

Peaceful Coexistence Under Qur'an and Sunnah

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Abstract

Qur'an is the Apex authority of guidance for the Muslims and its teachings leads to have a peaceful life in a just, truthful, unbiased society having equity and fairness. Qur'an has given the clear orders that conduct of Rasool Allah (peace be upon him) is the ideal and best example to follow which is Sunnah. In spite of this ground realities reflect an erosion of our moral and ethical standards, an overall degradation of our value system, discord, rivalry and internal strife due to the sectarian differences. Although these differences are not about basic and fundamental beliefs but conflict over trivial matters is causing divisions into sects and further sub sects. This division and conflicts, once, at low scale and limited are now aggravated to such a sad state of affairs that Ulema of one faction are not prepared to interact or even sit with the Ulema of another faction. This rot has spread into various factions of the once homogeneous social sect. For finding the root causes of differences within Muslim Sunni sect along with Qur'an and Sunnah views over these differences, a research study has recently been conducted. The major findings indicate that majority of respondents could not base their arguments on Qur'an and Sunnah for their differences with other sub-sects. religious clerics are misleading their followers with hate speeches and objectionable printed material for their political and economic gains. However, it is imperative that our Ulema should forego the minor differences and endeavor sincerely to foster both



inter-Communal and intra-communal harmony for the sake of peaceful co-existence and societal progress, which is the need of the hour.

Keywords: Peaceful Coexistence, Factions, Homogeneous, Aggravated

Introduction

In an increasingly diverse and interconnected world, we are still grappling with frivolous disagreements / conflicts with at Inter Sect level and also at Intra Sect level. Social psychologists are of the view that human have the tendency to merge and coalesce into groupings on the basis of their religions or sects therein. This phenomenon, naturally, give rise to dichotomy of 'Self and the 'Other', which is the root cause of discord. This disagreements / conflicts, here, do not relate to any fundamentals as narrated in Eman Mujammal and Eman Mufassal which are given below

Eman Mujammal:

أَمَنْتُ بِاللَّهِ كَمَا هُوَ بِأَسْمَائِهِ وَصِفَاتِهِ وَقَبِلْتُ جَمِيعَ أَحْكَامِهِ وَأَقْرَأْتُ بِاللِّسَانِ وَتَصَدَّقْتُ بِالْقَلْبِ

I believe in Allah (As He is) with all His names and Attributes and I accept all His commands. I accept verbally and endorse this truth from core of my heart.¹

Eman Mufassal:

أَمَنْتُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ، وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ، وَالْقَدْرِ خَيْرِهِ وَشَرِّهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَالْبَعْثِ بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ.

I believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His Rasool (Messengers), the Last day and in predestination that all good and bad are from Allah, the Highest and I believe in the resurrection after death.²

Over these fundamental all schools of thought and Ulema have consensus but there has been a historical cleavage between the interpretative doctrines of the major jurists and theologians which primarily reflects the regional and societal differences. Over the years these different interpretations have crystallized into proper schools of thought which have continued to exist within Islam and which energizes and provides the dialectical under-pinning to the intra-school debate. However there have been instances where these quasi-legal

differences have led to conflicts between the various sects but such conflicts have mostly been low-scale and limited in geographical terms. However, the last decades of the preceding century saw certain developments which have served to aggravate these conflicts and there is a looming danger that they may erupt into a major flare up between the two major sects of Islam namely Shias & Sunnies. At the same time there have been developments which have caused not only friction but even mayhem have between the various sub sections of the Sunnies namely Barelvis, Deobandis / Wahabis / Salfies, Ahl e Hadith and the orthodox Sunnies.

It is indeed a sad state of affairs to observe that Ulema of one faction are not prepared to interact or even sit with the Ulema of another faction and this rot has spread into the various factions of once homogeneous social sect.

In spite the consensus over fundamentals some of the Ulema differ over Attributes of Almighty Allah and the level of reverence for Rasool Allah (SAWW) besides other differences about religious practices, Jurisprudence and rituals of secondary and tertiary importance practiced by some sub sects of Sunni Sect over the mutual differences within Sunni sub sects. These differences are categorized into the following five heads.

In Pakistan a gross majority of Ulema and people follow Hanafi School of thought. In a recent survey view of sixty religious scholars including teachers, were sought through a questionnaire under qualitative research method, over these differences.

