

Encountering Sectarianism: A Critical Study Of Maulana Syed Abul Ala Maududi's Thoughts For Unity Of Ummah

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Abstract

The importance of keeping the Muslim Ummah united and harmonious cannot be denied. It is the urgent need of the hour to try to create unity and closeness, especially among the Muslims of Pakistan, so that the struggle for the implementation of the Islamic system in the country can be done through collective strength. People of insight have been striving for it at every age. Maulana Syed Abul A'la Maududi is also one of those personalities who was a great proponent of the unity of the Ummah. He called national prejudice, religious intolerance, and sectarianism completely against the spirit of Islam and the unity of the Ummah as the basic requirement of Islam. Among his priorities were the revival of Islam and the solution to the problems faced by the world of humanity, which he approached through unity. He considered it impossible without the Ummah. In his writings, he comprehensively described the benefits of unity of the Ummah and the disadvantages of divisiveness, and the elimination of racial, linguistic, regional, religious, and sectarian prejudices. Below are his writings. In light of this, a review of the ideas related to communal harmony and unity of the Ummah has been presented.

Keywords: Sectarianism, differences, unity, differences, Maududi, thoughts.

Introduction

The term 'Schism' is used interchangeably with Sectarianism, the combination of two words i.e. sect and ism, which means a group of people and ideology respectively. Thus, sectarianism means the ideology of a group making it different and distinct from others, it is the strong support for a particular religious or political group, especially when this leads to violence between different groups."¹

Oneness entails that Muslims following their respective ideologies are supposed to limit the issues of their differences to their respective sphere, under the light of communal Principles, it refrains them from disdaining each other's sacraments. Oneness does not allow any school of thought to back down their creed or to negate all other beliefs and concur with a single religion. In the past years, thousands of individuals had been the victims of discrimination in the sequel of Intersectionality. This attitude is Justifiably detrimental to the Identity and the disposition of Pakistan. Scholars have put a great effort into establishing harmony among the different groups/sects, these efforts did reap fruit in delimiting the intersectional discrimination, keeping it away from the nation. In the recent past, the Union Council and United Council of Action came into existence wherein the respective scholars of different groups have decried intersectional discrimination. Great intellectuals have penned books of great merit in the dissolution of hatred among the sects.

This article is one of those pieces in which Moulana Maududi makes an argument concerning the eradication of intersectional discrimination and disharmony among the groups.

Literature Review

The Research Subject: 'Perspective of Moulana Syed Abu al Ali Modoodi' in the Abolition of Sectarianism' is a crucial study, in the light of its significance various authors have debated on the causes, effects, and abolition of Sectarianism' in the following books:

1. 'Abd al Sattar Khan Niazi, Unity among Muslims: dire need of time, (Lahore, 1985)

In this book, the principles and regulations of the unity of Ummah for the denial of sectarianism and Masalik-e-Deeniah have been mentioned, by following which sectarianism can be eliminated.

2. Dr. Tahir Raza Bukhari, "Government's Actions in abolition of Sectarianism: A Review", Al-Qalam, 2015

In the research article, the measures taken by the Punjab government to eradicate communalism have been mentioned, and the causes and factors of communalism have been reviewed.

3. Prof Dr. Muhammad Tahir-al-Qadri, How is Elimination of Sectarianism Possible, (Lahore: Minhaj-ul-Quran Printers, 2010).

In this book, the author has highlighted the individual and collective responsibility for the establishment of an Islamic society, as well as possible strategies for the elimination of sectarianism.

4. Syed Maududi and his Political Ideas' Author: Dissertation writer, Fareed Ahmed Paracha, 2000, has been presented at Punjab University Lahore for the acquisition of a Ph.D. degree.

In this dissertation, the researcher has reviewed the Political Ideas of Moulana Modoudi. Moreover, different letters and newspapers have discussed the educational, political, and research contributions of Moulana Maududi, but there is no debate about sectarianism and its abolition, and any material available on the internet regarding this Subject, it was thereby necessary to highlight the Approach of Moulana Maududi in the abolition of Sectarianism, and how his Standpoint would aid in promoting Solidarity in Community. By abiding by Moulana's Ideas, the Schools of Thought could identify their merits and demerits, it ensues the possibility for Pakistan to get rid of indifferences among groups and become a citadel of peace.

