

Ummah Disparity in Qur'an (Based on Ash-Shura Surah)

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Abstract:

One of the great concerns of the reformers in the World of Islam is the issue related to the Unity of the Islamic Community(Ummah) .The difference and disunity among a population and folk has several adverse consequences, thus Qur'an and the leaders of religion frequently warn its outbreak .The present research aims to analyze the philosophy of the united community, the causes and factors behind the collapse of the united community, the pathology of alliance and coherence , the harmful consequences and detrimental effects of disparity in Qur'an , the ways to turn disunity to unity and the commentators' comments related to the verse 8 of the Surah Ash-Shura.

Based on the most important findings of this study, in addition to creating many ethical vices among the Muslims, disparity and disunity can result in the decline of Islamic dignity and gradually the downfall of religion, besides the affairs like killing each other, the insecurity and downfall of society are also other consequences of disparity among the Muslims and the Qur'an discourages the Muslims from grouping orientation and dispersion and invites them to

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integration under unity coverage and lists it as one of the Divine punishments.

Key words: United Community, disparity, unity, Ummah

Undoubtedly, unity and unanimity are of the most substantive and lofty doctrines of Qur'an. The evidence of this claim is tens of Quranic verses inviting not just the Muslims, rather all people to get together around the truth and leave disputation and schism and equally, there are verses prohibiting and discarding disunity and schism .When setting forth the most substantial invitation of the divine prophets, God considered the issue, namely, disunity avoidance as a message corresponding the principle of the establishment of religion. It seems as if the most important plague afflicting the Divine religion is the damage by disparity and disunity confronting with the spirit of religion establishment.

The history of human life has always witnessed conflicts and disputes among the races and nations worldwide, leaving behind disagreeable and grievous consequences. Plurality in human societies is evolutionary and a reality based on which we have to behave; but the abnormal fruit of this plurality comes with some disparities, sometimes leading to intolerable wars and catastrophes and destructions of humans and abundant disorganizations in human life.

This study targets to investigate disparity and its factors and inconveniences based on the verse 8 of Ash-Shurah Surah and other verses and narrations.

Disparity Definition

Ekhtelaf (Disparity) from the root (Khalaf) means that man selects proceeding a route except which there is no one else(Ragheb Isfahani). Khalaf means commute .Like day and night coming one after the other (Al-Sahah, 1410 AH, vol.4).

Disparity, in contrast to consensus means that one goes against another. The principle of disparity has been extracted from the path difference. In other words, disparity and opposition is perceived as though everyone selects a path and approach for behaviors and states, opposed to those of another one (Ragheb Isfahani, 1424 AH, p.249).

Disparity Term in Qur'an

The term *Ekhtelaf* (disparity) has come 35 times in past and present tenses and 10 times in active participle, such as the verse 213/1, 19 and 105/2 and 19/10. And other than division, it has been used as the developmental division among various creatures. So that the difference of the animals (verse 13/16) and different fruit (the verse 141/6) has been mentioned with the same term, too.

Moreover, Qur'an has interpreted the difference of people's languages and colors as disparity and taken it as Signs of God:"

و من آياته خلق السماوات و الارض . اختلاف السنتم و الوانكم ان فى ذلك الايات للعالمين
(Verse 22/30)

"And of Allah's signs of Power is the creation of the heavens and the earth and also the variation of the languages and the colors of you, People; verily, in all of these are Signs for Men of Knowledge "(Makarem Shirazi, vol.16).

In addition to the term disparity, this concept has been mentioned as the terms such as struggle (43/6) and sect meaning diverse classes (159/6), Satan's provocation (100/12), separation (103/3) and its derivatives and schism (35/4) and everywhere, division and separation has been mentioned as a blameworthy and obnoxious affair.

Literal Meaning of Community (Ummah)

Ommat derived from Ummah refers to a group with a commonality such as a united religion, time or place; whether this commonality is optional or non-optional. Also it means the followers, group and congregation to whom a prophet had been or has been sent.

Terminological Meaning of Ummah

Ommat in terminology is a congregation of people to whom Allah sent a prophet and they believed in him, so they entered a covenant with Allah and related with Him.

