'Alī is greater than the weight of the heavens and the earth".⁷⁵

A group of Jewish scholars came to Madinah during the caliphate of 'Umar and said to him, "We have questions that, if you answer, it will show that Islam is true and that Muḥammad is the prophet of God. Else, it will become evident that Islam is false". Some of their questions were as follows: What is the lock of the heavens? What is the key of the heavens? Which grave took its inhabitant around with it? Who struck fear into the hearts of their people but was not *jinn* or human? These and several others were questions to which 'Umar had no answer. He bowed his head and said, "It is not a dishonour for 'Umar to be asked questions to which he must answer: I do not know". The Jewish scholars went saying, "It is clear that Islam is false". Salmān who witnessed the affair went to 'Alī ('a) and asked the Imam for help saying, "Islam has been diminished".⁷⁶ 'Alī ('a) donned the attire of the Prophet (ṣ) and went to the mosque. When 'Umar's eyes fell upon the Imam ('a) he got up and said, "Whenever a problem arises they come to you". The Imam stipulated to the Jewish scholars that if he were to answer them in accordance with the Torah they must become Muslim, and they acceded. The Imam ('a) declared:

The lock of the heavens is polytheism because polytheism causes the deeds of a person not to ascend and not to be accepted. Its key is the Shahādātayn [i.e. the two testimonies of Islamic faith]. The grave that carried its inhabitant with it is the fish that swallowed Yūnus (Jonah). The creature not human or jinn that struck fear into its people was the ant that told the other ants to enter the nest so that Sulaymān (Solomon) and his army would not tread upon them.

⁷⁴ 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, vol. 3, p. 98; also Aḥmad Ṭabarī, *Dhakhā'ir al-'Uqbā*, p. 79.

⁷⁵ Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 40, p. 119.

⁷⁶ أ غ ت الاسلام

All three of the Jewish scholars became Muslim and named ‘Alī (‘a) the most knowledgeable man in the Islamic Ummah.⁷⁷

IMAM ‘ALĪ (‘A) AND THE THIRD CALIPH

The intellectual cooperation of Imam ‘Alī (‘a) with the caliphs was not limited to the incumbency of the first and second caliphs. All the Imam’s (‘a) endeavours aimed at preserving the unity and protecting the newly founded Islamic society. Thus, he also resolved the scientific and political needs of Islam and Muslims in the time of the third caliph who continuously benefited from the ideas and guidance of Imam ‘Alī (‘a). Here we shall introduce several cases of such cooperation.

A. Intellectual Safe Haven

Imam ‘Alī’s (‘a) thoughts were directed towards the dissemination of Islam in the world and stabilization of its foundations within the Islamic country. He would defend Islam by acquainting the people with the religious sciences and divine decrees. Therefore, whenever the third caliph asked Imam ‘Alī (‘a) for help, he would comply.

A man came to ‘Uthmān asking him about coitus with two sibling bondswomen. ‘Uthmān said, “One verse of the Qur’ān regards it permissible whereas another prohibits it. Though I do not like doing such a thing, its permissibility is preferable to its impermissibility”. The man came out of the meeting and encountered Imam ‘Alī on his way. He asked the same question of the Imam who replied, “I caution you to avoid this act. If I were ruler and I found you or any other person perpetrating this act I would punish him”.⁷⁸

The text of the following verse prohibits coitus with two bondswomen that are sisters, since the verse covers both free people and servants. For this reason, Imam ‘Alī (‘a) warned the inquirer against committing this act. The companions and other jurists also emphasize the unlawfulness of this act.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ ‘Abdul Ḥusayn Amīnī, *Al-Ghadīr*, vol. 6, p. 154.

⁷⁸ Aḥmad ibn Ḥusayn Bayhaqī, *Al-Sunan al-kubrā (Great Traditions)*, vol. 7, p. 164; Muḥammad Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi‘ al-aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, vol. 5, p. 117; Jalāl ad-Dīn Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manḥūr*, vol. 2, p. 136; Maḥmūd Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, vol. 1, p. 518; Ibn Ḥazm, *Al-Muḥallāb al-āthār*, vol. 9, p. 133; Fakhr Rāzī, *At-Taḥfīr al-kabīr*, vol. 10, p. 36; and Shaykh Mufīd, *al-Irsbād*, Al-Bābath-Thānī (part two), chap. 60.

⁷⁹ Fakhr Rāzī, *At-Taḥfīr al-kabīr (The Great Commentary)*, vol. 10, pp. 36-7; Jalāl ad-Dīn Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manḥūr*, vol. 2, p. 137; and Muḥammad Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi‘ al-aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, vol. 5, p. 117.

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أُمَّهَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُمْ وَعَمَّاتُكُمْ
 وَخَالَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُ الْأَخِ وَبَنَاتُ الْأُخْتِ وَأُمَّهَاتُكُمُ اللَّاتِي
 أَرْضَعْنَكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُم مِّنَ الرَّضَاعَةِ وَأُمَّهَاتُ نِسَائِكُمْ
 وَرَبَائِبُكُمُ اللَّاتِي فِي حُجُورِكُم مِّن نِّسَائِكُمُ اللَّاتِي دَخَلْتُم بِهِنَّ
 فَإِن لَّمْ تَكُونُوا دَخَلْتُم بِهِنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَحَلَائِلُ
 أَبْنَائِكُمُ الَّذِينَ مِّنْ أَصْلَابِكُمْ وَأَن تَجْمَعُوا بَيْنَ الْأُخْتَيْنِ
 إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا

Forbidden to you are your mothers, your daughters and your sisters, your paternal aunts and your maternal aunts, your brother's daughters and your sister's daughters, your [foster-]mothers who have suckled you and your sisters through fosterage, your wives' mothers, and your stepdaughters who are under your care [born] of the wives whom you have gone into—but if you have not gone into them there is no sin upon you—and the wives of your sons who are from your own loins, and that you should marry two sisters at one time... (4:23)

Now, let us consider 'Uthmān's thoughts about the interpretation of the verse. Zamakhsharī believes that the caliph had the following verses in mind:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأُفْئِدَتِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ
 أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ

...who guard their private parts except from their spouses or their bondswomen, for then they are not blameworthy. (23:5-6 and 70:29-30)

If he had meant these verses, his reasoning regarding them was incorrect since these verses indicate the limits of modesty of the faithful. The faithful

person does not have sexual relations with anyone except within the bounds of marriage or with bondswomen. This fact is not incompatible with the existence of conditions that may make delimitations on these two groups. Verse 23 of Sūrah Nisā' (see above 4:23) may be a stipulation on verses 5 and 6 of Surah Mu'minūn (chapter 23). Thus, by setting these two verses together, we realize that coitus with two bondswomen that are sisters is forbidden.

B. Imam 'Alī (ʿA) and the Judgements of 'Uthmān

A woman gave birth six months after she was married. 'Uthmān ordered her to be stoned. Imam 'Alī (ʿa) said to him, "Have you not read the Qur'an?" 'Uthmān replied, "I have read it". Imam 'Alī (ʿa) declared, "Have you not heard that God has stated:

وَحَمْلُهُ وَفِصْلُهُ ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا

...and the child's gestation and weaning take thirty months...
(46:15)

And elsewhere He has stated:

حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ^ط

[Mothers shall suckle their children] for two full years... (2:233)

By this account, the duration of gestation can be six months". 'Uthmān replied, "By God, I had not become aware of this truth until now".⁸⁰ It must be noted that some Sunnī scholars cite this same incident regarding both 'Uthmān and 'Umar ibn Khaṭṭāb with a little difference.

One of the rights of women in Islam is that if a man divorces his wife and dies during the *'iddah* of the wife, she inherits from him like any other inheritor since the marital bond persists until the end of the wife's *'iddah*.

In the time of 'Uthmān's caliphate, a man died who had two wives, one from the *Anṣār* and the other from Banī Hāshim. He had divorced his *Anṣārī* wife before he died. She went to the caliph and said, "My *'iddah* is not yet concluded and I want my inheritance". 'Uthmān was at a loss and informed Imam 'Alī (ʿa) about the matter. The Imam stated, "If the *Anṣārī* wife swears that she has not had three periods of menstruation after her husband divorced her, she can inherit from her husband".

⁸⁰ Aḥmad ibn Ḥusayn Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā (Great Traditions)*, vol. 11, p. 428.

'Uthmān said to the Hāshimī wife, "This judgement is from your cousin 'Alī ('a) and I have no opinion in this regard". She replied, "I am satisfied with the arbitration of 'Alī ('a). She may swear and inherit".⁸¹

C. Imam 'Alī ('a) and Those Dissatisfied with the Caliph

Imam 'Alī ('a) encountered three different rulers in three different periods. Each necessitated a specific stance. During the incumbency of the first and second caliphs, the people were relatively at peace and satisfied. However, during the time of the third caliph, the people had become weary and could not tolerate the prevailing conditions.

1. Arbitration

Imam 'Alī ('a) had taken the role of arbitrator and peacemaker between the caliph and the malcontent. This did not mean that the Imam accepted the actions of the caliph. Rather, 'Alī ('a) endeavoured to prevent riots and sedition in the society by his mediation.

When the discontented citizens of Egypt gathered outside the home of 'Uthmān, the caliph who had been saved many times by the mediation of the Imam sent someone to 'Alī ('a) notifying him of the possibility of his own assassination. He asked the Imam to speak with the people and guarantee that their demands would be met. Imam 'Alī ('a) went to the discontented people and relayed the caliph's promise. The people consented to leave the perimeter of the caliph's home and give him a three-day grace period to carry out their demands on the condition that he sign a written agreement thereof.⁸²

2. Water

When revolutionaries surrounded the home of 'Uthmān, the endeavours of Imam 'Alī ('a) were unsuccessful. The besiegers resolutely demanded that Marwān be handed over and that the caliph step down. However, the caliph would not surrender Marwān since he feared that they would murder him and he also refused to step down.

Again 'Uthmān sent Imam 'Alī ('a) a message that these people would kill him and that they had closed off his water supply. He also requested water from the Imam ('a).⁸³ Imam 'Alī ('a) sent the caliph water-skins through his sons Ḥasan and Ḥusayn ('a). When the besiegers saw that they

⁸¹ Mirzā Ḥusayn Nūriyat-Ṭabarsī, *Mustadrak al-wasā'il*, vol. 17, p. 200, ḥadith no. 21145.

⁸² Muḥammad Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh Ṭabarī*, vol. 3, p. 377-394.

⁸³ Balādhuri, *Ansāb al-ishrāf (Pedigrees of the Great)*, vol. 5, p. 68-69.

were the sons of Imam ‘Alī (‘a), they did not stop them from taking the water. The caliph later sent the Imam the following poem:

If I am to be eaten then you eat me, else deliver me!⁸⁴

3. Prevention of the Assassination of the Caliph

When Imam ‘Alī (‘a) was notified that the people had resolved to kill ‘Uthmān, the Imam instructed his sons, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn (‘a) thus:

أذهباً بسيفكما حتي تقوما علي باب عثمان فلا تدعا احداً يصل اليه

Go with your swords and stand before the doors of ‘Uthmān’s house. Do not allow anyone to reach him.⁸⁵

The sons of Imam ‘Alī (‘a) rushed to the house of ‘Uthmān and battled the attackers such that Imam Ḥasan’s (‘a) head was bloodied and Qambar, the bondsman of Imam ‘Alī (‘a), was severely wounded.⁸⁶

4. Burial of ‘Uthmān

When ‘Alī (‘a) heard news of the assassination of the caliph, he hastened to the house of the caliph and remonstrated against those guarding the house including his two sons Ḥasan and Ḥusayn (‘a).

Imam ‘Alī (‘a) and his son Ḥasan (‘a) endeavoured to gain permission from the attackers to bury the caliph. The attackers upheld respect for Imam ‘Alī (‘a) and let the Imam bury the caliph with several of the companions.⁸⁷

CONCLUSION

During the affair of Saqīfah after the passing of the Prophet (ﷺ), some opportunists came to the home of ‘Alī (‘a) to give him their allegiance with the aim of bringing about conflict, but he refused. Moreover, he cooperated with the caliphs in order to preserve the unity of the Islamic Ummah.

During his 52 years of silence regarding his just rights, ‘Alī (‘a) endeavoured to carry out his divine mandate and social responsibilities in the form of military, political, scientific, judicial, economic, and other types of counsel to safeguard the religion and help stabilise the newly formed Islam-

⁸⁴ Ibn Khuldūn, *Al-‘Ibar wa dīwān al-mubtadā wa al-khabar*, vol. 2, p. 1047.

⁸⁵ Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh al-khulafā’* (History of the Caliphs), p. 159; and Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-isbrāf* (Pedigrees of the Great), vol. 6, p. 185.

⁸⁶ Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh al-khulafā’* (History of the Caliphs), p. 160; and ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn Mas‘ūdī, *Muzawwij al-dhabab*, vol. 2, p. 348.

⁸⁷ Ibn A‘tham Kūfī, *Al-Futūḥ* (Conquests), vol. 2, p. 242; Muḥammad Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh Ṭabarī*, vol. 3, p. 438, Dhikr Ba‘ḍi Siyar ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān (On Some Actions of ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān).

ic society. He could not disregard the various problems that had befallen Islam and the Islamic Ummah—problems that had seriously endangered the survival of the religion and Muslims—on pretext that his right to the caliphate had been usurped.

It should be noted of course that the cooperation of 'Alī ('a) with the caliphs was not to the extent that they could use it to their own benefit and legitimize themselves.

'Alī ('a) faced three different persons, each of which necessitated a specific stance. Thus, in addition to the fact that he was a scholarly and judicial counsellor to the third caliph, he also played the role of mediator. He delivered water to the caliph when his home was besieged and sent his sons to the caliph's house to protect him. In the end, 'Alī even performed the burial ceremony of the caliph.

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The Shia Imams and Muslim Unity

Part II

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Translated by Hamid Waqar

Abstract:

This is the second part to a series of articles that will outline the stance of the Shia Imams with respect to Muslim unity. Part I was published in the previous issue of *Al-Taqrīb* and it defined the meaning of ‘Muslim unity’ and went on to enumerate the characteristics of such unity, especially as found in the Qur’ān and the Sunnah. It also outlined some practical methods of creating unity and preventing division, by giving examples from the *ṣirah* of the Prophet (ṣ). This present part continues by touching on the advent of exaggeration (*ghulūw*) and the forging, infiltration, and distortion of traditions. The section concludes 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 were generosity and knowledge, expressed with utmost empathy and magnanimity, as their goal was always guidance towards the ultimate truth.