Basic Research Questions

1. What is Moulana Maududi's Unity of Thought?
2. What role Moulana Maududi has played in the abolition of Sectarianism?

Moulana Moududi's Family Background

Maulana Maududi belonged to Afghanistan, his ancestors migrated to India at the end of the 9th century.² Shah Abu Al Aala Jaffer was a Sufi senior in his family, and Maulana was named after him. In his ancestors, the begetter of the Sufi Order is Qutb-ud-Din Modood Chishti. Moulana Modoodi's ancestry relates to Qutb-ud-Din Chishti.³

Birth

Moulana's parents were residents of District Chapli Poora in Aurangabad, Dakan. Born on 25 September 1903.⁴ His Father Syed Ahmed Hasan, acquired his LLB degree from Ilahabad (India). He was one of the initial pupils at Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's Ali Garh College.⁵

Educational stages

Moulana Modoodi's father managed to school him at home. He acquired education in Arabic, Persian, Hadith, and Islamic Law. At the age of 11, Moulana was admitted to Madrassa Foqania, this institution was established by Allama Shibli Nomani. In 1914, Moulana went for Scholarly Education, out of his father's illness, his acquisition of education was hindered.

Being keenly interested and passionate about studies, he become adept in Urdu, Arabic, and English Language, thus, it made it easy to study Economics, Sociology, Politics, and Philosophy.

During his stay in Delhi, he studied Arabic Literature, Jurisprudence, Ḥadīth, and Exegesis Of the Quran. Abd-us-Salam Niazi is one of his teachers, who ranks among the well-known Scholars of Delhi.⁶

Maulana Maududi's Perspective and Thoughts of Unity

Moulana Maududi always upheld the idea that Discrimination, Sectarianism, and Violence are major obstacles in the way of the Islamic Revolution. Maulana Maududi's stance is not merely a temporary measure for implementing a policy, but rather a prerequisite for compounding Islamic Community. Moulana's oral and written discourses are an effort to expunge this bigotry.

I. Opposed to Violence and Clandestine Activities

Over the past few years, certain religious organizations have certified the violence. A bolt of reaction appeared against Western Colonial Objectives. The Governments of Muslim Countries who fawn over the Westerners added fuel to the fire. Organizations performed surreptitious practices in the name of religion. Maulana Modoodi strongly abhors such acts and those behind them. Maulana always sticks to bringing revolution positively even before and after the existence of Pakistan, he strongly disapproved of the wrong use of power and violence.⁷

II. Manner of Teaching

Maulana makes use of Authentic teaching for mental reformation, social reformation, education, and training. He is of the view that cultural, ethical, and collective revolutions lead to Islamic Revolution. He remained in this position till the last moments of his life and kept calling for it in his speeches.⁸ In Mecca (Saudi Arabia) he addressed the youth as:

“I advise the activists to refrain from bringing holding weapons in the name of bringing revolution, and from being a part of covert practices, he affirms that real change is possible only by the assistance of Public Movement, he asserts to spread the awareness openly, among the public and to win hearts utilizing positive attitude. Change the minds of the people, subjugate the hearts with the weapons of morality and face the dangers and sufferings in this effort manfully.”⁹

The means of persuasion and persuasion prove to be very effective and permanent. The instruments and means of coercion and reluctance cause harm rather than benefit. A stable and lasting system of government cannot be guaranteed by violence and vandalism. Motivation and Exhortation are the best means in this regard. Sabotage and Vandalism can never guarantee a reliable infrastructure. In the Islamic state, the best companions of the Prophet PBUH were beaten and laid on hot sand and coals, but despite all this, they came out too brave and the whole Arab could not stand against them. But there is a need to work hard. By resisting the sufferings of those who obstruct the path of the revolution, with perseverance and patience, a time will come when the troublemakers will have to suffer.¹⁰

III. The cause of Division and Discord

In the Qur'an, a command has been given to hold fast to the rope of Allah and to avoid division.

