

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ELIMINATION OF SECTARIANISM AND PROMOTION OF TOLERANCE

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ABSTRACT

No nation can preserve its existence with pride and dignity unless and until there is unity among its people. No nation or society can achieve all the developmental stages of success unless it is strong and united. It is a fact that a scattered people can never be successful in their aims and objectives. A well organized group of people is needed for the achievement of success in which unity is the basic element. Need of the hour is that all the people of society should be embodied as a whole so that Ummat-e-Muslima should emerge as one united Ummah. This difficult task can only be done easily when all the individuals and communities agree on this agenda that tolerance and unity should be promoted instead of disorder and anarchy. The concept of a united nation can only be possible if there is tolerance and forbearance in differences. The wall of differences is going to strengthen with the passage of time on account of the absence of tolerance.

There is only one way to root out sectarianism and create an atmosphere of mutual tolerance and that is to follow the Quran and Sunnah. That very path can be the path of our survival. Apart from this path there is no other means for us to get rid of this problem. Allah says in Holy Quran: (ان الحكم الا لله) (Al Quran 6:57) (There is no command, except that of Allah)

And prophet (SAW) says:

(فعليناكم بسنتي وسنة الخلفاء المهديين الراشدين تمسكوا بها وعضوا عليها بالنواجذ) (Abu Daud, 1997)

(It is obligatory upon you to follow my Sunnah and the Sunnah of companions and those who are on the right path and hold the Sunnah of all those firmly.)

Key Words Tolerance, Society, Recommendations, Sectarianism.

INTRODUCTION

History of Islam is a witness that this religion is based on the golden principles of peace, tolerance and mutual forbearance. When the Holy Prophet (SAW) reached Madina in the commencement of Islam, he (SAW) made an agreement with the Jews in the form of the Charter of Madina, so that Islamic state might be protected from internal conspiracies.

It was agreed with the Jews that they (the Muslims and the Jews) would establish peace and harmony in the state because belief in the oneness of God and denial of partnership with God are two points on which both the Muslims and the Jews are united. If the Muslims can make agreement with the people of the Book, then why not Muslim can promote peace with another Muslim, Keeping this belief in mind? It is a fact that our

religion is one, our prophet is one, the Quran is one, Allah is one, objective is one, Qibla & the House is one and the effort for helping the religion is the same, then why not the Muslims become one and united setting aside all the differences and pride and prejudice.

Allah says in Holy Quran for us:

لا اكراه في الدين قد تبين الرشد من الغي فمن يكفر باطاحوت ويؤمن بالله فقد استمسك بالعروة الوثقى لانقسام لها

(Al Quran 2:256)

(There is no compulsion in the religion, surely the path of virtue has been clearly separated from sin. Then who rejects the Satan and believes in Allah, he holds the firm handle which never can break.

And the Prophet (SAW) says:

الدين النصيحة، قلنا لمن، قال لله وليكتابه ولسوله
ولامة المسلمين وعامتهم

(Muslim, 1419 A.H)

(Religion is the name of welfare, we said for whom? Prophet (SAW) said, for Allah, for his book and his prophet, for Muslims, imams and for all Muslims.

FINDINGS

Individual is the very first brick for the construction of society. If there is any attempt for the development of society without the reform of individuals, it can not turn out to be fruitful. While the learned people are that part of a society that leads it on the basis of knowledge and selects a way of life for the society. Similarly government is that enforcing power which compels all the institutions of a society to perform positively. Along with it, the role of media is very vital in the contemporary world. Which has the ability to decide its future by performing its positive or negative role in the individual and collective training? So it is the need of the hour that such a conduct and recommendations should be devised or formed for all these social elements by the observance of which tolerance may be promoted in the society.

DISCUSSION

INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Prophet says:

الا كلکم راع وکلکم مسئول عن رعیتہ

(Bukhari , 1400 A.H)

(You are shepherded and everyone will be accountable for his subjects.)

For mutual peace and development of Islamic society it is compulsory for every individual that he must perform his role for development of society by acting upon the following recommendations:

1. Inception of persuasion and training for forbearance and tolerance should be started from home.

2. Mutual forbearance should be a habit. Do not be in opposition to each other. It is also necessary to avoid dishonouring the personalities and religions places of other religions and sects, so that it may not add fuel to fire. Allah says in Holy Quran:

ولا تسبوا الذین یدعون من دون الله فیسبوا الله
عدوا بغير علم

(Al Quran 6:108)

(Do not revile those whom they invoke other than Allah, lest they should revile Allah in transgression without having knowledge.)