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

THE OBSTACLES AND PROBLEMS THAT THE IMAMS FACED IN THEIR LIFETIME

The Shia Imams faced important obstacles and problems during their lifetimes. They were unable to introduce their religion of unity as they desired. The most important problems that they faced were:

I. Various forms of political pressure

It can be concluded from a general review of the events of the first three centuries of Islam that most of the hostilities and politico-ideological challenges faced by the caliphs and the Umayyad and Abbasid workers were from the followers of ‘Alī—the Shia—and the Shia leadership. During the

presence of the Imams, the caliphs' most important task was protecting their political strength. By doing so, they were forced to spill the pure blood of the children of the Prophet of Islam. The Divine Sanctuary and the city of the Messenger of Allah were disrespected; the titles 'excessive' (*musrif*) and 'shedder of blood' (*saffāh*) were attributed to them.¹ Not only did they continuously harass the followers of 'Alī and the family of the Prophet (s), in order to solidify their power, they also imprisoned them and murdered them. They tried to legitimize their rule—to make their rule permanent and acceptable by the people—by using various methods such as creating sects. The following are some of the methods that the Abbasid and Ummayyad caliphs used to consolidate their political power. These methods also caused ideological differences in the Islamic society:

1. Destroying and harassing scholars or individuals who opposed them politically or ideologically.
2. Propagating various theological opinions, for instance predestination, confronting the Qadriyyah sect, and strengthening the ideology of Murji'ah.
3. Stating that competing ideas are tantamount to disbelief or corruption; or completely destroying the competing idea.
4. Creating parallel customs (*sunnah*) and sanctifying the customs (*sunnah*) of the companions.
5. Forging traditions about the merits of the caliphs, strengthening the foundations of the caliphate, and supporting the imitation of the *Sunnah*.
6. Strongly fighting the sect of the Ahl al-Bayt and its followers and creating divisions amongst most of the Shia.

These problems can be considered the most important causes of dispute and division in the Islamic society during those times.

The wars of the Ummayyad and Abbasid caliphate against the Shia and the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt are especially prominent. They were very sensitive about the Shia. They considered Shia ideology to be their biggest politico-ideological adversary. Due to this, the mutual confrontations between them and the Shia were very harsh. The divisions of the first Shia into Fāṭimī and Kīsānī, then into Zaydī and Ja'farī, or Imāmī and Ismā'īlī, and Wāqifī, Qa'ṭī, and other divisions resulted in some Shia being separated from the path of the Twelver Shias and their strong connection to poli-

¹ 'Alī 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukām*, p.131

tics is a form of the political rulers confrontations with Shiaism and the changes of that era.

A summary of the problems that the Ahl al-Bayt faced during that era has been clearly reported from Imam Bāqir ('a) and in a speech by Zayd bin 'Alī. According to what the Imam said, the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt were under so much pressure in that era that if a person was labeled a heretic or disbeliever it would be easier on him than if he was considered to be a Shia.²

The pressure and limitations set upon the Shia Imams and their followers by the caliphate (especially during the Abbasid reign) forced them to adopt the policy of *taqīyah*. Ideological and political damage accrued on account of the fact that the Imams did not have the ability to effectively rule over all of the Shia who were spread out in various regions. These tragedies caused many dangerous disputes during the period of the Imams and which have lasted until the contemporary times. For instance:

1. Formation of deviant sects amongst the true Shia.
2. Formation of two branches of the 'Alawī Sayyids: Ḥasanī and Ḥusaynī.
3. Confusion amongst the companions of the Imams regarding the true characteristics and identity of the Imam.
4. Plans of claiming to be the Mahdi and the immortality of the Imams.³

With all of this, the Shia Imams were able to introduce their religion, to the extent that was possible, through wise efforts and through choosing the most suitable methods for political and intellectual confrontation. They were able to cast their competitors and opposition aside. But, it cannot be denied that those historical problems made it difficult for the contemporary era to correctly understand and present their religion.

II. Internal competition and dispute amongst the companions of the Shia

The companions of the Imams, the Shia, and groups attributed to the Shia took part in the heat of the intellectual battles and harsh ideological

² Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, v.11, p.44; Rasūl Ja'fariyān, *Ḥayāt Fikrī Siyāsī Imāmān Shia*, p.312; *Tafsīr Furāt Kūfī*, p.42; Likewise, refer to: Aḥmad Amin, *Fajr Islām*, pp. 274-275; For further analysis, refer to: *Duḥā al-Islām*, v.3, p.277 and up

³ Detailed description: *Khāstgāh paydāyish tashayū' wa firqah-bā shī'ī dar 'aṣr imāmān*, chapter five

confrontations that took place between the Islamic sects at large.⁴ According to the historical research by specialists in Islamic sects, nicknames such as: rejected (*rāfiḍah*), *mamtūrah*, and donkey (*ḥimārīyah*) were used for Shia sects. The first people to accuse the companions of the Imams of anthropomorphism were Shias. According to the research of Nawbakhtī, the most famous researcher of Shia sects, each Shia group, or groups attributed to the Shia, would consider the other Shia sects disbelievers, polytheists, and permissible to kill.⁵

It is interesting to note that the eighth Imam answered a question by Sulaymān bin Ja'far about Hishām ibn Ḥakam, one of the most famous companions of the Imams. He said: "Allah have mercy upon him. He was a generous person. Some of his companions [other companions of the Imam] were envious of him and irritated him."⁶

In another case the Imam embraced the supporters of Yūnis, who were labeled disbelievers by other companions, and considered them to have been saved.⁷ Note that the eighth Imam does not consider Yūnis or Hishām's opinions to be contrary to the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt. But, it seems that some of the companions of the infallible Imams treated each other in a different way. There are many similar disputes which can easily be found in the books about the science of the transmitters of traditions and Shia books of traditions.

III. The advent of extremism and exaggeration (ghulūw)

The movement of extremism or exaggeration was one of the most dangerous and most difficult movements that the Shia Imams were faced with. The negativity which stemmed from this group is clearly seen in the confrontation that the Imams had with this ideology. It was extremely harmful because the supporters of this ideology disguised themselves as friends of the Ahl al-Bayt. They spread their ideology, political and intellectual goals, and carelessness by using religious sources as a pretext. They labeled the Imams with illegitimate attributes. They commonly forged traditions about

⁴ For examples, refer to: *al-Farq bayn al-furuq*, pp. 11,25, and 215; *al-Tabṣīr fī al-dīn*, pp. 25,41, and 111; Shātibī, *al-I'tisām*, pp. 454 and up.

⁵ Refer to the translation of *Firaq al-Shī'ah*, pp. 47,65,85, and 110; for further information about the fighting between the companions of the Imams refer to: Ḥussayn Mudaras, *Muqaddamah bar fiqh shī'ah*, pp. 32-34

⁶ Māmaqānī, *Tanqīḥ maqāl*, v.3, p.297

⁷ Kashī, p.259, number 477; For more examples refer to: Sayyid Aḥmad Ṣafā'i, Hishām bin Ḥakam, pp. 76-79; Kashī, pp. 475-508

the merits of the Imams. They would also argue against their opponents using some deviant theological opinions.⁸

The actions and words of the exaggerators damaged the image of the Imams and the Shia amongst some people of low capacity. Furthermore, some people refrained from expressing the balanced Shia view while using the excuse that they were preventing misunderstanding. For instance, it has been narrated that when the discussion of *Ghadir Khum* was brought up in the presence of Abū Ḥanīfah, he said: "I told my companions not relate the events of *Ghadir Khum*." Haytham bin Ḥabīb Ṣirafī asked him: "Why did you give such an order? Was the tradition of *Ghadir Khum* not transmitted to you?" He answered: "This tradition was transmitted to me. With me, it is established. But, since a number of people have become exaggerators, I gave the order not relate this tradition."⁹

The harmful effects of this movement are not only relegated to the period of its conception. Rather, the present Shia society is faced with some of the cultural effects and problems that have remained from that time.¹⁰ It seems as if it is impossible to completely solve this problem while differences regarding the principles and limitations of exaggeration exist. In any case, the advent and popularity of this event amongst the companions and those attributed to the Imams; the advent of it in the heart of Shiaism was so much that whenever the term 'exaggerator' was used without any surrounding circumstances the Shia exaggerators unintentionally come to mind.

Traditional and contemporary authors do not find any clearly instances of this term other than in reference to Shia groups.¹¹ But, none of the Islamic sects have been exempt from cases of exaggeration and certain levels of exaggeration. Some common exaggerative sects have nothing to do with Shiaism or the Shia Imams; their exaggeration is about other people.¹²

⁸ For instance, the traditions which state that the Imams have complete knowledge of the unseen, that they interfered in creation, claims that the Qur'an was distorted, stating that the present Qur'an is not an authority, fanatically attributing or explaining some verses to be about the Imams or their opposition. It is enough to say of the effect that they had in the field of traditions about the distortion of the Qur'an is that some noteworthy Shia scholars were deceived.

⁹ Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, printed by Jāmi'ah Mudarasīn, pp. 26-27

¹⁰ Akdhūbah, *Ṭaḥrīf al-qur'ān bayn al-sunnah wa al-shī'ah*, p.66

¹¹ For instance: *al-Maqālāt wa al-firaq*, p.66; *al-Millal wa al-naḥl*, p.155; *Muqadamah ibn Khal-dūn*, p.832; Sharīf Yaḥya, *Mu'jam al-firaq al-islāmī*, discussion of ghulāt

¹² For instance, refer to the reports of Abū Ḥatīm Rāzī in *al-Zīnah*, pp. 305-306; Nawbakhtī in *Firaq al-Shī'ah*, pp. 61-62; Ash'arī Qumī in *al-Maqālāt wa al-firaq*, p.69. These sources mention sects such as the Kisānī, Ghulāt 'Abbāsīyah, and Rāwandīyah who exaggerated about the children of 'Abbās; the Salmaniyyah sect who believed that Salman was either Allah or a

This movement cannot be precisely depicted due to differences of opinions amongst Shia scholars regarding the essence and formation of exaggeration and the exaggeration of anti-Shia scholars regarding the number of Shia sects and Shia exaggerators. Most of the scholars from Qom, for instance Shaykh Ṣadūq, rejected many of the great characteristics and miracles of the Prophet and the Imams. The people who believed in those characteristics and miracles were accused of exaggeration. The belief that the Prophet was never distracted in prayer was considered to be an instance of exaggeration.¹³ Those who held such beliefs were cursed. But, some of the scholars from Baghdad, for instance Shaykh Mufid, believed that it was not possible for the Noble Prophet to be distracted in prayer. He also established some characteristics and merits of the Imams which were rejected in Qom. He accused his opposition, the Qummī scholars, of shortcomings in their understanding of the Prophet and the Imams.¹⁴ It has been stated that the criterion of Baghdādī scholars about exaggeration is different than the criterion of Qummī scholars. They believe that exaggeration is the negation of the creation of the Imams and the belief that they are divine and immortal.¹⁵ It is interesting that amongst some of the cases and beliefs that were considered a criterion by the Qummī scholars in accusing someone of exaggeration are certain beliefs about the Imams that are presently considered as the necessities of the Shia sect. Even though the very division of schools into Qummī and Baghdādī and the supporting evidences for such a division can be seriously questioned, there is no doubt about the existence of fundamental differences regarding the limits and confines of exaggeration. For instance, the late Māmaqānī answers those who considered Muḥammad bin Sanān to be weak in the transmission of traditions because he was accused of exaggeration. He says:

prophet, the Hāshimīyah sect who exaggerated about Abū Hāshim, the Razāmīyah sect who believed that God was incarnated in Abū Muslim, and the Abū Muslimīyah sect who exaggerated about Abū Muslim. The claims of these exaggerators and the claims of other exaggerative sects such as the Khurmānah, Muzādakīyah, and the Bābakīyah do not have any connection with the Shia Imams and their followers were not Shia. Also, refer to the report by Asfarāynī in *al-Tabṣīr fī al-dīn* about sects such as the Ḥalājīyah, Khurmīyah, Ahl al-Tanāsukh, Khābiṭīyah, and Ḥammāriyah (sects of the Mutazailites) and also the Yazīdiyah and Maymūnah sects (sects of the Khawārij).

¹³ *Man la yaḥḍarab al-faqīh*, v.1, p.358; for further information refer to *Muṣanafāt al-shaykh al-Mufīd*, v.11, "Risālah fī 'adam al-sahw al-nabī", The Science of Traditions Quarterly, number 2, article: "Ibn Ghaḍā'iri wa mutahimān bih ghulūw dar kitāb al-ḍu'afā'" by Ni'mat Allah Ṣafārī

¹⁴ Mufid, *Taṣṣīḥ al-i'tiqād*, p.135; also refer to *Bihār al-anwār*, v.25, pp. 347-351

¹⁵ *I'tiqādāt al-imāmīyah*, pp. 135-136; Ṣafārī Furūshī, Ghālūyān, pp. 341-342

...We have repeatedly stated that one cannot rely on an accusation of exaggeration because the modern beliefs of the Shia regarding the levels and stations of the Imams; the beliefs which are considered necessities of the sect, were considered exaggeration in that era. This reached such a level that people of the stature of Shaykh Ṣadūq considered the belief that the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Imams were not distracted in prayer to be exaggeration. This belief amongst the contemporary scholars is considered to be a necessity of the sect.¹⁶

Some Sunni scholars have also provided another interpretation of the meaning and scope of exaggeration. They hold: "The Shia exaggerators in the past and in the common view of the Shia were people who would say bad things about 'Uthmān, Zubayr, Ṭalḥah, Mu'āwiyah, and those who fought against 'Alī (r), but the contemporary view is that exaggerators are those people who label these great individuals as disbelievers and who loath the two Shaykhs."¹⁷ It is natural that this group considers all of the traditions transmitted against the companions and the first caliphs to be forged by exaggerators.

In any case, even though the exaggerators were never able to hold a clear mandate and to play the role of an independent theological sect, nevertheless their tangible presence in some Shia traditions and beliefs cannot be overlooked.

Shia Imams were sensitive about the exaggerators. They rejected their ideology and methodology on various levels.¹⁸ According to the traditions which have reached us, those grand individuals negated exaggeration by presenting the correct beliefs of the Ahl al-Bayt sect in opposition to the beliefs of the exaggerators (for instance, they emphasized the servitude to Allah, and they mentioned deviant theological beliefs as well as the plans of the exaggerators). They also presented their hatred of the exaggerators and severely confronted their leaders. It is interesting that some traditions mention the reasons behind the conception of this negative trend.

