



The Role of Hajj in Objectifying Proximity Among Islamic Schools of Thought

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Today, the main weapon used against Islam and Muslim nations is to create differences between Muslims and Islamic societies. Meanwhile, sectarianism is the best vehicle for ill-wishers of Islamic societies through which they can spread disputes and enmity among Muslim nations. Keeping this in view, creating proximity and unity among Muslims has been and is the biggest concern of Muslim reformers. As the greatest congregation of Muslim nations, in the form of the Islamic Ummah, Hajj can play a very colorful role in creating solidarity and proximity among Muslims. The simultaneous presence of Muslims with racial, religious, cultural, and appearance differences under the banner of Islam and Hajj and based on authentic Islamic values has made Hajj be regarded as the manifestation of a real opportunity to practice Islamic unity and form the Islamic Ummah.



Concepts:

- **Unity:** the state of being in agreement and working together; the state of being joined together to achieve a common purpose.

- **Convergence:** In political science, convergence is said to be a process in which societies give up their will and power to independently guide their major and fundamental policies and try to reach common decisions. (Smit, Peter H, 1992)

- **Proximity:** This means to bring closer and it is a means for creating closeness among Shiites and Sunnis while preserving the integrity of both sides and focusing on knowledge and wisdom instead of fleeting emotions and feelings. (Biazar Shirazi, Abdul Karim, 1975) The aim of proximity is to revive the Qur'anic principle of

brotherhood and remove the artificial mental barriers between Shiites and Sunnis, which are mentioned in various forms in the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah: "Mankind were a single community..." (Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 213); "He ordained affection and mercy between you..." (Al-Rum:21); "The faithful are indeed brothers" (Al-Hujuraat:10); and "Hold fast, all together, to Allah's cord, and do not be divided..." (Aal-e Imran:103).

It seems that from among the three concepts of Islamic unity, Islamic convergence, and Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought, the concept of proximity is closer to the objective of peaceful coexistence in the form of the formation of the Islamic Ummah. In this regard, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution has stated: By Islamic unity, we do not mean that all beliefs and Islamic denominations should become identical. The clash of Islamic denominations and beliefs, the clash of philosophical and fiqhi beliefs is an arena for scholarly work, an arena for fiqhi debates, and an arena for philosophical debates. After all, each sect will have its own set of beliefs, but it is possible to keep philosophical and fiqhi differences away from the arena of daily life and politics. What we mean by unity of the world of Islam is that we should avoid disputes. If we say that Shiites and Sunnis should be together, it means that Shia will remain Shia and Sunni will remain Sunni. When did we tell the Sunni world that what we mean by Islamic unity is that you become a Shiite? We have not said

such a thing... We are not saying you should change your school of thought. What we are saying is that Shia and Sunni should always be reasonable; something that was, by the grace of God, observed during the Islamic Revolution in our country." (International Conference on Islamic Unity, 2006)

Hajj Represents the Islamic Ummah (The Platform for the Transformation of Muslim Nations into the Islamic Ummah)

As emphasized in the Holy Qur'an, Islam, is a comprehensive and complete religion that has not neglected any important issue and has provided guidance and wisdom in all areas of human life. However, among all religious duties and orders, there are few duties that have been emphasized by the Holy Qur'an, the Prophet, and the infallible Imams as in the case of Hajj. This is because, in addition to having religious, social, political, and cultural functions, Hajj is the manifestation of unity in all aspects of human life. In this regard, the late Imam Khomeini had stated: "Hajj is the best meeting place for Muslims to get to know their religious brothers and sisters from all over the world. The congregate in the House that belongs to all the Islamic communities and followers of Prophet Ibrahim by putting aside their personality, color, nationality, and race and by observing Islamic ethical values and avoiding controversies they demonstrate the purity of Islamic brotherhood and the perspective of the formation of the unified

Ummah all over the world.” (Saif-eye Noor, Vol. 20, P. 13) As regards the importance of Hajj, Imam Ja’far Sadiq (AS) has been quoted saying: “If people do not have the money for Hajj, their travel expenses will be paid from the Muslim treasury.” (Furu’ al-Kafi, Vol. 4, P. 268)

The Key Components of Objectification of Objectifying Proximity Among Islamic Schools of Thought

1. Hajj is the manifestation of the Islamic brotherhood

In Hajj, people connect with God because of their human nature and not because of their ethnic, tribal, and sectarian identity. In other words, all human beings are the creation of the same Creator and are actually brothers and sisters of each other, and Hajj is the headquarters of the presence of these brothers and sisters in the presence of God. As stated by Imam Khomeini (RA): “This (Ka’ba) is the house of all people. No person or persons or group or certain clan has priority over others with regard to the House of God. All people, those who are all over the world, in the east and west of the earth, are obliged to become Muslim and to congregate in this house that has been made a sacred place for pilgrimage of people.” (Saifeye Noor, Vol. 8, P. 172)