3. Individuals of the society should refrain from prejudice in spite of their differences and they should be well wishers to each other. The opinion of each other should be listened and they should abstain from difference for the sake of difference.

4. If two groups of the Muslims fight against each other, avoid supporting the one group without thinking. Try to adopt the middle way which means to keep away from the fight and try to settle the dispute. In Quran Allah says:

(فاصلحوا بینہما) (Al Quran 49:9)

"Do patch up among them"

5. If there is objection on the beliefs of anyone, negotiate with him in accordance with Islamic principals so that there may not be hostile atmosphere.

6. The Muslims should be united on submission to Allah and all other common beliefs so that first step may be taken towards unity.

7. Every individual must have this spirit to keep himself attached with truth and this matter of him is only with Allah. There he has the right to change his opinion in any disputed matter.

8. It will also be very useful for the unity of Ummah that a sect or a person who has his personal point of view about

a particular incident or historical character of a particular person, he must not force others to believe in his belief.

9. The followers of every religion and preacher of every sect should make it his habit that they will not try to show their prophets and reformers superiors to others.

10. Every individual should give due place to respect of humanity and observance of human rights in his belief and action. To respect the opinion of others is compulsory for us.

11. Obey your rulers; (until they decide within the light of Quran and Sunnah) though there is hardship in acceptance and observance of their given orders.

12.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ULAMA AND MADARIS

Religious schools are educational foundation which helps us to create sectarian harmony in the society. On whatever grounds the religious scholars and teachers will train their students. It will also have its impacts on the society. Following are some of the suggestions on the basis of which religious scholars, teachers, sermoners and students can protect their society from disorder and anarchy.

1. Instead of disputed and critical syllabus, such syllabus should be composed, which have positive results.

2. Efforts should be made to promote religious harmony by ending religious violence and mutual religious refuting.

3. Every sect should be considered with in the parameter of Islam if it believes in the basic beliefs. Partial differences about jurisprudence should either be ignored or there should be tolerance and forbearance for them.

4. Every sect should pay due respect to the respectable personalities of other sect.

5. Scholars of various sects should agree on a code of conduct which should have a legal and constitutional status so that violence and differences should come to an end.

6. Secondary differences should not be given extra- ordinary importance. The sentiments of the Muslim should not be stirred up by adding fuel to fire regarding religion disputed matters. Because it is such a negative practice which is detrimental to Muslim society and religious environment.

7. There is abundance of such courses in religious schools which are common. We should try even to search common ways in differences. For this purpose we should develop tolerance and the scholars should also teach the lesson of tolerance to their students in their religious schools.

8. There should be no literature based on any type of prejudice in these religious school (Madras's) and the curriculum of these madras's should be constituted in such a way that the students of one sect may not develop any type of grievances against the students of other sects.

9. They should cooperate with each other on the agreed issues and should avoid any type of dispute on the issues which have not been agreed upon.

10. The religious students should not propagate the disputed issues among the illiterate people and should not entangle them in such issues which are beyond their understanding. They should rather try to unit them.

11. If a situation arise when there is a discussion or dispute about some religious issue of one sect against the

other, they should adopt a moderate way both in their actions and words.

12. The differences and disputes should be tried to solve and settle with honesty, good arguments and polite attitude. Their purpose should not be to defeat one another.

13. There should be tolerance and forbearance in case of any difference and there should be a sense of respect for the opinion of others. The parties should not convert the difference of opinion into hostility.

14. The religious scholars should deliver speeches on topics that are acceptable to all the religious groups and sects and should try to develop unity among the Ummah.

15. Every group of thinkers and scholars should try to keep the ignorant and illiterate people away from the pulpit and Mehrab of the mosque.

16. The scholars of all sects should try to compose a book that should consist of all the basic beliefs and doctrines of all the sects.

17. The religious school should start discussions and speeches on religious harmony and mutual relations.

18. The first preference of the scholars should be the preaching of Islam. They should not try to preach about their sects.

In short, if the religious scholars, teachers, imams and speakers of the mosques deliver their speeches and write literature about the tolerance among various sects, their will be no destruction and no difference between the Muslims that may lead them to quarrel with one another.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GOVERNMENT

The government of country is like the back bone of the society. In case of any

defect in the back bone the body becomes out of order and helpless. A government of a country can play a very decisive role in eliminating disruption and differences among the people and create tolerance among them. This task is impossible for any other institution. There are some rules and principles which may create peace in the society and may save it from the evils of differences.

