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DIMENSIONS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: PRINCIPLES FROM THE SEERAH OF HOLY PROPHET (PBUH)

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ABSTRACT

According to the teachings of Islam human being is a very respectable and honorable creature. Islam binds all the human beings through universal brotherhood. According to Islamic teachings mankind deserves respect, love and sympathy to create a sense of adoption among different nations and generations. However at some occasions Islam insists to develop a sense of distinction and distance while developing relations with other religions in order to preserve the identity, legitimacy, universality and comprehensiveness. This paper intends to discover the principle of international relations from the Seerah of Holy Prophet .In respect of relationship with other religions, we found four basic dimensions according to the teachings of Seerah and Islamic history. Its first dimension is Adm-e-Madahnat (عدم مدابنت) it means that if we change our point of view or bring flexibility in our opinion under the influence of other

religions in order to create harmony or diminishing the conflict. There is no possibility of doing that in Islam at all. The second dimension is dialogue and discussion and we find lots of such examples in Makki and Madani era of Holy Prophet PBUH. Third one is different agreements and contracts among the followers of Islam and other religions. The fourth dimension is embassy through which the message of Islam spread from Arabia to the neighboring and distant areas of the world.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

In the eyes of Islam, man is an honorable and respectable creature. who was awarded the title of Ashraf al-Mukhluq. Islam considers all human beings in a universal human brotherhood. The requirement of this universal human brotherhood is that a wider sense of human brotherhood should be created among all human beings. Islam has made human beings worthy of respect, love and compassion, so that the relationship of belonging can be promoted among people of different nations and races. However, on some special occasions, Islam insists on maintaining a distance in relations with other religions so that the truthfulness, comprehensiveness and universality of the religion of Islam does not lose its identity and distinction along with other religions.

Aspects of relationship with other religions:

From the Qur'anic verses, it is known that the whole humanity is divided into two groups, one is those who adopt the way of life given by Allah and become Muslims and believers, and the other are those who are disobedient and ungrateful and are declared rebels and infidels. As these clearly stated in the Holy Quran:

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا¹

Allama Qurtubi (died 671 AH) writes in the explanation of this verse:

أي بيانا له وعرفناه طريق الهدى والضلال، والخير والشر ببعث الرسل، فأمن أو كفر²

The same thing is mentioned in Surah Al-Balad as follows:

وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ³

Qazi Sanaullah Pani Pati (died 1225 AH) writes in his commentary on the word al-Najdin:

وقال اكثر المفسرين طريقى الخير والشر والحق والباطل والهدى والضلال يعنى أظهرنا له الخير من الشر بايجاد العقل فيه وإرسال الرسل فمن ضل واختار طريق الشر بعد ذلك فلا عذر له⁴

Allama Nasafi (died 710 AH) points to the inherent light of insight in human nature:

¹ Al Quran 76:3

² Muhammad bin Ahmad Al Qurtubi, *Al-Jamea al-Ahkamul Quran*, (Al-Aahira: Darul kutub al misriah 1964) Vol. 19, p 122

³ Al Quran 90:10

⁴ Muhammad Sanaullah Pani Pati, *Tafsir al-Mazhari*, (Pakistan: Maktabah al Rashidiyyah 1992), Vol. 10, p 266

فأعلمها طاعتها ومعصيتها أي أفهمها أن أحدهما حسن والآخر قبيح⁵

Among those who disbelieve in the blessings bestowed by Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, there are also those groups who oppose following the group of Prophets sent by Allah, peace be upon them, and create their own way of life and religions, such as That is mentioned in this verse:

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً ۗ فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّنَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ ۖ وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِي مَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ ۗ ۝۶

From the above mentioned Quranic verses, it became clear that the entire humanity is divided into two groups, one is the group that spends its days and nights according to the concept of life given by Allah Almighty and the other is the group that uses its intellect and experience. He does not consider the will of God while setting the principles and ideals of living life, on the basis of which he joins the rebels. Therefore, Islam encourages keeping a distance from such rebels and rebels so that the difference between a Muslim and an ungrateful person can be marked.

Thanks to mass media and means of transportation, the world has become a global village. As a result of which every individual is seen as different and deviant from each other. In the face of this conflict, it has become very necessary to promote relations between people with different views in the society. However, fourteen hundred years ago, when the land of Arabia was suffering from such a conflict, at that time, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) introduced such aspects of inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations, thanks to which the multi-faceted society became a cradle of peace.

Intransigence:

By studying the biography of the Prophet ﷺ, it is revealed that the people of Islam want to adopt uncompromise (i.e. non-bargaining) as the first dimension of relationship with other religions. This was the attempt of the polytheists to connect Islam and Jahiliyyah on a middle path. That is, on the principle of taking something and giving something, the polytheists should leave some of their opinions and leave some of the opinions of Hazrat Muhammad Khatam-ul-Nabib. The Holy Qur'an has called this attitude Madahant:

وَدُّوا لَوْ تُدْبِنُ فَيُدْبِنُونَ⁷
(وہ تو تمنا کرتے ہیں کہ کہیں آپ نرمی اختیار کریں تو وہ بھی نرم پڑ جائیں۔)

(They wish you would compromise so they would yield 'to you'.)