Beliefs 2. Level of Reverence for Rasool Allah (SAWW)

Practices 4. Scholastic views over Jurisprudence differences. 5. Rituals

Beliefs

Differences among different Sunni sub-sects over Attributes of Almighty Allah, Level of Reverence for Rasool Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) and his characteristics. Here I am taking these differences one by one with orders from Qur'an e Majeed being the Primary source of information and Hadith as secondary source where the need arises.

Attributes of Almighty Allah

"ALLAH"

This name 'Allah' solely belongs to the Almighty God, The Universal and Eternal Truth. All descriptions after that are The Attributes or The Adjectives. These reflect the concepts of The True God. Qur'an says: He is Allah there is no God except Him, He is The Sovereign, The Holy, The Guardian, The Majestic, The Most Mighty, The All Great, Exalted and Superb.³ His Attributes are also given in Qur'an (59:24), (20:8),73:20), 42:11),6:18),6:61) and in many more verses. It is just one example of Attributes of Almighty Allah. Besides this many like 99 are given in Qur'an Majeed. Any Muslim not having belief upon these Attributes in its true sense or thinking otherwise or below the Status of Almighty Allah whether intentionally, un-intentionally or due to ignorance is misled.

Differences Over Level of Reverence for Rasool Allah (SAWW)

(a) Exceptional Birth of the Universe

The Ever Great Birth of Ever Great Rasool-e-Akram (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) of Almighty Allah. Syed Ameer Ali writes this great incident & the mystic indications at that time as under,

'His birth, they say, was attended with signs and portents from which the nations of the earth could know that the Deliverer had appeared. The rationalistic historian smiles, the religious controversialist, who, upon a priori reasoning, accepts without comment the accounts of the wise men following the star, scoffs at these marvels. To the critical student, whose heart is not devoid of sympathy with earlier modes of thought, and who is not biased with pre-conceived notions. "The portents and signs" which the Moslem says attended the birth of his Prophet are facts deserving of historical analysis. We, moderns, perceive, in the ordinary incidents in the lives of nations and individuals, the current of an irresistible law; what wonder then that 1400 years ago they perceived in the fall of a nation's memorial the finger of God, pointing to the inevitable destiny, which was to overtake it in its iniquity.'⁴

(b) The Scholars have difference of opinions over the level of Reverence for Rasool Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) as pointed out by some of the respondents, believers never dare to transgress the limits defined by Allah and his Prophet (SAW) and observe piety verily Allah is all knowing. O believers never let your voices rise (louder) than the voice of Prophet (SAW) nor speak loudly with the holy Prophet in the manner you talk to each other. If you do so all your (good)deeds shall be wasted and you would and you would not even know.⁵

(c) Tradition from Hazrat Anas (RA) and Hazrat Abu Hurraira (RA), Rasool Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) saying as none of you is a true believer, until and unless, I am more beloved to him than his father and his children and all other people.⁶

(d) **Concept of Present and Observer** حاضر و ناظر

Present and observer means omnipresent, existing or being everywhere or ubiquitous in all places at the same time or pervasive. One can be present and observer only when he is eye witness. Now let us see what Qur'an says in this context. 'And thus, we have made you a just and moderate Ummah so, that you remain witness over the people and Rasool Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) remains witness over you'.⁷

(e) **Knowledge of Unseen** علم غيب

The knowledge of unseen in Islam in Qur'an-e-Majid, Almighty Allah says, And Rasool Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) is not a withholder of knowledge of the unseen nor is stingy in talking about the Unseen.⁸

(f) **Light and Humanity** بشرية / نور و بشر

Rasool Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) is light and human at the same time and here is no contradiction in his being a light and a human being rather he is the embodiment of light in terms of attributes of guidance and inner illumination and in terms of nature, pure and perfect human being.

Almighty Allah says: -

'O holders of the Book, our truthful Rasool (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) has come to you. He openly tells you all the matters from the Holy Book which you have been concealing and this Rasool Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) forgives bundles of blenders. What has come to you is surely Light and clear Scripture'.⁹

(g) Love with Allah and Rasool Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم)

Almighty Allah says, 'Ya Rasool Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم), Say (to mankind) 'If you love Allah, then follow me. Allah will love you and forgive you for your sins.' And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful'.¹⁰

Differences Over Practices

(a) Prayer

No Muslim denies the Salah (Prayer) importance and its performance. Quran has ordered for its performance in many verses and Rasool Akram (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) in many Hadith. Prayer is to be performed according to the sunnah. Now the differences among sub-sects are Sunni School of thought are of trivial nature. Some of these differences on the basis of respondent's viewpoints are analyzed below.

