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Discourse 3: To Make Difference Between Two Schools So Light As To Appear Depthless

Introduction

This is one of the ideas since the beginning of unity in question, which still can be seen in a scattered thought. It is to show differences between school of Ahlul Bayt ('a) and that of Caliphs at a very low level.

If difference between beliefs of two schools be wider and deeper, to bring followers of these schools closer becomes very difficult. Therefore, it is in the interest of unity-seekers to display this gulf of difference as too narrow as far as their claim is concerned.

If we appoint one as a neutral judge and assign him to study beliefs of both schools and then give his judgment or opinion. Without doubt, his reply will be that differences in beliefs of Shia and Sunnis are much wider and deeper than what claimers of Islamic Unity pretend.

Although topics of the subjects of discussion between two beliefs are common, its contents differ very much. To depend on common topics would produce only fictitious unity. Because the following discussions that are publicized have the same titles but have a vast difference between them.

Just take a look at the books:

Be With the Truthful Ones, Ask Those who Know and other work of Dr. Muhammad Tejani. He has written these books after having had been guided to Shia School. This will rightly prove what we have stated above.

Tendency towards unity, in any case, is bereft of originality and truth. It might be having strength and

salubrity in its early stage. Even then it is said:

"We find out at a careful scrutiny that around eighty five or ninety percent of matters concerning belief, jurisprudence and moral are common among all faiths. Therefore we must persist on these common principles with adherence, since they result in unity of Muslims."1

"The fact is that schools are having common principles."!2

"Islamic sects are common in jurisprudence, principle, speech, conduct, tradition and Islamic culture."!3

"Principle and approximately total absolute beliefs are common and final among schools. The branch issues mostly are causes of difference because each aims at a particular view."!4

"...followers of schools since the second century have a record. They have jurisprudence and speech. They are bound to a divine legislation. They do not differ from one another as far as principle is concerned. They differ only in branch issues."!5

"We Muslims also have the same story. All have one God, one Prophet, one Book and one prayer direction. Other mandates such as prayers, fasting, Hajj and so forth run the same in all sects. Since we have no knowledge of others we become the butt of wrong allegations about one another."!6

"One thousand three hundred and ninety odd years have elapsed since the initial call of Islam. Six hundred and fifty million Muslims exist among three milliard people over this globe. Although elements of difference in belief have separated them from one another, yet we do not see any basic difference in faith or religion among them. A Chinese Muslim, an Indonesian one, or a Muslim from Tatar or an Arab or an Irani – all are together under a belt of one faith and one religion."!7

"If Sunnis get acquainted with their Shia brothers and likewise Shias with their Sunni brothers, it will dawn upon them that the difference between them is not a basic one. The conjecture that exists in one's mentality regarding the other is nothing but a product of false assumptions."!8

"Islamic legislation is not a product of any fanciful imagination. It stands on a fixed principle. There does not exist any Muslim from any sect of Islam who might differ with another Muslim. If there is a difference, it is in the branch of the principle not in the very principle itself..."!9

"Those who are in agreement with regard to God, religion, Prophet, prayer direction and Quran, which are foundation stones of faith, must be mindful of principle that is the pillar of their own faith. They should regard it as an unshakable factor of unity, solidarity and integration."!10

Dissemination of such foul and fake thoughts in the first place will harm and hit the body of Shiaism and the base of its belief. Consequently, the original and real face of this school will fade into oblivion.

In this way the monopoly of guidance that lies in following Ahlul Bayt of infallibility and purity ('a) will be defeated and the most important pillar of Shia school will be demolished.

Today we ignore Imamate of Infallible Ahlul Bayt of Prophet while we dwell on belief of two schools. This we do to protect or seek unity. It is quite clear where we will end. The propagation of such thoughts will carry us to an undesired and unwanted wilderness. 11

As for Imamate and its position in Islam, we would like to dwell upon it since it has been criticized.

We refer here to views of scholars who themselves are fast pro-Islamic unity in its true sense.

One will realize, after a scrutiny of this analysis, that Imamate is a great difference between two schools. This difference has become a cause for differences in all discussions of belief entailing there to difference between teachings of two schools.

A school that believes in Imamate of Prophet's Ahlul Bayt will naturally grasp all elements and factors of belief and its data or literature from them – the infallible one. Similarly, a school which has no belief in their Imamate has nothing to do with them. To gain Islamic information the school will refer to sources other than them.

Difference in belief in Imamate itself can be like a lighthouse that guides the way in dreadful oceans. In all subjects such as conduct, jurisprudence and belief between the School of Caliphs and that of Ahlul Bayt ('a) through the scale of Imamate, truth and facts can well be sketched.

Criticism And Analysis

Shias believe:

"Imamate is a principle that gives a special distinction to Imamiyah sect. This sect is distinguished from all other sects of Muslims for this very reason. This difference has made Shiaism prominent among the rest of sects." 12

In this regard, Ustad Mutahhari writes:

"The issue of Imamate is too important to us, Shias. Nevertheless, to other sects of Islam it is not so important. The sense Shias draws from Imamate varies with that which other sects draw. This is the reason. 13 Indeed, there are some dimensions common to both schools. Nevertheless, there is a certain dimension particular to Shia belief. This particularity of issue of Imamate makes it an element of top priority to Shias.

When we Shias want to mention principles of faith we say: Monotheism, Prophethood, Justice, Imamate and Day of Judgment.

