

FATWA ON VOTING

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PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM:

Introduction:

During the latter half of this century, the Muslim Ummah has been trying to revive itself from its current situation. Many Muslims and Muslim groups are trying to create the change using various means and styles. The concept of participating in the system, or changing the existing situation by using the current political institutions and systems, has become the dominant means in attempting to change the Ummah's situation. This concept has become so thoroughly entrenched in the minds of the Muslims that many of them refuse to recognize or consider any other alternative.

It is agreed upon unanimously by all Muslims that Islam is the only solution, not only to the problems of the Muslim Ummah but to the problems of the world. The Muslims also agree upon that Islam must be established through the methodology of the Prophet (saw). When the issue of how the Prophet (saw) carried the Daw'ah and established Islam is raised, the confusion begins. Changing the system from within, participating within the system, joining the current status quo, have all come to represent the major political styles of the mainstream Muslim Ummah, and many Muslims believe that the Prophet (saw) used this method to change his situation and establish Islam.

The Muslim Ummah has the obligation before Allah (swt) to supervise the affairs of humanity:

"Thus We have made you a just (and the best) Ummah, that you be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger be a witness over you." [TMQ 2:143] "You are the best Ummah ever raised up for mankind; you enjoin Al-Ma'ruf (Islam and all that Islam has ordained) and forbid Al-Munkar (Kufr and all that Islam has forbidden) and you believe in Allah." [TMQ 3:110]

For the Muslims to execute this responsibility, they must establish Islam and bring the Akham Shar'iyah into existence. To change their situation, the Muslims must understand how to bring Islam to the implementation level, which implies understanding the Seerah of the Prophet (saw) and the message of Islam itself. The Muslims today believe they can change their situation by casting more votes at the ballot boxes, holding more rallies and protests, increasing their numbers, patching up the current systems with a bits and pieces of the Ahkam Shar'iyah, writing more letters to the international community, or having a few "Islamists" in a parliament or congress. There is no way to expect the Ummah to reestablish Islam by any other method other than the Islamic method, and there is no way for the Ummah to establish, implement, and propagate a message that it does not understand. How the Ummah proceeds to revive itself reflects its understanding of Islam itself, the ideas and concepts it carries, and the reference it adopts. With this in mind, the issue of participating within the current political system, and all that this concept entails, must be addressed from the Islamic perspective.

PARTICIPATION IN THE SYSTEM DEFINED:

The phrase "Participating in the system" is a broad term that could have several meanings. It could

mean paying taxes, living in a non-Islamic society, holding a position in a non-Islamic government; in fact, if taken generally, it could mean thousands of different actions. This type of classification in itself is the cause of much confusion because this type of thinking is alien to Islam and to the Muslim mentality. Because Islam is a complete way of life that covers all aspects of life, then every action, every situation, and every issue must have a specific answer from Islam. Every action or issue has a specific Hukm Sharii (divine rule) that is derived through a very specific process. Allah (swt) says in the Qur'an: "It (the Qur'an) is not a forged statement but confirmation of Allah's existing Books and a detailed explanation of everything..." [TMQ 12:111]

The Muslims must look at every issue as unique with a specific Islamic ruling without lumping everything into a general clause such as "participating in the system." Many Muslims would justify such actions as seeking help from the Kuffar, holding a position in a non-Islamic government, or being a member of a non-Islamic party, on the notion that they are already paying taxes and subjected to non-Islamic constitutions and laws, and claim that all of these actions constitute participation in the system. Paying taxes or living under non-Islamic rules has nothing to do with holding a position in a non-Islamic government or seeking help from Kafir regimes. Each action is distinct, and each one must be addressed in its specific context with its own Islamic ruling. Although the term "Participating in the System," is a general term that could have several meanings, the Muslim Ummah perceives it as certain actions that involve changing the situation of the Muslim Ummah by using the existing political systems. Among these actions are:

- Voting
- Holding a position in a Non-Islamic government
- Being a member of a non-Islamic party or group
- Seeking help from Kufr nations or being political allies with them
- Establishing Islam by reforming the society or joining non-partisan efforts

Collectively, these actions are what are most commonly referred to as "participating in the system," and they have become almost holy among the Muslims as well as many of the Islamic groups and organizations. Such actions are not even the subject of discussion, as it is already concluded among many Muslims and Muslim groups that they are correct and Islamic. Moreover, they are seen as the only means of creating a change. Many Muslims would find it impossible to suggest an alternative to casting their votes, writing letters to the UN or their local Congressman, pushing a few "Islamists" into a parliament or government, or making alliances with Western nations, because, to them, even suggesting an alternative amounts to a cessation of all their activities. Those who even question these current trends are branded under many names & censored from the public opinion among the Ummah.

If the Muslims wish to revive, they must change their attitudes, even if this amounts to admitting that, for all these years, they may have been helping the Enemies of Islam when they thought that they were serving Islam by casting a vote or writing a letter to the president of the US. The best people amongst the human race, Allah's (swt) chosen prophets and messengers, had this attitude:

"And (remember) Dhan-Nun (Jonah), when he went off in anger, & imagined that We shall not punish him! But he cried through the darkness (saying), 'La Illaha Illa Anta [none has the right to be worshipped but You (O Allah), Glorified by You], Truly, I have been among the wrongdoers.' [TMQ 21:87]

"So he misled them (Adam and Huwa) with deception. Then when they tasted of the tree, that which was hidden from them of their shame became manifest to them and they began to stick together the leaves of Paradise over themselves (in order to cover their shame). And their Lord called out to them (saying), 'did I not forbid you that tree and tell you, 'Verily, Satan is an open enemy unto you?'" They said, 'Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You forgive us not, and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be of the losers.' [TMQ 7:22-23]

And even the Sahabis, the best generation of Muslims, had this attitude. Clauses such as : "If you can't beat them, join them," or changing the system from within, or gradual implementation, or being "realistic and practical," have reflected the attitude of the Muslim Ummah. As a result many Muslims are quite convinced that participating within the system is the only way to change their situation, more out of blind faith, imitation, or defeatedness than from deep thought or thorough investigation of what Islam really has to say regarding the issue.

VOTING:

The concept of voting is perhaps the most prominent feature of the Democratic societies of the world. Because of the influence of the West, the Muslims have also borrowed this idea. For many Muslims, putting their vote in the ballot box has come to symbolize a sense of accomplishment, regardless of whom they are voting for or whether the action of voting is allowed.