Qur'an e Majeed says, 'Surely Salah (Prayer) is such a duty on believers to perform for which each prayer is time bound'¹¹

Also mentioned in Surah Al Noor :56 Surah Al Baqarah 2:43 & 2:238. Surah Taha:132, Surah Ankaboot:45, Surah Al Infal:3-4, Surah Hood:114 and more Ayas of Qur'an-e-Majid.

But the set of prayers or the manners for its performance has not been mentioned in Qur'an. Its performance is in hadith and Sunnah. Narration about Prayer that Rasool-e-Akram (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) said is, "Salley Kama Ra-Aitumuni Usalley" Pray in the way you see me praying,¹²

(b) Difference in Making Ablution

Qur'an-e-Majid guides in Surah Al Maida for making Ablution. Allah says O' believers when you rise for Pray, wash your faces, your hands up to elbows, wipe your heads with wet hands and wash your feet up to the ankles.¹³

According to hadith 'Wiping the mouth, cleaning the nose by pouring the water into the nose, washing the entire face including the eyelids, washing the hands and under the nails, wiping the head and ears and washing the feet makes the complete Ablution'.¹⁴

This way of Ablution is agreed by majority of Sunni Schools of Thought. A slight difference is reported in Ahadith quoted in Sunnan Abu Dawood and Musnad Ahmad but I think this is not a major bone of contention. There are ways of Ablution mentioned by all four Schools of Jurisprudence and followers are satisfied with the guidelines of their respective jurists. Wiping of neck is minor issue and every sub-sect has arguments.

(c) Tahrah

Taharah in Islam means purity and cleanliness of body. Qur'an says
"Wa In Kunto Junoban Fattaharo"

And if you are in a state of ritual impurity, purify yourselves by taking a bath,¹⁵ It is agreed by all religious scholars that purity is an obligation. Taharah or purification is of two kinds, Spiritual purification and Physical purification. ¹⁶ Since no respondent have given any Qur'anic or Hadith reference for difference about Taharah with other Sub-sects. So, no further commentary or analysis is required.

(d) Divorce

The issue of divorce is much complicated. The respondents mentioning differences of opinion with other Sunni Sub-sects, like other respondents, did not give any reason or reference from Qur'an or Islamic Jurisprudence for their differences over the issue, However I only pen down the orders of Almighty Allah in Qur'an-e-Majid about the issue.

Qur'an says

'O' Prophet! When ye (men) put away women, put them away for their (legal) period and reckon the period, and keep your duty to Allah, you're Lord. Expel them not from their houses nor let them go forth unless they commit open immorality. ¹⁷ Then, when they have reached their term, take

them back in kindness or part from them in kindness, and call to witness two just men among you, and keep your testimony upright for Allah. ¹⁸

And for such of your women as despair of menstruation if ye doubt, their period (of waiting) shall be three months, along with those who have it not. And for those with child their period shall be till they bring forth their burden. ¹⁹ The matter of divorce varies from case to case and individual to individual. So, instead of confusing with other sub sects, one should seek guidance from their respective Jurist.

Scholastic Views Over Jurisprudence Differences within Muslim Sunni Sub-Sects

(a) Bidet

'Bidet' is an Arabic word. It is derived from Arabic word 'BADA' which means something innovated without any previous base or precedent.

In Quran-e-Majid this word has been found in six different Ayas giving the same meanings as detailed below.

Quran says, Almighty Allah says that He has originally created skies and earth. When Allah decides something, He says 'Be' so it happens.²⁰

Ya Rasool (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) say, that I am not the new Rasool ever sent.²¹

Almighty Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) says that He is the originator of heavens and earth. ²² Have they not seen how Almighty Allah originates the creation and resurrects. ²³ Allah originates the creation and then he goes on repeating

it. ²⁴ Ya Rasool Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم), say! can any of your associate gods originate the creation and repeat it too. ²⁵ In all above Quranic verses

translation, original creation of skies and earth is mentioned. This is innovation (Bidet)

(b) Shirk

Shirk is another terminology which is used by ignorant religious scholars ruthlessly for the followers of other subsects. Shirk in Islam refers to the idolatry and polytheism like worships of deity, gods whereas Islam believes and preaches oneness of Almighty Allah. In previous lines I have talked about

Bidet. People use this term equivalent to idolatry. Now shirk is that if someone takes or even thinks (Allah Forbid) about some other as having any of the attributes of Almighty Allah (Allah Forbid) But Allah may gift one or more qualities to anyone whom He wishes. So that would not be someone's personal attributes or quality but gifted by Allah.