We regard Imamate a part of religion. The Sunnis also acknowledge something of a sort of Imamate. They do not basically deny Imamate, but Imamate they acknowledge is something else in a different form.

Moreover, that form, according to them, is not a part of religion. It is only a branch factor of faith. However, we have difference in this issue of Imamate. For the Sunni sect Imamate is one thing else while to Shias something else. How it is that Imamate stands as a part of principle for Shia sect while it is a branch to Sunnis? The reason runs the same as referred to. In Shia sect, it is quite different from what it is with the Sunnis."14

"If the issue of Imamate could have ended at the frontier of political leadership of society after Prophet we too would have shifted it to branches of faith and never elevated it to grade of principle. Shias acknowledge Imamate and do not stand on that extent nor do they suffice at that. Ali was one of the Prophet's associates. Others were too – Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Salman and Abu Dharr. Ali was superior to all, above all, more in knowledge, in piety, in eligibility. 15 The Prophet had already nominated him. Shias do not stop at this. They argue two other issues. The Sunni sect never acknowledges anyone as far as these two issues are concerned. It is not that they accept these couple of issues and reject Ali to be attributed with them.

One: Imamate in a sense of final and absolute religious authority to be referred to. The Prophet was the conveyor of divine Revelation. People used to refer to him when they stood in need of knowledge about any aspect of Islam. They used to inquire from the Prophet what they could not or did not find in Quran. Here is a point worth considering. The commandment, legislations, the data that Islam wanted to convey, is it all same as mentioned in Quran and told by the Prophet? This is not the case. Time did not allow the Prophet to convey everything to the people. Ali was the Prophet's successor. The Prophet conveyed to Ali all that ought to be said and conveyed. He taught Ali to the extent to make him his like. He molded Ali into an extraordinary scholar. He made him by his teachings such as not to make mistake in his sayings and to not say what is not from God. Therefore, the Prophet introduced Ali and declared:

O, People! Whatever religious issues you want to know, when I am no more, you ask my successor and successors.

As a matter of fact, here Imamate becomes something like an expertise of Islam. Expertise from the divine side; and the Imams means those who know Islam and are experts therein. In other words, they are persons who have attained all sciences of Islam from the Prophet. The method they learnt from the Prophet is so concealed, unseen and a secret one that it is unknown to us. Islamic knowledge was first transferred from the Prophet to Ali. And from Ali it sought the bosoms of subsequent Imams one after the other. As such in all periods of the Imams, Islamic knowledge or source was one and the same – infallible, without any deviation or error."16

"In Imamate in the first place is the issue of succession to the Prophet 17 This naturally entails the office

revelation used to descend. Message and revelation ended after Prophet's passing away. The content or gist of Imamate runs thus: Divine instructions or teachings are such that none can insert therein his personal opinion nor can he build up on his own taste. These instructions and teachings were vested in the person of the Prophet. People were convinced that whatever of religious problems they ask; the answer is true as they used to receive from the Prophet. They knew that the answer was not based on personal opinion of the Prophet. Therefore there was not at all possibility of any error or mistake. Therefore the teachings remain the same without any change, addition or reduction. It never happened that the instructions might have been amended or corrected on the next day because the previous day the Prophet had forgotten to tell something or told erroneously. Indeed we do not say such a thing about the person of the Prophet. We told this by way of explanation. The Prophet passed away. The question that arises is: Whether after the Prophet there existed a person like him to perform the office of absolute point of reference to comment, explain and expound divine religious commandments? Indeed, there did exist one to take over this office and perform the duty the Prophet used to discharge. But there is only one difference. What the Prophet conveyed and expounded, his source was Divine Revelation. And when the Imam or Imams discharged the same job, their source was the Prophet himself. The Prophet was based on revelation and the Imams, on the Prophet. The Prophet taught them. How the Prophet did so we cannot understand. A glimpse of it appears in the words of Imam Ali ('a) when he says: 'The Prophet opened a door of knowledge to me. At the opening of that door one thousand doors got opened.' We cannot explain how the Prophet received knowledge from God nor can we understand the type of spiritual relation between Prophet and Ali. The Prophet taught the facts only to Ali and not to others."18

of explanation of faith or religion excluding revelation. It was the person of the Prophet to whom

"Islam is a wholesome, consummate and magnificent religion and Imamate is its spirit. How can we say whether it reaches the extent Quran narrates about its principle and perfection? Or to the extent of the Prophet's words while explaining it and which the Sunnis too have referred? Whatever was Islam, whether is it the same? Indeed, the call of Islam was completed to the Prophet. However, the question is whether Islam was wholly conveyed? Is there not such a probability that Islam might have descended after the Prophet? As such, there could be many issues, which were not told because of lack of need or lack of demand of time. They might have been held in reserve to be told at a proper time. Therefore, the stock of such issues could have been in the custody of knowledge of Ali. And Ali should have been supposed to convey to the masses." 19

"The Sunni sect does not acknowledge such a position to any. They do not accept such a type of Imamate at all nor do they accept existence of Imam. It is not such that they refuse Ali as an Imam and accept Abu Bakr instead. No. They do not accept the office of Imam. Sunnis refuse such a status to all – Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and other companions of Prophet.

The theme of the argument runs in this sense that revelation descended on the person of the Prophet only and nobody else. We too do not say that revelation descended on Imams. It was the Prophet who

conveyed Islam to humanity. God told the Prophet what He wanted to be told of Islam. There is nothing either partly or little or more that remains untold. Sunnis further go to say that whatever the Prophet said, constitutes Islam.