Ummah in Qur'an

Ummah in Qur'an also refers to non-Muslims and thus, it is closer to the meaning (people or tribes), in this application, by Ummah, it means a large group of people sharing the same language or united religion and or identical geographical land.

The word Ummah has been used 65 times as singular or plural in Qur'an. In Qur'an, Ummah has been used meaning people and or some humans with religious connection and in hadith in which many times as (the Ummah of Muhammad) or (an Ummah) by the Prophet or (Ummam), it has been applied as a congregation following one single prophet. Ummam has been used as the former tribes and nations to whom Allah sent the Prophet. However, in addition to its religious meaning, Ummah has the concept of lingual, cultural, natural or racial solidarity and....

Literal Meaning of Unity (Vahdat)

It is from the root (vahad), (yahad) and (vahedan).Unity literally means to get unique, unity, integrity, solidarity and consensus.

Terminological Meaning of Unity

Terminologically speaking, unity can be perceived as both real and figurative. The figurative unity refers to the conversion of something to something which is of two types itself:

First, the one through which a third object is created by attaching one thing to something else.

Second, something new is created without being mingled with something else.

The real unity means two things turn into one thing. In philosophers' mind, unity is conceived as the combination and the symmetry of the elements not the unification of two substances.

As Ragheb stated, Vahdat is derived from Vahed and Vahed is in fact an object not definitely having an element, then it can refer to anything and described as unity.

United Ummah in Qur'an

The United Ummah has been applied 9 times in Qur'an, the verses of which can be divided into three categories:

First Category: the verses addressing the Prophets and recalling them the Divine Command to form the United Ummah and states that people are naturally and instinctively a united Ummah and their nature requires to move in this direction ,but the conflicts arising lead them toward division. The emphasis on the Ummahs' instinctive unity in these verses means that the Prophets have to eliminate the obstacles of this unity .This category of the verses warn that only God deserves being the Lord and only He is worthy of being worshipped, which itself can be the stance of the unity of the Ummah, then it suggests that the Prophets' Ummahs rebelled during the history and have been led to division .These verses are as the following:

- 1- رَاجِعُونَ إِلَيْنَا كُلِّ بَيْنِهِمْ أَمْرُهُمْ تَقَطَّعُوا وَفَاعِبُونَ- رَبُّكُمْ أَنَا وَوَاحِدَةٌ أُمَّةٌ أُتُّكُمْ هَذِهِ إِنَّ
(Al-Anbiya/92/93)

"O' Messenger, verily, the Religion of you is one based on the Divine Unity and I am Your Creator and Nurturer, so worship Me and be obedient to Me. But the followers of some religions caused disputations and disperse among themselves .Nevertheless, they will return to Us ".

2-

فَرِحُونَ لَدَيْهِمْ حِزْبٌ بِمَا كُلُّ زُبُرَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَرُّهُمْ أَتَقَطَّعُوا فَاتَّقُونَ- رَبُّكُمْ أَنَا وَوَاحِدَةٌ أُمَّةٌ أُمَّتُكُمْ هَذِهِ إِنَّ وَ
(Al-Mu'minun/52&53)

"The religion of all you Messengers is the Divine Unity and I am your Creator and Nurturer, so avoid any disobedience from My Commands. But their followers became divided into Sects and each group is content with what has been given to them ".

Fakhr Razi stated: By the Unity of Ummah, it means the unity in religion and by religion, it refers to the principles accepted by all the Divine Laws, like the commitment to the existence of the nature of God and His Attributes and the like. Thus the Prophets' Divine Laws variety do not impair the unity of the Ummah, since however, the followers of all Divine Laws are committed to the united principles.

Second Category: The verses denying any sort of predestined providence of God to reach the United Ummah and indicate that the Divine Will dictates that human reach the United Ummah by his choice and authority .The second category includes four verses two of which are exclusively for the previous communities and one verse covers the Ummah of Islam and the previous communities. These three verses are the proof for human community, but the fourth suggests the Unity of the Ummah of Islam.