For instance Imam Sajjād ('a) said: "If a group of our Shia will come to love us so much that they say about us what the Jews said about 'Uzayr and what the Christians said about Jesus, the son of Mary, then they are not from us and we are not from them."¹⁹

¹⁶ *Tanqīh al-maqāl*, v.1, fāyidah 25, p.212

¹⁷ *Tarīkh tashayū' dar Īrān*, v.1, p.36 narrated from Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-i'tidal fī naqd al-rijāl*, v.3, p.552

¹⁸ For detailed information about how the Imams confronted this issue refer to: *Bihār al-anwār*, v.35, p.361 and up; Sāmī al-'Azīzī, *al-Jadhūr al-tārikhīyah wa al-nafsīyah lil-ghulūw wa al-ghulāh*, pp. 269-313; Ṣafarī Furūshī, *Ghāliyān*, pp. 151-171

¹⁹ Kashi, number 191

Imam Ṣādiq (‘a) said:

I swear by Allah, we are but the created slaves of Allah that Allah has chosen. We do not have any strength to negate or harm ourselves. If He has been merciful towards us it is through His mercy; if He punishes it is due to our sins. We do not have any authority over Allah. We will die and enter our graves. Then, we will be raised, we will stand and be interrogated.²⁰

Likewise, Imam Ṣādiq (‘a) stated while rejecting official exaggerators: “I swear by Allah, nobody except Allah has determined our sustenance; I, myself, needed food for my family—it occupied my mind. When I secured their livelihood I became relaxed.” There are many similar traditions against the exaggerators.²¹

In another tradition the Imam told youth to stay away from the exaggerators and their corrupt behavior. They are considered worse than polytheists because of their exaggerations.²²

The following supplication of Imam Riḍā (‘a) can be used to depict the ideologies of the exaggerators:

O’ God, I seek absolution from Thee in respect of Thy Strength and Power. There is neither strength nor power save in Thee. O’ God, I declare myself before Thee as having nothing to do with those who assert in respect of us things which we ourselves do not know. O’ God, to Thee belongs creation and Thou possessest the power of command; ‘Thee (alone) do we worship and from Thee do we seek help’. O’ God, Thou art our Creator, and the Creator of our ancestors, near and remote. O’ God, none deserves lordship save Thee; and divinity befits none except to Thee. So do Thou curse the Christians who belittled Thy greatness, and do Thou curse those who declare Thee to resemble Thy Creature. O God, verily we are Thy slaves and the sons of Thy slaves. We have no power over ourselves in respect of profit, loss, death, life or resurrection. O’ God, he who asserts that we are lords—we seek absolution from Thee in respect of him. O’ God, he who asserts that we have the power of creation and providing—we seek absolution from Thee in respect of him, an absolution similar to that of Jesus, son of Mary, in respect of the Christians. O’ God, we have never called upon them to assert what they do assert; so do not punish us for what they say and forgive

²⁰ Ibid., number 403

²¹ For examples, refer to: *Rijāl Kashī*, traditions regarding Abū al-Khaṭṭāb and Mughayrah bin Sa‘id; *Biḥār al-anwār*, v.25, pp. 261-350

²² *Biḥār al-anwār*, v.25, p.265

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us for what they allege. ‘My Lord! leave not one of the disbelievers in the land’. ‘If Thou shouldst leave them, they will mislead Thy slaves and will beget none save lewd ingrates’^{23 24}

In any case, on one hand these great personalities would emphasize the necessity to hold on to monotheism, the oneness of Allah’s essences, attributes, and actions, and on the other, they would affirm their servitude and human characteristics, while going on to label some forms of exaggeration as disbelief. They tried to uncover the harmful effects and evil goals of exaggerators. Furthermore, they would refrain from having relationships with them and considering them in a positive light. Finally, they gave the orders to physically confront them. This can be clearly seen in the lives and speeches of the Imams.²⁵ These grand personalities not only severely rejected the exaggerators’ claims and considered their followers to be disbelievers, but they said: “We have no power to attract benefit to or dispel harm from ourselves in opposition to the will of Allah.”

IV. The forging, infiltration, and distortion of traditions²⁶

The Shia Imams faced difficult conditions during the Ummayyad and Abbasid dynasties. Their competition was active and present on the scene (both external and internal) and acted with bigotry and enmity. This caused problems and prevented the progression and propagation of traditions from the Ahl al-Bayt. These problems cannot be amended. Contradictions and ambiguities in traditions, the non-existence of surrounding circumstances mentioned in the traditions, and more importantly, the evilness of forging traditions resulted in confusion amongst some followers about the realities of religious obligations and duties. It is natural that the Imams were not able to be active and free regarding traditions, the explanation of the Qur’ān, and the exposition of the religion. This was because of the political and theological environment of *taqiyyah* that existed at that time. It resulted in traditions not being inherited from them.

²³ Qur’ān, 71:26-27

²⁴ Ṣadūq, *al-I’tiqādāt*, p.74

²⁵ For information about the Imams severe confrontation with exaggeration and authorization (*tafwīd*): *Bihār al-anwār*, v.25, p.350; Ṭūsī, *al-Ghaybah*, pp. 244-254

²⁶ The importance and relevance of this discussion with the subject of Islamic unity is because, unfortunately, external opposition to Shia thought always use them as documents against the Shia sect and they create misunderstandings amongst some of the Shia who are opposed to the bringing together of the Islamic sects. This is all despite the fact that the foundation of the Ahl al-Bayt sect and Shia thought is nothing other than rational reasoning in theology and action.

This is not the place to discuss traditions being tarnished by contradictory traditions, imprecision and misunderstandings in the transmission and memorization of traditions, and the indistinctness of transmission. But, the most important problem, the forging, infiltration, and distortion of traditions, was confirmed by the Imams. The problems of attributing traditions to the Imams, even in their lifetimes, cannot be disregarded. The following traditions depict this important issue:²⁷

Some Shias asked Yūnis bin `Abd al-Raḥmān: “Why do you place such difficulty on accepting traditions? Why do you reject so many of the traditions of our companions? What assurances do you have in rejecting these traditions?” He said: “Hishām bin Ḥakam narrated a tradition from Imam Ja‘far Ṣādiq (‘a) to me. The Imam said: ‘Do not accept a tradition in our name unless it is in congruence with the Qur’ān and the *Sunnah*, or if you find that our previous traditions confirm it. This is because Mughayrah bin Sa‘īd—may Allah curse him—placed traditions in the books of my father’s companions; traditions which my father never related. Take Allah into consideration; do not tie us to words that are in opposition to the words of Allah, the Most High, or the *Sunnah* of our Prophet, Muḥammad (ṣ). Whenever we want to speak we say: ‘Allah, the Mighty and Great, said [such and such] or the Messenger of Allah, may the peace of Allah be upon him and his family, said [such and such].’”

Yunis said: “I went to Iraq and found a group of companions of Imam Muḥammad Bāqir (‘a). I also found many companions of Imam Ja‘far Ṣādiq (‘a). I heard traditions from them and took their books of traditions. Later, I told Imam Riḍā. The Imam rejected many traditions from amongst these traditions; he did not accept that they were the words of Imam Ja‘far Ṣādiq (‘a). He told me: ‘Abū al-Khaṭṭāb lied about Abū ‘Abdullah (‘a). May Allah curse him as well as the companions of Abū al-Khaṭṭāb ceaselessly, up until the present age. He intervened in the compilations of traditions of Abū ‘Abdullah (‘a). Do not accept a tradition in our name that is in oppo-

²⁷ It would be beneficial to mention that, unfortunately, the Shia scholars have not given this issue what it deserves. There are not comprehensive or independent works regarding the forging of traditions in Shia books of traditions. Some of the scholars who wrote about this subject put most of their effort into the forged traditions which exist in the Sunni books of traditions. But, there are great scholars of traditions, for instance, ‘Allāmah Majlisi who wrote an independent chapter in the 25th volume of *Bihār al-anwār* introducing the exaggerators and their forging of traditions, the famous professor Ḥasanī in his two books *al-Muwāḍū‘āt fī al-ṭhār wa al-akhbār* and *Darāsāt fī al-ḥadīth wa al-muḥaddathīn*, the late ‘Alāmah Shūshṭarī in *al-Akhhār al-dakhhīlah*, and professor Bahbūdī in *Ma‘rafah al-ḥadīth* who wrote about this issue. But, an independent, comprehensive work, which this subject deserves, has not been published.

sition to the Qur'ān, because whenever we say anything it will be in congruence with the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*...²⁸

Hishām bin Ḥakam heard the following from Imam Ṣādiq (‘a):

Mughayrah bin Sa‘īd intentionally lied about my father. He took his students books’ and mixed his students with my father’s students. They took control of the offices of my father’s students and gave them to Mughayrah. Mughayrah also added matters of disbelief and heresy and attributed them to my father. Then, he would return the books to his students encouraging them to circulate them amongst the Shia. Therefore, the instances of exaggeration that have found their way into the books of my father’s students are all forgeries of Mughayrah bin Sa‘īd.²⁹

Likewise, Kashī narrated that Yaḥya bin ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd wrote in a book confirming the *imāmah* of the Commander of the Faithful:

I told Sharik: ‘Some people imagined that Ja‘far bin Muḥammad is weak in the transmission of traditions.’ He said: ‘Let me narrate an incident to you. Ja‘far bin Muḥammad was a righteous and pious Muslim. But, an ignorant group of people socialized with him and said: ‘Ja‘far bin Muḥammad narrated for us.’ They falsely transmitted traditions from him in which they attributed lies to Ja‘far bin Muḥammad. They gained their livelihood from the people by narrating these forged traditions; they would receive dirhams and dinars. In this way they narrated every rejected ideology and the laymen who did not research accepted it. [This continued] until some of them died and some others were considered liars. Some of the exaggerators, for instance: Mufaḍḍal bin ‘Umar, Banān, ‘Amr bin al-Nabṭī, and others attributed these words to the Imam: ‘the obligation of prayer and fasting is lifted with the understanding of the Imam.’ They said that Ja‘far narrated from his fathers that ‘Alī (‘a) walks on the clouds, flies in the wind, speaks after death: mainly that the God of the heavens and the earth is the Imam. With these words they believed in a partner with Allah. But, by Allah, Ja‘far did not say any of these words, but people narrated them from him and weakened him...’³⁰

Also, according to the narration of one of the researchers of the science of traditions:

²⁸ *Rijāl Kashī*, p.224, number 401. There are many such traditions in *Rijāl Kashī* and the 25th volume of *Bihār al-anwār*, pp. 261-352

²⁹ *Ibid.*, number 402

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.324, number 588

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The exaggerating transmitters of traditions of the sect would sometimes take a famous principle source or book and add traditions from themselves between the lines. Sometimes, they would distort the wording of the tradition to suit their desires. Then, on the back of the mentioned edition they would state that this edition was read in so and so month to so and so person in the presence of his students. Then, they would distribute the doubted versions between the pages of the book or they would give them to weak or untrustworthy scholars of traditions. In some cases, they would take a notebook filled exclusively with forged and exaggerated traditions and then write on the back of it: "Kitāb so and so," or "Aṣl so and so." Then, they would insert this book or notebook in books or have illiterate children and elderly people sell them in order for it to seem as if these pages were bequeathed to them from great scholars of traditions.³¹

But, in later periods, through the tireless efforts of the Imams and their companions as well as Shia scholars of traditions and theologians, correct traditions have been distinguished from false traditions. Lately, the false traditions have been erased. But, many top Shia scholars believe that one cannot read Shia books of traditions and commentaries of the Qur'ān with a complete peace of mind.

V. The categories of opposition during the lifetimes of the Ahl al-Bayt

The Shia Imams were physically present for more than two centuries. They were faced with various groups who politically or religiously opposed them. Various religious and non-religious sects existed during those years, leading the Imams to respond in different manners according to certain priorities and socio-political consequences. The categories of internal and external opposition to the religion of the Ahl al-Bayt were:

1. Members of non-Islamic religions and ideologies (including the Jews, Christians, Magians, and atheist groups such as *Zanadiqah* (secularists) and *Dahrīyūn* (materialists): A large portion of the Imams' debates which were reported, were confrontations with the ideologies of these groups. The Shia Imams cooperated with other Islamic groups and even the rulers of the time, in the fight against the proliferation and popularity of such ideologies. But, their confrontation was coupled with benevolence, guidance, and wisdom; it was not violent. This opposition will not be examined in this book because it does not pertain to Islamic unity.

³¹ Bahbūdi, *Ma'rafah al-Ḥadīth*, p.42

2. The caliphs and political rulers (including the first three Islamic caliphs, the Umayyad caliphs, the Abbasid caliphs, the Zubayr family, and the governmental workers of their regimes): Each caliph obtained the caliphate through various methods and did not implement the same strategy. They did not have the same governmental goals and did not confront the Ahl al-Bayt and the Shia Imams in the same way. But, all of them were united in politically opposing the Ahl al-Bayt. The Ahl al-Bayt spoke about the first three caliphs, especially the two Shaykhs, in a way which would strengthen Islamic unity; they were compassionate with the Muslims. But, their policies of temporal silence, negative opposition, prevention of fruitless military excursions, and sometimes their apparent cooperation with the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs are considered to have the purpose of protecting their lives, protecting the lives of their companions, allowing the foundations of their religion to survive, and supporting peace in the society. These grand individuals wanted to protect Islam's strength and the progression of the Islamic government, despite the existence of the Umayyad and Abbasid rulers. But, this method strengthened the principle of Islamic government, the Islamic *ummah*, and the protection of the unity of the Islamic *ummah*; it did not have the purpose of uniting with the oppressive rulers.
3. Theological and jurisprudential sects: This category of religious opposition was given more attention by the Ahl al-Bayt and caused more problems for unity. The main body of the populace, in contrast to the first two groups, consisted of this category. Differentiating between these ideological groups, especially due to their ideological progressions and internal branches, is not easy. But, in general, they can be divided into three main groups:

A. Followers of the Sunni sect

This group, which was commonly recognized through jurisprudence, was normally led by jurists, and later by some scholars of traditions. They formed two groups under contrasting titles: *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* and *Ahl al-Ray*. Some of them, to varying degrees, received support from the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs as well. These groups have been recognized in traditions and historical terminology under the titles of *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*, *Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth*, *Ahl al-Ray*, *Ahl al-Athar*, *Nās*, *Qawm*, *Jamā'at*, and *'Āmmah*. With

the passage of time all of them have been given the title *Ahl al-Sunnah*.³² This group socially surpassed the Ahl al-Bayt's sect due to their political strength and support, their indifference and even opposition to some important theological discussions, and their consideration of popular discussions and practical teachings. When compared with the Shia and other theological and political sects their numbers were astonishing. Likewise, they did not have any differences with the Ahl al-Bayt regarding the consideration of the *Sunnah* and the negation of innovation. But, they presented a unique description of *Sunnah*. By emphasizing the holiness and authority of the lifestyle (*sīrah*) of the companions, especially the two shaykhs and the ten people promised paradise (*ashrah mubasharah*), they disregarded the Ahl al-Bayt sect. Therefore, the opinions of obeying the ruler and strengthening the existing government (instead of justice and seeking the truth) became Islamic principles.