There are issues about which the Prophet has not spoken even to his companions. About such issues, they (Sunnis) are confused and entangled in a puzzle. A thing not spoken is a quandary to them. They depend on precedent. They judge or decide upon comparing a similar case if it occurred in the past. Imam Ali ('a) has criticized this practice of comparison. In Nahjul Balagha, he says that such a practice means that God has sent an incomplete religion that you have to substitute by the system of comparison. Shia logic is: Whatever God revealed to the Prophet was full and complete. He did not keep anything short. The Prophet too conveyed the same in the same measure to the people. He too did not keep anything less or short. Besides delivering the message to the people he told all the commandments and instructions to his special pupil and enjoined him to convey it to the people."20

"It is here that we differentiate the duty of Shias and Sunnis in matter of explaining and understanding religion."21

In accordance with this fundamental Shia belief in Imamate, Ustad Sayyid Muhammad Dhiyabaadi has written:

"We differ with them in all things – in principle of religion and in its branches as well, that is right from monotheism down to the branches.

In two issues we have a deep and salient difference with Sunni sect. One runs in principles of religion and the other in its branches. As far as principles of faith are concerned our difference is in Imamate, which is a fundamental item to us.

We believe that Imamate holds in its fold foundation of all religious recognition and information. Therefore the difference with Sunni sect is that of sky from earth. We deem that belief in monotheism, prophethood and Day of Judgment will be of no avail if there is no belief in Imamate.

In other words, Imamate is a pillar and foundation of religion. If this item be deleted, our faith will be incomplete and our religious bases will be in want and will result in no good to us. Without Imamate, branches of faith will be wrong and principles will be of no worth; neither will its recognition be of any value."22

"Sunnis claim that Imamate has no role in faith; and that Ali too had no part in religious issues."

Faith consists of monotheism, prophethood and Resurrection day.

This is what the Prophet introduced to humankind. Finally, the matters are vested to the Ummah. The aspect of government is upto the Ummah to decide or to handle as deems fit.

They consider Imamate as rulership and social leadership, which the people themselves can manage or run.

Thus Ali has no role in Faith. This belief stands quite opposite to our point of belief.

We say that Ali has the real and main role in Faith. The message of prophethood depends on Ali's Imamate. Had there not been Imamate of Ali, the message would not have progressed.

As such, distance between them and us is to the extent of the sky from the earth.

We say that without Ali, Islam would be no more. They say Islam exists without Ali also.

What is a shell to its kernel such is the relation of Ali with Islam. Islam loses its spirit if there not be Ali. But they say the opposite; that is Islam exists with its spirit without Ali. So the gulf between us and them is too wide and large."23

Even though for the sake of creating unity it may be claimed:

"To know the Imam is not a subject but it is an adherence. It is the way to get acquainted with religious commandments. It is not like belief in God and resurrection so as to be subjective.24

Deviation In Principles And Branches Of Faith

Introduction

As we all know, one of the aims of unity of Islam is to avoid clashes, disputes, wars and bloodshed between Muslims.

Every Muslim is safe under Islamic civil regulations according to Islamic legislation. Life and property of a Muslim comes at the top of this civil law. On the other hand, differences in belief have been ground for destroying sanctity of one's life and property throughout history. Proponents of Islamic unity desire to have a word about sectarian differences among Muslims. Their end is that these differences may not hurt individuals because of their being Muslims. As a result, any excuse for any kind of separation among Muslims could be repudiated. Therefore, they usually say:

"...all of them (Muslims) are together in basic beliefs. In other words, beliefs which have bearing on one's being a Muslim. The difference that lies in certain matters is not to the extent to deny one's being a Muslim, but it is an adherence to a particular faith."!25

"What we mean is that unity or proximity with one another should push Islamic faiths to be together on those conditions that are subject to being a Muslim. All are Muslims. The difference among them is not a fundamental one. It is a marginal one which does not rescind one's Islam."!26

"Issues of difference existing in between are not of a category that could qualify one to blame the other of infidelity. The difference lies outside the principle and foundation. Therefore it is not a reason to say that these faiths have fundamental differences with each other."!27

"In this way they should seek real truth, fact and knowledge. As far as they can, they should settle their disputes by reason and proof. Thus they can reach mutual agreement on any issues of difference. What good it would yield to reserve for himself what he likes and to be a cause of dread for others? On the other hand difference in branches is not harmful nor does it push them out of the circle of Islam."!28

Criticism And Analysis

Declarations such as these towards gaining political unity are acceptable. Perhaps they may prove strong enough to achieve the aim. However in view of the highly exalted station of Imamate in Islam and Shia belief, they are bereft of originality and sincerity of thought.

We rather make divisions between teachings of Islam and principles of Islam and religion instead of maintaining Islamic principles and religious fundamentals. This is the important point overlooked that results in this outlook. The negligence is: We do not distinguish between worldly jurisprudence and fate of human beings in the next world.

