Concept of Islamic unity and its role in development

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UNITY THE REAL STRENGTH:

Unity is strength? Just like when the small particles of sand unite together they become a vast desert or like the small drops of rain that they become river and ocean. The combination of colours gives the beauty to flowers, rainbow and gardens. Similarly the unity of people makes a nation as a result of which an individual becomes strong. The Islam lays great stress on the importance of unity. The basic concept of Islamic is teaching the man how one has have to behave with other human being. In fact the basis of Islam lies in justice, equality, faith, discipline, struggle and honesty. These are the pillars of Islamic unity. The major goal in Islam is absolute faith in God as a result of which the people are united and bring peace in the world. Allah is one and His oneness is called Ahad. He gives us the message that we should be united and must in case divide ourselves into sections and sects. Of course according to the Qur'an the division of people in the races and clans is only for their identification. The best out of us is the man of piety (تقوی).

In fact Muslim unity is not only like some of the practices in celebrations of Eid and other festivals on any one of days of festivals. But the basis of Islamic unity depends on the proper teachings of Quran and the practices following Sunnah of Muhammad PBUH and his family for further guidance.

The unity in Islam means practices of the basic values of Islam. Such values are human kindness, mercy, affection, discipline and caring others. Unity means how to obey the order of Allah for a better world and how to handle others within the values of justice and equality. It is also necessary that all our actions should be in accordance with the values of Islamic unity according to the message of Allah as described in the Holy Qur'an. In fact the safety of human rights is the basic part of Islamic Unity. Interestingly in Islam the concept of kindness and safety is much wider that covers every creature, in the universe besides human being.

In Sura Al-e-Imran the Quran says; "And hold fast, all of you together to the rope of Allah, and be not divided among yourselves." (3:103).

Then Quran condemns sectarianism and regards it as shirk (polytheism). The Quran again in Sura Al-e-Imran (3.103) says: "O ye who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared and die not except in a state of Islam." This verse clearly ordains that instead of adhering to Sunnism, Shiasim, or Wahabism, we should strongly adhere to Islam. In Mishqat Sharife there is a tradition of the Holy Prophet which says; "The Muslims are like a body; if one limb aches, the whole body aches." Then the Messenger of Allah says; "whoever does not care about the affairs of the Muslims is not one of them." From the above Quranic facts we deduce the result that Islam believes in the unity of all humans and preaches peace, justice and equality. Religion is to serve humankind. Religion has come to reform and unite

humans, not to divide them. We must condemn extremism and terrorism in the name of religion and unite humankind if we believe in the unity of God.

Keeping in view above messages the unity is not particularly for only Muslims, but anyone who believes and have trust in God can be the part of outstanding values of Islam. In the modern era of globalization world is like a village now. A war in the east part of the world can affect the opposite part of the earth. In short concept of Muslim unity should be spread to each and every human, for a better world. But it is necessary to spread this message of unity, with love, and in a peaceful way. Muslims should know that they have to use their values for preaching the message of unity, instead of demonstrating their wealth, or power. Islam is the religion of kindness and preaches softness in behavior. There is no place of extremism in the religion of Islam. Some groups or individuals who involve in terrorism or extremism, their act is against the unity of Islam as well as against humanity. The murder of one human being means the murder of whole humanity. Islam stresses to eliminate such individuals and groups at any cost.

Now question is why Muslims all over the world are in misery? Why they are failure to achieve their right place in the world? Why they are failure in their socio political and economical polices and why they are failure to play strong role in international politics and policies? OIC organization of Islamic countries, which represents a larger part of the world after UNO, is also failure to achieve respectable or responsible status in the world.

Role of Islamic unity in development.

Unity and development, sounds mysterious, but the fact is that Islamic values and teachings have highest place towards any success. The following are basic reasons.

A) Unity is a strength

B) Unity is the base of knowledge.

C) Unity is always inspiration

D) Unity increase friends and eliminate enemies.