Before discussing the realities of the voting institution behind its glamour, one thing must be clear in the minds of the Muslims: Their only reference is the Halal and Haram, or the Commands and Prohibitions of Allah (swt). From this principle stems a qai'da, or a principle, which states that, "Anything that leads to Haram itself becomes Haram, and anything that is required to achieve an obligation itself becomes an obligation." Allah (swt) stated clearly that it is forbidden for the Muslims to be under the authority of the Kuffar: "And never will Allah grant to the disbelievers a way (to triumph) over the believers." [TMQ 4:141]

Furthermore, Allah (swt) has forbidden the Muslims to live under the rules of Kufr (swt) or any other rule than Islam: "Have you seen those (hypocrites) who claim that they believe in that which has been sent down to you, and that which was sent down before you, and they wish to go for ruling to the Taghut (anything other than Islam) while they have been ordered to reject them. But Satan wishes to lead them far astray." [TMQ 4:60] "And whosoever does not rule by what Allah (swt) has revealed, such are the Kafirun (disbelievers)." [TMQ 5:44] "And so rule between them by what Allah has revealed, and follow not their vain desires..." [TMQ 5:49] "The command (or the ruling) is for none but Allah." [TMQ 12:40]

Taken collectively, these ayahs indicate that the Muslims can only live under the authority of Muslims and under the ruling of Islam, and that the Muslims are not allowed to be under the authority of the Kafirs or any Kufr system. Thus, anything that leads to such a position is categorically prohibited. Voting for a Kafir or for someone who is not going to implement the Islamic system will lead to a situation which Islam prohibits. Thus, this act of voting becomes prohibited. Someone might claim that the person being voted for would implement Islam once elected. Such a claim has no basis because the current systems in the world today are not Islamic and no system will move aside and allow another system to function. Because the systems of the world are Kufr, then anyone who participates in this system would have to confine himself to the system and participate in the implementation of Kufr. There is no reason to expect that the Kufr systems will step aside and allow any individual or a group of people to implement Islam comprehensively.

Even though voting in theory is supposed to give the people the right to elect their rulers, in reality

the election process in the Western systems is but a mirage. It is well known that all the major political leaders, from the Presidents to the members of the various congresses and parliaments are backed by the wealthy capitalists who fund their campaigns. Furthermore, the election process is filled with loopholes that are easily manipulated by the ruling elite to make the entire voting institution work to their advantage rather than to the will of the people. For all that it may be worth in the eyes of the people, the ballot box is nothing but a waste of time. Some people would argue that, by voting, the people exercise their right of choosing their leaders, but the sore fact is that there is not much of a choice to begin with. Throughout the history of the Western nations, the policies of the major political parties, whether they were Federalists, Democrats, Republicans, Labor, or Conservative, have remained essentially the same. And in all the Democratic societies of the world, all the political parties, while giving the false impression that the people have a choice, are only various shades of the same system: The system of slavery of human beings to other human beings. By voting, many people, and unfortunately many Muslims, believe that they will be able to change the system, but the fact remains that no system is going to allow itself to be replaced from within. Those who worked to establish Communism in America eventually faced the Black lists and the McCarthy trials. In Algeria, when the Muslims received the majority of the people's votes through the election process, the system was immediate in its response to oust the Islamic party, and the Western nations began to discuss the "limits of Democracy."

The entire West claims that their rulers are voted in through elections, and this process reflects the will of the people. If such is the case, then why has it been, since the birth of Capitalism that the systems reflect only the will of the elite who hold most of the wealth and the resources. The same can be said of many Muslim countries, such as Pakistan, Egypt, and more recently Palestine, where the majority of the people are Muslims who want Islam but instead have to suffer from the oppression of non-Islamic systems. If voting truly reflected the will of the people, then these countries would be implementing Islam because the vast majority of the Muslims either want Islam or are actively working for its implementation. The voting institution and the concept of elections that is propagated by the West, while in theory is supposed to guarantee to the people that their rulers will reflect their political will, is nothing but a drug that is used to sedate the people with and give them a feeling of gratification whenever they cast their vote in the ballot box that they have exercised their rights or accomplished something.

HOLDING A POSITION IN A KUFR GOVERNMENT:

It is a clear fact that the entire world, including the Muslim world, lives under Dar-ul-Kufr because every territory is subjected to the rules of Kufr and the security of every country rests in the hands of the Kafirs. Thus, anyone who holds a position in any government existing in the world today, whether a Congressman in the United States or an Islamist in the Jordanian Parliament, is an active member of a Kufr government. Many Muslims and Islamic groups would attempt to justify the existence of Muslims participating in Kufr governments or systems with various arguments, in spite of these arguments, it is clear that, after inspecting the Qur'an and the Sunnah, Allah (swt) prohibits the Muslim from being in a position to pass any ruling or judgment which is not based on Islam, even if that ruling or judgment is similar to Islam.

Regarding the Congress in America and in the Democratic societies of the world, or any such institution which gives human beings the legislative power, such a position is categorically forbidden in Islam because Allah (swt) is the only sovereign in the sense that only He (swt) has the right to legislate laws: "And to Allah belongs the Ghaib (unseen) of the heavens and the earth, and to Him return all affairs (for decision)." [TMQ 11:123] "The ruling is for none but Allah." [TMQ 12:40] "The ruling rests only with Allah." [TMQ 12:67] "They have no Wali (helper, protector, etc.) other than Him (Allah), and He makes none to share in His Decision and His Rule." [TMQ 18:26] "His is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. And to Allah return all matters (for

decision)." [TMQ 57:5]

Because the Congresses and parliaments of the existing political systems are institutions which give human beings the legislative power, to be a part of such an institution and carry out its functions is forbidden in Islam. In addition, the act of ruling and judging must be based on Islam because Allah (swt) in many ayahs orders the Muslims to rule by Islam and forbids any other ruling: "And whosoever does not rule by what Allah has revealed, they are the Kafirun (Disbelievers)." [TMQ 5:44] "And whosoever does not rule by what Allah has revealed, they are the Zalimun (Oppressors)." [TMQ 5:45] "And whosoever does not rule by what Allah has revealed, they are the Fasiqun (Transgressors)." [TMQ 5:47] "And so rule between them by what Allah has revealed, and follow not their vain desires..." [TMQ 5:49] "Have you seen those who claim that they believe in that which has been sent down to you, and that which was sent down before you, and they wish to go for ruling to the Taghut while they have been ordered to reject them. But Satan wishes to lead them far astray. And when it is said to them, 'Come to what Allah has sent down and to the Messenger,' you seen the hypocrites turn away from you with aversion." [TMQ 4:60-61] "They (hypocrites) say, 'We have believed in Allah and in the Messenger, and we obey,' then a party of them turn away thereafter, such are not believers. And when they are called to Allah and His Messenger to rule between them, a party of them refuse (to come) and turn away." [TMQ 24:47-48]

Collectively, all of these ayahs forbid the Muslims from being a part of any Kufr government or any institution or position which will lead to the ruling by Kufr or legislation of laws because only Allah (swt) has the right to legislate laws and only Allah's (swt) Laws are to be implemented. Even the act of implementing rules or passing judgments similar to Islam is forbidden, and the daleel for this prohibition comes in the following hadiths:

