

**For Consideration of  
the Muslim Elite for World Peace  
A Proposal:  
Institutionalisation of Epistemological, Social, Ethical, Economic  
and Political Guidance Available in the Qur‘an**

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After Palestine, West Asia, South and South-Asia have witnessed certain strong waves of emotions of *Ukhuvvah* (Brotherhood) in the *Ummah* (Muslim community of the World). For the first time, again, after World War II strong signs are emerging of urgent realization on the part of Muslim intelligentsia and political elite in various regions of the world regarding the uncertainties in maintaining their future secure in the intensifying syndrome of Islamo-Muslimo-phobia, hardened with manufactured nationalism based on religion and race in the Western and Eastern lands. The Muslim elite are looking for ways leading them on the path of developing a defence-cum-development plan. Among these signs are the following:

- 1) Islamic Ukhuvvah”
  - a) For the first time, the *Ummah* (community based on Islam and cemented by the sense of *Ukhuvvah* (brotherhood):  
Rajab Tyap Erdogan, President of Turkey, came forward to offer all help to the Rohingya Muslims of Myanmar expelled from their country through acts of genocide. Turkey has taken the case to ICJ.
  - b) The second expression of *Ukhuvvah* was official protests against reports of persecution and killing of Muslims in various parts of India at the instigation of the ruling political party, BJP and its allies noticed by United Nations. These were followed by actions against some Indians serving in these states. Such protests were lodged by Ayatullah Khamenae of Iran, Erdogan Of Turkey, Mahatir Mohmmad of Malaysia and the Shaikhs of U.A.I.

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- 2) Another significant sign of Islamic self-awareness is the return of the concept of the Welfare State modelled on The State of Madinah under the Messenger of Allah:  
A declaration, last year, by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan of his determination for the establishment an Islamic Welfare State in Pakistan modelled on the "State of Madina". (However, historically it would be much more correct to call it a Society of Madinah shaped by the Messenger of Allah.)
- 3) Such expression of solidarity among the Muslim states was not seen earlier. The Muslim world politically, economically and intellectually continues to remain stagnant mainly because of economic backwardness and inadequate training in modern scientific thinking. Islamo-and-Muslimophobia structured by certain Western imperialistic forces.
- 4) *Ukhuwah* has now developed in to demands for changes in internal and external policies of Muslim states. Gradually they grew stronger and led to formations of organizations like Taliban and ISIS and now it is no longer possible to ignore them. Ignoring them had already resulted in massacres of innocent Muslims in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria and Turkey and have now come in to conflict with fundamental Islamic message of peace. A change in the direction of peace has become urgent. The change has to be in clear terms of Islamic principles of universal ethical values. In fact, religions of the world including Islam are losing relevance of existence because of ignoring this. In fact, all religious systems have ceased to be systems of life and have become a bunch of some abstract notions and phrases.
- 5) The Muslims, however, still continue to believe that only Islamic guidance in the Qur'an can change their life. And this is the point where I want to make a suggestion; In fact it is not a new one but a very familiar suggestion...."Back to the Qur'an to build a World of Peace and Happiness." What does it mean?
- 6) Let us analyse the present situation in terms of social, economic and intellectual change. We require i) a clear idea of the nature of changes to be introduced and ii) most importantly, a robust but adjustable structure of administrative authorities to navigate various stages.