Quran says, "Allah is witness over all things."²⁶ In another verse of Quran Allah says, thus we have made you a just and middle nation and as a witness over mankind and Rasool (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم), as witness over you.²⁷ Now look at both verses that Almighty Allah has used the word 'witness' for Himself and for Rasool (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) as well. Now the attributes of Allah for being Witness is His Personal whereas the becoming of Rasool as witness is gifted by Allah. This is no shirk but a proof of Oneness of Allah.

Now take another two verses, Qur'an further say in verse ²⁸, last line as Almighty Allah is Ever Gracious and Most Merciful to humanity. Whereas in Qur'an Allah says, Ya Rasool Allah we have sent you as the all mercy for the whole universe.²⁹ Here again mercy is Allah's Personnel attributes whereas he has gifted mercy to His Rasool (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم).

(c) Takfir

It is an Arabic word used to give a verdict about a Muslim as non-believer or infidel. This practice of accusing another Muslim of apostasy or declaring another Muslim as infidel is called Takfir. It is quite prohibited in Islam; Almighty Allah has warned such practices which might cause involvement of noble persons along with wrong doers.

Allah says, and guard yourself against any mischief which, not only, will bring punishment to the wrong-doers among you and know well that Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) is very severe in punishment.³⁰ Hazrat Ibn Umar (RA) narrates that the Rasool of Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: If a man among you calls his brother a unbeliever, then it turns against at least one of them, if he said. He was on the other side and if

not, then turn back to him. Either the accused is as he claimed or else the charge will turn against him,³¹

(d) Wahdat al Wajood

The terminology of Wahdat ul Wajood is a combination of two words i.e Wahda and Wajood. Wahda means unity and Wajood means existence. Then the term means Unity of Existence or Oneness of Existence or Unity of Being. The topic is not for discussion of common persons. A very few top most scholars might be knowing about it. The terminology is always confused with Wahdat ul Shahood and Wajib ul Wajood (necessary existence). The concept Wajib ul Wajood is the central aspect of Ibn Sina (980-1037).

Whereas Ibn Arbi (d 638) was among the first mentioning the terms Wahdat ul Wajood rather he is considered the founder of this term. His doctrine of Wahdat ul Wajood focuses on the exoteric reality of creatures instead of exoteric (33), It is also with the Persian Concept of 'Hama Uost' On the other hand, Dr. Khalifa Abdul Hakeem while talking about the concept of Rumi about Wahdat ul Wajood writes,

“What is Pantheism? --- The answer would be to say: it is a doctrine that maintains that all things are God or the 'All' is God, which is exactly how the Persian terminology describes it ---- Hama Ust! All is He. The Arabic expression for it (Wahdat-Ul-Wajood) 'The Unity of Being' is tinged with metaphysics and is the philosophical way of putting the simple idea. We need not stop to examine whether Pantheism defined as above is a possible concept, because the conception of God is possible only as relative idea, correlative with the world, So, saying 'All is God' is a contradiction in terms. To call this All as One or Absolute is more logical and hence one must acknowledge that the Arabic term describes the doctrine more exactly than its Persian equivalent. It is easy to see that all possible views about the Ultimate Reality can be identified with it, to justify the witty remark of Schonpenhauer that Pantheism is the poetry of Atheism. Ethical Monism like that of Fichte

or Panlogism like that of Hegel, the One-Substance doctrine of Spinoza with a number of others in so far as they are monistic are pantheistic.”³²

Another view point of a renowned scholar and mystic of 20th Century, His Eminence Syed Muhammad Wajih Us Seema Irfani (1920-1991) about difference between Wahdat-ul-wajood and Wahdat-ul-Shahood. He says that Shahood (witnesses) is plural of Shahid (witness). Then how can it be unity of Shahood (Witnesses)?³³ “Since neither any respondent explained the difference with other subject nor is the issue of concern with common man. So, I close my analysis here.”

