Rapprochement Strategies in Islamic *Madhāhi*

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ABSTRACT

The unity of Islamic ummah is a primary noble aim of Islamic law. It bestows with cogent evidence for the divine solidarity of the Omnipotent, the cohesion of His Sharīʿah and the oneness of revering Him. It also provides evidence for the binding nature of such subservience to Allah عزوجل. The prime objective of rapprochement deals with bringing the Muslim ummah together under the umbrella of the universal values and invariable precepts resulting from the Holy Qurʾān and the Prophetic traditions (Sunnah). It is a concrete and methodological call directing towards the investigation of the occurrence of madhāhib differences. The main purpose of this research study is to focus on targeting jurisprudential principles through rapprochement strategies among the Islamic madhāhib. The rapprochement strategy for bridging the gap is based on scientific and academic foundations. The study is qualitative in nature, with descriptive and analytical approach. Rapprochement of madhāhib and the role of jurisprudential principles has been the focus of jurists and scholars since the formative period of Islam. The study also focuses on the differences of opinions among scholars. The foundations of rapprochement among Islamic madhāhib are also discussed in detail. The research finding showed that even though a number of madhāhib emerged on the basis of doctrinal differences yet there are certain points of convergence in these madhāhib. The research also underlined the role of media for the establishment of religious harmony and suggested conducting more researches on various rapprochement strategies.

Introduction

Islām is the religion of harmony in its absolute comprehensive conception and dimensions. It has systematic approaches and is inclusive of cooperation, integrity and solidarity. Therefore, it has enhanced unity with strong firm pillars and foundations which cannot be weakened by any hardship or straitened circumstances. The Islām has great concern for coherent solidarity and protection against subjugation and transgression which has affected unity in terms of words and actions. If any conflict occurs then it is mandatory upon the Islamic *ummah* to make reconciliation by eradicating conflict and dissension. The genuine message of Islamic *Sharīʿah* is correspondingly to spread goodness in worldly affairs and hereafter. Therefore, the decisive future vision for protection of Islamic *ummah* is strengthening ties of relations in order to achieve solidarity. The achievement of intellectual integrity amongst its religious scholars is the main achievement and objective of rapprochement strategies.[1]

1. The Role of Strategy in Islamic *Madhāhib*

Strategy in Islamic jurisprudence is defined lexically as the art of formulating and consolidating the ways to achieve the desired target. In terminological sense, it is defined as pre planned action which will help in accumulation of results efficiently and rapidly. Strategy basically includes the working methods, precise means to achieve specific objectives, utilization of available resources with adjacent conditions and formulation of alternative options in case of any obstacle. In Islamic *madhāhib*, the strategy caters with set of foundations, ideologies, principles and parameters. It is also meant for governing the procedure of rapprochement of Islamic *madhāhib* and focuses on bridging the gap between the doctrines. This strategy is planned within the framework of the Divine law and utilizes its effort towards the practicalities of juristic issues belonging to followers of the different Islamic *madhāhib*. It also includes scientific methods and practical approaches in order to have the strongest grip on the teachings of the Holy Qurʾān and the prophetic traditions as both are the roots of Islamic Jurisprudence.[2]

2. The Theory of Rapprochement in Islamic Jurisprudence

In Islamic jurisprudence, rapprochement is defined as '*bringing closer*', '*saving rather than exaggerating*', and '*converging rather than diverging*'.[3]

It deals with identification of the issues which are shared by the Islamic *madhāhib* like agreement on the theme of faith and issues of jurisprudence. It also helps in finding the methods relating to disagreement matters or issues. In order to maintain mutual understanding, a line is drawn concerning the disagreement relating to ancillary branches and principles of *madhāhib* so both should not intermingled during the interpretation of disagreements. The relevant factor involved in the interpretation is the utilization of logical proof and realistic evidence drawn from the cradles of Islamic Jurisprudence.[4]

The theory of rapprochement provides ethics in giving any judgmental statement to other Muslims, such as '*branding others as disbelievers*', '*labeling them as open sinners*', '*accusing them of polytheism*' or '*indicting them for breaching the principles of Islām'*.[5] It also delivers guidelines in evasion from doctrine-based fanaticism and constricted sectarianism and encourages sticking towards the truth using authentic evidential sources. Therefore, this notion of rapprochement does not elucidate the exclusion of any Islamic *madhāhib* or doctrine. Neither, it means integration of one *madhhab* into other on the basis of total preponderance. It signifies the common grounds in order to achieve unification. With utilization of authentic evidences, solid shared understandings, avoiding extremism, confiscating ambiguity, eliminating uncertainty; it provides clarification to jurisprudential issues. In this strategic sense, rapprochement compacts with unity, bridging of gap and to attain mutual good-will along with reverence of different members of Islamic religion.[6]