- 7) The most challenging is the prevailing structure of authorities----- theological, Sufistic, jurisprudential, Sectarian and the traditional and modern schools of thought in general. Muslims of the world like followers of all other religions are divided into various sects and schools of thought and in conflicting theological, sectarian and legal authoritative systems. The Muslims of the world are no more one Ummah in the classical sense, but a collective of mutually conflicting theological sects/*firqah* and sub-sects/*masaalik* (*plural of maslak*) and various schools of Islamic jurisprudence. Each sect/*firqah* or sub-sect/*maslak* is acutely protective of its own ideological identity and always carry it with them in their exchanges with others. Sometimes these identities over-shadow their 'Islamic' identity. These divisions have acquired a lot of negative characters by becoming almost autonomous theological and legal authorities. For instance, the five schools of Islamic jurisprudence (four Sunni and one Imamia) have acquired a status of independent legal authorities much like the commands of the Qur'an or *ahaadis* (*Messenger's Traditions*). There is a general ignorance about the fact that no 'founder' of any of these legal school ever claimed that only his opinions were authentic. They were man-made and amenable to err.
- 8) Let us also admit that no Muslim country today is following Shari-ah in its totality. Their legal systems are not 'Islamic' except to the extent of family laws. No common grounds for solving various serious theological, legal and sectarian problems are available. This is a critical situation for the Ummah and a great obstacle in regaining its pre-13<sup>th</sup> century scientific, intellectual and cultural vigour. However, most important fact is that Muslims belonging to any sect, legal school and school of thought through it all differences can be sorted out.
- 9) Muslim achievements in the fields of Islamic sciences, philosophy, social and physical sciences, ethics, medicine, etc. were the chief sciences that helped in building up perhaps one of the most dynamic powerhouses in global history. The main cause of paving the way for amazing scientific progress in the most ignorant society was the knowledge-friendly Faith of Islam contained in the Qur'an and the social, political, economic and epistemological ideas, scientific discoveries, principles and concepts produced power-packed spiritual

and material might to produce what is known Muslim culture. This high-rise culture also explains why it declined. The rise of Muslim culture of knowledge was due to the stable, just, supporting the truth in accordance with the guidance available in the Qur'an as implemented by the Messenger of Allah. Unfortunately, the post-Messenger Muslims forgot this crucial reality. In the presence of the Messenger, absence of any administrative authority or structure was not missed. On the energy contained in the Messenger's society the next six hundred years produced a vast range of all sciences. Therefore, there is no other way of re-entering on the path of scientific development by preplacing Messenger's presence through his methods of institutionalising the guidance present in the Qur'an.

10) Institutionalisation of Social, political, economic, epistemological teachings of the Qur'an

The chief cause of decline of Muslim societies a pointed out has been ignoring the transformation of the teachings of the Qur'an into functioning epistemological, social, economic, political, intellectual, educational and cultural institutions as they and structured and implemented by the Messenger in societies of Makkah and Madinah.

11) Hikmah:

The second primary consensual source of guidance is *Hikmah*--wisdom, and application of analytical instruments in dealing with worldly affairs. (I do not know why this important source is not sufficiently used in the discourse of change)

12) Following guidances/ advices in the Qur 'an for peoples of faith are to be converted in to institutions in the Qur'an.

Example-1: Equality before law. All Muslims are first Muslims and then *Sunni, Shi'ah, Hanafi, Maliki, Shafai or Hambali*, etc.

Example-2: Governance and administration of state should be based on the concept of Consultation/*Shura and not monarchy or, dictatorship*

Example-3: Economic theory and administration of policies:

Baitul Mal, interest-free banking, *Zakat* administration, prevention of accumulation of wealth in fewer hands (*ihthikar*) and *awqaf*.

Example-4: Knowledge (from the Qur'an, authentic *ahaadis* and *Hikmah*): sciences, teaching of both religious and modern sciences at the same time, free education, freedom of thinking in and outside institutions as suggested by the Qur'an.

Example-5: All legal opinions available in the five Sunni and Ja'fari schools of Islamic jurisprudence should be treated as one single corpus of laws made by certain eminent Muslim jurists in Muslim intellectual history. For any issue whichever opinion in this corpus is found best should be allowed to be applied.

13) This great exercise is to be taken up being fully aware that even this exercise may not be successful in building up the institution at a specific research centre acceptable in other centres of other countries with different religious histories and different emotional universes. Our objective must be to attain as much agreement as possible at each stage. Even a little success there would be great success... of the Qur'an.

14) Process of Institutionalising: *Vahdatul Islamia*

After completion of the process of selection of Qur'anic instructions, the complex task of their development in to institutions has to be taken up. It is very complex. The nature of the institution thus developed in one Muslim country might have to take into account several elements of social customs and conventions peculiar to that region not in conflict with the Qur'an but different from other Muslim countries. It would, therefore be required to adopt a mechanism providing space for accommodating such differences. This means seeking help from scholars of various countries; they may include even non-Muslim intellectuals.