The above verses are as it follows:

1-

تَمَّتْ وَ خَلَقَهُمْ لِذَلِكَ وَ رَبُّكَ رَحِمٌ مِّنْ إِزْوَاجٍ مِّنْ إِزْوَاجٍ لَّا وَ وَاحِدَةٌ أُمَّةٌ النَّاسِ لَجَعَلْ رَبُّكَ شَاءَ لَوْ وَ
أَجْمَعِينَ النَّاسِ وَ الْجَنَّةِ مِّنْ جَهَنَّمَ لِأَمَلَانَ رَبُّكَ كَلِمَةٌ
(Hud/118)

"And if the Creator &Nurturer had so willed, He could surely have made mankind one nation, but they will not cease differencing. Save on whom your Creator &Nurturer has mercy and for this, Allah create them and the promise of your Creator &Nurturer will surely be fulfilled; Verily, I shall fill the Hell with the wrongdoers of the Jinns and mankind all together ".

This verse indicates the Mankind United Ummah. Allame Tabatabaee says about this: by unity and disparity in this verse, it means the unity and disparity in religion (Tabatabaee, 1997, vol.11, p.65).Fakhr Razi also believes that this verse implies Mankind United Ummah (Razi, 1420 AH, vol.9, p.78).Rashid Reza assumes that this verse indicates the Mankind United Ummah and the reason behind not being united is testing mankind (Rashid Reza, 1346 AH, vol.12, p.193).

2-

وَلِي مِنْ لَهُمْ مَا الظَّالِمُونَ وَ رَحْمَتِهِ فِي يَشَاءَ مَنْ- يُدْخِلُ لَكِن وَ وَاجِدَةً أُمَّةً لَجَعَلَهُمُ اللّٰهُ شَاءَ لَوْ وَ
لَا نَصِيرَ وَ

"If God desired, He would certainly make them a United Ummah, but He will bring whoever He desired to His mercy and the oppressors are neither helped nor aided ".

This verse also indicates the Mankind United Ummah.

Allame Tabatabaee and Fakhr Razi assume that in this verse, God addresses the Prophet saying as if God wanted to make all people an Ummah with the same attributes so that they were all believers and entered the Heaven, or all were unbelievers, and entered the Hell, while the Divine tradition is to let people free find their way on their own and then separate the virtuous from the evil-doers and let the virtuous enter the Heaven and the evil-doers get into the Hell (Tabatabaee,1995, vol.18, p.17).

According to Allame Tabatabaee: "This verse was set forth responding the pre-destined and illogical question as to "Why God sent the Prophets to make people into two sects and

some turned as the people of the Hell and other the people of the Heaven?" and "Why weren't all created the same from the beginning so that all moved toward the Paradise and Prophethood and preaching weren't required? He replied: If God desired and His Will required, He would enforce such a decree so that all people had the same attribute and as a United Ummah and lacking any privilege and all were the people of the Heaven and Believers. However, the Divine tradition and decree got so that not all people got the same and the order was based on authority and obligation and this way, He brings the people of good faith and action into His mercy and bestows them the Divine guidance, while the Unbelievers and the wrong-doers will dwell in the Hell, and they will have no guardians or helpers, then it refers to the Mercy of Paradise and the requirement for not having helper and protector is the Hell. Therefore, the Glorified God has provided Prophethood and preaching resulting from revelation because he knew that people aren't identical and at the Day of Resurrection, they will be divided into two classes: the unblessed and the blessed, while the reason why God hasn't created the people alike is that the Divine statute has been settled this way that God gets in charge of being a Guardian and Responsible of a group of people (i.e., those as the non-oppressors) to let them in His Heaven and Compassion and not to undertake the responsibility of the other party ,i.e., the oppressors and consequently, they wouldn't have any helper and supporter so that He brings them into His Mercy and protects them against chastisement .

Interpretation of Assembly of Al-Bayan

وَاجِدَةً أُمَّةً لَجَعَلَهُمُ اللّٰهُ شَاءَ لَوْ

"That means if God wills to force them to accept Islam, He would do it, but since this action will invalidate the obligation and obligation gets stabilized in case of the free will, God hasn't done so", this meaning has been quoted by Jabbaye.

And some suggested that it means "if God wanted to create equality in terms of dignity and created all of the people

of the Heaven; however, God has assigned them the highest degree that deserves reward.