- 'Aisha narrates, "Allah's Messenger (saw) said, 'If somebody innovates something which is not present in our religion, then that thing is rejected.'" (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Vol. 3, No. 861)
- In another hadith, 'Aisha narrates, "The Prophet (saw) said, 'Whoever performs a (good) deed which we have not ordered (anyone) to do (or is not in accord with Islam), then that deed will be rejected and will not be accepted.'" (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Vol.9, No.20)

For example, if a Muslim is in a position to prohibit Khamr (alcohol), but says that he is prohibiting this because Khamr is bad for the health, such a rule does not constitute an Islamic ruling. In Islam, only Allah (swt) has the right to command or prohibit things, and only He (swt) has the right either to provide reasons or not to give reasons for doing so. It is not up for we human being to decide based on his own reasoning what is good and evil because Allah (swt) clearly states that such an act is beyond the capacity of a human being: "Jihad is ordained for you (Muslims) though you dislike it, and it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you like a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows, but you do not know." [TMQ 2:216] "And if the truth had been in accordance with their desires, verily, the heavens and the earth, and whosoever is therein, would have been corrupted!" [TMQ 23:71]

Also, Allah (swt) did not give a choice for the Muslims regarding His rules but to submit to them, whether or not they make sense, and the Muslim does not have the option of innovating reasons and explanations behind each rule to justify its existence: "It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter, that they should have any option in their decision. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed in a plain error." [TMQ 33:36] "And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids for you, abstain." [TMQ 59:7] Obeying Allah (swt) means to submit to His Laws in their totality. If a Muslim who puts himself in a ruling position has to twist the Ahkam Shar'iyah or give up a part of

Islam to maintain his post, then he should ask himself whether his position is worth more than the Pleasure of Allah (swt) or whether the sacrifice he may face for standing up for Islam will be more painful than the Anger of Allah (swt). Furthermore, those who believe that they can change the system by being members of the Kufr governments are only fooling themselves. For one thing, they are contradicting the Sunnah of Allah (swt). The nature of creation is that Haqq (Truth, or Islam) and Batil (Falsehood) will be in a state of battle: "Nay, We hurl the Truth against the Falsehood, so it knocks out its brains, and behold, the Falsehood vanishes." [TMQ 21:18]

There is no way to think that Kufr will simply fling its doors open and allow Islam to rule because Allah (swt) makes it clear that Islam did not come to coexist with Kufr but came to dominate over it: "They want to extinguish Allah's Light with their mouths, but Allah will not allow except that His Light shall prevail even though the Kafirun (disbelievers) hate (it). It is He Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the Deen of Truth (Islam) to make it superior over all deens (ways of life), even though the Mushrikun (disbelievers, polytheists) hate (it)." [TMQ 9:32-33] "They intend to put out the Light of Allah (Islam) with their mouths. But Allah will complete His Light even though the disbelievers hate (it). He it is Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the Deen of Truth (Islam) to make it victorious over all (other) deens, even though the Mushrikun hate (it)." [TMQ 61:8-9]

Because of this inherent conflict between Haqq and Batil, then it followed that another Sunnah of Allah (swt) was that every prophet and messenger was opposed by his people: "Indeed, We sent Messengers before you amongst the sects of old. And never came a Messenger to them but they did mock him." [TMQ 15:10-11] "And verily, they were about to frighten you so much as to drive you out from the land. But in that case they would not have stayed after you, except for a little while. (This was Our) Sunna with the Messengers We sent before you, and you (O Muhammad), and you will not find any alteration in Our Sunna." [TMQ 17:76-77] "And so We have appointed for every Prophet an enemy • devils among mankind and jinns, inspiring one another with adorned speech as a delusion..." [TMQ 6:112]

If the prophets and messengers, including Muhammed (saw), who were the best of human beings, were bitterly opposed, then there is no reason to think that the nature of creation and all these ayahs that talk of the battle between Truth and Falsehood will suddenly suspend themselves for the Muslims today to sit side by side with Kufr in a Kufr system and participate in the implementation of Kufr. If examined objectively, one will find that the integration of the Muslims into the Kufr political systems is exactly what the Kafirs want. Because Islam is a political creed as well as a spiritual creed, then such a spiritual-political combination makes the Islamic Aqeedah incapable of coexisting with any other system, idea, or way of life. The Kuffar acknowledge that they cannot quell the political mentality from the Muslims because such a political mentality is an inherent quality of their Aqeedah. They also realize that, if the Muslims adopt this political mentality and act upon it, then they will automatically reject all the current systems and constitutions of the world and start working for the full implementation of Islam.

To accommodate the political mentality of the Muslims and at the same time ensure that Islam will remain contained within the current world order, they allow the Muslims to participate in their political machinery. Thus, the presence of "Islamists" in the Jordanian or Egyptian parliament or a Muslim Congressman only gives a false impression because such individuals still are confined to the Kufr regimes and systems. The Islamists in Egypt may be able to pass a law that allows women to wear the hijab in the schools and work places while the Kufr regime in Egypt continues to broadcast Western television and curriculum that cultures millions into the Western norms and values. Similarly, a Muslim senator in the United States may be able to pass a bill requiring the schools and work places to recognize the Eid as a national holiday, but the system will remain a Capitalistic system that exploits the people, the educational curriculum will continue to culture the

people with Kufr, the economic systems will still be based on Riba and exploitation in America as well as around the globe, the international relations will be based on Capitalistic exploitation of nations and imperialism, the political system will be based on Democracy which gives human beings the right to legislate laws, and the social systems will still be based on the Western way of life that markets free sex, the subversion of women, drugs, and crime.

The concept of participating in Kufr systems succeeds only in containing Islam within the circle of Kufr, whereas Allah (swt) revealed Islam to be the supreme system for all humanity. In addition, it prolongs the life of the Kufr regimes although Allah (swt) has declared all Kufr to be null and void. If those Muslims who hold seats and positions in the governments of the world were sincere in demanding the implementation of Islam, they would start pointing fingers at the rulers and demanding from them that they implement the Akham Shar'iyah or step aside and allow the Muslim Ummah to have its own platform and elect its own rulers. If those Muslims were sincere in bringing back the rules of Allah (swt) in their totality, then they would not settle for a law enforcing the hijab or the initiation of "Islamic banks" but would not cease criticizing the regimes until they implement all of Islam and not just a few laws to pacify the Muslims with.