The Imams commanded participation in Friday and congregational prayers and the tolerance of sects. But, they also rejected syllogism, the application of discretion (*istiḥisān*), and opinion (from the Sunni sources of derivation), while giving importance to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Ahl al-Bayt as a reference point. Some members of this group, especially during the lifetimes of the Ahl al-Bayt, were individuals close to the power of the caliphate. It seems as if the caliphs honored these people. There are some cases where the Ahl al-Bayt spoke harshly about them due to their positions within an oppressive government. In any case, this segment of the religious opposition did not hate the Ahl al-Bayt but at the same time they were not attached to their sect. This might be the reason that we see that the Ahl al-Bayt confronted this group through seeking unity with them.

B. Theological sects

The groups of religious opposition in this category, who sometimes were also present in the previous classifications, held names such as Khawārij, Murji'ah, Jabriyah, Qadariyah, Mutazalite, and Şafātiyah. In comparison with the previous groups, these groups did not have a notable position in the general public. The relationships of these sects with the possessors of power are varied. The famous Sunni scholars of traditions and jurists considered themselves to be competitors to these groups.

Some of the ideologies of the political and intellectual groups that are listed above, which normally appeared at the time of political upheavals,

³² *al-Zīnah fī al-kalimāt al-'arabīyah*, third section, p.42; for general information about the concepts, instances, historical development of the term *Ahl al-Sunnah* refer to the magazine *Haft Asimān*, number 17, pp. 257-261

were benefited from and misused by the political authorities of the time. For instance, the Umayyad caliphs used the ideologies of predetermination and murji'ah to their benefit. But, generally, with only a few exceptions, they were religious groups holding theological identities (if we accept their independent existence as a sect) and which did not have much political support. The Ahl al-Bayt also confronted these ideologies, especially keeping in mind the clear deviations that some of them had, with open hands. A large portion of the traditions from the Ahl al-Bayt about theological issues confronted innovations and cleared people of being considered innovators. Also, the importance that they gave to expressing theological issues such as determination, freewill, predetermination, the oneness of Allah, His attributes, the concepts of faith and disbelief, and also the necessity of referring to the Ahl al-Bayt can be seen. But, the existence of a strong motive in forging traditions against some of these sects and their leaders makes one seriously doubt about the authenticity of some of these traditions.

C. Shia sects

The twelve Imams were faced with immense political and intellectual pressures during the caliphate of the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties (41-255). These pressures and the suffocating political-social atmosphere made it impossible for them to participate in political uprisings. Furthermore they were even unable to clarify, to the extent necessary, the station, duties, and instances of *imāmah*—even for their closest companions. The problems that can be mentioned, in addition to the minute political and spiritual capacities, as well as the envy and competition of some members of the families of the Ahl al-Bayt, is that sometimes followers of the Imams or the children of the Imams would branch off from the main line of *imāmah*. Whether it was their desire or not, a new sect would be formed which was based on their particular ideology. The instances of these offshoots were numerous. They were recorded, possibly with exaggeration, by Shia authors who wrote about the various sects, such as Nawbakhtī and Ash'arī Qummī. The main sects are: Kīsanīyyah, Zaydiyyah, Ghullāt, Ismā'īliyyah, Wāqifiyyah, and some other smaller sects. It is interesting to note that sometimes the problems that the Ahl al-Bayt faced in confronting these groups, especially the Ghullāt, were more severe than the problems they faced confronting non-Shia sects. These sects opened doors weakening and defaming the Ahl al-Bayt sect due to their political and intellectual fanaticism. The fact that they sometimes played a role in the imprisonment and murder of the Imams will be overlooked for the time being.

The opportunity to discuss how the Imams confronted each one of these groups does not exist here. It is only natural that they tried to integrate the 'Alawī forces and the Shia. They would confront them mercifully to try and quell their differences. But, the method of confrontation that they implemented in regards to each one of these sects was not the same. It was expected that the way they confronted the deviant people and the exaggerators who struck the Ahl al-Bayt's school of thought with severe blows was very different from the way they confronted the people who were not able to bear the pressures of the Ummayyad and Abbasid dynasties; who willingly or unwillingly deviated from the continuity of *imāmah*. Along these lines, the Imams treated the *sayyids* from Imam Ḥasan's ('a) progeny and the Zaydīs compassionately. The Imams would mention their political mistakes and would even shed tears for them. But, in regards to the deviant exaggerators, they used the harshest terms and sometimes permitted their executions.

It is suitable to remind the reader that through a general examination of the political lives, beliefs, and stances of this opposition group, it can be understood that a large portion of traditions from the Ahl al-Bayt are about the duties, qualities, and stations of *imāmah* and the necessity to refrain from fanatic political movements and uprisings. It seems as if all of the groups that have been mentioned were unanimous in their discredit of and general opposition to the Shia Imams' school of thought. But the characteristics, purposes, and methods of opposition differed. Therefore, considering the length of the period of *imāmah* and the various conditions that the Imams were in, a clear and uniform method of confrontation cannot be described. But, it is concluded from the collection of ethical, social, and theological confrontations of the Ahl al-Bayt against these groups that the purpose was to bid the right and forbid the wrong, employing the policy of attracting and guiding, and being firmly based on the principle of unity. The common practice of these ambassadors of guidance and spiritual healers in their various theological, political, legal, and social confrontations was that they were based on generosity and knowledge—always being in consonance with fair disputation and observing propriety in criticism and aiming only to guide.

The Voice of Unity – Part III: Roots of Division*

Muḥammad Wāʿiz-Zādeh Khurāsānī

Translated by Hamid Waqar

Abstract:

As the third in a series of talks regarding the subject of unity, the present article focuses on its antonym—i.e., the issue of division. At the outset, two types of differences are mentioned: 1) differences that are condemned in the Qurʾān and 2) those that are considered beneficial, or at the least, tolerated by the faith. This talk focuses on the first of the two. Using the Qurʾān as the underlying criteria to understand the issue, the author presents numerous verses from the sacred text in which the topic of division has been broached. His analysis results in the following conclusion: the issue of differences and falling into division is explicitly prohibited in the Qurʾān and results in abasement in this world and retribution in the next.

Keywords: Islamic unity, Ummah, Muslim brotherhood, division, sectarianism, transgression, love of the world, partisanship.

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

The topic of our discussion in this chain of speeches is the one single Islamic Ummah and sectarian division. A discussion about unity is naturally related to a discussion about the roots of division. How nice it would be if there were no differences, and the discussion was always about unity and brotherhood. But, the natural course of human life and the reality of the situation show that unity is coupled with differences and division.

The Qurʾān discusses the issues of unity and differences together, and as such it would be right for us to do so as well. But, the organization of issues and the summary of them, with the purpose of clarity and explanation, present an obstacle for such a method of discussion.

In the previous two speeches, two particular topics were broached. On the first day, I spoke about the unified Islamic Ummah in an attempt to answer the questions: What is meant by a unified Ummah and what condi-

* This is the third of a series of talks delivered in 1991 by Muḥammad Wāʿiz-Zādeh Khurāsānī. The first two were printed in previous issues of the English Taqrib journal.

tions does it have? In the next session, I discussed Islamic brotherhood. Brotherhood, in reality, is the foundation of Islamic unity. Today, our discussion will be about the differences within the Islamic Ummah.

Considering that a great amount of confusion has gradually penetrated the Islamic world over the last fourteen hundred years, and considering the fact that division has permeated Islamic society, it is natural for us to want to examine and find the source of it. The issue of division must be raised and attention must be paid to it, perhaps even more so than unity. It is noteworthy that the Qur'an also mentions this issue more than it speaks of unity, and as mentioned earlier, the two issues are often discussed together.

TWO TYPES OF DIFFERENCES

The discussion today will answer the following question: are differences always harmful, despicable, and to be avoided or is there such a thing as "beneficial differences"?

In reality, it must be stated that there are two types of differences. One type of difference pertains to beneficial differences, or at least differences that are not to be rejected or despised. There are also differences which are looked down upon and the Qur'an mentions them on the same level as disbelief, thereby prohibiting them.

Some people may surmise that Muslims must be unified in all respects—that all Islamic jurists must pass the same verdicts and that all Islamic thinkers must have the same opinion. But this notion is opposed to both human nature and the Islamic point of view. Often differences can be considered quite positive because they create the foundations for thought and the prelude to reaching the truth. An example of such a preliminary is prudent doubt, and it is often stated that in so far as doubt can be a precursor to knowledge, it is positive. A person would not raise doubt in regards to a particular issue unless he has general knowledge of it, which then becomes the catalyst for him to pursue it further. Doubt causes him to obtain the reality of the issue and to understand it fully.

Differences which act as the precursors to understanding and obtaining the truth are positive. But those that are motivated by evil and result in it are the ones that must be opposed; the misfortune of Muslims stem from this second type of differences.

The Qur'an has mentioned many types of differences. The main portion of my speech will be about the verses which discuss these differences as well as their sources. This will be followed by an analysis separating those differences that should be rejected from those that are beneficial. In general, the

following conclusion will be elaborated on: if the differences in question stem from thought or the deep pondering over an issue, without any other factor influencing it—such as politics, carnal desires, rebelliousness, or conceit—religion can tolerate it. This is the principle found in the famous tradition related through both Sunni and Shia sources about Muslim jurists: “The religious authority (*mujtahid*) who makes a correct ruling receives two rewards and the religious authority who makes a mistake receives one reward.”

Therefore, if differences do not stem from socio-political factors, from love and hatred, from conceit, from rebelliousness (as rebelliousness is mentioned numerous times in the Qur’ān), from the transgression of one person upon another, or from division into parties and groups, and instead, if it stems from individuals sincerely pondering about their faith in order to understand the truth and arrive at a conclusion with regard to it, such differences can be tolerated by religion. It would even be accepted if such individuals came to a false conclusion. Shias have been following grand religious authorities (*marāji’*) for more than a thousand years. The grand religious authorities are in unison about universal principles, but they come to different conclusions about particulars.

In many verses of the Qur’ān, the issue of differences has been examined as well as the source of these differences. These verses can be divided in the following manner:

I. Verses which prohibit separation and the formation of parties:

يَتَّيِبُوا الرُّسُلَ كُلًّا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَأَعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا إِنِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ
 عَلِيمٌ وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ
 فَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ زُبُرًا كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ

O apostles! Eat of the good things and act righteously. Indeed I know best what you do. Indeed this community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord, so be wary of Me. But they fragmented their religion among themselves, each party exulting in what it had. (23:51-53)

Allah first addresses the messengers to eat of the good things (*tayyibāt*) and to perform righteous deeds. He then states that their Ummah is a single *ummah* [of messengers] and that Allah is their Lord. Here, the unity of

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the Ummah is a necessity stemming from the oneness of the Lord.¹ Next, the messengers are ordered to have piety. This piety—which has been emphasized continuously in the Qur’ān—is when one takes precaution from acting in accordance with one’s carnal desires, ignorance, or conceitedness.

This means that the prerequisite for success in relation to forming a unified Ummah under a monotheistic world view is being firm in piety. One should not lose control of oneself. One should not subject oneself to that which the heart desires, that which the carnal soul dictates, or that which the material world demands. Rather, one should guard oneself and always keep oneself in check.

This part of the verse was about unity. As was mentioned, the Qur’ān usually discusses the issue of fragmentation while discussing the issue of unity. Therefore, without delay it states: “But they fragmented their religion among themselves.” The Arabic phrase used is *taqattā’ū* which means to tear something apart with force and persistence, implying that there was a clear division between them—that they broke up to such an extent that unity was not possible thereafter. Then it states: “each party exulting in what it had.”

Here, the “difference” in question pertains to the break-up of a society or the followers of a religion in such a way that specific parties are formed. The formation of parties signifies that members of all sides are willing to lay their lives down to defend their particular groups’ goals and intentions. One can say, therefore, that the form of division that is condemned by the Qur’ān is the division that causes separation and the tearing of the Ummah into parties where each party is happy with its intent and with whatever it considers respectable. Each group considers itself to be correct and each group rejects the other groups’ ideologies—in essence, “each party exulting in what it had.”

Therefore, the type of differences that is condemned is the separation of the Ummah and the formation of parties—that which is in opposition to unity. These divisions have been prohibited in the Qur’ān; they are strictly forbidden. In reality, this form of differences is a sickness which has infected the Muslims. Such a sickness must be cured before Muslims can be saved from separation and the formation of parties.

¹ Refer to the first speech. This verse was explained in two different ways: one of them was the unity of religions in so far as all the messengers belong to one Ummah, which is how it is explained here, and the other is the unity of the Islamic Ummah.

إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ
وَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ كُلُّ إِلَيْنَا رَاجِعُونَ

Indeed this community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord. So worship Me. They have fragmented their religion among themselves. Every one of them will return to Us. (21:92-93)

Allah ordered Muslims to hold fast to the cord of unity, to become one Ummah, and to worship only one God—Allah. But, they destroyed the unity that they had amongst themselves. Allah then warns: “Every one of them will return to Us.” In these verses pertaining to division, the Qur’an warns people that everyone will return to Allah and He will judge between them; he will inform them as to who was correct. When the divisions stem from the formation of parties, the establishment of sects, and general fragmentation, Allah states: “Every one of them will return to Us.” This expression will be explained more clearly later.

