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Discourse 2: Adopt Common Things And Ignore Differences Between Islamic Sects

Introduction

One wrong conception formed by the term 'Islamic unity' is to accept what is common among Islamic faiths and leave the points of differences.

Within the folds of this conception lies a point, which must not be ignored. It is commonly used to block the way that raises issues of Shia belief.

In this method, we come across the same idea that necessitates silence. It invites discourse only in matters of common beliefs. Discussion is very much encouraged from this outlook. However the case is not the same with regard to subject of Imamate. Therefore under pretext of Islamic unity, the most fundamental issue particular to Shia school, which is belief in Imamate, goes into oblivion.

It is thus declared:

"All our efforts are towards this: Religions must wipe out past from their mentalities. Discussion should take place within framework of logic and reason including the most sensitive issue we have, i.e. Caliphate and Imamate...

In this said ground, discussion is possible away from sympathy with reason. The aim must not be to remove differences, but rather to control differences and create mutual understanding between two sides. Both sides should be brought home to the effect that presently these discussions do not cater to the need of Muslims. On the contrary, they do more harm than good."!1

Criticism And Analysis

Ustad Murtadha Mutahhari writes concerning the erroneous results of Islamic Unity:

"The second fault is: by raising these issues what would be the status of Islamic unity? The thing that befell Muslims was that their glory was snatched away from them. They were belittled and brought under domination of other non–Muslim nations. Imperialism, new or old, utilizes this tool towards igniting old differences. This has served as a good tool all over Islamic countries without exception. For imperialism is, in the name of religion, showing sympathy for Islam but aiming to enlarge the gulf and deepen rancor among Muslims themselves. Does it not suffice whatever we have suffered and endured through this way? Should we go on again? Will not raising such designs result in helping the aims of Imperialism?

The answer is: Unity and co-ordination forms the most essential need of Muslims. However, the old rankling rancor is mother-pain of Muslims; now it is contagion in the world of Islam. The enemy too benefits from it always.

It seems that the accuser has mistaken the sense of Islamic unity.

Islamic sects must overlook principles of their respective beliefs for the sake of unity. This was not the conception of Islamic unity among clerics and scholars of faith and open-mindedness a century ago. In other words, it means to accept joint material of belief among sects and to set aside the very particulars of their own belief. Such a thing is neither reasonable nor practicable. How is it possible to ask followers of a faith to ignore or give up certain principles, which are in belief or practice, in his view constitutes a part of text of Islam? That is for the sake of unity of Islam and Muslims he should turn a blind eye at a portion from the whole of Islam in the name of Islam?

There are several other ways to make people committed to a religious principle. The most natural one is reason and logic. People cannot be made faithful by means of request or in the name of interests nor can they be stripped of faith.

We ourselves are Shia. We are proud to be followers of Ahlul Bayt of Prophet. We do not consider a least thing, whether be it an appreciable or undesired, worthy of transaction against interests. We do not entertain any request from any in this regard. Likewise, we do not expect from others also to give up a principle among principles of their belief for sake of Islamic unity. To accept common elements of belief and to repudiate particulars of a sect is a kind of transgression on absolute consensus. 2 Moreover, it is not a true Islamic product. In any case, particulars of any sect among sects of Islam are parts of Islamic text. There cannot be Islam if it happens to be devoid of these distinctions and specifications. In usual terms, it is a difference in one party and in one single front.

Unity of a party demands that all individuals be at equity with regard to ideology, thought, way and vogue with the exception of personal matters.

Nevertheless, unity of a front means something different. All parties and groups, no matter however different in their taste, ideology, customs and norms must stand in one row against their common enemy because of combined elements common among them. It is obvious that arranging a row against enemy does not contradict with defending objectives and criticizing objectives of other brothers or inviting to their own objectives by associates of the same front. However, inviting to or supporting Islamic unity cannot bar the truth. Things that provoke bigotry or old rancor must not take place. Scientific discussion has an immediate bearing on reason and not on sympathy and feelings."3

- 1. Muhammad Waizzaada Khorasani: Nida-e-Wahdat, Pg. 120.
- 2. A new statement different from the one having consensus (Refer: Lughta Name Dahe Khuda, Vol. 26, Pg. 450).
- 3. Ustad Murtadha Mutahhari: Imamat-o-Rahbari, Pgs. 16-19.

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