(e) Taqleed

Taqleed in Islamic law is considered as the kind of following or unquestioning acceptance of the legal decisions of another without knowing the basis of those decisions. Normally this concept tantamount to discipleship, or follower or pupil of some teacher. In Sufi Order of Tareeqah they are called Mureed.

Qur’an says Obey Almighty Allah and his Rasool (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) and those who are men of say (in the relevant field)³⁴ Now, naturally, one has to learn knowledge about different things from someone and has to accept him or her as a teacher and then to follow according to the teacher’s advice and the teacher’s lesson. So, the availability of a good teacher is merely a blessing from Almighty Allah as no pupil can choose and judge his teacher’s ability. Obviously, a good teacher will not wish for his pupil to follow blindly rather one has to become critic at every ambiguity and good teacher will encourage volley of questions, from the pupil. So, the concept of being unethical and unqualified acceptance of a traditional orthodoxy or an authorization code of a particular religious teacher does not arise. The perspective to seek the blessings of Almighty Allah is one’s sincerity in finding the right path. Qur’an tells the story when Hazrat Ibrahim (A.S) was in search of Allah he passed the Star, Moon and Sun and finally concluded that the creator of all these is My Lord.

Qur'an says; thus, did we show Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth that he might be of those possessing certainly. ³⁵

(f) Intercession (Wasila)

Quran says, O believers be mindful of Almighty Allah and seek for someone who takes you to Him. ³⁶ It means, in search of intercessor, who recommends or speaks in favour of you in any kind. We also called him problem solver. Here in this world, we come across various problems and we endeavor to come out of it, we use many ways to find out the person helping us in such circumstances. So alike is searching for someone who guides you groom your ethics, build your character and teach you the ways and means to come up to his standard so as to reach the destination. It is but natural and anybody's guess. Ignorant people take it as associate-gods and thus issues 'Fatwa' and sounds it unlawful and against Islamic teachings. In everyday life the need of a mediator or intercessor is hard fact, right from a person's birth till death. The ever first intercessor was Hazrat Adam (A.S) between creations and The Creator following other are Prophets till Rasool Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم). None of the creations have seen Almighty Allah. We Muslims believe Allah only as we heard from our Rasool (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم). This is Wasila / Intercession.

There are two types of intercession concerning the people. The first type is incession in matters of this world and second which will take place in the life hereafter. Now let us see what Qur'an says in this context. 'Who is he that intercess with Him without His save by His leave?'³⁷ And Qur'an further says, 'Ya Rasool Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) warn them of the Dooms Day when hearts will be choking the threats and there will be no friend for the wrong doers nor will be any intercessor heard. ³⁸ Now, see what Qur'an say about Almighty Allah's will, 'On the Day of Judgment, no intercession will be of any benefit for anyone except- whom Almighty Allah, the Beneficent allows and whose He accepts'. ³⁹

Rituals

Some of the respondents have mentioned differences with other Sub sects over certain rituals like “Reward of Virtues, Visit to Shrines / Graves, Commemoration of Rasool Allah Birthday”. Now let us see what Qur’an and Sunnah says in this context.

(a) Eward of Virtues

It means votive ritual of praying for the dead and doing good deeds on their behalf or conveying reward of virtuous deed or rite.

v.a.(i) Quranic verses. Al Mighty Allah says: My Lord, have mercy upon (My Parents) them as they brought me up when I was small. ⁴⁰

v.a.(ii) In other verses Allah says “And for those who believe and whose descendants follow them in belief and faith. We shall elevate their descendants to their rank and will not discount anything from their rewards of their deeds. ⁴¹ Here now let us see some Ahadith on the topic to have more clear understanding. v.a(iii) Hazrat Abu Huraira (Allah May be pleased with him) narrated that Rasool Allah (SAWW) said upon death of a person his every action is finished except the following three.

Endowment pious gifts having the quality of the continuous reward which includes Quran left inheritance, building a mosque, canal, establishment of educational institution, water stall, public path and doing other things for the welfare of the humanity. Benefit giving knowledge and noble son who prays for him ⁴².