It would not be surprising if this search lead to the major 19<sup>th</sup> century intellectual of the East, Syed Jamaluddin Afghani and his concept of "*Vahdat al-Islamiah* (Islamic Unity). An analysis of his thought is quite relevant to this project

A longstanding misunderstanding is that it stands for a political *pan Islam*. This is not correct. The real objective was structuring of an intellectual, social and political federation of Muslim countries termed as *Vahdatul Islamiah* termed in his bi-lingual Arabic/French journal, *Al-Urvah al-Vusqa*, (1884). Later, the follow up of this mission sans any political content continued in Egypt by his disciple, colleague and co-editor of this journal, Shaikh Muhammad Abduh.

Contemporary situation today is certainly quite different from what Afghani had envisioned. Although he remained totally involved in negotiations with Muslim rulers and the political elite of those times, he failed in getting any support to his revolutionary project except for a brief period in early 1890s with Sultan Caliph Abdul Hamid II. He himself confessed in a highly emotional way which also shows his respect for peoples' authority that he was wrong in giving all his time for getting support of Muslim rulers. In the summing up of his mission during his last days in Istanbul, in a letter to his colleagues in Iran, he admits that he committed a mistake by ignoring the real agents of change were the people:

Only on this account I grieved, that I have not lived up to reap what I have sown and that I have not fully attained to that which I desired. The sword of unrighteousness has not suffered me to see the awakening of the peoples of the East and the hand of ignorance has not granted me the opportunity to hear the call of Freedom from the thoughts of the nations of the Orient. Would that I had sown all the seeds of my ideas in the receptive ground of the people's thoughts. Be not frightened by the ferocious acts of the Sultans .... Strive with the utmost speed, and endeavour with the greatest swiftness, nature is your friend, and the Creator of Nature your ally. The stream of renovation (*tajaddud*) flows quickly towards the East. (E. G. Browne, *Material for the study of the Babi Religion*, Cambridge, 1908, quoted in, Anwar Moazzam, *Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani: A Muslim Intellectual of the East*, New Delhi, 2017, p.193).

He had seen the beginning of the inevitable process of intellectual and political modernisation already starting under the western colonial powers. Some of his suggestions that may be taken along with institutionalisation are as follows:

- a) The *'ulama* should also be trained in modern sciences.
  - b) State must be based, not on monarchy or dictatorship but on “Law”(*qaanoon*).
  - c) In the contemporary Islamic jurisprudential terminology, Afghani was *ghair muqqallid* and argued that for the purpose of legislation all rational instruments (including *ijtihad*) and for any problem sources of legal injunctions available in all schools of *fiqh* should be used. Once in Egypt he was asked as to which school of law he followed. He replied that he preferred to select the most apt opinion for an issue from all legal opinions.
  - d) *'Ulama* are those who not only have knowledge but are also capable of changing peoples' minds with that knowledge.
- 15) Institutionalisation would be a long process. But, it must be started since there is another option. If required, it could be better a collective human effort—Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu and Sikh--joint effort, effort for providing life-line for humanity. The process of institutionalisation demands participation of Muslim and non-Muslim experts of the world and would take a long time and may face stiff resistance from the so-called conservative sections of the *'ulama* of the world. But there is no other alternative to what has been suggested in this article in order to initiate a discourse on the institutionalisation of the teachings of the Qur'an. A blue-print may be drafted for consideration and suggestions of scholars of all schools of thought. Later, the final draft could be published and available to those who are interested in change.

Important: For the present project the most important is availability primary data on the Qur'an. Sajjad Husaain has done a great job in providing on line searchable website, Islam365.com.

### **Abstract**

This article aims at sharing guidelines, based on the holy Qura'n, for the importance of institutionalization as there is no other option. The chief cause of decline of Muslim societies has been ignoring of the transformation of the teachings of Qura'n into functioning epistemological, social, economic, political, intellectual, educational and cultural institutions as they were implemented by the Messenger Hazrat Muhammed (peace be upon him) in the societies of Makkah and Madinah. Quoting what Jamaluddin Afghani has seen the beginning of the inevitable process of intellectual and political modernization already starting under the western colonial powers, and suggested that i) the ulema should be trained in modern sciences; ii) state must be based on Law not on monarchy or dictatorship; iii) for the purpose of legislation all rational instruments (including *ijtihad*) and for any problem sources of legal injunctions available in all schools of *fiqh* should be used; and iv) *Ulama* are those who not only have knowledge but are also capable of changing peoples' minds with that knowledge.

**Keyword:** Institutionalization, Jamaluddin Afghani.