2. Hajj is the venue for getting to know about Muslims’ affairs

One of the fundamental functions of this congregation is get-

ting to know religious brothers and sisters in faith. In such an atmosphere, it is possible to share the opportunities, threats, potentials, and weaknesses of Muslim nations and promote sympathy, cooperation, and unity among Muslim nations with the context of the three elements of recognition, commitment, and understanding. Reaching a common understanding based on recognition and common interests, in addition to having common values, is not an impossible expectation. In this regard, Imam Khomeini (RA) had said: “Given that the hypothesis of Hajj is one of the biggest religious-political duties in Islam and the Hajj congregation is one of the biggest congresses in the Islamic world, the respected pilgrims of the world should be gathered to exchange opinions on the interests of Islam and the problems of Muslims, to make the necessary decisions for solving problems, to reach the sacred goal of Islam. The ways and means of creating unity between all Islamic schools of thought should be explored, find solutions for common political problems that have been created for the Muslims of the world by the enemies of Islam, the most important of which is discord between the ranks of Muslims.” (Saif-eye Noor, Vol. 19, P. 191)

By the same token, Ayatollah Khamenei has stated” “What is important is to know that Hajj is one of the strengths of the holy religion of Islam. Although the strengths of the Islamic Sharia are not one or two, Hajj has certain prominent qualities - which we are more or

less familiar with. In fact, it can be said that Hajj is the source of the authority of the Islamic society, it is the source of the authority of the Islamic Ummah. The day when we Muslims from different countries and different schools of thought, from the far east of the world to the far west of the Islamic world, succeed and attain the intellectual maturity - which has not, unfortunately, happened so far - to actually form the ‘Islamic Ummah’ in the true sense of the word - even though under different governments - on that day, we will understand how Hajj is a source of authority, strength, elevation, and dignity of this Ummah.” (Meeting with Hajj authorities, 2013)

3. Common enemy

One of the serious issues regarding the non-realization of proximity among Islamic schools of thought is the existence of a common division-creating enemy. In order to exploit the resources and position of Islamic countries, the colonial states have adopted the strategy of divide and rule. This is the reason that many Western countries do not approve of the reestablishment of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia and have overtly and covertly expressed their disapproval. Imam Khomeini had rightly said: “The entire Islamic Ummah are the followers of the Prophet and the followers of the Holy Qur’an and have common treacherous enemies who by creating differences through their wretched agents, mass media, and divisive propaganda, throughout history, and especially in the recent centuries and present era, have kept

all the Islamic states and nations in captivity. They have looted the rich resources of Muslim countries and oppressed their people. They intend to make the governments blindly serve them, spread the culture of consumerism, and prevent the human development and industrial innovation of the oppressed countries with evil tricks and conspiracies. Thus, now that

to be benevolent is exaggerating about ethnic and sectarian differences. Repudiation of infidels during the Hajj congregation is a move for identifying the enemy and if actualized its impact can be witnessed among all Muslim nations. It must be noted that repudiation of the common enemy must follow the identification of the enemy. And this important issue can

pretation and perception of Islamic unity and the role of effective actors in the field has been one of the causes of non-fulfillment of this important. For unity to be actualized among Muslims the concepts of convergence and proximity must be resorted to by Islamic scholars and the Islamic government so that the basis for a better understanding of Islam and Muslims to-



the pilgrims from every nation and sect have gathered in the center of life-giving Islam at the command of God and His Messenger, they should think of a solution for this deadly cancer. They should know that the basic solution is the unity of all Muslims in cutting off the hand of superpowers from Islamic countries.” (Saifeye Noor, Vol. 20, P. 16)

Proximity and compassion among Muslims is of great value in recognizing the common enemy. Because one of the issues that the enemy invests in and pretends

be realized through the accumulation of experiences and thoughts of Islamic elites and rulers during Hajj. Therefore, Hajj is also an important platform for identifying and defining the common enemy of Islamic society, and this highlights the necessity of proximity of thoughts.

Concluding Remarks

Unity among Muslims has been one of the topics of discussion among the fair elites of Islamic societies since ancient times, but it seems that differences in the inter-

wards each other is provided for and the ground for brotherhood between Muslims is paved. Therefore, if Hajj is performed within the framework of authentic Islamic values, it will definitely be the basis for consolidating the three main aspects of the formation of the Islamic Ummah, namely, brotherhood, mutual understanding, and identification of common enmity, and it can be a platform for the realization of unity, the proximity of Islamic schools of thought, and the orientation of Muslim nations towards the Islamic Ummah.