3. Notions of *Madhāhib* and Reconciliation Process

Adoption of any doctrine results in advocating that specific opinion only. Therefore, *madhāhib* or doctrine deals with 'creed' or 'belief' including methods or principles. In terminological basis, doctrine is tailored as intellectual actions derived from the authentic sources i.e. the Holy Qurʾān, prophetic traditions, *ijtihād*, *qiyās* or any other evidence or principles employed by the jurists. It also includes issues of worship rituals, transactions or any branch of *fīqḥ* which they extracted from authentic and beneficial documentations.[7] These derived principles are followed by jurists in the initial stage and then they are further put forward for legal reasoning. Afterwards, such rulings constitute a heritage benefitting the upcoming generations with such valuable treasure

enriching the diversity of Islamic thought. In development of its terminology, it expanded its arrears to other thoughts such as philosophy and politics.[8]

In Islamic jurisprudence, juridical issues are demonstrated by the authentic sources concerning to foundational area of knowledge. In this regard, some of the publications are referred as '*issues*'. The publications of juristic auxiliary branches entitled 'juridical issues' are incorporated under a concise illustration. For example, the issues pertaining to transaction comes under the branch of Law.[9]

4. The Philosophy of *Ikhtilāf* in Rapprochement Strategy

The concept of 'disagreement' (*khilāf*) and 'difference' (*ikhtilāf*) is fundamental expression in the theory of strategy. 'Disagreement' deals with 'discord' and 'disparity'.[10] The word 'disagreement' is not appropriate in the perception of opposition. In Arabic, it is considered as full-blown conflict which leads towards *shiqāq* (dissension).[11] It is not suitable to express this term in variance of juristic reasoning, as *Imāms* and Islamic scholars are grounded on common principles. The term 'difference' is more pertinent to explain such diversity with speculative opinions and plurality of juristic reasoning.[12] However, people being reconciled on issue besides having disagreement are considered as a praiseworthy notion. In order to avoid extremism and distress[13] in such situation, it is essential to consider it as a part of Allah's عزوجل trial of this worldly life for humans[14] as it is stated in the Holy Qurʾān:

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وَجَعَلْنَا بَعْضَكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ فِتْنَةً أَتَصْبِرُونَ وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ بَصِيرًا[15]

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"We have made some of you as a trial for others: will ye have patience? For God is One Who sees (all things)."[16]

4.1 Scholars View on *Ikhtilāf*

The concept of disagreement is also documented by Al-Ṭahanawaī; a religious scholar who stated that, '*difference is what is used in a statement based on evidence, while disagreement occurs in what is not based on evidence.*'[17]

Al-Kāfawi describes that, '*disagreement occurs when the way is different but the objective is the same, and it is a sign of mercy, whereas conflict occurs when both are different*'.[18] There is a delicate difference between both terms i.e. 'disagreement' and 'difference', however, some religious scholars use them

interchangeably. Whereas, in the Holy Qurʾān, 'disagreement' is used when two different meanings are mentioned, one explains about diversity and the other disruption.[19] Diversity is described in the Holy Qurʾān as:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَأَلْوَانِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِلْعَالِمِينَ[20]

"And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colors: verily in that are signs for those who know".[21]

Some of the religious scholars adopted the concept of disagreement (khilāf) while others prefer to difference (ikhtilāf). In this particular sense, 'difference' is employed for diversity of *Imāms* explaining rich diversity of Islamic thought.[22]

5. Foundations of Rapprochement of Islamic *Madhāhib*

In the early centuries of Islām, the Holy Qurʾān and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (خَاتَم النبِيِين) (صلَّى الله علَيه وسلَّم) were the only source of information. Later on, the religious scholars started deriving legal rulings by using these primary sources along with acts and acknowledgement.[23] After the demise of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (خَاتَم النبِيِين) (صلَّى الله علَيه وسلَّم), the sources employed by the religious scholars for inferring Islamic legal ruling were the Holy Qurʾān, prophetic traditions and *athār* of companions. The companions were the direct learners of knowledge disseminated by the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (صلَّى الله علَيه وسلَّم) (خَاتَم النبِيِين). With the growth of Islamic society, the circumstances of Islamic society have been changed and evolution of civil issues begun. Being the natural phenomena, various issues and problems emerged in the arena of Islamic life. Such innovative developments were dependent on the exposition of Islamic rulings, as adoption of legal ruling confirms such development. This ruling is based on Islamic frame in order to meet the upcoming challenges with the essence of Islamic civilization.[24] Majority of the jurist have agreement on basic four sources of evidence namely the Holy Qurʾān, the prophetic traditions, consensus and analogical reasoning.