E) Unity creates and multiplies recourses.

First of all with respect to Islamic unity and development, we should believe `Unity means unity` it is not a word, it is an action. This action should be adopted as a behavior of Muslim's life which means the philosophy of Islamic way of life with trust among Ummah. Now let us explore the theory of Islamic development. Development is a fact, which can be measured and judged practically. As already discussed Islamic development is related to collective development of individuals. As an individual it is related to the prosperity of each person living in an Islamic society. It covers the welfare of each person living in Muslim state. No society can be known as real Islamic society, until it does not reflect the justice, equality and spiritual values, which are their strength.

Keeping in view the above discussion and definitions, Islamic concept of unity and development can be defined as under.

"Efforts made by individuals and collectively for a better life of the human living in a Muslim state, enjoying the real system of justice, equality, trade, besides learning opportunities in all fields of life. Being Muslims they should be facilitated in performing their spiritual obligations freely. The goals of the state should be to maintain peace, a socio political system suited for all age groups beliefs with an environment fit for scientific and basic needs for development. The state should be responsible to create atmosphere of unity, understanding and development. Also the state should maintain security and peace on the borders and maintain good relations with other states. (Abid Ali Abid)

Misery of Islamic countries and suggestions for mutual development.

In the present era, a large number of Muslim countries are part of world map. OIC Organization of Islamic conference is now the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations. It has 57 member countries. But unfortunately, nearly whole Muslim world is facing series of problem and misery as they are not united.

For example in present international political scenario, Muslims world is facing terrible, pressure and injustice from outside. The basic reason is lack of unity, understanding and cooperation within Muslims states with result that Muslims states are blamed responsible for terror, undemocratic, and unwanted. The Islamic phobia is prevailing due to unjust behavior of others entirely for their personal reasons? Why the Muslim world is not able to achieve their goals in development? Some claims the reason as lack of natural recourses, but this is not the reality. The answer lies in political instability, internal fights, religious extremism, sectarianism, social classification, corrupt sovereignty, lack of research work, bad governess, bad law and order situation, weak foreign policies and weak propaganda methods.

It is painful that due to lack of efforts on the part of Muslim world during past 25 years the image of Muslims of the world has been badly damaged. Gulf war imposed on Iraq, terror attack on world Trade towers at New York, war against Iraq, crises in Somalia, Egypt, Afghanistan, Libya, Sudan, terrorist attack in Yemen, human rights issue at Bahrain, Palestinian crises, Kashmir issue, Iran nuclear issue, un-realistic sanctions against Iran and the present terrorist attacks in Pakistan are just a few examples in the Muslims world. Almost in all cases the interest of Muslims has been badly damaged. In most of the cases the super powers have misused their power directly or through unilateralism.

Unfortunately despite experiencing terrible conspiracies, attacks, blockade, wars, Muslim world is still playing in the hands of their masters but not friends. Billions of dollars legal and illegal are lying in the banks of Europe and USA but we could not establish first

class universities in Muslims states, the children of privileged class are enjoying their high level education in most expensive institutions of the world while the children belonging to poor class are forced for child labor. If at all some of them go to schools there no teachers, even no drinking water available for the children.

There is a lot to mention about the prevailing conditions. However let us try to find out some solution relating to Islamic unity and development in Muslims world. It is important to mention that Islamic unity is a privilege in presence of which all the Muslim states can be benefited. Especially it provides the opportunity to work with the people of same belief, and spirit.