(b) Visit to Shrines/Graves

Respondents reflected their differences with other Sub sects over visit of Shrines or Qaboor. Let us see what Quran and Hadith say about the issue.

v.b (i) Qur’an Says,

Almighty Allah says, “Competition in worldly increase will divert you until you visit the graves”⁴³ v.b (ii) “Rasool Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) used to visit

Shrines of the Martyrs of Uhad battle every year”. ⁴⁴ v.b (iii) Narrated in Hadith Book of Tiramdhi, “Rasool Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) said I forbade you to visit the graves, So now Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) has been

given permission, 'Visit your mother's grave, So, you should also visit graves. Surely remind you of the life hereafter".⁴⁵

(c) Melad unNabi (SAWW)

Meelad is Muslim's observation of the Day of birth of Rasool Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم). In history these different dates such as 9th Rabi-ul-Awwal, 12th Rabi-ul-Awwal and 17 Rabi-ul-Awwal are mentioned. However, most of Sunni commemorate it on 12th Rabi-ul-Awwal. Respondents differ over its celebration. Let us see references from Qur'an, Ahadith and practices ideas from historical eminent scholars to have clarity about it.

Almighty Allah says, "If you have received a wound, then your opponents have also received similar wounds. We gave such days of fortunes to men to men by turns. So that Allah may know the believers and He may take himself from you as witnesses".⁴⁶ The interpreters have taken this verse as referring to the 'Battle of Badr'. This is an example of remembering memorial. Qur'an Majid from A to Z is all memorial as it was revealed to Rasool Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم). Hundreds of Thousands of persons in the world recite and talk about it. This is obviously remembering Rasool Allah. Almighty Allah has mentioned in various verses. The stories of Prophets, along with His blessing followed by the stories of unbelievers and punishments given to them. This all tantamount to tell to the whole humanity about such days and the results and both positive and negative actions of the people. Meelad itself is to remember and recall the unique birthday of Rasool Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم). In previous pages I have narrated various verses from Qur'an about exceptional status of Rasool Allah. Here I quote a few references from renowned scholars of the world about Meelad.

(c) Celebration of Rasool Allah's (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) Birthday in View of Scholars and Hadith Scholar

Allama Ibn Jawzi (510-579 AH) - Hanbali scholar:

From Makkah Mukarramah to Madinah Tayyibah, Egypt, Syria, Yemen, from the east to the west, the inhabitants of the Arab lands have always held

gatherings to celebrate the Prophet's birthday. Whenever they saw the crescent of Rabi' al-Awwal, their joy knew no bounds. Therefore, they took special care to recite and listen to the mention of the Prophet's birthday, and as a result, they continued to receive immeasurable rewards and success.⁴⁷

Imam Abu Shama (599-665 AH)

Imam Abu Shama, the mentor of Imam Nawawi (631-677 AH), the commentator of Sahih Muslim, has also mentioned in his book Al-Ba'ath 'ala Inkari al-Bida' wa al-Hawadith (Reviving the Denial of Innovations and Incidents) about the celebration of Prophet's birthday in Arbal City.

And in a similar manner, in our time, the beginning of good innovations took place in the city of 'Arbil'. In this blessed city, every year on the occasion of the Prophet's birthday, doors of charity and goodness are opened to express joy and happiness⁴⁸

Imam Dhahir al-Din Ja'far ibn Yahya ibn Ja'far al-Tazimanti al-Shafi'I (682 AH):

The celebration of the Prophet's birthday is a praiseworthy innovation. When it is done with the intention of bringing together righteous people, reciting blessings and salutations, and providing food for the poor and needy, then it becomes a means of reward."⁴⁹

Allama Ibn Taymiyyah (661-728 AH):

Allama Taqi al-Din Ahmad ibn Abd al-Halim ibn Abd al-Salam ibn Taymiyyah mentions in his book Iqtida' al-Sirat al-Mustaqim li Mukhalifati Ashab al-Jahim:

The veneration of the noble celebration (of the Prophet's birth) and making it a slogan is the practice of some people, and there is immense reward in it because it has good intentions and is also a respect for the honorable Prophet. As I mentioned before, some people consider one matter good while others consider it ugly."⁵⁰

In addition, the following scholars also spoke in favour of Meelad.