5.1 The Holy Qurʾān

It is stated that,

لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ[25]

> "No falsehood can approach it from before or behind it: It is sent down by One Full of Wisdom, worthy of all Praise."[26]

The Holy Qurʾān is the chief among all sources. Allah عزوجل has laid down His orders in His Holy Book to worship Him only, obey Him, His Holy Messenger and Muslim *Imāms*. It has been revealed in the Arabic language and has entrusted responsibility to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) (خاتم النبيين) to explain it to people.[27] The utilization of the Holy Qurʾān as jurisprudence source demands observing specific rules. For extraction of rulings directly from the Holy Qurʾān, reasoning should be kept in mind of Islamic scholars while differentiating between univocal and allegorical texts, abrogating and abrogated writings, independent and dependent extracts, general and specific verdicts. If any attempt made by non-specialist expert and his work would be cited in jurisprudential matters, it may result in number of mistakes that might increase disunity and widen the gap.[28] In order to avoid such situation, jurists should issue a document which is in alliance with the Holy Qurʾān rulings and deliver the rulings on Qurʾānic injunctions like marriage or rituals of pilgrimage. Further, this issued document makes it clear that any question besides this issue to be considered as responsibility of other jurists who are expert in the remaining three sources. Hence, adopting different approach towards common ground issues would result in promotion of culture of unity.[29]

Abdullah bin Masud in this regard states that:

> 'Among us, one had learnt say, ten verses of the Holy Qurʾān, just would not proceed further unless and until he was thoroughly conversant with their meaning, and until he had commenced acting upon them in daily life.'[30]

5.2 The Prophetic Traditions

Prophet's Tradition signifies the wisdom that is revealed to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) (خاتم النبيين). The Islamic scholars did not differed in its practice but significantly differed with regard to the methods of reconciling its possibly conflicting texts.[31]

Majority of the scholars has set criterion for authentication of Prophet's sayings such as continuous *sanad*, truthfulness, precision of text, lack of contradictions and defects. In order to deal with conflicting pieces, an effort should be made in preparation of new document relating to rulings upon which there is agreement in terms of both meaning and recording. This can be accomplished with well-known references of Imām Mālik's (d. 474/1081) *Al-Muwaṭṭa* (the Approved), Al-Zāylaī's *Nasb Al-Rā'yah*, Imām Shāfiʿī's (d. 204/819) *Ikhtilāf Al-Hadīth*, Imām Zayd's *Al-Majmu*, and other reference books of Islamic schools.[32] In selection of the prophetic traditions, the theme of unity should be kept in mind as it is stated in the Holy Qurʾān,

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ[33]

> "Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations after receiving Clear Signs: For them is a dreadful penalty."[34]

5.3 Consensus

Consensus advocates among all the doctrines as they are agreed on its proof-value, although they differ in the conditions of implementing them.[35] However, it has some impact on the application of consensus as according to *Ẓāhirī*, it is restricted only to the companions of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) (خاتم النبيين). The *Māliki* are of the view that the consensus of the votaries of Madīnah deals with only 'action' and apply in specific issues. The consensus of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad's (صلى الله عليه وسلم) (خاتم النبيين) family is taken by *Imāmis*. The notion of consensus is now easily accessible due to communication of jurists on current issues with the availability of academic and Islamic organizations. It is highly appreciated that renovation in consensus is a matter accepted by Islamic law theoreticians.[36]

5.4 Analogical Reasoning

The proof-value and part of analogy are irrefutable in innovation of the process of jurisprudence acquiescent to legal reasoning.[37] Conversely the plenty of ancillary branches judgments issued by *Imāms* has constrained its role presently. This is for the reason that the votaries of each school desire to follow the verdicts and legal opinions listed in their own approved records.[38] The sense of imitation is still prevalent in jurisprudential thought in general. The current reality, however, necessitates the use of unique type of analogy for new concerns addressed by scholars in jurisprudence meetings. The four elements of analogy are: the ruling, the principle, the branch (essential detail) and the reason. The latter is the corner stone in analogical reasoning process. 'The occasion' is a core notion that defines such procedure.[39]

6. Purpose of Rapprochement among Islamic Doctrines

The principles upon which the Islamic doctrines are established, adoption of rational and legal reasoning sources are not valid until they are derived from the Holy Qurʾān and the traditions of Holy Prophet Muḥammad (خاتم النبيين) (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Such sources must fulfill the requirements in order to accept them as a valid source by *Imāms* and jurists. Therefore, the rapprochement source of doctrines is basically axis of sound and insightful consideration of ruling issues and authentication of juristic opinions. The disagreement among the jurisprudential schools emerged concurrently with the expansion of understanding and aggravated proportionately with the flow of issues and problems. This type of disagreement is regarded as, '*disagreement of academic opinion between schools rather than an actual disagreement among Muslims.*'[40] It should not be regarded as an element of division or distance between the Islamic *Ummah*. This type of disagreement can be eradicated while discovering its dimensions and finding out the way through dialogue with perspective to jurisprudential fundamental sources.[41]

The recourse to disagreement can be achieved while staying in line with spirit of Islām and concentrating on the unity of Muslim *ummah*. These observances should be underlined within the parameters of the life of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (صلى الله) (عليه وسلم) (خاتم النبيين) and holding firmly his technique in resolution of disagreements.[42] For this purpose, the assistance of religious scholars should be accepted to endorse individual and joint legal reasoning. This objective can be achieved in confirmation with

the practicalities of Islamic jurisprudence including proven content with validity. It will be accomplished through research, knowledge, adoption of Islamic tolerance and eradication of fanaticism. This effort would help the religious scholars to excel in the area of rapprochement including integrity, momentousness and Islamic spirit. The jurists then have the capability of re-launching the inferential principles and restoration of intellectual progress for Muslims. To do so, the jurists should gain enough input from jurisprudential sources and tolerance in line with legal texts without inclusion of any fanaticism and favor of single doctrine or *madhhab*.[43]