BEING A MEMBER OF A NON-ISLAMIC PARTY:

Allah (swt) orders the Muslims to establish a party amongst themselves: "Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to Khair (Islam), enjoining Al-Ma'ruf (what Islam allows and commands), and forbidding Al-Munkar (what Islam prohibits)." [TMQ 3:104]

In this ayah, Allah (swt) states very clearly the conditions of this party. Such a party must be based on Islam, and must submit to Islam in its totality. Furthermore, because the party is based on Islam, then the sole basis of the party culture, the party's thoughts and concepts, the party's methods and techniques, and the means of affiliation amongst the party members, must be the Islamic Aqeedah and no other basis. Allah (swt) further elaborates these characteristics in the following ayah: "You (O Muhammad) will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, making friendship with those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kindred (people). For such He has written Faith in their hearts, and strengthened them with Ruh (proofs, light and true guidance) from Himself. And We will admit them to Gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein (forever). Allah is pleased with them, and they with Him. They are the Party of Allah. Verily, it is the Party of Allah that will be the successful." [TMQ 58:22] The last ayah describes some of the characteristics of the members of the Party as those "Who believe in Allah and in the Last Day," those who are not opposed to Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw), and those who have faith. Allah (swt) mentions regarding those who believe in Allah and in the Last Day as well as those who oppose Allah (swt) and the Messenger (saw): "And whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger will be admitted to Gardens under which rivers flow, to abide therein, and that will be the great success. And whosoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger and transgresses His limits, He will cast him into the Fire, to abide therein, and he shall have a disgraceful torment." [TMQ 4:13-14] Regarding the attribute of faith, Allah (swt) states the condition of faith clearly in the following ayah: "But no, by your Lord, they can have no real faith until they make you (Muhammad) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept (them) with full submission." [TMQ 4:65]

Thus, the prerequisite for any party to please Allah (swt) is to submit to everything which Muhammad (saw) brought, which is the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and to have the Qur'an and the Sunnah as the basis for the party's culture, thoughts and methods. As believers, all Muslims are ordered to establish a party based on the ayah in the Qur'an, which states, "Let there arise out of you a group of people," Furthermore, the party must fulfill the criterion that are set by Islam, and

any other party which does not fulfill this criterion is not a legitimate party.

There exist many non Islamic parties, both in the Muslim world as well as in the West. These parties call for a variety of ideas, such as Nationalism, Capitalism, Democracy, Communism, and various other ideas. They are established on a multitude of platforms, and their membership constitute both Muslims as well as non-Muslims. It does not take a lengthy explanation to realize that all such parties are completely forbidden to join. A non-Islamic party has as its party basis a thought other than the Islamic Aqeedah, and Allah (swt) states clearly in the Qur'an: "The only Deen in the sight of Allah is Islam" [TMQ 3:19] "And whoever seeks a Deen other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers." [TMQ 3:85]

Because the party does not have Islam as its party basis, then its methodology, its culture, and the concepts that it adopts will not be based on Islam. The only legitimate party in the sight of Allah (swt) is the party which follows the methodology of the Prophet (saw) and follows the Messenger of Allah (saw): "Say (O Muhammad), 'If you (really) love Allah then follow me (i.e. accept Islam and follow the Qur'an and Sunnah). Allah will love you and forgive your sins.'" [TMQ 3:31] "Say (O Muhammad), 'Obey Allah and the Messenger.' But if they turn away, then Allah does not like the disbelievers." [TMQ 3:32] "Say you (O Muhammad), 'This is my way; I invite unto Allah with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follows me.'" [TMQ 12:108]

Furthermore, the party that does not have Islam as its basis will not have the correct bond between the party members. Allah (swt) only recognizes one bond, which is the bond of Iman. The only bond that exists between the Muslims is the bond of Islam, as Allah (swt) states: "And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah (The Qur'an), and be not divided amongst yourselves." [TMQ 3:103]

Even the Prophets and Messengers were subjected to this rule. Allah (swt) mentions regarding the Prophet Nuh (as) and the Prophet Lut (as): "And Nuh called upon his Lord and said, 'O my Lord! Verily, my son is of my family! And certainly, Your Promise is true, and You are the Most Just of the judges.' He said, 'O Nuh! Surely, he is not of your family; verily, his work is unrighteous, so ask not of Me that of which you have no knowledge!'" [TMQ 11:45-46] "They said, 'O Lut! Verily, we are the Messengers from your Lord! They shall not reach you! So travel with your family in a part of the night, and let not any of you look back, but your wife (will remain behind); verily, the punishment which will afflict them, will afflict her.'" [TMQ 11:81]

In these ayahs, Allah (swt) makes it clear that the only bond is the bond of Iman, and this bond supercedes even the blood relationships that exist between the members of the same family. Indeed, anything which comes before Allah and His Messenger is rejected as a basis for one's thoughts and actions, and such a criterion is as binding for the party which is based in Islam, because Allah (swt) states: "Say, 'If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, you kindred; the wealth that you have gained, the commerce in which you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you delight, are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger, and Jihad in His Cause, then wait until Allah brings about His Decision. And Allah guides not the people who are Al-Fasiqun (rebellious, disobedient to Allah).'" [TMQ 9:24]

In addition, Muhammad (saw) exemplified this Islamic bond by stating as the opening statement to the first written constitution in the history of Islam, "The Muslims are one Ummah, to the exclusion of all others." The uniqueness of the Muslims was not their place of origin or their tribal background because, from the onset, the Prophet (saw) contradicted this means of affiliation. When he received the revelation, the Prophet (saw) incorporated into his group a Black Abyssinian, a Persian, a Roman, and people from the Arabian Peninsula. In addition, when he migrated to Medina, he incorporated the inhabitants (the Ansar) and those who migrated (the

Muhajireen) into the body of the Muslim Ummah. Furthermore, the uniqueness did not stem from social or economic status because the Prophet's group included people like Musab ibn Umair and 'Uthman, who came from a very wealthy and noble background, and Bilal, who was a slave and lived below the poverty line. This uniqueness was the Islamic Aqeedah, and upon embracing this Aqeedah, this fundamental thought became the sole basis of their affiliation towards one another.

Perhaps nothing did more harm to the Muslim Ummah implicitly than the existence of these non-Islamic parties. Towards the demise of the Islamic Khilafah, many parties emerged in order to change the situation of the Muslim Ummah. Many of these parties called for nationalism, patriotism, Communism, Capitalism, and a host of other foreign ideas. These parties did not understand that the Muslim Ummah's ideology is Islam, nor did they understand that Islam was deeply rooted in the culture, the sentiments, and the history of the Muslim world. Because these parties were based on ideas and concepts that were alien to Islam, then it was natural for them to come in direct conflict with the Muslim Ummah and to lead the Muslim Ummah even further away from reviving itself. Furthermore, many of these parties felt themselves privileged, and this class mentality caused them to look down upon the Ummah as well as resulted in class struggle within their own structures, not to mention the track record of betrayal, treason, deceit, and corruption that these organizations left behind. All of these factors succeeded only in creating among the Ummah an atmosphere of hatred and resentment towards politics, parties, or anything associated with such terms, which placed an even greater burden on the correct party in its path towards reviving the Ummah. Because politics is a part of Islam, and only a political party can change the Ummah's situation by reestablishing the Islamic system, then the gap that such parties created between them and the Ummah dampened the revival process. By continuing to take part in non-Islamic movements, such individuals only add to this process of widening the gap between the Muslim Ummah and politics, without which the Ummah cannot survive.