“Hold fast together to the cable of Allah and be not divided.” (Sūrah Aal-e-‘Imran, 3:103)

This cable of Allah has interwoven the Shackle of Muslims to Allah and united them among themselves. The rope of Allah has been defined as a religion, which is the relationship that connects Muslims with Allah on the one hand, and on the other hand, unites all believers to form a single community. To hold this rope firmly in the Quran. The order has been given so that the real importance of religion in the eyes of Muslims, they should cooperate for the service of this religion, they should strive for its establishment and dominance. When he turned away from the details and branches, there was division and disagreement between them.¹¹

IV. Negative Meaning of Disagreement

Disagreement concerning minor differences is unbearable. It is also a fact that several Muslim Community follows an Imam. The various aspects of the sects of Hanffiyah, Shafiya, and Hanabila are different from each other.

Disagreement in genuine terms is not defective whether it pertains to opinion or action but disagreement taking the shape of violence and quarrel is inimical. Disagreement between religions does not entail that the opponent is the enemy, or he is claiming the other to be false. Disagreement is Contrasted with Opposition and its connotation must not be amalgamated with Opposition.¹²

V. Moderate in accepting opinions and ideas

Maulana Maududi holds fairly equitable opinions for an issue like discourse and expression, he never forced anyone to accept his views and standpoints.

Once He addressed the people as:

“I beseech before the members of the community, In the name of Allah that: do not favor my words merely because these are my words or obey my actions merely because they are my actions.”¹³

He asked the community that: View my words as being merely perspective or point of view, you have the freedom to adhere to what belief you want, I did not want and I will not intend to impose by force my standpoints over others, for I do not want to be criticized or limited in research.

VI. Stance Concerning Discourse/Islamic Jurisprudence Expression

Moulana Modoodi holds a unique stance regarding the issues concerning 'Discourse and Expression. It is allowed an erudite or one who is a savant and Intellectual to follow his conviction and if one is not aware, and lacks sufficient understanding of the subject, he is supposed to follow

the work he assumes to be authentic. Moulana Mudoudi states that dignified personas of the Class can assert their viewpoints and they can disagree with Mudoudi's viewpoint. Maulana Maududi explicits that all members despite having contrasting viewpoints can continue as a single unit like Sahabas, who is an example of unity before us.¹⁴

VII. Conditions of Affiliation with Jamaat-e-Islami

Moulana Mudoudi laid the foundation of Jamaat-e-Islami based on Islamic Principles, Moulana with his impartial approach allowed everyone: the adult and the sensible, man and woman to take part in any walk of national, racial, and communal expanse. Moulana affirmed the basic notion working behind Jamat Islami which is: 'Belief in the oneness of Allah and manifest the confirmation of Prophethood' it entails that one can participate in Jamat Islami by being aware of the motto which underlies its stance. Jamaat-e-Islami can include anyone who understands the interpretation of the Jamaat's creed and agrees with it, and this creed includes all religious and political parties because the foundation of every Jamaat is based on the belief of the Word of Tawheed and Prophethood. This concern of Islam has paved the way for people belonging to all schools and sects to join the Jamaat who agree with the goals and objectives of the Jamaat, regardless of race, family, and community.¹⁵

VIII. Monthly Quran Translator

In 1932, Maulana Modoodi took the hold of Quran Translation administration, during his incumbency, the journal continued to flourish and became a precursor and raconteur of revival and connotation of the religion (Deen). In this magazine, the invitation was presented which led to the formation of Jamaat-e-Islami. In his monthly magazine Tarjaman al-Qur'an, moderate opinions, and thoughts of unity in the unity of the Ummah, religious harmony, fanatical religious differences, and sectarian tensions have been presented.¹⁶

This Journal is aimed at the advancement and dissemination and advancement of lessons from the Quran and the preaching of Allah's message. The premises of this subject was to convince and impel the Muslims of India to strive and struggle in the cause of Allah for the expansion of Islam, and to investigate and scrutinize the prevalent and overarching notions of the world under the light of the Quran and Quranic Ideology and Outlook, and to delve the economic, social, political, and scientific walks of life according to the Principles of Quran and Hadith. To debug the skeptical questions and uncertain thoughts of Muslims and Non-Muslims whilst going through the Quran.¹⁷