The purpose of rapprochement is utilization of its general rules, aims, in-depth study of disagreement, historical and dogmatic motives along with genuine components. This effort is grounded on the intellectual, scientific research, faith, exclusion of personal motives and tolerance. It should center on recognizing the practice of categorical evidence foundations and the content inferred therefrom. Abovementioned elements are capable and competent to solve any emerging problem in Islamic nation from Islamic perspective whether issues are political, doctrinal, societal or economic.[44]

7. Prospective Areas of Rapprochement

The areas of rapprochement cater with implementation of strategies between Islamic *madhāhib* including their activities and conduction of rapprochement plans. It constitute of the central basis integrated with implementation methods, strategy programs and elaboration of activities. The implementation of these programs would be ensured by the stakeholders with a concern to achieve rapprochement objectives and goals of programs in particular. The areas of rapprochement constitute of following objectives:

7.1 Principles of Mutual Understanding

The principles are defined for scholarly *ikhtilāf* in terms of general principles (*uṣūl*) or specific rulings (*furūʿ*). It deals opponents with clearest examples of ethics and manners which reflect clear image of Islām without any deceit or subterfuge. Differences of opinion among schools of thought do not deal with any option of behaving ethically or politely but it gives the message of respect of brotherly spirit. Mutual understanding conveys the message that statements of differences should not be

rejected and opinions which have agreement on their wrong text should be rejected. This principle works for the change towards betterment and creates harmony within the Islamic community.[45]

7.2 Enrich Intellectual Dialogue

The Islamic intellectual dialogue has its basis on Islamic legal principles which were revealed by the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (صلـى الله عليـه وسلم) (خـاتم النبيين) and his sayings are a source of mercy. The Prophetic traditions were then followed by companions and later on by *Imāms*, religious scholars and jurists. These sayings were the basis of establishment of derivation of agreement rules and an important constituent in accepting scientific argumentation.[46] Hence, it would lead towards the achievement of prior objectives such as unity, rapprochement and tolerance.[47] Islām has always stressed upon mutual dialogue without any argumentation as it is stated in the Holy Qurʾān:

$$\text{وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ}^{48}$$

"And argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious".[49]

The abovementioned verse elucidated the significance of dialogue among Muslim brothers especially in the matter of any disputation. This would help in stabilizing the Muslim identity. This verse on dialogue and argumentation deals with every aspect of Muslims' life especially issues related to religion. In order to unify Islamic nation, the dialogue should be characterized with soft language, sound judgment, factor of rapprochement and strengthening the ties of agreement. Intellectual dialogue compacts with exchange of knowledge, acceptance of logical proof reinforced by authentic evidence. It excludes odd elements such as negative resistance and ethnic fanaticism. The rehearsal of dialogue and argumentation as well as the interchange of authentic scientific confirmation based on textual and logical proof is limited to only scholars and jurists who are experienced enough to engage in this essential field.[50] The dialogue should be carried out in conformity of the Islamic Nation with well-specified methodology sticking towards the principles of rich Islamic dialogue. Such dialogue with implementation of scope and theme includes the following goals[51]:

7.2.1 Bilateral Dialogue through Intellectual Meeting

The intellectual meeting of jurisprudence scholars and jurists as well as participation of governmental, non-governmental

organizations should be conducted under the umbrella of unity. Such type of meeting would enhance the chances of number of Islamic actors to be part of rapprochement. It would also increase the bilateral dialogue between Islamic countries on the basis of participatory activities and advices. Further, it would help out in circulation of information regarding intellectual and rapprochement cohesion between Islamic Nation.

7.2.2 Achievement of Patience through Authentic Knowledge

The constructive dialogue is necessary requisite as the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (صلـى الله علیـه وسـلم) (خـاتم النبيين) taught his believers to consult with each other. It would help in achievement of patience and perseverance by avoiding pitfalls and deviation and ensures the continuity of march.[52] For this purpose, the seasonal intellectual sessions should be arranged for Muslim youth in order to represent true image of religion Islām and to sensitize them about the lessons of early companions. This would help them in providing an opportunity to grasp the authentic knowledge of jurisprudential schools and their differences. Such paramount meetings would convey the message of precise information regarding Islamic *madhāhib*.[53]

7.2.3 Expansion of Scientific Research and Cultural Activities

Such activities should be organized in thematic style to circulate the information of causes of differences and demerits of such differences. It would also disseminate suggestions to improve these differences and acquire complementarity goal for better life. Such activities will contribute in providence of information with the utilization of available resources. It would play a positive role in creating awareness regarding incorrect opinions of Islamic *madhāhib*. These fruitful activities would be accompanied by national and international organizations with their participation on the rapprochement areas. The exchange of knowledge pertaining to areas of rapprochement should also include the scientific research of Islamic jurisprudence schools whose information would be provided by their particular *Imāms* and jurists. More emphasis would be focused on expansion of writing and publication. The basic interest should be devoted to jurisprudential efforts with a view to achieve spiritual unity. This can be accomplished through the exchange of printed provisions or through means of communication. Through the exposition of

knowledge of Islamic schools, it would open the doors for new horizon of knowledge and unveiling the hidden facts about Islamic *madhāhib*.