SEEKING HELP FROM KUFR STATES OR GOVERNMENTS:

Allah (swt) says in the Qur'an regarding the issue of seeking protection or help from the Kuffar:

"O you who believe! Take not as (your) Bitanah (advisors, consultants, protectors, helpers, etc.) those outside your religion since they will not fail to do their best to corrupt you, they desire to harm you severely." [TMQ 3:118] "Those who take disbelievers for 'Auliya' (protectors, helpers, friends) instead of believers, do they seek honor, power and glory with them? Verily, then to Allah belongs all honor, power and glory." [TMQ 4:139] "O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians as 'Auliya' (friends, protectors, helpers, etc.), they are but 'Auliya' to one another. And if any amongst you takes them as 'Auliya', then surely he is one of them. Verily, Allah guides not those people who are the Zalimun (wrongdoers, oppressors)." [TMQ 5:51] "O Prophet (Muhammad)! Keep your duty to Allah, and obey not the disbelievers and the hypocrites." [TMQ 33:1] "And obey not the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and harm them not (until you are ordered). And put your trust in Allah, and sufficient is Allah as a Wakil (Trustee, or disposer of affairs)." [TMQ 33:48] "O you who believe! Take not My enemies and your enemies as friends, showing affection towards them, while they have disbelieved in what has come to you of the truth (Islam, the Qur'an, and the Sunnah), and have driven out the Messenger and yourselves because you believe in Allah your Lord! If you have come forth to strive in My Cause and to seek My Good Pleasure, (then take not these disbelievers as your friends). You show friendship to them in secret, while I am All-Aware of what you conceal and what you reveal. And whosoever of you (Muslims) does that, then indeed he has gone (far) astray, (away) from the Straight Path." [TMQ 60:1]

Furthermore, Samara bin Jundub narrates, "Allah's Messenger (saw) said, 'Anybody (from among the Muslims) who meets, gathers together, lives, and stays with a Mushrik and agrees to his ways,

opinions, etc., and enjoys his living with him (the Mushrik), then he (that Muslim) is like him (Mushrik). [Abu Daud, The Book of Jihad]

Regarding the attitude of the Kuffar towards the Muslims, Allah (swt) mentions: "Neither those who disbelieve among the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) nor Al-Mushrikun (idolaters, polytheists, disbelievers) like that there should be sent down unto you any good from your Lord." [TMQ 2:105] "Never will the Jews nor the Christians be pleased with you (O Muhammad) until you follow their religion." [TMQ 2:120] "Hatred has already appeared from their mouths, but what their breasts conceal is far worse...Lo! You are the ones who love them but they love you not, and you believe in all the Scriptures. And when they meet you, they say, 'We believe.' But when they are alone, they bite the tips of their fingers at you in rage—If a good befalls you, it grieves them, but if some evil overtakes you, they rejoice at it." [TMQ 3:118-120] "Should they gain the upper hand over you, they would behave to you as enemies, and stretch forth their hands and their tongues against you with evil, and they desire that you should disbelieve." [TMQ 60:2]

Taken collectively, these ayahs state one rule: The Muslims are forbidden to take the disbelievers as political allies. Some may attempt to justify their stance by claiming that they are under duress or their situation demands that they shake hands with the United States or sign a treaty with Israel. Such justifications have no validity because the basis for determining how the Muslims should act is the Akham Shar'iyah, and such a basis is independent of the circumstances. Also, in situations of duress, only Islam specifies what actions to take under which circumstances. For example, regarding the prohibition of eating pork, Allah (swt) makes an exception if the person is in a life-death situation: "Forbidden to you are: Al-Maytata (dead animals that were not slaughtered), blood, the flesh of swine, and the meat of that which has been slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah, or has been slaughtered for idols—But as for him who is forced by severe hunger, with no inclination to sin (such can eat these above mentioned meats), then surely, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." [TMQ 5:3]

This ayah makes an exception regarding a very specific incident, which has nothing to do with the relationships between the Muslims and the Kuffar. For these relationships, Islam mentions other rulings specific to them, and among these rulings is that the Muslims are forbidden to take the Kuffar as allies. Allah (swt) makes clear their intentions, their innermost feelings, and their views regarding Islam and the Muslims; this should be sufficient enough for the believers to know who to take as an enemy and who to take as a friend.

REFORM - CHANGING FROM WITHIN:

Many Muslims and Islamic movements have taken upon themselves to propagate Islam with a reformist mentality. The Muslims today are content with building Islamic schools, opening up a few halal-meat markets, performing charity services for the needy, or engaging in other services and sectarian activities. Many of them talk of Islam as a way of life, but the "way of life" that they speak of amounts to nothing more than a few general principles that came to improve the moral structure of the existing societies—what is commonly referred to as "Islamization of societies." Instead of calling for Islam as a complete system that came to replace the existing systems of societies, such movements call for Islam to patch up the wounds of the ailing societies without addressing the issue of whether or not the foundation of the current societies are incorrect to begin with.

Before discussing this issue, one point must be clearly established: Every system is comprehensive. As a system, Islam is comprehensive and includes every aspect of life. From this fact come two important conclusions:

- No two systems can co-exist in a society.
- No system will allow itself to be dismantled by another system from within.

Without addressing the issue from an Islamic perspective, these two facts are sufficient to show that the idea of reform is an invalid concept. Because Islam is a system that emanates from an ideology, then by its nature, it cannot be taken partially or be absorbed into any other system. The Islamic system is a complete package whose parts are interconnected. Any law or rule derived from the Akham Shariah cannot be implemented without the complete system. In order to apply the Islamic punishment for theft, a judge must preside over the case and pass a judgment. For the judge to make a sound judgment based on Islam, he must refer to the Islamic constitution to deduce his decision, and a functioning constitution implies the presence of the complete Islamic system. The judge is part of the judicial system, which is organized by the political system, and he must be assigned by the ruler who is a part of that political system. For the crime to be considered theft, the society's basic needs must be fulfilled by the Islamic economic system which requires a ruler governing the collection of taxes, the expenditure of taxes, and the distribution of wealth and property in the society. Also, the moral and intellectual atmosphere must exist to prevent such criminal behavior and tendencies from surfacing, and such an atmosphere depends upon the thoughts, sentiments, and culture existing in the society. The thoughts, culture and sentiments of the society are developed by the Islamic educational system and sustained by the Islamic social system. Without the entire system functioning, no Islamic rule can be applied effectively. Islam is a complete system that must be implemented as such.

