Mutual Respect & Peaceful Co-Existence Among Muslims

- a call of time -

In words of Ayatullah Sistani & other leading Shi'a Maraji

Compiled & translated by
Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi

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– a call of time –

IN WORDS OF THE LEADING SHI'A SCHOLARS

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

اللهم صل على محمد و آل محمد

We take pride in Shi‘a Islam as preserved by the Imams of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), the Islam wherein justice is part of the fundamentals of our faith. We believe that the Prophet and the Imams of Ahlul Bayt were infallible *(ma‘ṣūm)* in all situations of their lives, they never committed injustice even when dealing with their bitter enemies.

We take pride in the fact that our contemporary mujtahideen and senior marãji‘ (jurists), as true servants of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), have maintained that sense of justice and have refused to stoop to the level of the takfīri[1] Salafis. They still stand firm on their views about peaceful co-existence with the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama‘at and even with the non-Muslims on basis of mutual respect and justice.

The painful situation of the contemporary Muslim world –from Pakistan and Afghanistan to Bahrain and Iraq– demands extreme patience and insightful understanding from the Shi‘as of Ahlul Bayt. Let us not allow the Salafis to use our words to add to the fuel of the fire lit by their hatred to the Ahlul Bayt.

The views of our leading mujtahideen, compiled in this booklet, are guidelines for us to follow the example of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). In our interaction with the fellow Muslims, the question is not about ***what to say*** and not to say, the question is about ***how to say*** it and how not to say it. *“Repel ill (conduct) with that which is the best.”* (23:96)

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[1] *Takfīri* refers to the attitude in which the extremists label other Muslims as “*kāfir*, infidel” even those they believe in One God and the Prophet Muḥammad (s.a.w.) as the Last Prophet and Messenger of God.

وَ لا تَسُبُّوا الَّذينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْواً بِغَيْرِ عِلْم
(الأنعام : 108)

Do not abuse those whom they call
[in their worship] besides Allah,
lest they should abuse Allah out of hostility,
without any knowledge.
(The Qur’ãn 6:108)

اور یہ (مشرکین)
اللہ کے سوا جن کی عبادت کرتے ہیں
انہیں تم برا نہ کہا کرو
ورنہ یہ لوگ بھی اللہ کو بے سمجھے دشمنی میں برا کہہ بیٹھیں گے.
(قرآن، سورۃ انعام آیت 108)

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(1)
On Harmony & Peaceful Co-existence Between the Muslims

by the Grand Ayatullah Sayyid ‘Ali Sistani

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

“And hold on to the rope of Allãh altogether and do not be divided.” [3:103]

The Muslim *ummah* is going through difficult circumstances, facing great tribulations and serious challenges that affect its present and endangers its future. Under such situations, all realize an urgent need for closing the ranks, eliminating the disunity, distancing ourselves from sectarian slogans and refraining from inciting religious differences—the differences which have lasted for centuries and there seems to be no way of solving them in a way that would be liked and accepted by all. **Therefore, there is no need to stir up the debate on them *outside* the respectable scholarly discussion,** especially when it does not involve the matters of the principals of faith and fundamental beliefs.

All believe in the only One God, in the apostleship of the chosen Prophet (s.a.w.), in the hereafter, and in the noble Qur’an –which Almighty Allãh has protected from interpolation– and the noble Prophetic sunnah as sources for the religious laws, and in the love for the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.); and many similar matters which are generally common among Muslims such as the pillars of Islam in the form of prayer, fasting, hajj, etc.

These common points are the strong basis for Islamic unity, and so they should be the focus in order to strengthen the bonds of love and friendship between the children of this *ummah;* at least by acting on peaceful co-existence between them based on mutual

respect, and by keeping away from sectarian hatred and abuse in whatever shape or form may it be.

So, everyone who wishes for the advancement of Islam and the progress of Muslims should put their utmost effort in bringing them together and in reducing levels of tension that rise from some political leanings so that it does not lead to further division and separation, since that will give way to fulfillment of the goals of the enemies who intend to control the Muslim lands and capture their resources.