رَحْمَتِهِ فِي يَشَاءَ مَنْ يُدْخِلُ لِكِنْ و
يشاء من

Derives at this idea that "He enters into his mercy every one of the believers He desires".

نَصِير ل و وَّلِي مِنْ لَهُمْ مَا الظَّالِمُونَ و

"That means the oppressors have neither a friend to like them nor a helper to prevent them from chastisement".

Comprehensive Interpretation

As saying:

وَّلِي مِنْ لَهُمْ مَا الظَّالِمُونَ و رَحْمَتِهِ فِي يَشَاءَ مَنْ خَلَّ يُدْ لِكِنْ و وَّاجِدَةً أُمَّةً لَجَعَلَهُمُ اللّٰ شَاءَ لُو و
نَصِير ل و

"If God wanted and willed, he would make all human beings an All-Faithful Ummah, that is, He would impose it on all people by vengeance and compulsion and coercion to believe, but He found it expedient not to do so since compulsion and coercion relinquishes the obligation and obligation has to be out of free will so that the obliged one deserves reward and compensation and penalty and retribution as the result of obedience and disobedience. The Creator will bring into His Mercy everyone He desires and He won't be the Helper and Friend of the unmerciful in order to repel their tribulation.

Mohammad Bin Abbas narrated from Imam Bagher (AS) following this verse:

رَحْمَتِهِ فِي يَشَاءَ مَنْ يُدْخِلُ لِكِنْ و

Stating that:" Compassion in this verse refers to the authority of Amir Al Mu'minin and by the oppressors, it means those oppressing the Family of Muhammad (p.b.u.h) and who have no helper and supporter at the Day of Resurrection".

Interpretation of Ahsan al-Hadith

The verse is an excerpt from the past verse, someone said:

What was the need for revelation and preaching .God Himself could create people in such a way that to be the people of

guidance and force them to believe. Replied that: "If God wanted, he would make all people the true confessor of Divine Unity and they would turn into a United Ummah in belief in God and good deeds, while God didn't will so since in that case, all would get powerless and would lack free will like a burning fire; consequently, the issue known as reward and punishment would get invalidated. But the eternal will has been set for being free; however, people are divided into two groups against the invitation of the Prophets. A group welcomes their invitation, God is their guardian and problem solver and grants them His blessing, another group who turns the invitation down is the oppressor, and they neither have a guardian nor a helper. This verse similar to the verse 99 of Surah Yunas:

جَمِيعًا كُلُّهُمْ الْأَرْضِ فِي مَنْ لَأَمِنْ رَبُّكَ شَاءَ لَوْ وَ

"And if your Creator had willed, verily, all those who are on the earth would have believed; can you [O, Messenger, compel people against their wish to become believer?"

And verse 13 of Surah As-Sajdah:

أَجْمَعِينَ النَّاسِ وَالْجِنَّةَ مِنْ جَهَنَّمَ لَأَمْلَأَنَّ مَنِّي الْقَوْلُ ق ح لَكِنْ وَ هُدَاهَا نَفْسَ كُلِّ لَأَتَّبِعُنَا شِئْنَا لَوْ وَ

"If we had so willed, we could have given all men their guardian [by force]. But Allah gave Books of Guidance and sent Messengers and showed Signs and Miracles to help them choose the Straight Path; nevertheless, they denied them all and choose astray. So My Decree for punishment will come to pass and as I have promised I will fill the Hell with the Jinns and mankind altogether".

Atyab al-Bayan Fi Tafsir al-Quran

وَ لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلْتَهُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَ لَكِنْ يُدْخِلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ وَ الظَّالِمُونَ مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَ
ل نَصِير :

"And if the divine providence had been granted, he would put all human in a unidimensional way, but He says that He will bring into His blessing whoever He wants, and that the oppressors won't have friends and help".