We can still change the image of Muslim world among other nations by adopting certain changes in our behavior towards others and adopting drastic steps in our way of living in order to keep up the dignity of the Muslims. The following are a few proposals in this respect:

1. In order to achieve the required result let us have a quick review on the recourses of Muslim world. For instance, the tiny Ingushetia (pronounce as in-gu-she-sha) located in the North Caucasus next to Chechnya is rich in marble, timber, dolomite, plaster, limestone, gravel, granite, clay, thermal medical water, rare metals, mineral water, oil (over 60 billion tons), and natural gas reserves. Kazakhstan has between 10-17.6 billion barrels of proven oil reserves, and its natural gas reserves are estimated at between 53 and 83 trillion cubic feet. Turkmenistan has between 98 and 155 trillion cubic feet of natural gas reserves, making it the fourth largest producer of the world. In addition to that the most of the Muslim countries have geostrategic importance as well as having rich natural resources (e.g., natural gas and crude oil). Roughly half of the petrol consumed in the West is exported from the Muslim world. In addition these countries produce 40% of the total of the world’s agricultural production.

2. Many economists and strategists freely admit that the world economy depends upon the

Muslim world's oil and gas exports, in particular those in the Persian Gulf. The Persian Gulf holds two-thirds of the planet's discovered crude oil reserves.

3. Data obtained by researchers concludes that Saudi Arabia alone holds 25.4% of the world's oil reserves or 262 billion barrels. In addition 11% is in Iraq, 9.6 % in the UAE, 9.2 % in Kuwait, 8.6 % in Iran, 13% in other OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) member states. Research commissioned by the U.S. Department of Energy shows that between the year 2000 and 2020, oil exports from the above area will increase by 125%. This means that the world will continue to meet most of its energy needs by importing oil from the Gulf region. Moreover, the Middle East has 40% of the global natural gas reserves, 35 % of the reserves are in the Gulf region, Algeria, Libya, and other North African countries have 3.7% of the world's reserves.

The Caucasus and Central Asia are also rich in oil, natural gas, coal, gold, and other natural resources. According to Ariel Cohen, a research fellow at the Washington-based Russian and Eurasian Studies at the Heritage Foundation, the huge oil reserves are estimated to be over 25 billion barrels under the Caspian Sea. He estimated that oil reserves in the Central Asian republics of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan are similar to those in Kuwait and larger than those in Alaska's Northern Slope and the North Sea combined. Some other Muslim countries have valuable mineral resources. For instance, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan are two of the world's leading gold producers. Turkey has one of the world's richest boron reserves, only recently discovered to be very important, and Tajikistan has the world's largest aluminum producing facilities.

In addition to above mentioned resources, Muslim world has large amounts of other natural and agricultural resources available to them. The amount presented here is based on the world's production of them. 75% of the world's production of Barley, 25% Cocoa, 30% Copra, 40% Cotton, 93% Dates, 25% Groundnut, 48% Jute, 40% Livestock, 70% Natural Rubber, 40% Rice, 40% Pepper, 35% Phosphate, 52% Tin, etc., all of them are coming from the Muslim world. (THE SHIELD NEWS LETTER)

The question rises as to what is the use of so much recourse? Muslims world have a huge, and vast size of potential market. But due to lack of potential investment in Muslim countries market the available potential is not utilized despite their billions of dollars lying in the world banks. Under the circumstances we can adopt the following steps:

MUTUAL PLANNING AND ACTION.

Muslim countries may be closer and share their planning, for development programmers. In this way different Muslim countries may avail their respective mutual experiences in technology, expertise, human resources, even investment. This practice can provide huge benefits to each Muslim country.

FAST TRACK TOURISM.

Many countries of the world are earning huge foreign exchange through tourism industry. There are a number of countries depending only on tourism industry. Fortunately most of Muslim countries have great attractions in the field of tourism. But the tourism industry is miserably neglected in Muslim countries and its potential is facing lack of activity and interest by the government of these countries. There is great need of awareness and rapid action. These countries can introduce special and free visa policy, special chartered flights may be started and construction of tourist class hotels and necessary steps can be taken. The practice should be expanded between the entire Muslim world through development of tourism. This will develop better socio political relation among Muslim states. This will also flourish, trade, cultural activities, sports, educational system and will activate mutual interest. Strong tourism activities within Islamic world will also provide better understanding between the people of different countries having different culture..