Unfortunately, it has been observed that some individuals and entities act in an opposite manner and try to fortify the differences and divisions, to increase the gulf of sectarian differences amongst the Muslims. They have multiplied their efforts in recent times after the escalation in political struggles in the region and increase in the fight for dominance and influence therein. They have renewed their attempts by highlighting the sectarian differences and publicizing them, fueled by using methods of deceit and accusation, in order to further vilify a specific sect, to curtail the rights of its followers and to frighten other among them.

As part of this scheme, some media outlets – satellite channels, internet websites, magazines, etc.– occasionally circulate strange fatwas insulting some sects and schools of Islam, and associate that with the respected Sayyid [Sistani] in a clear attempt to tarnish the status of the religious leadership and to increase the sectarian tension for their specific goals. The fatwas of the respected Sayyid can be obtained from their reliable sources –such as his well-known fatwa manuals certified by his signature and seal– and there is nothing in them that offends the Muslims from other sects and schools of thought. Anyone with even the slightest knowledge of those sources knows the baselessness of these statements and what is being circulated falsely.

Additionally, the stand of the respected marja‘ (jurist) and the statements issued from him during the past years about the tribulations that the wounded Iraq is going through, and how **he has advised his followers and his followers about interacting**

with their Sunni brethren on basis of love and respect, and what he has repeatedly emphasized on the sanctity of the life of every Muslim, Sunni or Shi‘a, and on the sanctity of his honour, his property, and disassociation with whosoever spills blood from whatever sect he may be – all this clearly demonstrates the stand of the religious leadership about interaction with followers of other sects and their views about them. If all act according to this method with those who are opposed to them from other sects, things would not be what we see today in form of indiscriminate violence afflicting every location and horrible killings which do not even spare small children, the elderly, and pregnant women. To Allāh is our complaint!

We pray to Almighty Allāh to guide all to what is best for this ummah and its interest; for He has power over everything.

Office of As-Sayyid As-Sistani
An-Najaf al-Ashraf [Iraq]
14 Muharram 1428 / 3 February 2007

(2)
On Abusing & Insulting Leaders of Sunni Madhhab

by the Grand Ayatullah Sayyid ‘Ali Khāmena’i

When a person speaking in the name of Shi‘as on his private internet television channel (based in London, UK) used abusive and insulting remarks about one of the wives of the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.), a group of Shi‘a scholars from Ahsã’[2] (Saudi Arabia), sent a question to the Grand Ayatullah Khamena’i and asked for his verdict.

In his reply, Ayatullah Khamena’i said:
“Insulting the personalities of Sunni brethren, including the wives of all the Prophets, in particular those of the Leader of the Prophets and accusing the wife of the Prophet of Islam, is forbidden *(ḥarām)*.”

* * *

by the Grand Ayatullah N. Makãrim Shirãzi

“…Recently a pseudo scholar, an ignorant person…has shockingly abused the wives of the Noble Prophet and has insulted some holy entities of other sects and has accused wives of the Prophet of inappropriate things.

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[2] It should be noted that a person with a Shi‘a garb sitting in the comfort of his studio in London utters abusive things about Sunnis and its brunt is felt by Shi‘a minorities in Saudi Arabia and other countries. A speaker, especially one who is be heard through internet, should realize the serious consequences of what he says.

“Either this person is in pay [of the enemies] or is foolish and a lunatic; and more ignorant than him are those Wahhabi scholars who use such statements as a basis [for their hatred against us]. This is in spite of the fact that hundreds of Shi‘a scholars have condemned this act but they [the Wahhabis] have accepted the words of this servant [of the enemies]. This shows the illogical attitude of the Wahhabis….

“Our condemnation was publicized on the Global Wilayat Channel, and **we have condemned every kind of insult of the wives of the Prophet.** These [Wahhabis] have forgotten that the late Imam [Khumayni] declared Salman Rushdie as an apostate because of the Satanic Verses in which inappropriate things had been attributed to the Prophet’s wives.

“We should be careful to make our statements on the basis of proofs and logic, but at the same time, we should not do something that will cause conflict.”

* * *

by the Grand Ayatullah H. Waḥīd Khurāsāni

Once in his lecture, Ayatullah Ḥusayn Waḥīd Khurāsani, the head of Hawza-e ‘Ilmiyyah of Qum, read a narration from *tafsīr* of Imam Fakhru ’d-Dīn Rãzi in which the name of ‘Umar, the second caliph, had come.