Imam Abu Abdullah ibn al-Hajj al-Maliki (737 AH) - Maliki scholar

Imam Burhan al-Din ibn Jama'ah (725-790 AH) - Shafi'i School

Zain al-Din ibn Rajab al-Hanbali (736-795 AH) - Hanbali School

Hafiz Ibn Hajar Asqalani (773-852 AH) - Shafi'i School

Imam Jalal al-Din Suyuti (849-911 AH)

Imam Muhammad bin Jar Allah bin Zahira al-Hanafi, Hanafi scholar

(d) Remembrance through Exalted Poetry

There are so many ways to remember and Praise Rasool Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم), may be by reciting Qur'anic verses, talking about, and writings in any form, in any language of the world. Na'at, an exalted poetry in the praise of Rasool Allah is one of the unique forms of remembering Rasool Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم). Since his birth till today and will last till the life hereafter. A few occasions are mentioned below

Listening to the eulogy of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) by Hasan ibn Thabit (may Allah be pleased with him):

Hazrat Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), the mother of the believers, narrates: "Indeed, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) would place the pulpit in Masjid al-Nabawi for Hasan ibn Thabit (may Allah be pleased with him), and he would stand on it reciting eloquent poetry in praise of the Prophet (peace be upon him) or defending him against the disbelievers and polytheists."⁵¹

Hazrat Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) narrates:"The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to Hasan ibn Thabit (may Allah be pleased with him), 'No doubt, the Holy Spirit is in your support as long as you defend Allah and His Messenger.' Hasan confronted the disbelievers with harsh words and obtained victory."⁵² Listening to the Naat from Hazrat Aswad bin Sari'ah: ⁵³

Listening to Naat from Hazrat Abdullah bin Rawaha: ⁵⁴

Listening to Naat from Hazrat Ka'b and receiving a cloak from the Prophet (peace be upon him) ⁵⁵ Listening to Naat poetry in the presence of Hazrat Aasim bin 'Umar (RA)⁵⁶ Listening to Naat poetry from Hazrat Abdullah bin Ruwahah (RA)⁵⁷

Conclusion

So, the above are the references from Qur'an and Ahadith about the differences of religious scholars. However, it is imperative that our Ulema forego the minor differences and endeavor sincerely to foster both inter-Communal and intra-communal harmony for the sake of peaceful co-existence and societal progress, by embracing diversity understanding and respect, they can bridge gaps of minor importance such would lead towards a more inclusive Society which is the need of the hour. Some strategies that could go a long way in promoting and fostering a both inter communal and intra-communal harmony are the following

Education and Awareness

Inter- sect and Intra-sect education should be integrated into school curriculum, giving the positive contribution made by all Schools of thought and Ulemas thereof. Tolerance should be emphasized as well as the acceptance of differences in a healthy way into responsible citizens who respect diversity and differences of opinion.

Dialogue and Mediation

The state should actively try to encourage both inter-sects and intra-sects dialogue between various different Schools of thought and their respected Ulemas to address their complaints and grievances and misunderstanding, the State should make forces waada for ongoing discussions and dialogue between ullemas of various schools of thought and also involve community leaders and influential individuals in a concerted and ongoing process of frank and free interface for the resolution of all minor differences to promote understanding and reconciliations of the Council of Islamic Ideology council can play a major and a central role in this regard.

Collaborative Projects

The state should encourage collaboration between different schools of thought and their respective Ulemas by involving them in collaborative initiatives like free distributions of rations to deserving individuals and

families. When Ulema belonging to different schools of thought cooperate to humanitarian ventures they would develop more understanding for each other's religious point of views. These Ulemas should be galvanized and involved in poverty alleviation initiatives and public health projects as by working together towards shared goals, fosters unity of thought and breaks down barriers.

Inter-Sect and Intra-Sect initiatives

The government should make determined efforts to support inter-sect and intra-sect harmony by organizing collective Prayers Day on the occasion of Eid and if possible, on Jummas. The Shared prayers would send a message to the Community and Society of Cooperation and coordination and would eliminate or lessen facile differences and create societal harmony. The Ulemas and influential individuals from different schools of thought should also be galvanized to participate in collective ventures for of community welfare such as health-care schemes for providing primary health care and literacy programs. This would develop greater understanding and harmony between them which would affect the societal attitudes positively. The Government through the Council of Islamic Ideology should try to make a concerted effort to address the problem of Stereotypes" that create negative and false images of others" in the minds of people belonging to one school of thought about the other. The government should launch campaigns through print and electronic media, conduct workshops and encourage inter and intra sect discussions in a free and enabling environment to do away with prejudices and stereotypes that have been fostered over a long period of time so that a more inclusive societal values are engendered.

Re-visiting Government Policies

The government should make a determined effort to introduce policies that are non-discriminatory and inclusive so that no sect or community should feel that they are being discriminated against the govt. policies such that the rights

and dignities of all communities are protected with the ultimate end of promoting equality and social cohesion.

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