1. The propagation of sectarian views and to create disgust and hate among the various groups of the society should be declared a big crime through the law of the government.

2. It should be declared a crime according to the law of country to declare any Muslim a non Muslim.

3. Such movements should be encouraged that work for the unity of nation and try to develop tolerance in the society.

4. The politicians should be strictly forbidden to propagate any sectarian prejudice. And should not chant religious slogans in their election campaigns.

5. The government should persuade the people to respect all the prophets equally and should try to remove the differences that may cause terrorism in a society.

6. The leaders and followers of no sects and religion should be allowed to violate the law of government otherwise they should be subject to law suits.

7. There should a single federal controlling authority for all the religious schools instead of more than one so that a single curriculum may be developed.

8. There should be a single federal controlling authority in the whole country that may give exam to all the religious schools of all the sects and should have the authority to issue them

certificates and degrees. All the religious schools should be accountable to this very central authority.

9. There should be a central text book board in the whole country that may recommend courses and books for all the religious schools.

10. A committee should be constituted that should prepare such a curriculum for the whole country which include the principles, laws, doctrines, history and philosophy of all the schools of thought. So that no sects or schools of thought may refuse to accept that course or curriculum for its schools.

11. The curriculum and courses should teach the students the holy Quran, Hadith, ethics and should try to clean the inner selves of the students.

12. The jurisprudence should include such daily problems that may eliminate or at least minimize the problems that are faced by the country.

13. The government should not create any hindrance for any sect or religion in performing their religious duties and customs nor should allow any other person to do so.

14. There should be a severe punishment for the people who are involved in subversive and negative activities.

15. There should be a forum in the whole country that should have the authority to issue Fatwa's (decisions regarding any religious problem).

16. It should be a culpable crime to propagate such views among the people that may lead to differences and disputes among the people.

17. If there are some elements of sectarianism in the literature of some school of thought it should be censored at once. And this person should be made accountable to law.

18. The government should act upon the recommendations of the scholars of the various schools of thought regarding the discouragement of sectarianism and development of tolerance.

19. Such speeches and writings should be strictly forbidden that may torture any member of the society.

In short, the government should seriously work on the above mentioned points to remove the terrorist activities, disruption in the society and to create the phenomena of peace and solidarity in the nation.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRINT AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Print and electronic media may create and develop tolerance in the society and remove disturbance and disruption by writing columns, books, dramas and dialogues. Electronic media is an institution to which both the illiterate and literate people have almost equal access. People may be persuaded to hate disruption and to develop unity in the society. The following recommendations are offered for all the people so that they may play a good role for the welfare of the society.

1. News paper and magazines should not print such columns and essays that may cause sectarianism in the society. They should print such items that may developed religious tolerance and may remove differences and disruption from the society.

2. Media should be strictly prohibited from presenting such programs that may create sectarianism in the society. On the other hand it should present such programs that may remove sectarianism from the society.

3. The dangers and destructive effects should be highlighted through print and electronic media.

4. We should search the common aspects of all the sects and schools of thought in order to develop tolerance in the society.

5. Media should play a positive role, they should be careful about expressing any negative views in the press.

6. Print and electronic media should act upon the moral principles laid out by PEMRA.

7.

CONCLUSION

Islam has given us universal and cosmopolitan principles that may not be found in any system of the world. The followers of all religions and all sects have accepted these principles and are ready to follow them whole heartedly and sincerely. If human being act upon these principals and create forbearance and tolerance in them selves then there will be no problem in the world. This

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world has now changed into a global village or rather a global family. It is not impossible to get access to any person in any part of the world to help him and fulfill his needs. We should accept the great jurisprudence of Islam open heartedly and should try to tread upon the paths where we see tolerance and unity in the society. There should be no disgust, hostility and hate in the society. The Whole world may not unanimously accept a single system of jurisprudence and it is not even according to the desire of our Allah. However we should try to achieve unity in every form. If we follow the principles of unity during performing our Hajj by performing all the rights of pilgrimage in the same way in our Holy cities so why should this good spirit become dim when we go away from this atmosphere? In most of the cases we put before us our personal differences in the guise of sectarian differences and in this way we develop grievances among our selves.

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