II. Verses which prohibit division after unity and which command holding fast to the divine cord and piety:

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ
مُسْلِمُونَ وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا ۗ وَادْكُرُوا
نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ
بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا ۗ
كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ءَايَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ۗ وَلَتَكُنَّ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ
يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْعُرْفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ
هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ۗ وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ
مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ عَذَابُ عَظِيمٍ ۗ يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ

وَجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُ وَجُوهٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ أَكْفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ
 إِيمَانِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ابْيَضَّتْ
 وَجُوهُهُمْ فَفِي رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ
 نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِّلْعَالَمِينَ وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي
 السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ
 أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
 وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ ءَامَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ
 مِّنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ لَن يَضُرُّوكُمْ إِلَّا
 أَذًى وَإِن يُقْتَلُوا يُوَلُّوكمُ الْأَدْبَارَ ثُمَّ لَا يُنصَرُونَ
 ضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذَّلِيلَةُ أَيْنَ مَا تُقِفُوا إِلَّا لَن نَّحْبِلَ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَحَبْلٍ مِّنَ
 النَّاسِ وَبَاءَ وَبَغَضٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَسْكَنَةُ ذَٰلِكَ
 بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقِّ ذَٰلِكَ
 بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ

O you who have faith! Be wary of Allah (i.e., have piety) with the
 wariness due to Him and do not die except as Muslims. 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. There has to be a nation
 among you summoning to the good, bidding what is right, and

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forbidding what is wrong. It is they who are the felicitous. 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, on the day when [some] faces will turn white and [some] faces will turn black. As for those whose faces turn black [it will be said to them], ‘Did you disbelieve after your faith? So taste the punishment because of what you used to disbelieve.’ But as for those whose faces become white, they shall dwell in Allah’s mercy, and they will remain in it [forever]. These are the signs of Allah which We recite to you in truth, and Allah does not desire any wrong for the creatures. To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and to Allah all matters are returned. You are the best nation [ever] brought forth for mankind: you bid what is right and forbid what is wrong, and have faith in Allah. And if the People of the Book had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them [some] are faithful, but most of them are transgressors. They will never do you any harm, except for some hurt; and if they fight you, they will turn their backs [to flee], then they will not be helped. Abasement has been stamped upon them wherever they are confronted, except for an asylum from Allah and an asylum from the people; and they earned the wrath of Allah, and poverty was stamped upon them. That, because they would defy the signs of Allah and kill the prophets unjustly. That, because they would disobey and used to commit transgression. (3:102-112)

Through the examination of these verses, the forms of divisions and differences that the Qur’ān prohibits will be recognized as well as the methods of curing them. The series of verses begins with the following: “O you who have faith! Be wary of Allah (i.e., have piety) with the wariness due to Him.” Undoubtedly this is a difficult obligation. Nevertheless, before the Qur’ān commands unity, it cites piety—a piety that is due to Allah. This means that as long as the hearts are not purified and the insubordinate soul is not controlled, unity will not be reached. It is like a so-called “scholar” who wants to establish his superiority over others and insists on the validity of his speech, though it be incorrect; this will only cause division. Piety must be obtained first. Then, the Qur’ān states: “and do not die except as Muslims [i.e., those who submit].” In other words, one must submit to Allah till the end of his life. The person who surrenders to his carnal desires does not have piety and has not submitted to Allah. Rather, he has surrendered to his own soul, his wealth, his position—such a person will not achieve unity

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nor will he taste the oneness of Allah (*tawhīd*). Therefore, the prerequisite for achieving unity, articulated in this verse and the previous verse, is piety.

وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا ۗ وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ
عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ
إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِّنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُم مِّنْهَا ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ
يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُم ۖ 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)

The above verse speaks of *tafarruq*, which in Arabic means “dividing into sects.” The term *taqattu*’ [in previously mentioned verses such as 21:93 and 23:53 for example] means “being torn apart,” while the term *tabazzub* means “dividing into parties.” All three terms share the same verb form² and usually indicate emphasis or severity.

The series of verses continues with, “And remember Allah’s blessing upon you when you were enemies, then He brought your hearts together, so you became brothers with His blessing.” Brotherhood between the believers and their hearts being brought together is one of the biggest blessings from God. The next verse states: “And you were on the brink of a pit of Fire ...” This is because of the divisions and differences that they had in the Age of Ignorance. The Qur’an continues, “whereat He saved you from it.” Allah saved the Muslims from the sea of fire through unity. The Arabic term *in-qādh al-ghariq* means to save someone from drowning. Then, Allah states: “Thus does Allah clarify His signs for you so that you may be guided.”

Consider the following concepts: piety, surrendering to Allah, holding fast to Allah’s cord, bringing together of hearts, brotherhood, divine blessing, and guidance. These divine terms are corollaries of one another (*lāzim* and *malzūm*). On the other hand, enmity in the hearts is similar to fire—

² In Arabic morphology, the form is called ‘*Bāb al-taffī’ul*.’ Hans Wehr has listed it as the sixth verb form. [tr.]

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i.e, it is a punishment, not a mercy; it is misguidance, not guidance; it is surrendering to one's carnal desires, not submitting to Allah.

Now that we have examined the content of the first set of verses, we must inspect and understand the next set. Allah immediately states:

وَلَتَكُن مِّنكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْعُرْفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ
الْمُنْكَرِ ۚ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

There has to be a nation among you summoning to the good, bidding what is right, and forbidding what is wrong. It is they who are the felicitous. (3:104)

The prerequisite for success in achieving these grand concepts—i.e., in unifying the Ummah, in holding fast to Allah's cord, in attaining piety, and in submitting to Allah—is that a group of people bid towards the good and forbid the wrong. Immediately after inviting people to that which is right, the Qur'an mentions the issue of bidding what is right and forbidding what is wrong. Without a group of spiritual reformists amongst the Muslims who bid towards the good and forbid the wrong, people will naturally tend towards dividing into sects and parties; they will undoubtedly lose their piety.

Therefore, one of the conditions of moving towards piety and unity is that a group of individuals take the responsibility to ensure that Muslims do not leave the boundaries of righteousness and move towards evil. They must be attentive to where the division into sects is taking place and where unity is dissolving. They must warn the Muslims of its dangers. Such a congregation must exist among the Muslims. If they do exist, then "It is they who are the felicitous." It is when we take their heed in navigating through the intricate path of Islam and Islamic unity that we too can become felicitous.

The next two verses return to the discussion of dividing into sects:

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ
الْبَيِّنَاتُ ۚ وَأُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ۚ يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌ

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وَتَسْوَدُ وُجُوهٌُ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ أَكْفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ
فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ

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, on the day when [some] faces will turn white and [some] faces will turn black. As for those whose faces turn black [it will be said to them], ‘Did you disbelieve after your faith? So taste the punishment because of what you used to disbelieve.’
(3:105-106)

What does Allah say to those whose faces turned dark? He asks them: “Did you disbelieve after your faith?” Did you divide after you unified? Did you turn to the path of evil after you treaded the path of righteousness? Division after unity, in reality, is disbelief after faith. Then He continues:

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ أَبْيَضَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ فِى رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

But as for those whose faces become white, they shall dwell in Allah’s mercy, and they will remain in it [forever]. (3:107)

Pay attention here for it is understood from the sequence of verses that the supporters of unity will have bright faces in this world and will be felicitous in the next. The supporters of division are the opposite—they will be punished in this world and the next; their faces will be dark.

Islamic unity and brotherhood are blessings of Allah in this world and will cause comfort in the next. On the other hand, division in this world causes punishment in the hereafter. Having a bright face in this world causes the possession of a bright face in the next; having a dark face in this world causes the possession of a dark face in the hereafter. The Qur’ān portrays the conditions of fortunate and unfortunate people by these two material terms: bright faces and dark faces.

It is interesting that after discussing this subject—that of unity and division—the Qur’ān returns to the issue of bidding the right and forbidding the wrong. Therefore, first the discussion was about unity and division. Then the issue of bidding the right and forbidding the wrong was raised. The discussion then returned back to unity and division, only to be fol-

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lowed once again by the concept of bidding the right and forbidding the wrong:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ
الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

You are the best nation [ever] brought forth for mankind: you bid what is right and forbid what is wrong. (3:110)

As explained, “right” (*ma‘rūf*) in the context of this verse means unity and brotherhood; “wrong” (*munkar*) means division into sects and parties, causing differences, and moving towards disbelief from faith. Therefore, the issue of unity and division is completely connected to the issue of bidding the good and forbidding the wrong.

At the end of this set of verses, the People of the Scripture are made as examples for us to take admonition from. The verse states:

ضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذَّلِيلَةُ أَيْنَ مَا تُقِفُوا

Abasement has been stamped upon them wherever they are confronted... (3:112)

The conclusion is clear: if Muslims disregard unity and divide up into sects and parties, they will have the same destiny. Looking at the situation today, one can ask the following: Why are Muslims more abased and subjugated than others? Why have others progressed and taken control of Muslims? Before, there were two super-powers in the world; now there is one; in the future, who knows how many super-powers there will be? The point is that all of them are non-Muslim and wield considerable authority over Muslims. Why? The reason is that Muslims have traversed the path of division—the necessary outcome of dividing into sects and parties is abasement.

III: Verses which Prohibit Heated Debates, becoming Weak in Religion, Worshiping the World, the Decree of Obedience, and the Decree of Patience

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ^ط

وَأَصْبِرُوا 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)

The obedience of Allah and His Apostle is holding fast to Allah's cord and piety, which, as was previously stated, is the source of unity and the source of goodness. Here dispute means fighting one another; differences must not present themselves in the form of dispute. What would happen if the differences do reach a state of dispute? You will lose heart. The Arabic term *fashal* (the verbal noun for *tafshalū* in the verse) means to lose courage. The Ummah will become a defective and weak *ummah* which can quickly become abased. Then it states: "And be patient; indeed Allah is with the patient." If you want to prevent these disputes and *fashal* you must be patient. Patience has a close relationship with piety because piety cannot occur without patience. If man desires a thing and a satanic thought crosses his mind, he has to be patient and control himself.

There are many types of patience, one of which is patience in the face of sin, and this is the patience implied here. If the source of division is rooted in carnal desires or a spiritual sickness then one must learn to be patient. For example, if two Muslims have different opinions about an intellectual issue (and Islam does not necessarily look down upon this), then one must not let one's ego take a path that leads towards the division into parties and sects, or separation. If they have a difference of opinion they must accept each other and tolerate the difference. They must bear the opposing view—i.e., they must be patient. Therefore, the method of keeping disputes from causing separation and the division into sects is piety and patience.

وَلَقَدْ صَدَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ إِذْ تَحُسُّونَهُم بِإِذْنِهِ^ط حَتَّىٰ إِذَا

فَشَلْتُمْ وَتَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَعَصَيْتُمْ مِمَّنْ بَعْدَ مَا أَرْسَلَكُمْ مَّا

تُحِبُّونَ^ج مِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرِيدُ الدُّنْيَا وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ^ج

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ثُمَّ صَرَفَكُمْ عَنْهُمْ لِيَبْتَلِيَكُمْ^ط وَلَقَدْ عَفَا عَنْكُمْ^ق وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ
عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

Allah certainly fulfilled His promise to you when you were slaying them with His leave, until you lost courage, disputed about the matter, and disobeyed after He showed you what you loved. Some of you desire this world, and some of you desire the Hereafter. Then He turned you away from them so that He might test you. Certainly He has excused you, for Allah is gracious to the faithful.
(3:152)

In this verse, Allah states his support for the Muslims up until “you lost courage, disputed about the matter . . .”—i.e., until their unified and strong society became weak and they fell into dispute with one another. They fell into sin after victory was granted to them. Here, Allah does not promise to continue supporting them. His promise of assistance is only as long as they protect their brotherhood and help Him: “If you help Allah, He will help you.” (47:7)

It is clear that divine aid has conditions, but when you have become weak, when you have walked away from your revolution or have become weak with regard to it, when excuses start to appear, and when sins become prevalent, divine help will not be heard of anymore.

Why have divisions and disputes arisen? Why did people turn towards sin after obedience? The answer lies in the verse: “Some of you desire this world, and some of you desire the Hereafter.” Your differences are in this world; your disputes are regarding this world. All differences have roots in the love of this world for “the love of the world is the root of all evil.” This is the truth. Even intellectual and political differences have roots in the love of this world. Moreover, your paths and destinations were different. Some sought after the world and some sought after the Hereafter. The differences rooted in the love of this world are the differences condemned by the Qur’ān.

There are other differences opposed to these differences. A person seeking the truth studies, discusses, and inquires. But, as long as he has not reached the truth, he will undoubtedly have differences with other people who are also seeking the truth. But, these differences do not stem from carnal desires, seeking worldly benefits, seeking position, seeking division into parties, or seeking division into sects—rather, it is a difference of opinion. Since reality has yet to be discovered for such seekers, there is no escaping

such differences. This type of difference will be discussed in the next discussion about *ijtihad*.

IV: Prohibition of Division after the Truth is Known with the Purpose of Transgression against Others.

A few verses will be mentioned where people divided after clear knowledge was given to them. The Qur'an prohibits such division, even mentioning that it reaches the border of disbelief:

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)

أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا فِيهِ ۚ وَمَا تَفَرَّقُوا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ
الْعِلْمُ بَعْضًا 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 transgression with one another... (42:13-14)

The Arabic term *baghy* means transgression and oppression. For instance, when a leader is delinquent another will take over leadership. A fight will occur between them and this is how division occurs. They do not only have a difference in an intellectual issue; rather, one of them wants to rule over the other and the other wants the same.

This usually happens after knowledge. They do not seek knowledge in order to find the truth, for they have already found the truth. Rather, each of them has impure intentions and wants to actualize them. The way that they can achieve this is through separation and division.

وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَعْضًا
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... and none differed in it except those who had been given it, after the manifest proofs had come to them, out of transgression with one another... (2:213)

Most of these verses are about the Israelites. They are explicitly identified in some places of the Qur'an:

وَمَا اٰخْتَلَفَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ اِلَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ
بَعِيًّا بَيْنَهُمْ

... and those who were given the Book did not differ except after knowledge had come to them, out of transgression with one another... (3:19)

In another verse it states:

وَلَقَدْ بَوَّأْنَا بَنِي إِسْرٰٓءِيْلَ مَبُؤًّا صٰدِقٍ وَرَزَقْنٰهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ فَمَا
اٰخْتَلَفُوْا حَتّٰى جَآءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ ۗ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِيْ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ
فِيْمَا كَانُوْا فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ

Certainly We settled the Children of Israel in a worthy settlement and We provided them with all the good things, and they did not differ until [after] the knowledge had come to them. Your Lord will indeed judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that about which they used to differ. (10:93)

The Israelites were given the good things in life (*tayyibāt*) as well as position [as seen in the next verse mentioned: "I gave you an advantage over all the nations."(45:16-17)]. But after all of these blessings were given to them, after scripture and clear knowledge was given to them, they still divided into sects. It is clear that such people do not have piety; that they did not practice patience against their lower self.