The narration had the words, *“raziyallahu ‘anhu,”* and Ayatullah Waḥīd Khurāsāni recited it the way it had occurred in the book.

Some from the audience uttered words of insult regarding the second caliph. Ayatullah Wahid responded by saying:

“Have I not said that in my lecture do not use such words?!

مگر نگفته بودم سر درس من از این گونه کلمات به کار نبرید!“

by the Grand Ayatullah Sayyid ‘Ali Sistani

Question:
As-Salaamun ‘alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh.

A video clip is circulating on social media of a mourning procession on the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam al-Jawād (a.s.), and a group of people in the area of al-A‘dhamiyya are seen shouting abuses on ‘Umar and ‘Aisha and others.

Is such an act condemned by the highest religious leadership (*marji‘iyyat*)? Especially since it relates to abusing the religious symbols of our Sunni brethren and this, in turn, will further enflame the fire of blind civil strife among the Iraqi people.

Was-salaam.

Answer:

In the name of Allah, the Kind, the Merciful

This behavior is **condemned and strongly objectionable**, and is against what the Imams of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) has ordered their followers (Shi‘as). Allah is the Guide.

Office of As-Sayyid As-Sistani
An-Najaf al-Ashraf
2 Dhul Hijjah 1434 (8 October 2013)

(3)
So, Should We Not Discuss Historical Differences?

by the Grand Ayatullah N. Makārem Shirāzi

"Some of the scholars of Egypt and Sunni brethren of the south [Iran] have considered some historical serials of Iranian television [entitled as "Mukhtar Nameh"] as an insult to the companions of the Prophet. **They should realize that *insult* is one thing and *narrating history* is something else; these are fundamentally different issues.**

"Can anyone doubt that there was a battle in Islam by the name of Siffin? Can anyone doubt that some companions *(sahaba)* did not pledge allegiance to the Imam of their time and fought against him, many of which who were killed? Are you saying do not narrate the history?

"We cannot close our eyes to history [and historical differences]; *insulting* is one thing while *research* is something else—these two should never be confused with one another. These brothers should realize that historical issues cannot be forgotten; all books on the history of Islam are full of these events. Even the historical books of the Sunnis talk about the issue of Talha, Zubayr and 'Abdullah bin Zubayr.

"If history is researched objectively, then many realities and events will become clear. In Islamic history, some companions *(sahaba)* were steadfast in the path of the Prophet while some did not remain on that path. If we look at the issues and events of history in an unbiased way, then our duty will become clear. This means narrating the event, and that should not be considered as an insult."

An Example from Amīrul Mu'minīn 'Ali (a.s.)

During the Battle of Ṣiffīn, Imam 'Ali (a.s.) saw some of his companions hurling abusive words towards the Syrian forces. He advised them:

"I dislike you starting to abuse them, but if you describe their deeds and recount their situations that would be a better mode of speaking and a more convincing way of arguing.

"Instead of abusing them you should say, 'O Allah! Save our blood and their blood, produce reconciliation between us and them, and lead them out of their misguidance so that he who is ignorant of the truth may know it, and he who inclines towards rebellion and revolt may turn away from it.'"

(Nahjul Balagha, sermon 204)

اِمیر المومنین علی (ع) نے جنگ صفین کے موقع کے پر اپنے ساتھیوں میں سے چند آدمیوں کو سنا کہ وہ شامیوں پر سب و شتم کر رہے ہیں تو آپ نے فرمایا:

"میں تمہارے لئے اس چیز کو پسند نہیں کرتا کہ تم گالیاں دینے لگو.
"اگر تم ان کے کرتوت کھولو اور ان کے صحیح حالات پیش کرو، تو یہ ایک ٹھکانے کی بات اور عذر تمام کرنے کا صحیح طریق کار ہوگا.
"تم گالم گلوچ کے بجائے یہ کہو کہ: خدایا ہمارا بھی خون محفوظ رکھ اور ان کا بھی، اور ہمارے اور ان کے درمیان اصلاح کی صورت پیدا کر اور انہیں گمراہی سے ہدایت کی طرف لا تاکہ حق سے بے خبر، حق کو پہچان لیں اور گمراہی و سرکشی کے شیدائی اس سے اپنا رخ موڑ لیں."