The fact that every system is comprehensive means that no system has any room for another system to share in its authority. No system will allow itself to self-destruct internally by giving room for another system. Because no two systems can co-exist, then the presence of two systems means that one system will prevail and the other one will either vanish or submit. In such a situation, the existence of any two systems implies a struggle that must arise between them, and the history is 100% accurate in demonstrating this fact. Secularism in Europe emerged as a result of a struggle between the papacy and the intellectuals and thinkers. Communism in Russia arose as a result of the Bolshevik revolution. Islam established itself as a system after a fierce ideological and political struggle between Muhammad (saw) and the political authorities of Mecca. Every prophet and messenger of Allah (swt) was bitterly opposed by his society because he came with a system from Allah (swt) to replace the man-made systems, and the Qur'an establishes this fact clearly: "And verily, they were about to frighten you so much as to drive you out from the land. But in that case they would not have stayed after you, except for a little while. (This was Our) Sunna with the Messengers We sent before you, and you (O Muhammad), and you will not find any alteration in Our Sunna." [TMQ 17:76-77] "And so We have appointed for every Prophet an enemy - devils among mankind and jinns, inspiring one another with adorned speech as a delusion..." [TMQ 6:112]

When Communism and Capitalism existed, they struggled with each other to dominate the world, and after the fall of Communism, the Capitalist West, under the leadership of the United States, is still working arduously to squeeze the remnants of Communism in North Korea, Cuba, China, and other parts of the world. Today, the only other system known is Islam, and it is not surprising that the entire world, both the West and the East, is working at all fronts to curtail the Islamic movement and suppress the Islamic system. When Islam was given a political platform in Algeria, the democratic system wasted no time in closing its doors, just as the Communists were silenced in the 1950s in America by the McCarthy trials. All of these facts only reaffirm the reality that only one system can rule the world, that no two systems can co-exist, and any two systems will fight each other until one remains standing and the other falls or is kept on its knees.

Because Islam is a system, then it is bound by these laws. The Islamic system cannot co-exist with any other system. As a comprehensive package, Islam must exist on its own platform that will enable it to cover all aspects of life. The notion of reform has no place in Islam because Islam did not come to establish itself in pieces that can be used to cover the wounds of an already dead society. Those who call for the partial or gradual implementation of Islam do a great injustice to the Muslim Ummah and to humanity because they either keep Islam on its knees under the subservience of the existing system, or they dilute Islam by mixing it with other systems. In the first instance, Islam remains an ineffective voice that goes around patching the wounds of Kufir, thus legitimizing what Allah (sw) has already made illegitimate. In the second case, they create the chaos that already exists in Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, where Islam is implemented in fragments. Such a partial implementation of Islam only allows the regimes in the Muslim lands to use Islam to legitimize their corruption and gives Islam a label as being barbaric, backward, and devoid of any solutions.

Such a partial approach to Islam is not acceptable because Allah (swt) mentions clearly that the Muslims must submit to Islam in its totality: "O you who believe! Enter perfectly into Islam and follow not the footsteps of Satan." [TMQ 2:208]

Those who take Islam in fragments must ask themselves: Do they believe in Islam as the solution or not? Believing in Islam means taking all of Islam, not parts of it. By default, the Muslims must submit to all the Islamic rules and must believe that all the rules of Allah (swt) are applicable and relevant. Those who justify such actions as gradual or partial implementation of Islam should first understand Allah's stance towards this issue and towards those who condone it: "Then do you believe in a part of the Scripture and reject the rest? Then what is the recompense of those who do so among you except disgrace in the life of this world, and on the Day of Resurrection they shall be consigned to the most grievous torment." [TMQ 2:85]

THE ADVOCATES OF PARTICIPATION:

Those who advocate participation in the system have many arguments to justify their positions. Such arguments take many shapes and forms, but they all center around a few major points:

- The example of the Prophet Yusuf (as)
- The concept of Maslahah (benefit/interest)

Regarding the example of the Prophet Yusuf (as), they claim that Yusuf participated in the Kufir system in Egypt during his time, and such an incident, to them, is a justification for Muslims to participate in the system. Such an argument is invalid for two reasons. First, in Islam, the previous prophets do not constitute a source of legislation, and the only valid Shariah is that which Muhammad (saw) received. It is a well-known fact that every prophet and messenger conveyed the same Tauhid, but the Shari'ah that was delivered to each one differed in its contents. When Allah (swt) revealed Islam, it cancelled all the other previous messages, and Allah (swt) states this fact clearly: "The only Deen in the sight of Allah is Islam" [TMQ 3:19] "And whoever seeks a Deen other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers." [TMQ 3:85]

The Prophet (saw) also took a similarly firm stance regarding the issue of following previous messages and those of previous scriptures:

- The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "In Whose Hand Muhammad's soul is, there is none from amongst the Jews and the Christians who hears about me and then dies without believing in the

Message with which I have been sent, but he will be from the dwellers of the Hell -Fire. (Sahih Muslim, Kitab al hnan, vol. 1, ch. 240)"

- Umar ib al-Khattab narrates that when he brought to Allah's Messenger (saw) a copy of the Torah and said, "Allah's Messenger, this is a copy of the Torah." When he began to read it, he noticed that the color of the face of Allah's Messenger (saw) underwent a change, whereupon Abu Bakr said, "Would that your mother mourn you, don't you see the face of Allah's Messenger?" Umar saw the face of Allah's Messenger (saw) and said, "I seek refuge with Allah from the Wrath of Allah and the wrath of Allah's Messenger. We are well pleased with Allah as the Lord, with Islam as our Deen, and with Muhammad as the Prophet." Allah's Messenger then said, "By Him in Whose hand is the life of Muhammad, even if Musa were to appear before you and you were to follow him, leaving me aside, you would certainly stray into error; for if Musa were alive and he found me, he would have definitely followed me (Miskhat al -Masabih)."

All of these ayahs and hadiths indicate that Islam is the only message that Allah (swt) accepts, and any other message is obsolete. What applied to the Prophet Yusuf (as) is no longer applicable; it is only what is mentioned in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and the Islamic text forbids the Muslims from being in any position to rule by Kufr.

Moreover, even the claim that Yusuf (as) participated in the Kufr system is incorrect because the ayahs indicate that Yusuf (as) was the ruler himself: "Thus did We give FULL AUTHORITY to Yusuf in the land, to take possession therein, as when or where he likes." [TMQ 12:56] "Then when they entered unto him (Yusuf), they said, 'O RULER OF THE LAND! A hard time has hit us and our family, and we have brought but poor capital, so pay us full measure and be charitable to us. Truly, Allah does reward the charitable.'" [TMQ 12:88]

For Yusuf to implement anything other than the message that he received from Allah (swt) completely contradicts the entire concept of prophethood. Even Yusuf himself claimed this, as the Qur'an says: "The rule (or the judgment) is for none but Allah. He has commanded that you worship none but Him, that is the (true) straight Deen (way of life), but most men know not." [TMQ 12:40]

From these ayahs, the argument of Yusuf has no basis. Regarding the concept of benefit, it must be clearly established in the minds of the Muslims that the basis for performing any action is the Ahkam Shar'iyah, or the speech of the Legislator that addresses the actions of human beings. The Ummah's only reference is Islam, and it is Islam that is the sole basis of the Ummah's thoughts and concepts, its criterion for judgment, its laws and regulations, and its culture. Allah (swt) clearly states that the Muslims have no choice in the matter but to obey His Commands and to submit to the Qur'an and the Sunnah: "It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter, that they should have any option in their decision. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed in a plain error." [TMQ 33:36] "But no, by your Lord, they can have no real faith until they make you (Muhammad) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept (them) with full submission." [TMQ 4:65]