Against the above division, unity-seekers have erroneously divided the principle (the common belief) and branches (the belief on personal make out) into two batches:

- 1 The basic faith: i.e. common among all sects. It constitutes the basic principle of Islam. This gives the identity of being a Muslim.
- 2 Branches of faith: i.e. beliefs particular to its relative faiths or sects. They are independent from fundamentals of Islam. They have no bearing on limits of Islam.29

Hence it is said:

"Principles means pillars on which rests the entity of a Muslim. If one rejects all of them or a part of it, he is no more a Muslim."!30

"Branches are same issues that revert to the principle irrespective of views."!31

"The meaning of branches is not only the side commandments, but it also means issues stretched out of the basic principle in both dimensions prior and after the commands and beliefs. In beliefs too we have a principle and a branch." !32

Here rises a question: When we can attain the goal without injuring the quality of thought and attain knowledge of all beliefs by personal conclusion why should we stick to unpleasant ideas or thoughts? Besides, according to real teachings of religion in this respect, which is agreeable to both sects, political

unity too can be attained.33 Descriptions about principles of faith and its standards; we make appear as brief knowledge is sufficient because principle is a scale agreed by all sects. As such, Islamic sects have no difference at all in principles and fundamentals of faith. Their religious differences, considering these narrations, consist of beliefs as a whole except common subjects related to branches!

It is thus said:

"Data mentioned in Quran and traditions; that is the principles Muslims had accepted and in the time of the Prophet too all Muslims were in agreement."!34

"By the common sum of principle we mean final principle of Islam acceptable to all Muslims. They are proved and established by Quran and traditions which Muslims have necessarily accepted."!35

"In this respect also we must go after deed36 of a category, a necessity of Islam and which are acknowledged by all faiths as an obligatory mandate in Quran and traditions. As in principles of belief, here too standard of acceptance of these actions is agreement of all upon it."!37

"Muslim unity rests on the pivot of basic Islamic principles and all Muslims agree upon it." 38

"The difference of Muslims does not lie in issues of jurisprudence alone. It runs partly in side beliefs too. Besides, it also exists in common principles."!39

Because of this narrow-mindedness, like the Muslims are excused in their differences about contents of common subjects they are also excused about belief in Imamate! 40

Rather it is said that their faith will not be harmed because of not having such beliefs.41

Whether a claim like this:

"A brief knowledge about principles and belief in it to the extent of common understanding is sufficient. Not in sense of comprehension that embraces principles in detail. It suffices to form a standard of being a Muslim and a ground for Islamic unity. Belief in this principle runs to the extent of a common understanding to all."!42

Is there something that goes beyond testimony of oneness of God and prophethood?

The above element creates confusion. Beyond necessary knowledge of principles which is a combination of subjects and general comprehension all arguments are side and branch ones. As a result they rest on personal conclusions! Therefore:

"Muslims in matter of branches should allow each other to have different beliefs." 43

Now according to faith one who gives testimony of God being one (i.e. monotheism) and prophethood, is a Muslim. And he is obliged to obey the commandments of Islam and enjoy the rights thereby.

As such, there is no need for a Muslim to know followers of all Islamic faiths and to claim wrongly:

"Justice and Imamate are principles of faith not principles of religion. Why they say so? Because Shias considers them Muslims who do not believe in this issue. Yes, they are Muslims though they may not believe in the said issue."44

Because to consider followers of other Islamic sects Muslims has a root in fundamentals of other than Ja'fari (Shia) jurisprudence.

Conclusion

On this base:

"Principles of faith are elements that constitute a faith. Principles of faith in Islam are of two categories. One is the same, which entitles one to be called a Muslim according to issues 45 of jurisprudence 46 that is: testimony of God's unity and prophethood.47

The other is salvation in the next world from divine punishment and resurrection to attain God's pleasure and entrance in heaven. This depends upon that alone. Entering heaven is subject to acknowledgement of that principle. Otherwise heaven is prohibited. He who does not believe in this principle is regarded as infidel and thrown into hell. This part of principle is called principle of faith 48 that is to believe in Imamate and to accept the Imam."49

Allamah Sayyid Abdul Husayn Sharafuddin has dealt with this issue in two chapters in his book Al-Fusool al-Muhimma Fi Taleef al-Ummah. According to him, sanctity of being a Muslim is preserved and protected by rights of Islam by uttering two testimonies. This is agreed upon by Shias and Sunnis.

He in the same way writes in the third chapter that: A great part in this regard is narrated by Sunni sect to the effect that whoever says: There is no god but God and Muhammad is the Prophet of God is a Muslim and his life and property is entitled to respect and regard. We shall evaluate it.

He further writes below the subsequent chapter: We shall dwell on a few traditions of Infallible Imams who have given sanction of Islam, i.e. of being Muslims, to Sunnis. They have regarded Sunnis in all respects entitled to rights50 that a Muslim enjoys like Shias."51

"Authority of jurisprudence and faith, the Second Martyr (Shaheed Thani) says after arguing about the reality of faith: From the data above you know that acknowledgement of Imamate of Imams forms a principle of faith in Imamiyah sect and a necessity of their religion. A thing if it be a part of another thing will vanish at disappearance of its origin or main source. There is no doubt about it. It is same as the matter in question. Accordingly, decree becomes necessary to declare one an infidel if he be not at home with the testimony of Imamate although he might have uttered the two testimonies. Some have said this decree varies with what you say: Who admits the two testimonies is a Muslim not infidel. The answer is there is no difference between the two decrees. We issue a decree that whoever does not

admit the said testimonies is an infidel in the sense of the gist itself and a Muslim outwardly. As such, these two decrees on this subject are different but there is no negation in it.

He further says: Outwardly, a Muslim means that most religious commitments take shape thereat. Consequently, the Messenger of Allah (S) has fixed two testimonies as ground to carry out religious obligations or mandates on the person who confesses.