7.2.4   Awareness of Ethics of Disagreement

The better understanding of the teachings of Islamic laws made easier to suppress the seeds of insurgence for authority from the competing rivals.[54] The leading thinkers and religious scholars of *ummah* must comply with ethics of disagreements by defining creedal areas under the umbrella of mutual understanding.[55]

7.3 Research and Study Premises

This area comprises of variant fields of effective learning and transmission of Islamic jurisprudence content in civilized style.   It should also play a significant role in accumulating enrich material of Islamic civilization which would help in publication of novel facts in rapprochement. This would also help Islamic society by allowing individuals to stay in touch with the rapprochement policies and its adoption. The responsibility of research and study premises includes the following considerations[56]:

7.3.1   Framework of Intellectual Horizons

The educational institutions, individually and collectively are the places for young Muslims where they build their minds and learn with their perception. These institutions are the sources of intellectual horizons and development of intellectual competencies. Therefore, they are considered among the greatest focus to promote culture of rapprochement in the mind of young Muslims and to create awareness about Islamic unity.[57] For this purpose, it is essential to review the prospectus of educational programs especially Islamic education. It should be aligned with unification of Islamic schools, their concepts and structure. With reference to this, the teaching methods should be adopted according to the desired objectives of rapprochement. This would help out in eradicating flaws of previous programs and references without mentioning any baseless material about Islamic schools. The specialized programs of these educational institutions should provide an opportunity to students to excel in legal reasoning. This would encourage the students in critical study of sayings of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (خـاتم النبيين) (صـلى الله عليـه وسـلم) (*Dirāyāh*) and the basics of personal legal opinion based upon flawless Islamic approach. For this purpose, talented individuals should be

engage in such research of legal reasoning and required auxiliary sciences.

7.3.2 Areas of Scholarly Dimensions

The centre of research is a fundamental task in scientific and religious fields. The specialized studies help in the analysis of information where research expertise could be exchanged. This would also help in acquiring knowledge of Islamic *madhāhib* in credible and effective way. The basic purpose would then become to limit the differences between Islamic schools in strictly narrow area and aiming towards analysis of intellectual dimensions. Afterwards, the comparison is made with the source of origin from where they were originated. This effort would benefit the Muslims in accomplishment of rapprochement strategies.[58]

7.3.3 Academic Training Institutions

The worship places have significant value in the Islamic history. The historical evidences and biographies of elite scholars has shown that such places whether they are *Masājid*, *hawzā* or any worship house, they are only the sole center of their intellectual training.[59] This training later on served for shaping the conduct of general public. They also played an eminent role in consolidating faith, promoting Islamic ethics and unity. They are still connected with activities which are effectively contributing in the rapprochement areas. These institutions are a great source of production of jurists, religious scholars, *Imāms*, and intellectual leaders.[60]

7.3.4 Significance of Cultural Hubs

The cultural hubs being a center space for the execution of rapprochement activities endowed with rich information. They are considered as a source of dissemination of knowledge about intellectual, scientific and religious. Hence, their role is of much importance as compared to other areas of rapprochement. They are provided with modern qualities in order to cater every single step. In this way, no single element of rapprochement is missed or overlooked and hence contributing their major role in the implementation of rapprochement strategy. On this basis of such responsibility, they could be delegated with a considerable portion of the accountability of spreading the culture of rapprochement and evidences about doctrines. In addition to their fundamental task of disseminating Islamic thought and characterizing its civilizational features is basis of pride for Muslims. In order to

perform better, supplementary role by these centers is in dire need of rehabilitation and support in order to meet the fundamental requirements for rapprochement among the Islamic *madhāhib* within the prescribed boundaries.[61]

7.4 Role of Media in Rapprochement of Islamic *Madhāhib*

In the past, media has played an extraordinary role in dissemination of knowledge and information quite quickly and effectively. This shows that this particular field has the capability to play its effective role in the area of rapprochement and looks for the independent media.[62]

Hence, means of communication is considered as an essential element that would help in various phases with multiple operations for the implementation of rapprochement strategy. It includes variant phases such as awareness-raising, proper planning, and organization for implementation of strategy, follow-up and evaluation. Therefore, this category has its equal importance in terms of effectiveness of sharing of responsibility. In this way, each mean is complementing the task of other means. The reason behind this is that in means of communication, every single factor has its own onlookers and users. Bridging all of them together creates a wider space for communication. The emergence of fluidity of *madhhab* can be an important factor in minimization of conflicts and tensions which resulted in expressions of cultural practices.[63]