IX. Prayer is the foundation of unity of the Ummah

Offering Prayers five times a day, with a congregation has a great impact in establishing union among different groups, but the bone of contention is the manner/way the distinct groups offer their prayers, the traditionaries that are available in this context have certain different standards, of those some are considered as authentic while few appear to be apocryphal. It is to be born in

mind that the Ummah learned offering prayer from 'Genuine (Practical) Hadith' (Sunnah) before the 'Oral/Spoken Hadith'. On the other hand, it is also a fact that the Intellectuals (of Fiqh) have witnessed the Ummah offering Prayers in different manners, which they considered appropriate they adopted. the one they got from the 'Genuine Hadith'. It thereby confirms that the negative attitude towards offering prayer is irrational, we must not deny the manner which came out after the interaction of Ummah.¹⁸

X. Union in Ummah in the Face of Jurisprudential Difference

Maulana Maududi views Prayer as a prerequisite to establishing a Union, he once replied to a question as.

“Issues concerning Jurisprudential differences are sub-issues novice problems newly emerged problems, (that are not discussed in Quran and Hadith), to differ Namaz on its basis would lead to differences per religion and this is referred to as: 'Ignorance' in Quran. Muslims can never constitute an Ummah in the consequence of differing their prayers; thereby; they can never play a role in sustaining religion.”¹⁹

Sahabas are role models in this context since they did not differ their prayers out of jurisprudential differences rather they continued to form a single unit, but nowadays, we can observe the case is otherwise, therefore vivid that, those who insist on differing their prayers, strike at the basis of the edifice of religion.²⁰

XI. Offering Prayers in imitation of various Masalak

Maulana Maududi says about the controversial issues that arise during the performance of prayers and based on which the justification for not participating with the congregation is presented:

“If one does not recite Surah Fatiha at any cost; or if he does recite it necessarily; cannot be claimed that whether his prayer (Namaz) is not accepted; because both the sects have pleadings in this context, the said individual is not disobeying the command, but he is acting under the command which is justified before him with pleading. He cannot be accused of offense with which one is accused who disobeys the command in true connotation.”²¹

Various traditionaries have been associated with Prophet PBUH on various occasions, the Sahabas too witnessed Prophet PBUH performing the acts of a prayer differently, therefore, the one who is following any one of those acts (Sunnah) is following the Shariah, none has the right to impel any towards his own adopted and preferred act/manner.

XII. Prohibition of Sectarianism Based on Controversial Issues

It is not manifested by former Imams that the manner which they called superior or accurate is the only which can be associated with that of Prophet PBUH, and others are not so; rather they stated

that they have watched Prophet PBUH following various manners; it entails that the disagreement among Imams was mere regarding which of the manners is improved one and can be called as finest. To refute any manner means repudiating the manners practiced by Prophet PBUH.

It is not narrated by any of the jurists, and Imam they said that the method that we have declared to be correct is the only one that was narrated from him, not the others, rather they used to say that this practice is permissible for us. This was his usual practice and he used to follow other methods sometimes. That is, the difference between them was about the best and the non-best. By looking at his actions, it is necessary to look at following the actions of the Holy Prophet. It is not permissible to separate the prayers and mosques and divide them into sects on such issues, nor is it permissible for both the followers of the Imams and the Ahl al-Hadith to abandon each other because of these minor issues.²²

XIII. Abolition Of Linguistic and National Discrimination

There is another crucial concern that the Muslim Ummah is divided based on color, race, state, nation, and language. These attributes are innate to mankind and should not subside humanity since none of the human beings has chosen any or all of these attributes himself; it is attributed to them by the will of Allah. Allah addresses the whole of mankind in the Quran and states:

“Human beings, we created you all from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another. Verily the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most God-fearing of you. Surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.”²³

Moulana Modoodi's explication of these verses for the abolition of linguistic and national discrimination presents three aspects:

The first of them is that the roots of all mankind can be traced back to the same father and mother; human beings across the globe are similes of branches generated from a single seed; none is created from a soil different from another's all creation is identical to one another; likewise, the parturition is identical to one another.²⁴

The second of them is that the advent and explanation of human lineage throughout history, across various places on the sphere of the earth was a natural phenomenon; thereby the tribal, and other division was obvious, but by any means, it does not allow to establish binary oppositions such as civil/savage, superior/inferior, etc.²⁵

The third of them is that the Quran has set the criteria of superiority or inferiority. It is described in the Quran:

"The greatest in scales is the one who fears Allah, and distances himself from all such divisions and discriminations; he may belong to any class, whether inferior or mediocre or any race, color, nation; in the eyes of Allah; he is the greatest of the humans; on the other hand, the one who is

opposed to it, may belong to any class, whether superior or richer, in the eyes of Allah, he is in the lowest scales²⁶.