The chief of jurisprudents and researchers, Shaykh Muhammad Hasan author of al–Jawahir says: Perhaps the numerous narratives that have come regarding infidelity of denier of Ali and denier of Imam are in the sense of absolute infidelity against faith..."52

As observed in religious teachings, we do not have divisions by name of principles of faith and principles of religion or basic principles and branches of faith. Principles of religion are of two kinds. Principles of Islam that is to pronounce two testimonies and its acknowledgements, the other is principles of Faith that is to have correct beliefs. Therefore, it is distinguished as religious recognition.

Conclusion

What are principles of religion and how they are specified and fixed, is in itself a debate. And what kind of denial it is with regard to principles that results in exit from jurisprudential obligations leaving only an outward appearance of Islam in this world? This constitutes another debate that the standards that fix principles of religion have no part. It enjoys special calculations particular to itself. In other words, conditions and standards of exit from the borders of being a Muslim and from the circle of outer Islam has no bearing on the main or branches of argument of Imamate in Islam.

Therefore from religious viewpoint belief such as Imamate can be a principle and a cornerstone of Islam as well. But an open denial of it based on any interests could cause exit from borders of being a Muslim in this world.

It is never allowed to create a new description for principles and branches of religion and belief and introduce self-made standards for religious base wherein the station of Imamate is shifted to a lower grade; all this for sake of preserving the outcome of fake and feeble facade of Islam.

Therefore in accordance with sagacious religious decree an open denial of Imamate and Wilayat of infallible Imams will not qualify one to be discarded as a Muslim had he adhered to testimony of oneness of God and the testimony of prophethood.

Although Imamate is the basic element of faith yet the testimony of monotheism and prophethood holds one from going out of the circle of Islam53 unless he has enmity to Infallible Imams or he denies both testimonies, i.e. monotheism and prophethood.

Therefore it does not befit necessary to consider contents of belief in field of monotheism, prophethood and resurrection as branches. As a result, contents could be considered as personal conclusion and

wrong beliefs of Sunni sect could be justified. 54 It is not necessary to discard Imamate from category of principles of religion and make it a branch discussion. 55

Reminder

"Ayatullah Kashiful Ghita says with regard to Imamate, which is the only basic cardinal difference between Shia and Sunni sects: <u>56</u> Shias regard Imamate a principle among principles of religion at the level of monotheism and prophethood. Further, their belief goes to extent that Imamate too, like prophethood is choice of God. Imam is chosen and appointed by God and Prophet. Ummah has no choice in appointment of a prophet and it is out of its reach and choice.

But our Sunni brothers do not treat this issue as a principle of religion. They have lowered and downgraded it to a political issue that can be accommodated by consensus or election which has no bearing on principles or branches of faith.

Yet, inspite of that...

Do you find a Shia pronouncing infidelity of one who has no belief in Imamate? Never!...

On the basis of this:

Acknowledgement of Imamate or its denial has nothing to do with Islamic society and relative commandments. The blood and properties (of both sects) is respectable and liable to protection..."57

Deviated Side-Effects Of This Conjecture

First Wrong Result

As you may have realized some seekers of Islamic unity have divided followers of all Islamic sects into religious discussions irrespective of beliefs, commandments, principles and branches. They have done so for sake of preserving Muslim sanctity. They have displayed principles such as to comprise arguments – absolute and final ones and common and combined ones among Islamic faiths. It has been declared such:

"Root of religion means the established facts, strong realities, absolute decided elements and common issues of religion."!58

"Principles are same comprehensive ones on which all Muslims have agreed."!59

Consequently, branches were mentioned as matters that had become separated from this absolute principle, which were final and common and a sign of distinction of differences between Islamic faiths.

To say it more clearly: unity-seekers distinguish branches and separate them from principles on the

ground that viewpoints differ in branches while in principles, viewpoint of all Muslims is coherent and consistent. It is thus said:

"Principles and sum of beliefs is nearly final and common among faiths. Mostly side and branch issues cause difference because each sect has its own view."!60

"Matters subject to differences are side issues."!61

On the other hand there exists no doubt at all that the prime issue of difference in Islamic Ummah is Imamate and Caliphate of Infallible Ahlul Bayt of Prophet. In this regard it is said:

"The issue of Imamate and Caliphate heads issues of differences among Muslims. Most differences – those of belief and jurisprudence, originate therefrom. None of these two fundamentals, Imamate and Caliphate, has had ever been a subject of common agreement between Muslims. In the era of the Prophet, it did not attain a level of serious consideration. In case it had been at that level it has lost importance by now."!62

Therefore the thought of seeking unity has pushed this issue into side branch or at the margin because it creates difference among Muslims. As a result, it has been treated as a branch or side issue and as such it assumes particularities significant to subsidiary or subordinate matters. They are:

- A "Branch issues which often are a source of differences should not be set in the middle of Islamic fundamentals or principles nor should they be treated such as to befog main issues."!63
- B "Muslims are at difference with one another only in little and branch issues. Such issues do not form the main spirit of Islam. In fact, they originate from wrong conclusions and various viewpoints of scholars or jurisprudents."!64
- C "Side issues and non-principles are objects of differences which should be resolved by scientific methods and exchange of views. If they could not be solved, do not let them dominate your mind and create fresh disputes among you. Islam does not deny difference in views. But the difference is natural and it is not supported by proof or reasoning."!65