Another verse:

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِّنَ
الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ۖ وَآتَيْنَاهُمْ بَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ
فَمَا اخْتَلَفُوا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَعْضًا بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ
يَقْضِي بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ

Certainly We gave the Children of Israel the Book, judgment and prophethood and We provided them with all the good things, and We gave them an advantage over all the nations, and We gave them manifest precepts. But they did not differ except after knowledge had come to them, out of transgression with one another. Indeed your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that about which they used to differ.

(45:16-17)

The Qur'an narrates many stories of the Israelites for the Muslims so that the Muslims can take admonition. The Israelites attained success, overpowered the Pharaoh, and established a government. They were superior to other nations in their own time. Some historians said that the flag of monotheism, during the period of their reign, was in their hands. Other nations were not monotheistic. After this, they lost all their fortune at once. Why? "But they did not differ except after knowledge had come to them, out of transgression with one another"—because they wanted to transgress against others.

If you read the existent Torah (which, in reality, is a history of the Israelites clearly written after Moses, and not a heavenly scripture) you will find many passages pointing to the competition between the tribes of Israel. Their competition reached such a level that two governments were established in the tiny country of Palestine: in the north there was a government called the Kingdom of Israel, and in the south there was a government called the Kingdom of Judah.

Through their actions, they wrote their history. The Qur'an instructs Muslims to take admonition from it, to open their eyes, and to see that after the Israelites reached the height of power, they were abased, and as the Qur'an states, their abasement will last until the Day of Judgment. The root of this calamity was the fact that they fell into division. Hopefully Muslims

will not suffer a similar fate though, unfortunately, they have already set foot on that path.

The verse then warns: “Indeed your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that about which they used to differ.” He will say that their differences and divisions were invalid. Despite having the Torah in their hands, despite possessing clear knowledge, they still went off track. All of them were in the wrong; it is not the case where one of them is correct and the other is wrong. All of them are in the wrong. This is a promise of punishment dished out by Allah for people who, after clear knowledge has come to them, move towards division into parties, the seeking of position, and the seeking of this world because of their lower self. They move towards paths which have nothing in them except mistakes and misguidance.

In another place the Qur’ān states:

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَىٰ شَرِيعَةٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ فَاتَّبِعْهَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ
لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

Then We set you upon a clear course of the Law; so follow it, and do not follow the desires of those who do not know. (45:18)

Paraphrased, this verses states: “O Prophet. We showed you a path of religion, so resort to it. Do not follow the desires of ignorant people—which is the path of mistakes, disputes, divisions, and carnal desires.” The Commander of the Faithful states in one of his speeches: “Your biggest fears are two: following your carnal desires and having unreachable hopes.”³ Carnal desires means the disregard for piety which is the source of unity. Unreachable hopes are desires which one would not be able to obtain even if he lived for more than a century.

These two issues cause man to disregard the truth resulting in dispute and division.

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ الْكِتَابَ فَآخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ ۚ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ
مِّن رَّبِّكَ لَفُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ ۚ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مُرِيبٍ

³ Nahj al-Balāghah, speech 28.

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Certainly We gave Moses the Book, but differences arose about it, and were it not for a prior decree of your Lord, a decision would have been made between them; indeed they are in grave doubt concerning it. (11:110)

They disputed about the book itself. In another verse it states:

وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اٰخْتَلَفُوا فِي الْكِتَابِ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ

...and those who differ about the Book are surely in extreme defiance. (2:176)

In the previous verses, disputes about the truth after it was known were mentioned. But, in these two verses, disputes about the divine book are mentioned. These disputes would definitely become the source of future disputes.

V: Verses Mentioning the Differences amongst Parties

The differences of parties are mentioned in a few verses of the Qur'an. For instance:

فَاٰخْتَلَفَ الْاَحْزَابُ مِنْ بَيْنِهِمْ

But the factions differed among themselves. (19:37)

If a nation divides into parties, it implies that there are differences between themselves; in the absence of such differences, they would not have become divided. The issue of dividing into parties is an important issue in the Qur'an. It is necessary to deliver an entire speech about this issue. Whenever the Qur'an wants to speak negatively, it uses the term 'parties' (*ahzāb*). Whenever it uses the term 'party' (*ḥizb*) it is describing the party of Allah. This means that the party of Allah, amongst the Muslims, is only one party; if it is divided into parties then a tragedy has occurred.

Initially, I had wished to end this speech with a discussion regarding the differences which are acceptable and termed *ijtihād*. Although it is an interesting discussion, it is quite lengthy and I will leave it for the next talk. In that talk, we shall differentiate between the two types of differences in Islam: 1) that which has been rejected by the Qur'an and have even been described as being on the brink of disbelief, and 2) that which is acceptable according to the Qur'an and Islam—i.e., those differences that are in the fields of science and religion such as differences within Islamic jurisprudence and theology. It is imperative to clearly demarcate the line between

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these two types of differences—that which is rejected and that which is praised—in order to avoid confusing the issue.

In Memoriam: Āyatullāh Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Faḍlallāh (1935-2010)

In memory of the late Grand Āyatullāh Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Faḍlallāh (November 16, 1935 – July 4, 2010), it is appropriate that some of his seminal views with regards to Muslim unity are outlined.

His Eminence once confirmed in a statement that sectarian debates that violate Islamic mores are an offence against the very reality of Islam. He also reproved Muslims from going through the classical Sunni and Shia books with the aim of scrounging for errors and turning them into a foreboding cloud that would preside over the future generations. He maintained that the creation of any type of strife in the Ummah is tantamount to treason and is in direct opposition to the commandments of the noble Messenger (ṣ). Ay Faḍlallah, pointing out that sectarian debate brought relief to Israel, called on the Shia and Sunni leaders to confront it and support the Palestinian people instead of occupying themselves with marginal issues.

The following is the text of the statement that he issued:

The state of political disruption in the Ummah has reached to the extent that it is threatening the unity of several Arab and Islamic countries, and the sectarian assault, launched from several positions, is targeting religious and political symbols and creating big cracks in the Ummah's firmament... all these developments bring about sorrow and grief and highlight a number of errors and mistakes that have been and are still being committed at many levels:

First: The fact that the rhetoric has violated Islamic mores and values; for resorting to terms that connote *takfīr*, lechery, slandering, and insults, does not only offend those who use them, but rather the general Muslim community that models itself after the religious scholars. This trend could eventually lead the Muslims to become shocked by the bitter reality [of the offenders], hence driving them towards irrational positions and abandoning religious scholars and perhaps even losing faith in the reality of religion itself.

Second: Scrounging the classical books to dig out Sunni positions that condemn the Shias, or Shia views that condemn the Sunnis is one of the biggest slips, for the mistakes included in these books

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ought not to be turned into a sword that hangs over the heads of the coming generations, or an obstacle that impedes Islamic unity. Moreover, whoever seeks to dig out the mistakes of history and use them to incite fanaticisms in the present or future Muslim generations, is actually betraying the Ummah and disobeying the commandments of the noble Messenger (ﷺ) who had addressed the Ummah with a decisive speech, in which he (ﷺ) said: “Do not become misguided after me, some of you striking the necks of the others.”

Third: We do not reject the idea of criticizing any given religious leader, but we would like any forthcoming criticism to be based on objectivity and scholarship, and for it to remain aloof from fanaticism and the mentality of vengeance; for we neither approve of sanctifying what is not sanctified, nor support excessive criticism such as violates Islamic morals. Allah says in His glorious Book: “And do not dispute with the followers of the Book except by what is best...” (29:46), so how do you think the dispute among the people of the same Book, the Qur’ān, ought to be?!

Fourth: The ongoing sectarian polemics that are extending rapidly and that have reached the vast space of modern media through political forums on satellites, the internet and the like...all these developments bring about horror in the souls of those devoted to the Ummah and relief in the hearts of its enemies, especially the Zionist entity. This entity expresses nothing but relief at the fact that the Ummah’s leaders and scholars have entered into this escalating argumentative chaos. Meanwhile, the Zionist entity goes forth in its acts of killing , assassination and besiegement in Gaza and the West Bank. As it advances its attempts to judaize Jerusalem and tightens its grip on occupied Palestine, it makes plots for wars with all Muslim societies that are preoccupying themselves with marginal issues and useless details and opening the doors wide open to the American invaders and Zionist occupiers.

We call on the Ummah’s aware vanguards, the revered Sunni and Shia elites to take action at all levels so as to stop the internal fragmentation and put an end to these debates that add nothing except further complicating relations between the various Islamic parties. Moreover, we call on everyone to support the oppressed Palestinian people and end the siege imposed on them at the economic, social, and political levels, for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) says: “Allah will not bless a nation, unless the weak takes his right from the strong.”

SAYYID MUHAMMAD HUSAYN FADLALLAH

Given the recent fatwas of Ayatullah Khamenei and Ayatullah Sistānī on the issue of disparaging and denouncing the notables of the Ahl al-Sunnah, it is appropriate that we bring to the attention of our dear readers the fatwa of Ayatullah Faḍlallāh in this regard:

We forbid cursing, slandering, and abusing the mothers of the believers and deem such acts to be in contradiction of genuine Islam.

The opinions and fatwas of Āyatullāh Faḍlallāh have always constituted a unifying Islamic stand and have always insisted that Muslims should be aware of the danger of inciting and fuelling seditions and sectarian strife that would only tear them apart and serve to do nothing but facilitate the schemes and projects of the Ummah's enemies. Therefore, His Eminence forbade the cursing and slandering of the mothers of the believers and the companions, considering that such acts are in opposition to the practice of the Commander of the Faithful (‘a), which necessitates giving supreme priority to the general Islamic interest over any personal or secondary interests.

The following is the excerpt of an interview conducted by the Saudi daily *Okaz* with His Eminence regarding the issue of cursing and slandering the companions and mothers of the believers, on Safar 28th, 1429 H., March 6th, 2008 A.D.

Q: What is your stand regarding the issue of cursing and slandering the companions, including Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Āisha?

A: Personally, I forbid the act of slandering and cursing any companion whom Allah had mentioned in the following Ayah: “Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those with him are firm of heart against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves; you will see them bowing down, prostrating themselves, seeking grace from Allah and pleasure,” (48:29), at a time we set aside the issue of the Imamate and Caliphate, for which we have other considerations. As for the issue of cursing, I have always deemed it forbidden for any Muslim, and I state in all the relevant religious inquiries I receive that it is forbidden to curse and slander any companion including the Caliphs. I reiterate the words of Imam ‘Alī (‘a) which he said while he was on his way to Siffin and heard some of the People of Iraq cursing and slandering the People of Sham, so he told them: “I dislike you starting to abuse them, but if you describe their deeds and recount their situations that would be a better mode of speaking and a more convincing way of arguing. Instead of abusing them you should say: ‘O Allah! Save our blood and their blood, produce reconciliation between us and them, and lead them out of their

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misguidance so that he who is ignorant of the truth may know it, and he who inclines towards rebellion and revolt may turn away from it.” Actually, this text is found in the book *Nahj al-Balaghah*.

In this aspect, I tend to adopt the way Imam ‘Alī (‘a) used in interacting with the Caliphs, although Shias believe that the caliphs are the ones who deprived the Imam of his right to the caliphate. In his letter to the people of Egypt, he (‘a) said: “I suddenly noticed people surrounding Abū Bakr to swear him allegiance. I, therefore, withheld my hand till I saw that many people were reverting from Islam and trying to destroy the religion of Muḥammad (ṣ). I, then, feared that if I did not protect Islam and its people and there occurred in it a breach or destruction, it would mean a greater blow to me than the loss of power over you, which was in any case to last for a few days of which everything would pass away as the mirage passes away or as the cloud scuds away. Therefore, in these happenings, I rose till wrong was destroyed and disappeared and religion attained peace and safety.”

Thus, we deal with the issue of the caliphate in the same manner as Imam ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a) who was open to the caliphs, supporting them and guiding them to where their interest lies. It is narrated that Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (‘a) said: “It is easy to earn people satisfaction; just hold your tongues back against them.” Moreover, we deem it forbidden to curse and slander the mothers of the believers; on the contrary, they ought to be honoured as a sign of honouring the Messenger of Allah (ṣ). On this occasion, I recall the following verse of a poem written by one of our scholars, Muḥammad Bāqir Hujjah al-Islam, who died a hundred years ago, in which he says: “O redhead (Aisha), [the act of] cursing you is forbidden, because for the sake of one person, a thousand persons are honoured.”

Therefore, we deem it forbidden to curse, slander and offend the mothers of the believers, just as we deem it forbidden to curse and slander the companions, and we have issued a fatwa on this ruling and it spread widely throughout the world.

Q: Is this stand you have taken based on your rejection to the concept of slandering and cursing, in general, or out of consideration to the feelings of Sunnis, or out of your belief and conviction that the companions enjoy a high status [that ought to be honoured]?

SAYYID MUHAMMAD HUSAYN FADLALLAH

A: Actually, my stand stems out from the genuine Islamic line that we believe in; which deems slandering and cursing any Muslim impermissible, especially if that Muslim was a companion [of the Prophet], considering that slandering and cursing is [an act of] derailment from the genuine Islamic line. I believe that conducting dialogue, in a direct manner, places those engaging in it in an intimate ambience that enables them to ease and reduce the differences amongst them at the psychological, mental and intellectual levels.

Q: When we discuss the issue of cursing and slandering the companions with the wise and rational Shias, they say: this is the stand of the exaggerators in the Shia sect and not that of the sect itself, but the problem actually lies in the fact that the companions are scorned in the works of prominent Shia figures. What do you say about that?

A: It is natural to consider that the historic accumulations and personal psychological interactions have left a negative impact on the way the caliphs are regarded, as a result of the state of oppression inflicted upon the Members of the House ('a) that the Shias believe in; thus, we believe that the issues have evolved due to the historic accumulations and personal interactions. At a time we meet some Shias who justify cursing and slandering, we find some Sunni brothers who deem the Shias as Kafirs (disbelievers). I have even heard some of them saying that the Jews and Christians are better than the Shias, for they believe that the Jews and Christians are among the People of the Book, while the Shias are atheists. Therefore, we note that there exist many accumulations that ought to be treated.