In order to achieve the desired objectives of rapprochement strategies, the assistance regarding means of communication is acquired. It is essential as it is deeply rooted in education, culture, broadcasting and preaching. Being effective tool, it is widely used by everyone everywhere. The top most priority of such strategy program is to provide support, guidance and training of its scientific executives. Hence, it would deliver programs and activities of rapprochement strategy in accordance to its plans along with the requirements of resources and cooperating institutions.[64]

7.5 Writing and Publishing

The writing and publishing would help miraculously in launching of strategy in order to achieve the desired target of rapprochement. The reason behind this achievement is the positive effect on documenting the historic truth relating to intellectual dimensions and jurisprudential differences along with

their motives and causes. It clearly depicts the true image of Islamic *ummah* and Muslims. Like other areas of rapprochement, this area is also of vital sustainable guidance. It provides benefit to Muslim generation and stake holders in achievement of Muslim unity. The writing sector is also influential in reaction to the suspicious comments of enemies of Islām in their attack against the Islamic *ummah*.[65] In order to get benefit from this sector, implementation plan should be activated in accordance with Islamic governments to perform the following actions[66]:

7.5.1 Promotion of Co-Authorship Books

It would help in promotion of knowledge relating to variant Islamic *madhāhib* in terms of *uloom* of interpretation, juridical content and comparative jurisprudence. It would also deals with rewriting of Islamic history, eradication of indelicate information about jurisprudential differences. This effort would also result in exposition of authentic facts about clear image of Islām.[67]

7.5.2 Editing of Islamic Heritage Books

Editing of such books along with ancient classical work of various Islamic schools would help in amending the content which is providing harm to Islamic doctrines. This objective can be achieved by practical scientific committees where selected members (learned, moderate and unprejudiced scholars) are representative of entire Islamic schools and ensured maneuvers of editing, publication and evaluation.

7.5.3 Responsibility of Intellectuals in Promotion of Solidarity

It is their responsibility to have a look on sectarian provoking material, conflicting issues as they are working against the esteem of unity.[68] The final channel for promotion of cohesion is the Arabic language as it acts as a soft medium for transferring of feelings among Muslims.[69]

7.6 Islamic Legacy and Caring of Islamic Immigrants

The significance of this rapprochement strategy contributes in the dissemination of message of Islamic unity as majority of Muslims are scattered in variant populous countries. The enrichment and capitalization of such area would play a momentous role in promotion of such culture.[70] This area is also acquainted with authentic information concerning Islamic *madhāhib* and Islamic heritage by making them conscious of hidden facts about Islamic doctrines. Therefore, they are fully equipped with statistics of sources, principles and trends of Islamic doctrines with complete

standardized knowledge about religion. Such standardized knowledge also enables to face the challenges and advised strictly to stick to their religion otherwise disunity would weaken their strength.[71]

8. Practical Measures for Rapprochement Strategy

For fruitful and effective implementation for the strategy of rapprochement among the Islamic *madhāhib*, certain combined and complementary actions should be taken at national, local and international levels.

8.1 Rapprochement Measures at National Level

At the national level platform, following measures should be adopted[72]:

8.1.1   Implementation of National Policy

Formulating a national policy which would aim at improving areas for rapprochement among Islamic schools of jurisprudence. This novel national policy should comprise of practical plans that highlight the evidential truths about jurisprudential differences. It would also explain that these differences are merely consequence of intellectual phenomena which are unharmonious with Islamic legislation. They are solely due to independent judgment which is consequent of conjectural evidence having justified Islamic roots.

8.1.2   Promotion of Rapprochement Culture

Integrating the subject, 'The Culture of Rapprochement between Islamic Schools of Jurisprudence', in curriculum of educational institutions, particularly religious bodies, and universities where Islamic jurisprudence is taught as a course. It should be according to standard pedagogical methods. The significance of such curriculum should be focused throughout the educational process and special consideration to be kept in mind that it is integrated as a practical subject. Later on, focus should be based on catering it as a core subject for higher educational institutions.[73]

8.1.3   Scholarly Conferences on Rapprochement

Inaugurating specific regular conferences on the theme of rapprochement along with its behavioral culture in different centres and educational institutions. This determination would encourage educators to focus prior on Islamic unity and elucidate the motive behind differences among *madhāhib* on intellectual and jurisprudential level. This would also allow them to solve the rationale behind such circumstances.[74]

8.1.4   Highlighting the Significance of Unanimity

Confiscating every national event and gatherings in order to highlight the issues pertaining to rapprochement. It will spread the culture of rapprochement and clarify that differences among *madhāhib* not be granted as dissimilarity and contradiction. Such differences have no close bindings with essence of Islām.[75]