Prophet PBUH has explicitly connoted the facts mentioned in Quran, in his statements:

“O People! be heedful! that all mankind is from one Lord; all mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a Non- Arab; neither a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; likewise a White has no superiority over a Black; nor does a Black has any superiority over a White except piety and abstinence.”²⁷

These lessons from Quran were not merely limited to the words, but in the light of Prophet PBUH's teachings and preaching, an exemplary society came into being, free of any kind of discrimination or division.

XIV. Moulana Advised the Members to Forbear the Negative Attitude of Opponents

Moulana Modoodi always advised members to maintain patience in case of the ill behavior of opponents, he not only advised but also showed an example of patience and endurance before others. Moulana Modoodi belonged to Uchra Village, Lahore, where he used to offer Jummah prayer in a mosque at a distance of one kilometer. Once, he along with his companion Sheeri Khan went to offer prayer in Moulana Achravi's Mosque, where the speaker made a verbal attack on him and began to criticize him, Sheeri Khan got enraged by the orators' words but he also got surprised when he looked at Maulana Modoodi's face, being content, after the sermon, on their way back he stated to Maulana that you surprised me by staying calm upon listening to the bitter words, to which Moulana replied: Were we supposed to quit our prayers upon that petty matter, those words mean nothing, the speaker has expressed his sentiments, it is not a big deal.²⁸

XV. Sectarianism Solution

From the very beginning, Moulana has affirmed to the members that they may act according to the interpretation, they assume to be authentic, the other following a different interpretation is forbidden to impose his interpretation on the other, the members are supposed to aim at constituting a system which is based on morals of Quran and Sunnah.

Do not impose your interpretation on it by force, and the other person who wants to follow the interpretation that he considers to be correct, should certainly do so, but he should not demand to follow it from someone who has a different interpretation, nor should he argue and argue with each other. Let us both agree that we have to establish a system based on the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. In Jamat Islami; the Deoband, the Barelvi, and the Ahl-e-Hadith are included. Jamat Islami also makes no restrictions on the inclusion of the Shia School of thought.²⁹

CONCLUSIONS

The following Conclusions are drawn from the above discussion:

1. Moulana Modoodi holds the Stance that Unity is a requisite for the solid basis of Muslim Ummah. Excommunication, transgression, and religious intolerance are inimical to the prevalence of Religion (Deen).
2. Syed Modoodi firmly believed that Discrimination and Schism, are major barriers to the way of the Islamic Revolution.
3. Moulana propounds that Education and Instruction along with awareness and training can lead to mental and social betterment, whereas convincing people by force results in unfavorable circumstances.
4. Moulana claims that: Muslims have deviated their attention from the morals and lessons of Quran towards the matters that are meager and a moot point, this is the reason that the nation is dispersed and disintegrated.
5. The various Schools of Thought are of the view that: to bring harmony and union between different sects, demands that one must not foist their respective belief/ideology on the other.
6. Differences of opinions must not ensue enmity, rage, or obstinacy, and must not be mixed with opposition and hostility.
7. Syed Mudoudi has termed the separation of prayers and mosques based on minor differences as sectarianism, which is forbidden according to the teachings of the Quran. Muslims cannot remain as one nation after separating the prayers
8. Maulana claimed that the segregation of prayers and mosques means the segregation of religious ideologies, Muslims then, cannot be called a single Ummah.
9. Prayers five times a day play a key role in uniting the Ummah but differences in manners of offering Prayers are resulting in division and sabotage, therefore, the various sects are supposed to comprehend the Sunnah.
10. Maulana Modoodi prohibited discriminatory arguments over religious matters and advised the members to maintain patience with the uncouth attitude of opponents because such disputes can sever the Ummah.

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