(نہج البلاغہ، خطبہ نمبر 204)

(4)

Status of the Sunnis in Shi‘a Fiqh

by the Grand Ayatullah Sayyid ‘Ali Sistani

Question:

As-Salāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatullāhi wa barakātuh.

An independent [television] channel has repeatedly claimed that Sayyid Sistani (may Allāh protect him) has given the fatwa of *kufr* (infidelity) for one who does not believe in Imamate [of the Ahlul Bayt], and among such people are the Sunni brethren. This is based on what has been quoted from Al-Abḥāthu ’l-‘Aqā’idiyyah website which is under the patronage of the respected Sayyid as claimed in the beginning of the “al-Hiwār aṣ-Sarīḥ” program of the channel.

What is your response on their specific claims since they are repeating that almost every day since the beginning of the present month of Ramadhan [1431].
With thanks.

Answer:
In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful
As-Salāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatullāhi wa barakātuh.

The respected Sayyid Sistāni in the manual of his fatwas, *Minhāju ’ṣ-Saliḥīn,* vol. 1 (1st edition) p. 138 has clearly stated that a *kāfir* (infidel) is one who

1. does not have a religion
2. or follows a religion other than Islam
3. or follows Islam but rejects what is known as an essential part of the Islamic faith (i.e., what has come from the Prophet [a.s.]) in a way that his rejection leads to belying the Prophet (a.s.) in what he has conveyed from Almighty Allāh.

By considering the fact that most of our brethren from Ahlus Sunnat wal Jamā‘at who deny the Imamate of the Twelve Imams (a.s.) believe that Imamate is not part of [the faith] that was brought by the Prophet (s.a.w.), therefore their rejection does not harm their Islam based on the view of the respected Sayyid.

This is [also] clear from his other fatwas such as:

1. His verdict on obligation of doing the funeral prayer on a Muslim even if he is of a different sect *(madhhab)*. (*Minhãju ’ṣ-Ṣãliḥīn*, vol. 1, p. 106)
2. And his verdict on validity of a Shī‘a lady marrying a Muslim from other *madhhab.* (*Minhãju ’ṣ-Ṣãliḥīn*, vol. 3, p. 70)
3. And his verdict that the Muslims can inherit from one another even if they differ in their *madhhab*, principals and beliefs. (*Minhãju ’ṣ-Ṣãliḥīn,* vol. 3, p. 323)

In short, whoever is aware of the fatwas of the respected Sayyid knows that **he considers the general Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā‘at as Muslims whose lives are to be preserved, whose properties are sacrosanct, and all rules specific to Muslims would apply on them…**

May Allãh grant you success. Was-salaamu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatullãhi wa barakãtuh.

12 Holy Ramadhan 1431 AH
[Seal of the Office of As-Sayyid as-Sistãni, an-Najaf al-Ashraf]

by the Grand Ayatullah Wahid Khurasãni

Question:
In the name of the Almighty

We are a group who reside in a Sunni neighbourhood, and they call us *'kãfir'* (infidel) and say that Shi'as are *kãfir*. In such a situation, can we retort in kind and treat them as kãfirs? Please clarify our religious duty in face of such confrontations.

A group of mu'mineen.

Answer:
In the name of Allãh, the Kind, the Merciful

Whosoever bears witness to the unity of Almighty God and the prophethood of the Last Prophet (s.a.w.) is a Muslim. His life, honour and property is as sacrosanct as the life, honour and property of a follower of the Ja'fari sect.

Your religious duty towards one who believes in God's unity and the Prophet's messengership, ***even if*** he calls you a kãfir, is cordial association with him. And if they behave wrongly with you, you should not deviate from the right path of truth and justice.

If anyone of them becomes ill, go and visit him; if he passes away, participate in his funeral; if he needs something from you, fulfill it. Accept Allãh's command, *"And let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably Act equitably, that is nearer to piety;"*[5:8] and follow the Almighty's injunction, *"And do not say to anyone who offers you peace: You are not a believer.."*[4:94]

Was-salaam 'alaykum wa rahmatullãh.