Second Wrong Result

As could be gathered from preceding narrations, unity-seekers have brought belief in Imamate and Guardianship of Infallible Ahlul Bayt down to a branch level. They have utilized the excuse of preserving unity in the Ummah. All arguments relating to faith under the title of principle or fundamental and essentialities of religion would have to face this basic objection to the effect that there exist differences between School of Infallible Ahlul Bayt and School of Caliphs. The differences are deep and rooted. Therefore founders of unity-seeking concept suggest a brief knowledge of these handy matters for solution of this problem. The extent, they say is enough that could provide information to people of

common understanding. 66 Besides, it must comprise branches. Consequently, the matter turns to rest at personal conclusion of a jurisprudential merit. They say:

"A brief knowledge of this fundamental belief at the level of common understanding suffices. A detailed knowledge of it is not desired."!67

"Accordingly we must know and even acknowledge that most religious matters are of personal conclusion of jurisprudence. The matters of need or those of necessity are common ones. For example: God is attributed with attributes of perfection, beauty and glory. Quran too mentions it. But when details are dealt with, question too arises accordingly. For example, the attribute or quality – is it the very self or added thereto? Or intention (i.e. the will) as to whether it is a quality of an action or quality of self? This issue is in the range of jurisprudence. The laity cannot understand it totally. There is also no need for them to understand."!68

As for this conjecture, all discussions under these fundamental beliefs that go beyond common borders in glittering titles do not comprise principles because of their being within category of subsidiary character. It can be said in more clear words:

As far as this outlook goes, all deviated and wrong beliefs of Islamic sects in the chapters of monotheism and prophethood and... encompassed by jurisprudence are beyond the circle of deviation and crookedness! And stand in need of justification!

Because all these beliefs are absolute and beyond common understanding!

Third Wrong Result

Division of religious arguments that have taken place in beliefs and commandments is to preserve Muslim sanctity. 69 This causes exit of important arguments such as Imamate and Guardianship of Infallible Ahlul Bayt from category of prime matters of religion and become a subsidiary matter of less care. However it goes even farther, embracing issues, which were main ones in the sphere of branches. 70

Consequently, wrong conception gives shape to shifting of issues from main to branch and from the foundation to a side, irrespective of beliefs or commandments. It is said that:

"Religious matters are in two categories. One is the final and decided one. The other one is not final. The final and decided matters are those, which must be as wholesome, of unanimous agreement of all Muslims. We have other matters in religion that are not of much transparency. Or they might have been previously. But by the passage of time, lost importance and became ground of difference between Muslims. All issues pertaining to belief, jurisprudence and practice are common between two sects (Shia and Sunni). 71 But branches of it are the ground of difference. We shall deal what exists in the domain of jurisprudence; all issues are not final."!72

"Jurisprudence has an immediate bearing on issues of theory. Its authority and validity runs in issues that are outside essentialities and final say of Islam..."!73

"If we accept that religion consists of two series of issues. One is final, which does not carry any difference because there cannot exist any difference in it. Difference in these matters will make one to be regarded a deserter of religion. The other series of this is not a part of final matters and absolute essentiality. This is among theoretical issues. This is liable to create difference and arguments. There are various proofs and grounds in it. The method to reach to knowledge in the subject matters of this series is same as already mentioned. All ways end at conclusions of jurisprudent. As such, we must know and acknowledge that there are many issues in religion that lie in domain of jurisprudence...."!74

Fourth Wrong Result

When religious issues (related to belief or jurisprudence) are divided into two categories, principles and branches, the branch issues yield to jurisprudents' ruling. When this formula is accepted, it should also be accepted that each branch consists of its own peculiarities or special effects related to differences of rulings among jurisprudents. And they are:

1) This Difference Must Be Acknowledged

"Religious issues are divided into absolute and final ones on one hand and on the other in issues that are otherwise i.e. not final. Issues of the first category do not yield to differences. In other words, no difference can creep therein. But issues of second category are subjected to difference. In other words, they undergo differences. Sometimes, we have no way but to tolerate differences."!75

"Differences in non-principle issues are tolerable within framework of reason and proof. This difference is harmless. It is to a certain extent unavoidable because every jurisprudent has his own opinion in matters of jurisprudence."!76

2) This Difference In Religion Is Neither Rejected Nor Blamed

"There are issues perhaps never raised in early Islamic period, or if at all raised, they were limited and unclear. As centuries passed, clerics and scholars paid much care and attention to issues. Their findings brought in differences. Such differences are outcome of scholars' research, therefore cannot be called differences. It cannot be blamed on either."!77

3) This Difference Is Desirable And Useful

"Difference in any faith neither decays nor vanishes. So no saying goes about a difference when several faiths exist. It has a root in conclusions of jurisprudents. As many viewpoints as many differences. Islam acknowledges different thoughts or views; if thoughts be useful, so much better."!78

4) This Difference Is Not Harmful, It Solves Difficulty

"There are many differences in Islamic faiths in fields of jurisprudence and speech. These differences originate from difference in views of jurisprudents and they do not contradict basic principles of Islam. Hence they do not carry any harm but they occasionally solve difficulties also."!79

5) This Difference Is Good, There Is Nothing Wrong In It

"Efforts should be made to open door of jurisprudence in all faiths of Islam. Thus ruling of jurisprudents will be established by support of reason and proof in all aspects in branches as well as fundamental. The rulings can rescue matters from going under disputes and the Ummah going into disintegration. There remains only a difference in view which is not harmful but rather advantageous..."!80