Also, Allah (swt) severely condemns those who follow their own desires, or resort to what they see as beneficial to them: "And recite (O Muhammad) to them the story of him to whom We gave Our Ayat, but he threw them away. So Satan followed him, and he became of those who went astray. And had We willed. We would surely have elevated him therewith, but he clung to the earth and followed his own vain desire. So his description is the description of a dog: If you drive him away, he lolls his tongue out, and if you leave him alone, he (still) lolls his tongue out." [TMQ 7:175-176] "Have you seen him who has taken as his Ilah (god) his own desire? Would you then

be a Wakil (a protecting guide) over him? Or do you think that most of them hear or understand? They are only like cattle; nay, they are even farther astray from the Path." [TMQ 25:43-44] "Have you seen him who takes his own lust as his Ilah (god), and Allah knowing (him as such), left him astray, and sealed his hearing and his heart, and put a cover on his sight?" [TMQ 45:23]

The idea of taking Maslahah, or using benefit and interest as a basis, contradicts the entire basis of being a Muslim. The purpose of one accepting Islam is his realization that there exists a Creator and that, as a human being, because he is limited, he depends upon the Creator for systems and laws to organize human affairs, to answer the fundamental questions, and to provide solutions to human problems. The Muslim also realizes that he will be accountable before Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgment for his actions, and based upon whether he obeyed the laws of Allah or not, he will be rewarded or punished. Upon this basis, the Muslim submits to Islam, because he realizes that it is his only means of attaining the Pleasure of Allah and avoiding His Punishment, and because he realizes that anything from Allah (swt) is the correct solution. After attaining such a realization, for somebody to claim that the correct solution should be based on the interests of the human being would defeat the entire purpose of being a Muslim.

Unfortunately, when it comes down to providing a daleel for their actions, those who advocate such actions as participating in the political system, seeking political alliances with the Kuffar, voting for non-Muslims rulers, or changing a society from within, usually do so on the basis of benefit or from a "pragmatic or realistic" perspective rather than a Sharii perspective. Such an approach is only self-defeating in the end because it will not lead to any correct solution and it will lead to the Anger of Allah (swt) in the Hereafter.

THE STANCE OF THE SEERAH:

Virtually all the Muslims and Islamic groups today claim that they are working to establish Islam following the methodology of the Prophet (saw) outlined in his Seerah. Many of the same Muslims and Islamic groups also promote, or engage in, such actions as participating in Kufr governments or seeking help and assistance from Kufr states, which have been shown to contradict many clear-cut concepts in Islam as evidenced by the abundance of ayahs and hadiths that refute such actions. Thus the question comes: Are these persons and groups correct and accurate in their understanding of the Seerah, implying that the ayahs and hadiths which contradict such an understanding are false, or is there a misunderstanding of the Seerah among the Muslim Ummah today? Clearly the ayahs and hadiths are authentic and clear, and the question of whether or not Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw) speak the truth is not worthy of being a subject of discussion among Muslims. In order to put the issue of political participation within the existing system in its proper Islamic context, the Seerah of Muhammad (saw) must be revisited.

When Muhammad (saw) began the Daw'ah from the moment he received the Qur'an, it was very clearly established that Islam was a message for all humanity. At the time when the number of Muslims did not exceed ten in number, Allah (swt) revealed in Surah Al-Qalam: "But this is nothing else than a Thikr (a reminder, a message, a warning) to all the Worlds." [TMQ 68:52]

In addition, when Muhammad (saw) received the revelation, the angel Jibril (as) ordered Muhammad (saw) to recite the Shahadah, which every person is ordered to declare upon entering Islam: There is no Ilah but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. The word "Ilah" means "that which is worshipped," and, to the Arabs, who were most acquainted with the Arabic language, such a declaration meant that Allah was the Creator and Legislator from which all the laws and systems of the society must emanate from. This statement by itself meant that Islam did not recognize any authority in the worldly affairs except Allah, which was a direct threat to the political establishment of Mecca. Together with the above ayah, Muhammad (saw), from the very

early stages of the Da'wah, delivered a message to the world that Islam was to be the dominant system and ideology for the entire world and every other system and ideology would have to vanish. As a result of this objective, Muhammad (saw) understood that the Da'wah would involve a struggle between Islam and the Kufr societies. Ayahs after ayahs descended throughout his Da'wah attacking the political and ideological systems of the society, degrading its practices and systems, and even ridiculing the political authorities of Mecca using some of the vilest words known at the time. The Prophet (saw) attacked the aristocratic and money-conscious values of the society, as well as the economic practices prevailing in Mecca, with ayahs such as: "Woe to every slanderer and backbiter who has gathered wealth and counted it. He thinks that his wealth will make him last forever! Nay! He will be thrown into the Destroyer." [TMQ 104:14] "Woe to Al-Mutaffifin, those who, when they have to receive by measure from men, demand full measure, and when they have to give by measure or weight to men, give less than due." [TMQ 83:1-3] "The mutual rivalry for piling up worldly things diverts you, until you visit the graves. Nay! You shall come to know." [TMQ 102:1-3] "And that which you give in Usury (to others), in order that it may increase (your wealth by expecting to get a better one in return from other people's poverty) has no increase with Allah..." [TMQ 30:39]

Furthermore, Muhammad (saw) made the chiefs of the tribe and the idol system, the highest political symbols of the society, the subjects of his most vicious attacks. Al-Wahidi, in *Ashab al-Nuzul al-Qur'an*, maintains that, when Abu Sufyan ibn Harb, one of the elites at the time, gave a big feast, an orphan came into his house and asked for some food. Abu Sufyan was greatly annoyed by the intrusion, swore at him, and hit him in the head with a stick, upon which Allah (swt) revealed the ayahs: "Nay! But you treat not the orphans with kindness and generosity! And urge not the feeding of the poor! And you devour inheritance—all with greed. And you love wealth with much love! Nay! When the earth is grounded to powder, and your Lord comes with the angels in rows, and Hell will be brought near that Day. And that Day will man remember, but how will that remembrance avail him?" [TMQ 89:17-23]

Allah (swt) also revealed an entire surah in the Qur'an cursing Abu Lahab and his wife to the highest degree: "Perish me two hands of Abu Lahab, and perish he! His wealth and his children will not benefit him! He will be burnt in a fire of blazing flames! And his wife too, will carry the wood. In her neck is a twisted rope of Masad." [TMQ 111:1-5]