Therefore, I used to say that my call for an Islamic – Islamic dialogue is based on the need for correcting the mistakes and removing the complications existing in any sect, by means of dialogue. This is because dialogue directly places those engaging in it in an intimate ambience that enables them to bring them closer to one another at the psychological, mental and intellectual levels.

A Brief Survey of Islam in Britain

Zahir Davdani*

Abstract:

Although the presence of large numbers of Muslims in the West is a more recent phenomenon, the influence of Islam on the West has a much lengthier history. This article offers a chronological survey of how Islam influenced various aspects of British history from the coins used by King Offa of Mercia in the eighth century to the printing of the first English copy of the Qur'an in the seventeenth century to the establishment of the Muslim Parliament in the twentieth century. The article concludes by looking at some of the more recent incidents that have brought British Muslims into the limelight such as the historical fatwa against Salman Rushdie in 1989 as well as the London bombings of 2005 and the growing trend of Islamophobia that has ensued thereafter.

Keywords: Islam in Britain, History of Islam, Islamophobia, British Muslims.

EARLY HISTORY

Contact between Muslims and the British Isles has a long history, going almost as far back as the period of revelation. King Offa of Mercia (died 796 CE) had a copy of the coins used by the Abbasid caliph Al-Mansūr minted, with the Arabic text 'Muḥammad is the Apostle of Allah' written on it in one direction, and 'Offa Rex' in the other. As for his reason for minting the coin, it is thought that perhaps it was to facilitate trade with the expanding Islamic empire in Spain, as the Islamic gold dinars were the most important coinage in the Mediterranean at the time, or it may have been part of the annual payment of 365 mancuses that Offa promised to Rome. In any case, Offa's coin looked original enough that it would be accepted in Southern Europe. Found in Kent, it was procured by the Duc de Blacas in Rome sometime before 1841 and has been in the British Museum since 1922.

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Dating back to the ninth century, the Ballycottin Cross, found on the Southern coast of Ireland, is also worth mentioning. It is significant because, like Offa's coins, the cross also bears an Arabic inscription. Set in a glass bead is the word '*Bismillab*', meaning 'In the Name of Allah'.

It is generally believed that the first Englishman known for certain to have been a scholar of Arabic was Henry II's tutor, Adelard of Bath (c.1152) who travelled in Syria and Muslim Spain and translated a number of Arabic texts into Latin. Among the works he translated was al-Khawārizmī's work on mathematics and astronomical tables. It was through these translations that the numerical value of 'zero', and the Hindi-Arabic numerals were introduced into Britain, and the West as a whole. If not for the work of al-Khawārizmī, and the translation made by Adelard, it is likely that Britain would have been using Latin numerals for a much longer period. His book '*Quaestiones Naturales*', consisting of seventy-six chapters, is a dialogue in which he discusses different scientific questions and what he learnt about them during his seven-year stay with 'Arabs'.

Muslim scholarship was well known among the learned in Britain by 1386, when Chaucer was writing. In the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, there is among the pilgrims wending their way to Canterbury, a 'Doctour of Phisyk' whose learning included Razi, Avicenna (Abū 'Alī Sīnā) and Averroes (Ibn Rushd). Avicenna's canon of medicine was a standard text for medical students well into the Seventeenth Century. Following Adelard's footsteps, others too sailed from Britain in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in quest of Arabic learning and returned to enlighten their fellow countrymen. This included Danel of Morley and Michael Scotus, whose translations of Aristotle from Arabic were of great value during the Renaissance.

Relationships were not confined to the intellectual, but also included political and partisan connections. For example, King John was excommunicated by Pope Innocent III in the twelfth century for offering his help to the North African King, Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad an-Nāsir, in his campaign against the Spanish Catholic King of Aragon. Much later, Elizabeth I offered in 1588 to enter into an alliance with Murād III (1546-95) to overthrow the then King of Spain, as she viewed the Muslims as 'fellow monotheists' and the Spanish King as 'idolatrous'.

There were several Moorish delegations from Morocco to Elizabethan England around 1600, which are said to have inspired characters in works of literature, such as Shakespeare's '*The Merchant of Venice*', '*Titus Andronicus*', and '*Othello*'. Besides scientific works, works of Arabic fiction

were also translated into Latin and English during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, such as the famous ‘One thousand and One Nights’.

The first English convert to Islam mentioned by name is John Nelson. Similarly, a number of British pirates based in the Maghrib also converted to Islam, such as Captain John Ward (c. 1553 – 1622) of Kent. Ward, who was also known as Jack Ward and by his Muslim name of Yūsuf Reis, was in fact a notorious English pirate who later became a Barbary pirate operating out of Tunis. Before dying of the plague in 1622, Jack Ward (like many other Christians who sailed to North Africa) abandoned his religion and adopted the Muslim religion of the Ottoman Empire. Around 1645, Barbary pirates under command of the Dutch renegade Jan Janszoon operating from the Moroccan port of Salé occupied Lundy (the largest island in the Bristol Channel, lying 12 miles off the coast of Devon, England, approximately one third of the distance across the channel between England and Wales), before he was expelled by the Penn. During this time there were reports of captured slaves being sent to Algiers and of the Islamic flag flying over Lundy.

The turmoil of the Civil War may have encouraged some Englishmen to break with tradition and an account written in 1641 referred to “a sect of Mahomatens” being “discovered here in London”. By 1646, King Charles was holed up in Oxford under siege by Cromwell’s army and the worst of the fighting was soon to be over with defeat for the Royalists. In December 1648, the ‘Council of Mechanics’ of the new Commonwealth voted for a toleration of various religious groups, including the Muslims. The next year, in 1649, the first English translation of the Qur’ān, by Ross, was printed. It had two imprints, attesting to a wide circulation. Reference to Islam and Muslims was part of the discourse of the times. Cromwell’s enemies attacked the revolutionaries for their disrespect of parish priests and rejection of the ‘High Anglican’ official tenets: “And indeed if Christians will but diligently read and observe the Laws and Histories of the Mahometans, they may blush to see how zealous they are in the works of devotion, piety and charity, how devout, cleanly and reverend in their Mosques, how obedient to their Priests, that even the Great Turk himself will attempt nothing without consulting his Mufti.” From secretary to antiquarian to Lord Protector, the Qur’ān was a text widely consulted and quoted: it had legitimacy for addressing not only Muslims overseas but Christians in England and the rest of the British Isles.

Unitarians in Britain were also interested in Islam, such as Henry Stubbes (1632–1676) who was an English physician, writer and scholar. In the 1671 he wrote ‘An Account of the Rise and Progress of Mahometanism,

and a Vindication of him and his Religion from the Calumnies of the Christians'. He was unable to publish this book, considered the first work in English sympathetic to Islamic theology; it circulated privately. He tried to demonstrate the similarity between the beliefs of Islam and Unitarian Christianity. Stubbe can also be seen as part of a growing tradition at this time who expressed a dissatisfaction with intellectual inconsistencies of trinitarianism and sought to discover the original unitarian roots of the Christian tradition in the Middle East.

THE COLONIAL PERIOD

The first large group of Muslims to arrive in the eighteenth century was composed of the *lascars* (sailors) recruited from the Indian subcontinent to work for the British East India Company. They established the first communities in the main ports of England and Scotland. Four hundred and seventy lascars were recorded in 1804. By 1842 between three and twelve thousand arrived in Britain. Records dating from 1873 show that the majority of the *lascars* were Muslims from India, Egypt, Turkey, and Malaya (now Malaysia). Similarly, other migrants came from a broad range of ethnic, social, and economic backgrounds. They consisted of people connected to the British Empire: Malaya, Yemen, India, and British Somaliland. Initial communities were formed in Manchester, Cardiff, East London, and Liverpool. Early immigrants were mainly sailors, but also merchants, servants, students, itinerant entertainers, princes, and people from professional classes.

From the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries Islam was firmly establishing itself in Britain, with significant activities both on the part of converts and migrant Muslims to set up institutions. The following timeline is a demonstration of this:

1860: Existence of a mosque at 2 Glyn Rhondda Street, Cardiff, recorded in the Register of Religious Sites.

1887: William Henry Quilliam (Shaykh 'Abdullah Quilliam) embraced Islam and led a small community in Liverpool. In 1889 the community rented a house, 8 Brougham Terrace, to serve as a prayer hall. He would personally call the *adhān* (the call to prayer) from one of its upper windows. The community was soon able to purchase the rented property and also 9-12 Brougham Terrace, which became the Liverpool Muslim Institute.

Following a visit to Turkey, 'Abdullah Quilliam was given the title 'Shaykh al-Islām of the British Isles' by the Sultan. The King of Morocco made him an *Ālim* and the Sultan of Persia appointed him as Consul. The

King of Afghanistan granted him two and a half thousand pounds toward the building of the Islamic Institute and Masjid in Liverpool.

He was also a social activist. He not only established a Muslim College with courses for both Muslims and non-Muslims, he also established a refuge for women and organised care for illegitimate children and found foster homes for them.

'The Crescent', a weekly paper, and 'Islamic World', an academic journal, were also initiated by him. He further wrote *The Faith of Islam* and wrote on inter-faith issues, addressing Christianity and the Judaic Laws. Quilliam is buried at Brookwood Cemetery, near Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking.

1889: Establishment of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, with an adjoining student hostel, under the patronage of the Indian Muslim princess, the Begum of Bhopal. It was the base for the journal 'Muslim India and the Islamic Review', re-named as 'The Islamic Review' in 1921. An early editor was the charismatic Khāja Kamāl al-Dīn, a barrister originally from Lahore.

1913: Lord Headley al-Farūq, the 5th Barron of Headley (1855-1935), accepted the Islamic faith. He was born in Woking and educated in Cambridge. By 1877 he had become a peer and served as captain and later lieutenant in the army. He was also Colonel in the 4th Battalion of North Minister Fusiliers. In addition, he wrote several books, the most famous being *A Westerner Awakening to Islam*. In 1916 he wrote to Secretary of State Austen Chamberlain for allocation of state funds for the purchase and construction of a mosque in London "in memory of Muslim soldiers who died fighting for the Empire".

1917: Sir Marmaduke Pickthall (1875-1936), after extensively travelling around the Muslim world, accepted Islam. Pickthall was born in London to an Anglican clergyman. He was a deeply literary man who dedicated most of his time to writing and lecturing, especially on Islam and its message. He is most famous for his translation of the Qur'ān, the first of its kind. 'The Meaning of the Glorious Koran' was published in 1930, and it is still one of the most well-read translations of the Qur'ān.

1928: Formation of the London Nizāmiyah Mosque Trust Fund by Lord Headly (Al-Ḥājj al-Farūq); these funds were subsequently transferred to the London Central Mosque Fund (which is the present day Islamic Cultural Centre in Regents Park).

1933: Muslim Society of Great Britain, under the presidency of Isma'īl de Yorke, organises Islamic events at the Portman Rooms, Baker Street.

1937: Abdullah Yusuf Ali, best known in the English-speaking Muslim world for his monumental translation and commentary of the Holy

Qur'ān, finally settles in Britain after years as an itinerant educationalist. British Muslims initiate their first political campaign by expressing opposition to the Peel Commission's proposals for the partitioning of Palestine. Yusuf Ali, drawing on his first-hand knowledge of the mandates drawn up by the League of Nations, lectured widely on the injustice in Palestine, at venues in Brighton, Cambridge and London. Yusuf Ali was the only non-ambassadorial trustee of the London Central Mosque Fund, thus representing the British Muslim community.

1944: King George VI visits the Islamic Cultural Centre— Regents Lodge in Regents Park—for its official opening.

THE MODERN ERA

The majority of Muslims in Britain come from what was the former British colony of India, both before and after partition; hence from Pakistan and Bangladesh as well.

The mass migration to Britain of Pakistanis (including Bangladeshis) had its origin in colonialism. For example, many soldiers who joined the British army in the war were posted to the British Isles, and some of them began to settle there. Initially, however, their number was very small, until after the partition of India. Partition caused the displacement of large populations, especially in the Punjab and Mirpur (a significant sector of the populations who joined the British army), who then began to look to Britain for their future over a longer term. Following the Second World War and the break-up of the British Empire, Pakistani migration to the United Kingdom increased, specifically during the 1950s and 1960s, as Pakistan was a part of the Commonwealth. Pakistanis were invited by employers to fulfill labour shortages and by being Commonwealth citizens, Pakistanis were eligible to full rights of entry and residence as well as full civic rights. Pakistanis found employment in the steel and textile industries of Yorkshire, Lancashire, and the West Midlands, mainly working night shifts and in the light industry of Luton and Slough.

Large-scale immigration began in the mid-1950s when manual workers were recruited to fulfill the labour shortage which resulted from World War II. Many people began immigrating from Azad Kashmir after the completion of Mangla Dam in Mirpur in the late 1950s as well. The construction of this dam, in effect, displaced 100,000 people, especially the Mirpuris. With their compensation money, some settled in other parts of Pakistan; others, however, looked for the sponsorship of their relatives in Britain and subsequently settled there in large numbers. Their initial intent was to earn

enough money to buy a plot of land and build houses for their families and settle in Pakistan. The rapid increase in demand for unskilled labour in British industries also occasioned large scale migration.

The economic climate in post-war Britain changed rapidly. There were fewer jobs and opportunities for people compared with the early 1950s. Inevitably, the government began to restrict migrant workers and in 1961, the Commonwealth Immigration Act was passed which came into force the following year. Arguably, this Act was the turning point in the growth of the Muslim population in Britain. The eighteen month long gap between the passing of the Immigration Act and its enforcement provided time for reflection for those who were working in Britain: did they want to return to their country of origin, or make Britain their home? Basically, the Act imposed restrictions on adults intending to work in Britain. By 1964, the Ministry of Labour stopped granting permission for the unskilled to work in Britain.

The impact of this legislation was such that each single male who had formerly shared a house with others, now began looking for houses for their families in a nearby neighbourhood. Once their families arrived, the immediate concern of the parents was for their children. They wanted to impart religious education by teaching the Qur'an, basic beliefs and the practices of Islam to their children. This meant allocating a house for their children's education in the neighbourhood and using the same house for the five daily prayers. Muslim dietary laws saw the development of *ḥalāl* butcher shops and the import of Asian spices. This also gave birth to the Asian corner shops in Britain. In this way, the growth of the Muslim neighbourhood had begun.