- 1. Muhammad Waizzaada Khorasani: Payaam-e-Wahdat, Pg. 151.
- 2. Ibid. Interview in 'Haft Aasmaan' (Seven Skies) Magazine, Issues 9 & 10, Spring, Summer 80, Pg. 13.
- 3. Ibid. Payaam-e-Wahdat, Pg. 235.
- 4. Ibid. Payaam-e-Wahdat, Pg. 270.
- 5. Ibid. Interview in 'Haft Aasmaan' (Seven Skies) Magazine, Issues 9 & 10, Spring , Summer 80, Pg. 12.
- 6. Abdul Kareem Bi-Azaar Shirazi: Islam Aaine Hambastigi (Islam, the Constitution of Solidarity), Pg. 11.
- 7. Muhammad Moheet Tabatabai: Sayyid Jamaluddin Asadabadi wa Beedaari-e-Mashriq-e-Zameen (Awakening of Eastern land), Pg. 168.
- 8. Shaykh Muhammad Taqi Qummi: Article quoted in Islam Aaine Hambastigi, Pg. 138.
- 9. Muhammad Jawad Mughnia: Article quoted in Islam Aaine Hambastigi, Pg. 103.
- 10. Sayyid Jawad Mustafavi: Article: 'Wahdat Dar Nahjul Balagha' (Unity in Nahjul Balagha) quoted in Kitab-e-Wahdat (Book of Unity) Pg. 120.
- 11. Refer: Dr. Abdul Kareem Saroosh: 'Civil & Religious Constitution', Pgs. 169–182. From his speech delivered in Unity Conference, Tehran University, 1367.
- 12. Shaikh Muhammad Husayn Kashiful Ghita: Asl-e-Shia Wa Usoolaha (Fundamental of Shia and its principle), Pq. 107.
- 13. Sunnis do acknowledge leadership and Imamate in some cases. But the attributes of Imam are different from those of Shia belief. As for some conceptions of Imamate they altogether deny. It is not that they differ from Shias in qualities of Imam. The difference runs in the gist of Imamate besides the qualifications of the Imam. Imamate means (to them) leadership of a society. Ustad Murtadha Mutahhari: Imamat–o–Rahbari (Imamate and Leadership), Pgs. 46–47.
- 14. Ustad Murtadha Mutahhari: Imamat-o-Rahbari (Imamate and Leadership), Pgs. 45-46.
- "As a matter of fact it should be said: Sunnis from the very base reject Imamate that exists in view of Shias. They do not question its conditions and its very core is subject to denial." (Ibid.) Pgs. 117–118.
- 15. This much suffices: Negligence about appointment and divine text (Nass) has repercussions which we can also see today.
- 16. Ustad Murtadha Mutahhari: Imamat-o-Rahbari (Imamate and Leadership 50-52.
- 17. Of course after the subjects of Wilayat and Imamate.
- 18. Ustad Murtadha Mutahhari: Imamat-o-Rahbari (Imamate and Leadership 71-73.
- 19. Ustad Murtadha Mutahhari: Imamat-o-Rahbari (Imamate and Leadership Pg. 75.
- 20. Ustad Murtadha Mutahhari: Imamat-o-Rahbari (Imamate and Leadership Pgs. 52-54.
- 21. Ustad Murtadha Mutahhari: Imamat-o-Rahbari (Imamate and Leadership Pg. 76.

We shall dwell later in the subsequent chapters on the claim of those who separated from the school of Ahlul Bayt ('a) under the pretext of their having an excuse. It will be useful in the course of discussion to remember the publicized sources.

22. Ustad Sayyid Muhammad Dhiyabaadi. Booklet: Guidance (Quoted portion from his speech on 21/11/79. Commentary of Verse 41, Surah Anfaal Pgs. 10–11).

- 23. Ibid. Pgs. 12-13.
- 24. Nimatullah Salihi Najafabadi: Majmua Maqaalaat (Collected Essays), Pg. 176.
- 25. Muhammad Waizzaada Khorasani: Payaam-e-Wahdat, Pg. 257.
- 26. Ibid. Payaam-e-Wahdat, Pg. 258.
- 27. Shaikh Muhammad Taqi Qummi: quoted in Hambastigi-e-Mazaahib-e-Islami (Unity of Islamic Sects), Pg. 57.
- 28. Ibid. quoted in Hambastigi-e-Mazaahib-e-Islami (Unity of Islamic Sects), Pg. 56.
- 29. One of the wrong consequences of this is that Imamate is shifted to branches as we shall explain in coming pages.
- 30. Muhammad Waizzaada Khorasani: Interview in 'Haft Aasmaan' (Seven Skies) Magazine, Issues 9 & 10, Spring & Summer 80, Pg. 13.
- 31. Ibid. Interview in 'Haft Aasmaan' (Seven Skies) Magazine, Issues 9 & 10, Spring & Summer 80, Pg. 15.
- 32. Ibid. Interview in 'Haft Aasmaan' (Seven Skies) Magazine, Issues 9 & 10, Spring & Summer 80, Pg. 13.
- 33. That is the principles of Islam that shall be dealt in detail.
- 34. Ibid. Interview in 'Haft Aasmaan' (Seven Skies) Magazine, Issues 9 & 10, Spring & Summer 80, Pg. 15.
- 35. Ibid. Nida-e-Wahdat, Pg. 26.
- 36. Religious acts (Laws).
- 37. Muhammad Waizzaada Khorasani: Essay quoted in Kitab-e-Wahdat, Pg. 210.
- 38. Ibid. Payaam-e-Wahdat, Pg. 235.