CLOSE COOPERATION IN EDUCATION FIELD.

Close cooperation in the field of education can add to great unity and understanding among

Muslim world. It will help a lot to bring different nations closer in the field of education and will help a lot to bring their people closer. The cooperation in educational educational activities is a spiritual and social responsibility. Muslim world need vast and active cooperation in this field. Following steps can be taken to achieve outstanding results.

A) Frequent visits of academics, and experts for research and discussion sessions.

B) Special seats should be reserved in different universities for the students from Muslim world.

C) Special discounted fee for students from Muslim countries.

D) Students should exchange study program. For example students can spend six months through mutual exchange program. In this way they can learn a lot about each other's culture, values and education techniques.

E) Establishment of common research and scientific societies and institutions.

F) Establishment of open and in universities campus for the students of other Muslim countries.

G) Opening of trade and cultural centers representing Muslim world.

H) Multi language learning centers can be introduced in different countries.

I) Establishment of research laboratories with specified goals. Scientist from Muslim world can share between each other the knowledge and researches.

J) Establishment of teachers training centers for long and short courses.

K) Establishment of multi nation publishing houses. These publishing houses can expand and publicize the work of Muslim scholars.

L) Similar cooperation can be developed for basic, middle, and secondary education level.

COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF TRADE.

Close trade relations will develop better understanding and opportunities between different countries. Muslim world is extremely rich with natural resources. If Muslim countries take practical steps for trade development outstanding results can be enjoyed in very short time. Some helpful practical steps are suggested hereunder.

1) Special agreements can be signed among countries of Muslim world for close trade cooperation.

2) Muslim countries can develop their trade relations on priority basis. Through special trade agreements they can have huge benefits.

3) Common marketing and trade centers within Muslim countries.

4) Tax and duty free attractions for import and export within Muslim countries

5) (MWCM) Muslim world common market can be developed. Within this market, special tariff, conditions, can be introduced.

6) Special trade ways i.e. roads, shipping, and air transport can be developed.

7) Free visa policy for businessmen with (MWCM) can be introduces.

8) Special soft investment opportunities can be introduced for investor from (MWCM).

9) Common chamber of commerce can be established in every common market.

10) Special trade promotion fund can be established in order to create awareness of the people in the field.

11) Regular trade delegates should visit each other countries on regular basis.

12) A common and more useful policy can be adopted for export to other countries.

13) All natural resources of Muslim countries should be sold to other Muslim countries on priority basis.

14) The items, such as medicine, motor vessels, aero plans, ships, defense instruments, etc can be produced with mutual cooperation.

15) (MWCM) should try to be self sufficient in mutual resources and technology of their common market.

16) Construction work should be offered to other Muslim countries, who have better experience in the field.

17) Strong information exchange mechanism can be established to deal with smuggling and illegal trade.

18) Socio trade method can be adopted. The barter system can be used. Human resources exchange program can be introduced.

19) Public festivals and trade meals (for public) can be introduced. Where small traders could sell their products directly to people. This facility should be only for (MWCM) countries.

20) Besides the above points having a few guide line there are many issues and useful basis which can be developed.

The above mentioned points for Islamic unity might bring about a strong philosophy. But in reality under present circumstances it is difficult to trace it. If we consider the number of countries, population, natural resources, and size of market Muslim world have great potential. In fact much more can be done to achieve the target of Islamic unity and proper development. Some other important points are under.

a) Common defense strategy.

b) Foreign policy with priority for Muslim world.

c) Muslim world parliament should be established.

d) Common Muslim world currency and development fund.

e) Common training system for security organs.

f) Establishment of common interests counsel.

g) Demand for permanent seat (with veto power) in UNO.

h) Common struggle for solving international, (Muslim world) issues, conflicts Such as Palestine and Kashmir issues.

i) Establishment of Muslim world court of justice.

j) Muslim world unity counsel to be made.

k) A Muslim solidarity counsel should be established