The second wave of migrants came from East African countries. Asians, who were occupied in the wholesale and distributive trade in Africa, provided the necessary banking and financial services there. Their participation in the economy, however, was checked by the Africanization policy of the newly independent African countries. Banks and private businesses were nationalized. This left Asian businessmen and their families with a stark choice between African enterprise, under strict regulation, or leaving the country. They opted for the latter. A large number of Asians had British passports, and so, they decided to come to Britain. This resulted in the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1968, which removed the right of entry to the U.K. for passport holders living abroad.

The Conservative government nevertheless allowed, amid much controversy, the immigration of 27,000 individuals displaced from Uganda after the coup d'état led by Idi Amin in 1971. On August 4, 1972, Idi Amin, Pres-

ident of Uganda, gave Uganda's Asians (mostly Gujaratis of Indian origin) 90 days to leave the country, following an alleged dream in which, he claimed that God told him to expel them. Their expulsion resulted in a significant decline in Uganda's Asian Hindu and Muslim population. Many Asians owned big businesses in Uganda and many Indians were born in the country, their ancestors having come from India to Uganda when the country was still a British colony. Those who remained were deported from the cities to the countryside, although most Asians were granted asylum in the United Kingdom. A plurality of the Asians with British passports, around 30,000, immigrated to Britain.

The number of Muslims in Britain from 1970 to the current time has undergone a staggering increase, going from 0.7% of the population in 1971 to 4% of the population in 2009, mainly due to massive amounts of immigration from Commonwealth countries. This has resulted in a much broader exposure of the British public to Islam and Muslims, to the setting up of numerous Islamic organisations, and more recently to growing sense of Islamophobia reflecting global events.

The Salman Rushdie affair of 1988, and Imam Khomeini's subsequent fatwa of 1989 was a turning point for Muslims in Britain, uniting them along religious lines in condemnation of the book and giving them a sense of being backed on a global scale. The event also signalled a noticing by the British public of the Muslims amongst them, and has had profound and far reaching cultural and political connotations which resonate to this day—from self-censorship of literature and art to the spreading of anti-Islamic sentiment.

After the late Dr. Kalim Siddiqui's role in leading the defence of Imam Khomeini's fatwa in Britain, he effectively became the spokesperson for the British Muslim community; given the terrible fallout of the Rushdie affair, he used the opportunity to create 'The Muslim Manifesto'. This was published in 1990, at a Muslim Institute conference on 'The Future of Muslims in Britain' and laid out both the problems facing Muslims here and the duties and responsibilities the Muslim community had living in a non-Muslim country. The Muslim Manifesto was to become the foundation document of the Muslim Parliament of Great Britain.

The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) was set up in 1997 to act as an umbrella body for Muslim organisations and has over 500 affiliates. The MCB replaced the National Interim Committee for Muslim Unity (NICMU) after a "process of countrywide consultations ... indicated that a large majority of British South-Asian Muslims were very concerned with the lack of unity, coordination and representation and supported the establishment

of an umbrella body.” The name ‘The Muslim Council of Britain’ was chosen on May 25, 1996 and it was inaugurated on November 23, 1997 at Brent Town Hall, by representatives of more than 250 Muslim South-Asian organisations from all parts of the UK.

The event of September 11th has probably been the single most significant event in terms of its effect on the life of Muslims in Britain, as it has elsewhere. Within hours of the Twin Towers attack, Muslim organizations in Britain were receiving hate mail. Examples include the following: “*Are you happy now? Salman Rushdie was right your religion is a joke! Long live Israel! The US will soon kill many Muslim women and children! You are all subhuman freaks.*” “*The rest of the world will now join to smash your filthy disease infested Islam. You must be removed from great [sic] Britain in body bags.*” British Muslims found themselves catapulted to a front line not of their making.

And these were not idle threats: Muslims were being abused and mosques desecrated as people responded in a knee-jerk manner. In Exeter, two days after the September 11th attacks, eight pig heads were thrown into the car park of the local mosque and a banner was erected saying “The blood of the American people is on the hands of every Muslim. Nuke ‘em, George.” In Swindon, a nineteen year-old Muslim woman wearing a headscarf was left hospitalised after being chased and hit hard on the head with a baseball bat.

A quick uniting of British Muslim bodies and condemnation of the attacks, however, prevented Britain slipping into an environment of intolerance towards Muslims, as happened in the US. The event, nevertheless, left its mark as a watershed in the relations between the Muslim community and the wider British public, sparking an increasing trend of Islamophobia and a viewing of British Muslims as outsiders.

Then on July 7, 2005, Britain had its own version of September 11th with the London bombings. The bombings were carried out by four British Muslim men, three of Pakistani and one of Jamaican descent, who were motivated by Britain’s involvement in the Iraq War. At 8:50 a.m., three bombs exploded within fifty seconds of each other on three London Underground trains, a fourth exploding an hour later at 9:47 a.m. on a double-decker bus in Tavistock Square. The explosions appear to have been caused by home-made organic peroxide-based devices, packed into rucksacks and detonated by the bombers themselves, all four of whom died. Fifty-two other people were killed and around 700 were injured. This event naturally heightened the already tense relations between Muslims and the British public (On July 9, Richard Littlejohn used his column in the Daily Mail to attack politicians in an article titled ‘Hello bombers...and welcome to Londonistan’).

ISLAM IN BRITAIN

As we enter the second decade of the 21st century, the situation of Muslims on the British Isles does not look bright. Anti-Islamic sentiment is on the rise, with the BNP (British National Party) gaining support after the formation of the violent English Defence League (EDL) in 2009—a single issue organisation whose aim is to oppose the spread of Islamism, Shari‘ah law, and Islamic extremism in England.

In surveying the history of Islam in Britain, we notice that it always reflects the global situation of the Ummah at the time, especially in today’s increasingly close global community. The fortunes of British Muslims are tied then to the aspirations and progress of the Ummah as a whole, and it would seem that things are going to get worse before they get any better.

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AL-TAQRIB

خلاصة المقالات

الانجليزية في القرن السابع عشر وتأسيس برلمان المسلمين في القرن العشرين. وينتهي الكاتب مقاله بالنظر إلى الحوادث التي حصلت مؤخراً والتي سلّطت الأضواء نحو مسلمي بريطانيا، من قبيل الفتوى التاريخية تجاه سلمان رشدي عام ١٩٨٩ إضافة إلى التفجير في لندن الذي حصل عام ٢٠٠٥ ونموّ التوجّه نحو اسلامفوبيا وتفاعلات هذه القضايا منذ ذلك الحين.

الكلمات الرئيسية: الاسلام في بريطانيا، تاريخ الاسلام، الاسلامفوبيا، مسلمو بريطانيا.

التقريب

صوت الوحدة (القسم الثالث)

محمد واعظ زادة خراساني

الخلاصة: في القسم الثالث من سلسلة مقالات صوت الوحدة يركّز الكاتب على المفهوم المقابل للوحدة، أي الفرقة، وفي المستهلّ يذكر صنفين من الاختلافات، أحدهما: الاختلافات التي ذمّها القرآن، وثانيهما: الاختلافات التي عدّت مفيدة أو التي يحتملها الدين على أقلّ تقدير. هذا القسم من المقال يناقش الصنف الأول، مستخدماً آيات القرآن كمعيار في القضية، فقدم الكاتب في هذا المجال العديد من الآيات المقدّسة ليؤكّد رأيه. وقد انتهت تحليلاته إلى النتائج التالية: الفرقة والوقوع فيها ممّا يحرمه القرآن بصراحة، وينتج عنها الذلّ في الدنيا، والعقاب في الآخرة.

الكلمات الرئيسية: الوحدة الاسلامية، الاخوة الاسلامية، الفرقة، الطائفية، انتهاك الحرمة، حبّ الناس، النضال.

تخليد: آية الله السيد محمد حسين فضل الله (١٩٣٥ - ٢٠١٠)

لمحة

رؤى سماحة السيد محمد حسين فضل الله وفتاواه اعتمدت دائماً مبدأ الوحدة بين المسلمين. وفي هذا المقال المختصر تُسرد بعض آرائه وكلمات في مجال ذمّ وشتم رموز أهل السنّة لكي يتبلور لدى القارئ انطباع أفضل حول هذه الشخصية وأهمية رؤاها في مجال الوحدة بين المسلمين.

دراسة مختصرة حول الاسلام في بريطانيا

زهير داوداني

الخلاصة: برغم أنّ تواجد عدد من المسلمين في الغرب يعدّ ظاهرة حدثت مؤخراً لكن تأثير الاسلام على الغرب ذات تاريخ أطول. المقال عبارة عن دراسة للترتيب التاريخي لكيفية تأثير الاسلام على تاريخ بريطانيا في مختلف الجوانب، منذ استخدام القطعة النقدية الفلزية من قبل أوقا ملك مارسيليا في القرن الثامن مروراً بأول طبعة للقرآن باللغة

خلاصة المقالات

تعامل الامام علي(ع) مع الخلفاء لأجل الوحدة الاسلامية

اسماعيل دانس

الخلاصة: بغضّ النظر عن القرآن الكريم وسيرة الرسول(ص) وسلوكه فإنّ الائمة الطاهرين(ع) شكّلوا مثلاً رائعاً لأهمية وضرورة الوحدة ولزوم العمل في هذا الاتجاه. المقال يركّز على كيفية تعامل الامام علي(ع) مع الخلفاء بعد وفاة الرسول برغم ما كان يملك من حقّ الخلافة والولاية. فقد قدّم الامام المساعدة والدعم للخلفاء في المجالات السياسية والاقتصادية والعسكرية والقضائية والدينية حفظاً للوحدة والثبات ودون تعرّض الامة لخطر الفرقة والتشتت. و عوضاً عن أن يكون هذا الامام نقطة افتراق الامة بالامكان اعتبره محوراً للوحدة في هذا اليوم، حيث تعاني الامة من الضعف والتضعيف من الداخل والخارج.

الكلمات الرئيسية: الامام علي(ع)، أبو بكر، عمر، عثمان، التعامل، الخلافة، الوحدة الاسلامية، الشورى، الامة.

الشيعة الامامية والوحدة الاسلامية (القسم الثاني)

علي آقا نوري

الخلاصة: المقال هو القسم الثاني من سلسلة مقالات تسعى لترسيم موقف الشيعة الامامية من الوحدة. القسم الأوّل نشر في العدد السابق من المجلة، وكان فيه تعريف للوحدة الاسلامية، وسردت فيه مواصفات هذه الوحدة بشكل عام وبالنظر إلى القرآن والسنة بالتحديد. كما قدّم المقال مناهج عملية لبلورة الوحدة وتجنّب الفرقة، وذلك من خلال تقديم أمثلة من سيرة الرسول(ص). وفي هذا القسم يتطرّق الكاتب إلى ظاهرة الغلو والتحريف والتزوير التي طالت الأحاديث. وينتهي المقال إلى أن أهل البيت(ع) ثبتوا بقوة في طريق المدرسة التي كانت تدعو إلى الوحدة. القاسم المشترك لهؤلاء الشخصيات الروحانية في نقاشاتهم اللاهوتية والسياسية والحقوقية والاجتماعية هو العلم والسماحة في النفس، التي عبّروا عنها بغاية العطف والشهامة، وما كان هدفهم إلاّ الارشاد باتجاه الحقيقة المطلقة.

الكلمات الرئيسية: القرآن، السنّة، الشيعة الامامية، وحدة المسلمين، المدرسة الشيعية، المدرسة السنّية، سيرة أهل البيت، الوحدة، الغلو، التطرّف.

التقريب

التسامح في تعاليم الرسول والليبرالية، تحليل مقارنة

عباس نيكزاد

الخلاصة: المقال يتعرّض لقضية التسامح في الاسلام وتعاليم الرسول الأكرم(ص) في هذا المجال. فبعد دراسة دلالة مفردات التساهل والتسامح يتطرّق الكاتب إلى وجهة نظر الاسلام وتعاليمه في هذا المضمار. يقسّم التسامح إلى إيجابي وسليبي، والايجابي منه هو الذي يرتضيه الاسلام، والسليبي هو الذي يقابله بالضبط. الاسلام لا يرتضي التسامح بنحو مطلق ولا يرفضه بنحو مطلق. والمقال يناقش الفوارق المبدئية بين الاسلام والليبرالية في مجال التسامح.

الكلمات الرئيسية: التسامح، التساهل، الاعتدال، الاعتداء، الرسول الأكرم(ص)، الليبرالية.

ظاهرة العاطفة في السلوك المعياري وتميّز الرسول في هذا المجال

آية الله محمد علي التسخيري

الخلاصة: تشكّل العاطفة جزءاً مهماً من النفس الانسانية ومرحلة من مراحل تنشئة وتربية الوجدان والشعور الانساني ولزرع الايمان بالله وتعميق الايمان بكونه ضامماً لجميع الصفات، وأهمّها: الحقيقة والعدالة والحب والعطف والورع. عندما تتجذّر العاطفة في النفس وتنغرس وتتكرّس الأفكار في هكذا أجواء عندئذ تنفتح القريحة نحو الكمال. لقد تفوّق الرسول في طي مراحل الكمال ومثّل انموذجاً كاملاً في سلوكه المعياري سعياً منه لتأسيس وتجسيم شخصية رفيعة في وسط البشرية. وقد سرد هذا المقال أمثلة متعددة من حياة الرسول في مجالات مختلفة، شخصية واجتماعية وفي مختلف الظروف، وسعى الكاتب لدراسة هذا الموضوع من سيرة الرسول.

الكلمات الرئيسية: الرسول محمد(ص)، السيرة، السنّة، العاطفة، الحب، العفو.

الإشرا ف العام: الشيخ محمد علي التسخيري
المدير المسؤو ل: الشيخ علي اصغر اوحدى
رؤساء التحرير: الدكتور السيد حسين هاشمي - الشيخ شجاع علي ميرزا
المحرر: رضا ن راشد
المدير الادار ي: محمد هلد ي باباجانيان
هيئة التحرير: السيد علي قلي قرائي - الدكتور مهدي هادو ي طهراني - الدكتور محمد جعفر
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محمد ليكنهوز ن - الدكتور مظفر اقبال - الدكتور رولاند بييج - الدكتور
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التقريب

رسالة متخصصة تعنى بقضايا التقريب بين المذاهب و
وحدة الامة الإسلامية

العدد السابع

ذو الحجة ١٤٣١