وَاجِدَةً: أُمَّةً لَجَعَلَهُمُ اللّٰهُ شَاءَ لَوْ و

"Compulsively and urgently, or the source of evil, He had taken the means of disobedience from them, and the power of lust and wrath, too and or closed the path to them, they lacked power; however, they had no perfection similar to animals and thus no obligation was put for them and also in the angels created with no power of passion, anger and preconception, therefore, according to the requirements of human wisdom, put him as the autonomous actor and bestowed him both the angelhood features as the power of reason and the animal property with the power of passion, anger and preconception and determined some obligations for them and showed them the path of right and wrong both by the intellect which is known as the esoteric messenger to perceive its rational virtues and devalues and sent the Messengers to lead them to the path of bliss and misery and didn't devalue their authority so that the good and bad, the believer and unbeliever, the obedient and disobedient, the blessed and the miser get distinguished from each other".

رَحْمَتِهِ: فِي يَسَّاءٍ مَنْ يُدْخِلُ لَكِن و

"Those selecting the right path by free will and pursuing the path of bliss and entering the Divine obedience and command, have been subjected to His mercy and bestowed with prosper in the world and the Hereafter, and Paradise has been exclusive in their destiny".

الظَّالِمُونَ" و

"And the ones oppressing themselves, not minding the rational virtues, saying that people neither paid attention to the Divine Commands nor the Messengers' orders and followed the power of passion, anger and preconception".

نَصِيرٍ لَّ و وَلِيٍّ مِنْ لَّهُمْ مَا

"They have no friend to shelter them and no helper to assist them".

3-

فَاسْتَقْبُوا الْخَبْرَاتِ آتَاكُمْ مَا فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ- لَكِن و وَاجِدَةً أُمَّةً لَجَعَلَكُمْ اللّٰهُ شَاءَ لَوْ و

(Al-Ma'ideh/48)

"And if Allah had intended. He would have made you one nation, but Allah's Will is to try you in what He has given to each of you [of the Divine Books and Decrees in different eras]. You people should compete with each other in goodness".

The verse addresses the prior nations and the Community of Islam and refers to the Mankind United Ummah.

Interpreting the verse, Allame Tabatabaee and Fakhr Razi and Rashid Reza stated: "This verse refers to the United Mankind Ummah, but God hasn't created unity among them to test the mankind individuals and to distinguish the righteous from the wrongdoers (Rashid Reza, 1346 AH, vol.6, p.418)".

4-
كُنْتُمْ عَمَّا أُنْسَلْنَا وَ يَشَاءُ مَنْ يَهْدِي وَ يَشَاءُ- مَنْ يُضِلْ لَكِنْ وَ وَاحِدَةً أُمَّةً لَجَعَلَكُمْ اللّٰهُ شَاءَ لَوْ وَ تَعْمَلُونَ

(An-Nahl/93)

"And if Allah willed, He could have made you one nation by force [in order to overrule any difference], but He leaves a man in his astray, [if Allah does not observe any good in him]. And He guides whom He wills [due to Man's entitlement], and surely, you will be questioned about the things that you used to do".

This verse indicates the Islamic United Ummah.

In the interpretation of this verse, Allameh Tabatabaee and Fakhr Razi believe that after Allah mentioned the differences among people in the previous verses, in this verse, He states that these differences don't violate the Divine purpose in creation, if Allah willed, He would have made you as a United Ummah, but He didn't wish so that everybody be free to choose the way to guidance or astray through his own desire and determination and God has defined the sanction (reward or punishment) for both groups and calls them to account for their actions (Razi, 1420 AH, vol.10, p.112).

The third class: the verses referring to the humans being the United Ummah at the beginning, then some differences emerged among them and shattered their unity .Theses verses are as it follows :

1-
لِيُخَكِّمَ بِالْحَقِّ الْكِتَابَ مَعَهُمْ أَنْبَلُ و مُنْذِرِينَ و النَّبِيِّينَ مُبَشِّرِينَ لِّمَنْ قَبَعَتْ وَاحِدَةً أُمَّةً النَّاسَ كَانَ
فِيهِ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيمَا النَّاسَ بَيْنَ
(Al-Baqarah/213)

"At the beginning, people were one Nation, then Allah sent Messengers as Givers of glad-tidings and Warners .And sent down [with them]the Book with the Truth to judge between men in whatever they differed .But those to whom the Scripture was given after clear proofs had come to them, they differed ,out of envy and aggression among themselves .Then Allah by His will guided those who believed the Truth about which there was dispute .And Allah does guide those whom He wills, to the straight path".