8.1.5   Role of *Dawāh* Organizations

Granting special attention to the role of *Imāms*, sermonizers and preachers who are engaged in the activities of Islamic call. All of these missionaries should be attributed to the role of rapprochement and unification of Islamic *madhāhib*. By keeping in regard that the raised questions are only meant for expansion of knowledge with the aim of Islamic unity. Establishing cordial relationship between the organizations of *Dawāh* (Islamic call) and *Fātawā* (Islamic legal opinions) is essential for reconciliation process. It is obligatory for both factors to be consistent with true essence of Islām. References pertaining to these sources should be derived from prime foundations, and not from any statement of sound religious basis.[76]

8.1.6   Advancement of Curriculum

Gathering universities and Islamic personnel to work on the development of their curriculum to open new prospects for Islamic students by widening the space of Islamic studies within the arena of rapprochement. Afterwards, these institutions should adopt new methodology to open the close gate of *ijtihād*. This approach should be in line with discipline of *Uṣūl al-Fīqḥ* (the theoretical foundations of Islamic jurisprudence). This would allow *Mujtahids* who are proficient in Islamic affairs to work on specialized areas of scientific research to achieve goal of rapprochement among Islamic *madhāhib*. In parallel to all this, higher institutions of education advised to grant rapprochement prospectuses in academics, theses, dissertations as well as publications.[77]

8.1.7   Mobilizing Muslim Potentialities

Securing well-suggested action plan for accurate implementation of the strategy by availing all necessary means. The Muslim society execute this strategy plan in accordance to Islamic vision emerging from the authentic foundation sources of Islamic law with consideration of financial resources of particular country. They are highly active in organizations like scientific, media,

education and other aspects of life in order to accommodate the theme of bridging the gap between Islamic *madhāhib*.[78]

8.2 Rapprochement Measures at Regional and International Level

Both regional and international spheres are crucial in every aspect of life especially in the arena of religious unity and enlargement of international relations. This is predominantly relevant to such zones like inter-complementarity, harmonization, consultation, and mutual assistance. It is also meant for preserving intellectual and spiritual constancy in a diplomatic and brotherly ambiance as prerequisite by the benevolent religion of Islām. For an actual implementation of the aims bordered in the strategy, both regional and international collaboration should entails following[79]:

8.2.1 Collaboration of National Institutions

Taking into consideration all complementary measures to endorse collaboration among national institutions whether regional or international functioning towards the elite task of *Dawāh*. It also accelerates areas of knowledge and information in accordance with objectives of rapprochement and Islamic unity. In addition to this, certain means are provided to disseminate printed stuff and publications in order to bring Islamic *ummah* together.

8.2.2   Flourishment of Rapprochement Areas through Research Opportunities

Enhancing interaction between religious scholars, intellects, guides, instructors, researchers and reverent teachers who are linked together through the channel of Islamic call. It especially focused on rapprochement areas among different *madhāhib* of Islām. Encouraging and supporting exchange of visits, increasing the number of scholarships and providing opportunities to the researchers of Islamic studies concerning with issues of rapprochement. In view of this, additional means are required to carry out research field work and to achieve the main target of rapprochement. Apportioning annual prize remuneration for novel researches in the areas of rapprochement would encourage young researchers to excel in this field and enable them to enhance their skills in religious scholarly interaction.

8.2.3   Promulgation of Rapprochement Objectives

Providing technical assistance and scientific techniques to Islamic countries in preparation of rapprochement plans for Islamic schools of law. The primary and ultimate goal is to provide platform in achievement of objective which will be beneficial in publicizing target of rapprochement at local level. It would

provide centre of interest for scholars and intellectuals. This would enable periodical measures to ensure availability of rapprochement literature and maintains record of this valuable material of jurisprudence scholars for further documentation purposes.[80]

8.2.4 Renovation of Rapprochement Objectives

It would develop additional means to achieve and renovate basic objectives of rapprochement, aiming for fruitful result in the future prospects for Islamic world. Accompanying inventory for purposeful national programs and organizational programs towards the subject of rapprochement. The aim is to generalize expertise and advantage towards preparation of future plans regarding rapprochement as well as to avoid duplicated efforts.

8.2.5 Inculcating Message of Islamic Collaboration

Inculcating element of Islamic cooperation during the training of *mujtahids* for the call of rapprochement in Islamic schools and prepare competences in Islamic studies domain and unity in the expansion of Islamic thought.[81]

8.2.6 Emphasis on Intellectual Development

It would help to build association between scholars, intellectuals and young researchers to express, enhance communication and exchange of views at both national and international grounds. It would also help in overcoming the material and technical obstacles hindering in exercising religious independent verdict for benefit of Muslim community. Drawing essential integral plans for creating link with organization in order to keep intact with intellectual development to meet upcoming challenges of Muslim society. In this context, action would be directed towards support and efforts in order to bring fruition national programs focused on rapprochement goals.[82]

8.2.7 Authentication and Accumulation of Published Documents

Publishing authentic documents including methodical approaches for certification of *aḥadīth* and their application. Special attention will be engrossed on criteria of criticism sanctioned by *ḥadīth* scholars. The investigation will be made on variant views among the Islamic schools of thought on the basis of rules made by scholar's community. Assembling new revised material on aḥadīth al-āḥkam (the legal study of *Sunnah*) where special consideration should be taken into account relating rules. These rules must have consensus of all jurisprudential scholars in

context of its significance and certification. This meticulous task can be achieved by referencing groundwork details through effort of Islamic jurisprudence scholars.