Of course, this question remains unanswered: How agreement among Muslims equals religions concurrence that has resulted in a standard to distinguish the principles and decide its absoluteness? What is a reason or a proof for it?!!

39. Ibid. Payaam-e-Wahdat, Pg. 228.

This claim includes all matters of belief in which there are differences in side and common principles.

- 40. We shall deal in the following pages about the claim that the Ummah is excused in Usool (beliefs) and Furu (Laws).
- 41. Regarding the difference between Islam and (Imaan) Faith, please refer to the book, Marefat-e-Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.), (Knowing the Imam of the Age) by Dr. Bani Hashimi.
- 42. Muhammad Waizzaada Khorasani: Article quoted in Kitab-e-Wahdat, Pgs. 207-208.
- 43. Ibid. Interview in 'Haft Aasmaan' (Seven Skies) Magazine, Issue 9 & 10, Spring and Summer 80, Pg. 13.
- 44. Ibid. Nida-e-Wahdat, Pg. 155.
- 45. That is it includes Islamic rights.
- 46. This part is called the principles of Islam.
- 47. To pronounce the two testimonies of faith.
- 48. Having the right and correct belief in Islamic sciences.
- 49. Allamah Marashi Najafi: Ahqaaq al-Haqq, Vol. 2, Pg. 306.
- 50. This does not mean that believers do not enjoy special rights such as back-biting which is prohibited for believers.

Refer: Ahmad Rahmani Hamadani. Translation of Ali bin Abi Talib (by Husayn Ostadoli) Pg. 665.

- <u>51.</u> Allamah Sharafuddin: Mubaahis-e-Ameeqi Dar Jahat-e-Wahdat-e-Islami (Deep discussions about Islamic unity), Pgs. 33–45.
- 52. Ahmad Rahmani Hamadani. Translation of Ali bin Abi Talib (by Husayn Ostadoli) Pgs. 201–202.
- 53. The wrong beliefs can be treated with the same status.
- <u>54.</u> Refer: Muhammad Waizzaada Khorasani: Interview in 'Haft Aasmaan' (Seven Skies) Magazine, Issues 9 & 10 Spring & Summer 80, Pg. 12, 16 & 24.
- 55. Refer: Ibid. Interview in 'Haft Aasmaan' (Seven Skies) Magazine, Issues 9 & 10 Spring & Summer 80, Pg. 13, 14 & 18.
- 56. The root of all differences, i.e. those of belief, behavior and jurisprudence, etc. go back to this fundamental difference.
- <u>57.</u> Sayyid Ahmad Mawassaqi: Istiratazi-e-Wahdat (Strategy of Unity), Vol. 2, Pg. 205 quoted from Hambastigi-e-Mazaahib-e-Islami, Pg. 46.
- 58. Muhammad Waizzaada Khorasani: Nida-e-Wahdat, Pg. 28.
- 59. Ibid. Interview in 'Haft Aasmaan' (Seven Skies) Magazine, Issues 9 and 10, Spring and Summer 80, Pg. 15.
- 60. Ibid. Payaam-e-Wahdat Pg. 270.
- 61. Ibid. Payaam-e-Wahdat Pg. 191.

- 62. Ibid. Payaam-e-Wahdat Pg. 272.
- 63. Ibid. Payaam-e-Wahdat Pg. 135.
- 64. Ibid. Payaam-e-Wahdat Pg. 176.
- 65. Ibid. Payaam-e-Wahdat Pgs. 199-200.
- 66. Muhammad Waizzaada Khorasani: Article quoted in Kitab-e-Wahdat, Pg. 210.
- 67. Ibid. Article quoted in Kitab-e-Wahdat, Pg. 210.
- 68. Ibid. Nida-e-Wahdat, Pg. 92.
- 69. Refer: Ibid. Nida-e-Wahdat, Pgs. 83-84 & Pgs. 92-93.
- <u>70.</u> As it has been pointed out: Monotheism is the self of God. Prophethood is from the principles of Islam the common ones. No one can deny it. In a detailed discussion it is said that in the next word God is seen. Whether can He be seen or not? This is a branch. According to texts about possibility of seeing God many arguments have been launched. This must be regarded a subsidiary matter.
- <u>71.</u> In fact, he says: About Imamate and Guardianship of Ahlul Bayt ('a) this much is mutually agreed upon that religion of Islam dwells on politics too. The rest of the matters such as the very Imamate and Guardianship of Ahlul Bayt ('a) are subject to differences. Therefore they are branches and liable to personal conclusion of jurisprudents.

"Yes, we confirm this policy. I go even so farther as to believe this issue as totally among the essentialities of faith and common elements of all Islamic faiths. But as to the method of appointing a ruler as an Imam, or a Caliph is dispute among Islamic schools. Likewise, what qualities he should have, is a matter of dispute." (Muhammad Waizzaada Khorasani: Nida-e-Wahdat, Pg. 106).

- 72. Ibid. Nida-e-Wahdat, Pg. 83.
- 73. Ibid. Nida-e-Wahdat, Pg. 101.
- 74. Ibid. Nida-e-Wahdat, Pg. 92.
- 75. Ibid. Nida-e-Wahdat, Pg. 84.
- 76. Ibid. Nida-e-Wahdat, Pg. 134.
- 77. Ibid. Nida-e-Wahdat, Pg. 93.
- 78. Ibid. Nida-e-Wahdat, Pg. 128.
- 79. Ibid. Payaam-e-Wahdat, Pg. 271.
- 80. Ibid. Payaam-e-Wahdat, Pgs. 136-137.

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