Al-Walid ibn al-Mughira, who was considered by many historians as the head of the Quraysh at the time, received among the worst of insults from Allah (swt) when He (swt) revealed regarding him: "Leave Me (to deal) with him whom I created lonely. And then bestowed upon him ample means. And sons abiding in his presence. And made (life) smooth for him." [TMQ 74:11-14] "So (O Muhammad) obey not the deniers. They wish that you should compromise. And obey not everyone who swears much, and is considered worthless—a slanderer, going about with calumnies, hinderer of the good, transgressor, sinful, cruel, and after all that Zaneem (Bastard; son of a whore). (He was so) because he had wealth and children." [TMQ 68:8-16] "Verily, he thought and plotted. So let him be cursed! How he plotted! And once more let him be cursed, how he plotted! Then he thought, then he frowned and he looked in a bad tempered way; then he turned back and was proud. Then he said, 'This is nothing but magic from that of old, this is nothing but the word of a human being!' I will cast him into Hell-Fire." [TMQ 74:18-26]

The chiefs of Mecca, including 'Utbah bin Rab'iah, Shaibah bin Rab'iah, Abu Jahl, Ummayah bin Khalaf, Abu Sufyan, and several others, were the subject of the ayahs: "Sa'ad. By the Qur'an full of reminding. Nay, those who disbelieve are in false pride and opposition. How many a generation have We destroyed before them, and they cried out when there was no longer time for escape! And they wonder that a warner has come to them from among themselves! And the disbelievers say, 'This is a sorcerer, a liar. Has he made gods into One Ilah (god)? Verily, this is a curious thing!'

And the leaders among them went about, 'Go on, and remain constant to your gods! Verily, this is a thing designed (against you)!'" [TMQ 38:1-6]

From every angle, Muhammad (saw) attacked, cursed, and ridiculed the society around him. He (saw) did not leave any aspect or issue unscathed from his attack. Even when it came to the idols in Mecca, the most respected institution of the society at the time, Allah (swt) said: "Certainly! You (disbelievers) and that which you are worshipping now besides Allah, are (but) fuel for Hell! (Surely), you will enter it." [TMQ 29:98]

These ayahs clearly indicate that Muhammad (saw) had no intention of participating within the system or cooperating with the political establishment in any way, but sought to dismantle it from its roots and replace the system altogether with the Islamic system. Those who argue in favor of participation almost unanimously refer to benefit or interest, or claim that: "It is the realistic or pragmatic thing to do." Muhammad (saw) and His Companions took every available opportunity to cause trouble. In response to this ideological and political struggle that Muhammad (saw) initiated, the Meccan authorities launched a vicious assault upon the Muslims to smash the Da'wah with all possible means. They killed some Muslims, tortured many, they severed social and economic relations with the Prophet (saw) and his Companions, and they attacked and ridiculed him with every kind of verbal and psychological abuse. And the only thing that Muhammad (saw) did in response to this physical pressure was to continue his Da'wah without changing or altering his methodology. From the perspective of benefit or interest, or a practical or realistic perspective, such an approach is totally unrealistic and impractical.

Furthermore, it is known that Muhammad (saw) was given many offers to compromise or to come to a common ground between him and the society, which gave an open invitation for political participation. In one instance, narrated by Al-Tabarani, a delegation of the leaders of Quraysh, visited the Prophet (saw) in order to reach a compromise. They offered the Prophet (saw) enough money to make him the richest man in Mecca, and offered him any woman of his choosing, and lastly, they offered him a deal that they would worship Allah one year and Muhammad (saw) would worship their gods one year. Such an offer in today's currency amounted to far more than a few seats in Parliament or a few votes, but Muhammad (saw), in spite of the miserable situation he (saw) and his Companions faced, did the most impractical and unrealistic thing when he recited Allah's (swt) answer to their propositions: "Say: 'O you who disbelieve. I worship not that which you worship. Nor will you worship that which I worship. And I shall not worship that which you are worshipping. Nor will you worship that which I worship. To you be your Deen and to me my Deen.'" [TMQ 109:1-6]

In another well known incident, when his uncle Abu Talib was pressured from the Quraysh tribe to reconcile with the Prophet (saw), he responded with the famous statement, "O my uncle, by Allah, if they put the moon in my right hand and the sun in my left hand on condition that I abandon this mission, I would not abandon it until Allah makes it victorious or until I perish." This statement eliminates any notion of partiality or compromise that the Prophet (saw) may have carried.

Even when his wife and uncle died, leaving him devoid of any material and moral support, and the Muslims faced the most bitter persecution and torture, Muhammad (saw) never yielded to the circumstances or succumbed to the realistic or the practical solution. During that time, the Muslims were desperate to acquire material support, but when the tribe of Banu Amir said that they wanted the leadership after Muhammad (saw) as a condition for their support, Muhammad (saw) flatly rejected their offer. He (saw) also rejected the offer of the tribe of Sheeban b. Thaalaba when they agreed to protect the Prophet (saw) against the Arabs but declined to offer any protection against

the Persians.

In studying the Seerah, one finds that the Prophet (saw) did not engage in any type of political participation within the system. In spite of what the proponents of such activities may claim, there is no evidence in the entire Seerah to support their views.

CONCLUSION:

Because of the lack of information that exists regarding the establishment of Islam, the Muslim Ummah is suffering from a great deal of confusion, erroneous concepts, and faulty information that reflects in its distorted understanding of Islam. Since the establishment of the Islamic State in Medina, today's Muslim Ummah is the only generation which witnessed the absence of Islamic rule. During the existence of the Islamic State, the Muslims never thought that they would live in the absence of Islamic rule. As a result, the issue of how to establish Islam or bring Islam back into existence remained a closed subject since the time of the Sahabis and was never discussed among the scholars of the later generations. Most of the information that exists regarding this issue can only be found in recent works by Muslims who lived in this century. Because of this, the idea of establishing Islam has not yet seeped into the mentality of the Muslims. In addition to the low level of understanding that exists within the Muslim Ummah and the effects of the severe ideological campaign perpetuated by the West upon the Muslims, it is not surprising to see the Muslims in such disarray when working towards reestablishing the Deen of Islam.

The only way for the Muslims to salvage themselves out of this mess is to understand that, regardless of their situation, Islam is their only reference in all aspects of life, whether the issue is prayer or establishing the Islamic system, and to realize that, no matter how much they want to believe or pretend otherwise, Islam and Kufr are open enemies, and the Kuffar will stop at nothing to suppress Islam and the Muslims. Participating within the system contradicts the Islamic method because Islam came to dominate over Kufr not to coexist with it. In addition, it contradicts the Sunnah of Allah (swt) which states that Islam and Kufr are open enemies and the Kuffar are the open enemies of Islam. As such, the Muslims must reject such a notion and work towards establishing Islam based upon the true Islamic method, which is to make Islam victorious over all the world, and Allah (swt) states this objective clearly: "It is He Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the Deen of Truth (Islam) to make it superior over all deens (ways of life), even though the Mushrikun (disbelievers, polytheists) hate (it)." [TMQ 9:33] "He .it is Who has sent His Messenger (Muhammad) with guidance and the Deen of Truth (Islam) to make it victorious over all other Deens, even though the Mushrikun hate (it)." [TMQ 61:9]

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