8.2.8 Shaping Platforms for *Fīqh* Sessions

Organizing special symposium, conference or workshop for interpretation of sacred text, adoption of cores for *al-tarjīh* (evaluation) in compatible with prescribed goals of *Sharīʿah*. It would also aim at rectifying the misunderstanding about different concepts being discussed in number of *aḥadīth*. On the matter of '*questions of interpretation-based consensus versus consensus-based interpretation*' or with similar theme in order to attain the goal of rapprochement between different *madhāhib*.

8.2.9 Advancement of Flexibility

In order to promote degree of flexibility and humbleness, adoption of moderate approach is necessary instead of liberal or extreme approach. It brings change through proper knowledge, rationality, and argumentation and enables to live religiously in a diverse society.[83] Inviting religious scholars, intellectuals, jurists and *Mujtahids* for reviewing works with extremist ideas and provide clear image about Islamic *madhāhib*. It would also help in eradicating misconception about Islamic schools and deliver clear-sightedness about their immediate surroundings. The aim is to subject them in objectivity, scientific analysis without any extraneous thoughts and views which are unpredictable with essence of Islām. Therefore, it can achieve the target by getting rid of fabrication and falsehood attack indebted in them about concepts of Muslim unity. The exceptional attention is focused on awareness-raising campaigns in bridging the gap and bringing together Islamic *ummah*.

8.2.10 Responsibility of Organizations

Gathering Islamic countries, organizations and institutions on single platform to survey all work in the field of jurisprudence and review them in the light of sound Islamic thought. It would root out jurisprudential differences which are not in line with the objectives of intellectual and Islamic jurisprudence in various Islamic schools of thought.[84]

9. Influencing Factors in the Area of Mutual Proximity

There is no doubt that maintaining unity is an arduous task but the concept of *taqārub* (rapprochement) is easily accessible. However, the *taqārub* between Islamic *madhāhib* is certainly

possible and praiseworthy. In this context, various organizations are formed without suffering from any conflict or clash of different groups. However, disagreement is corroding the true essence of Islamic body and is active in the appellation of Islām. The rapprochement can play an effective role in eradicating roots of dissension from Islamic world. Political paradigm and Islamic elites have a major role in preaching Islamic precepts where sectarian background is given no consideration.

This principle is essential for maintaining solidarity and unity between Islamic *madhāhib.* As at the time of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (صـــلى الله عليــه وســلم) (خــاتم النبيــين), Muslims regain their strength which results in constitution of great Islamic state and spread its teachings to the grand states.[85]

10. Rapprochement of *Fīqḥī Madhāhib* and its Impact on Contemporary Laws

Besides the fact of independency of Islamic sects with one another, *taqārub* basically contemplates on the position of variant sects that portrays Islamic *Sharīʿah*. However, this specialization was not purposely built and was imposed by the evidences of circumstances. In the beginning, *fuqahā* established their schools on their names, because at that time communication was not easy as compared to today. This was the main reason which forbade the Islamic history to merge all *madhhab* into one grand *madhhab* which might be baptized as Islamic school of *fīqḥ*. The major thing seen is that a particular region where any certain *madhhab* was prevailed, it was not influenced by other *madhhab*. So, the prevalent sect flourished the religious culture inadvertently.[86]

The notion of rapprochement among Islamic *madhāhib* deals with the theoretical conception and achievement of conception with practical action. This conception would be implemented in contemporary Islamic society. This can be achieved by equalizing all sects in means of commonality, solutions and *fatāwā*. It also caters with *fatāwās* of all sects as primary theory whether desirable or not. Lastly, it derives *Uṣūlī's* ideological rules from old sects and applies on the issues to find solutions in accordance with scientific Islamic criteria.[87]

Conclusion

The foremost duty of these strategies is to provide strength and support to Islamic areas where rapprochement-culture is not widespread. It also stipulates potency to non-Islamic areas where

Muslims are not dominant or situated at odd places in perspective to Islamic faith. The achievement of this area is though complex but still it has greater responsibility of bridging the gap where bulk of Muslim immigrants live. Hence, it is considered as one of the most important application of rapprochement strategy due to its paramount objectives. Therefore, rapprochement strategies crave for intensive Islamic effort in order to achieve priority for in terms of legal thoughts and the Islamic judicial frame of reference.[88] Paigham-e-Pakistan in this context has also prepared a unanimous document on declaration of *fatāwā*. It has been endorsed by all *ulēmās*, scholars and leaders. This narrative has its text from the Holy Qurān, *Sunnah* and Pakistan's constitution. Paigham-e-Pakistan has promoted the message regarding upcoming challenges of Muslim society and also suggests a strategy in order to achieve goal of rapprochement.[89]

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