Interpreting this verse, Allame Tabatabaee and Rashid Reza claimed that: based on this verse, on the start, the peoples were a United Ummah in worldly and material affairs, that is, all benefitted from material things equally until the time when by the increase of mankind population and their needs getting expanded, humans started mutual cooperation to meet their needs and this created clashes among them.

In order to settle these differences , God sent down the Messengers and laws in the form of Shari'a for the peoples; however, some people of the Book aware and out of cruelty created difference in the Divine Shari'a and caused the peoples to divide. Thus, from the perspective of Allame Tabatabaee and Rashid Reza, the United Ummah that Qur'an mentions was united in the worldly and material affairs (Tabatabaee, 1995, vol.2, p.111).

Fakhr Razi also commented this way on this verse: "Based on this verse, peoples were originally a single Ummah, but later they resulted in difference due to jealousy and strife in

material things .In terms of what the unity of this Ummah was in, he pointed out some ideas and assumed that the popular saying is that it was in belief in the Truth and complying with that Unity (Razi, 1420 AH, vol.3, p.12).

2-

فِيهِ فِيمَا بَيْنَهُمْ لَفْظِي رَبِّكَ مِنْ سَبَقَتْ كَلِمَةَ لَوْ - وَ فَاحْتَلَفُوا وَاحِدَةً أُمَّةً إِلَى النَّاسِ كَانَ مَا وَ
يُخْتَلَفُونَ

(Yunus /19)

"Mankind was but one community, then they differed and had it not been for a Word of Command that had been ordained before, by your Creator, it would have been decided between them; [and perdition would have fallen upon them]".

Allame Tabatabaee and Fakhr Razi stated that: "According this verse, the peoples were united in the past and had a Divine Religion, then difference broke out among them and some turned as monotheists and some as polytheists (Tabatabaee, 1995, vol.10, p.28).

Mohammad Rashid Reza interpreted this verse similar to the previous verse (Rashid Reza, vol.11, p.328).

3-

مَعَارِجَ وَ فِضَّةً مِنْ سُقْفَا لِبُنُوتِهِمْ بِالرَّحْمَنِ يَكْفُرْنَ لِمَ لَجَعَلْنَا وَاحِدَةً أُمَّةً النَّاسِ يَكُونُ أَنْ لَوْ وَ
يُظْهِرُونَ عَلَيْهَا

(Az-Zokhruf, 33)

"And if there was not the probability that all may become one community [in denying Allah], We would provide for all the disbelievers of Ar-Rahman silver roofs for their buildings and stair-ways by which they can ascend ".

Allame Tabatabaee says: "This United Ummah was united in benefitting from living facilities and Allah hasn't given the disbelievers such superiority for the survival of this unity (Tabatabaee, 1995, vol.18, p.105)".

Based on these three categories, humans were a United Ummah at the beginning, but later difference emerged among them, God sent down the Messengers to settle the disputes and after the Seal of the Prophecy, He commanded the Imams (AS)

to perform this mission. Though, in this regard, no optimal results have been gained, it is hoped a Unique Ummah emerges in the government of Imam Mahdi (AS).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Of the mentioned points, it is understood that the most important factor resulting in the believers' success or failure in a Muslim community is disparity .Disparity and ignorance of the Muslims brings about the weakness of the believers, and the empowerment of the ignoble, war and bloodshed, the wasting of the capitals, the collapse of the believers and the domination of the colonialists in the Islamic countries and preempted their economic and cultural dignities and plundered their reserves .Most importantly, it is having a common religion of Islam and the Holy Qur'an that can lead the world of humanity towards prosperity and grace .Thus, through benefitting from the unity and coherence factors and adopting rational policies against the hostile policies of your common enemy, all people and groups of a society can get united and avoid irrational differences and settle their differences by exchanging ideas and living together peacefully. The Muslims struggling with the schismatists must be under the command of the Muslims' leader and by the Command of God, and the Prophet and his righteous successors .Alliance plays a decisive and important role in the survival of the Ummams and nations and whenever humans get united with each other and start a movement, nothing and nobody can beat them.

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