Allama Ibn Jarir al-Tabari (died 310 AH) while commenting on this verse writes:

⁵ Abdullah bin Ahmad Al-Nasafi, *Madarik al-Tanzil wa Haqa'iq al-Ta'wil*, (Beirut: Dār al Kalim al Tayyab 1998), Vol. 3, p 648

⁶ Al Quran 2:213

⁷ Al Quran 68:9.

ود هؤلاء المشركون يا محمد لو تلين لهم في دينك باجابتك اياهم الى الركون الى آلهتهم، فيلينون لك في عبادتك
الهي⁸

(These polytheists wished, O Muhammad! If you add to your religion the worship of their (i.e. the polytheists) gods for a year, they will also worship your god for a year.)

Thus, Ibn Ishaq (died 150 AH) narrates from Yazid bin Ziyad that one day Utbah bin Rabi'ah said to the Quraish of Makkah, "Should I not present some such things to Muhammad (peace be upon him) of which he may accept something (so that one of our Take something with the other, something will be the matter of two) people said why not. So Utbah bin Rabi'ah came to the Holy Prophet and said:

يا ابن اخي ان كنت انما تريد بما جئت به من هذا الامر مالا جمعنا لك من اموالنا حتى تكون اكثرنا مالا، وان كنت تريد به شرفا سودناك علينا، حتى لا نقطع امرنا دون، وان كنت تريد به ملكا ملكناك علينا، وان كان هذا الذي ياتي رئياتراه لا تستطيع رده عن نفسك طلبنا لك الطب، وبذلنا فيه اموالنا حتى نبرئك منه⁹

(O nephew! If you only want wealth through this problem that you have brought, We will accumulate so much wealth for you that you will become the richest of us. And if you want high status through it, We We will make you our chief, so that nothing will be certain without you. And if you want to be ruled by him, we will make you our king. This is what comes to you if there is anything you see. And do not have the power to remove it from us, then We will arrange for you to blow the broom, and We will save you from it by spending money.)

The Prophet ﷺ continued to listen to his words, and when Utbah finished his speech, he recited some verses of Surah Al-Sajdah, then he went back and advised his people that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ should be informed of their condition. So leave him, and be separated from it. You will become the most prosperous and honored by it, but the nation refused to do so.

Therefore, it became clear from this conversation that by prohibiting the bargaining and compromises with other religions and nations, the Prophet ﷺ gave the message that in the matter of religion, in any situation and condition, bargaining is absolutely not allowed, because by doing so, each individual will be subjected to the monopoly of other religions instead of living freely according to his religion. Disorder will be promoted instead of peace.

This is the reason why you said in response to the offer of marrying a favourite woman by the polytheists of Makkah, receiving wealth and wealth, wearing a crown of dignity and getting all kinds of treatment, the Holy Prophet PBUH replied that I have no desire for riches, high status and government, but Allah

⁸ Muhammad bin Jarir Al-Aabari, *Jāmi' Al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān*, (Beirut: Muasasat Alrisalah 2000), Vol. 23, 534

⁹ Abd al-Malik bin Hisham, *As-Sīrah an-Nabawīyah*, (Sharkt al Tibaeat al Fnyt al Mutahida), Vol. 1, p 261

has sent me as a messenger to you. Therefore, instead of bargaining with me, believe in me, it is better for you in this world and the hereafter.

Dialogues and Conversations:

Man has always tried to establish relations with other nations and religions through dialogue. In view of which, Hazrat Muhammad Khatam al-Nabiyeen ﷺ held dialogues with other peoples and religions during the Makkah and Madani periods. The purpose of which was to promote relations with other nations and religions. He held discussions and conversations with Jews, Christians and other sultans on individual and collective level. He even ordered the Companions to acquire proficiency in other languages in order to conduct negotiations and dialogues with other nations and religions, because the effectiveness of discussions and conversations and power can be created only when the language of negotiations and dialogues is simple, soft, comprehensible and uniform. So that the solution of controversial issues can be found by direct discussions with other nations and religions.

The series of negotiations and dialogues of the Prophet ﷺ with the people of Quraysh happened at that time, when he invited the Quraysh to Islam and stopped them from worshiping idols, they became alienated from him. In order to stop him from preaching, all the great chiefs of the Quraysh united and came to his uncle Abu Talib for the purpose of discussions and dialogues and said:

يا ابا طالب، ان ابن اخيك قد سب آلهتنا، وعاب ديننا، وسفه احلامنا، وضلل آباءنا؛ فاما ان تكفه عنا، واما ان تخلى بيننا وبينه، فانك على مثل ما نحن عليه من خلافه، فنكفيك. فقال لهم ابو طالب قولا رفيقا وردهم ردا جميلا، فانصرفوا عنه¹⁰

(O Abu Talib! Your nephew insulted our gods, found fault with our religion, made fools of the wise among us, and led our elders astray, so now either stop him from saying these things or our and our Do not interfere between them, because you are also against them on the same (religion) that we are on. We shall manage on our own. But Abu Talib made them return after speaking politely and tactfully.)

After this conversation between Abu Talib and the Quraysh, your uncle did not say anything about it to you. And Holy Prophet PBUH continued to give the message of Islam to everyone. So after some time, the Quraysh again came to Abu Talib. After the conversation like before, this time your uncle was very saddened by the separation and enmity of his people, while it was not right to hand over the Holy Prophet to them and leave Him helpless. So this time the Prophet Muhammad PBUH and said. :

يا بن اخي ان قومك قد جاؤني، فقالوا لي كذا وكذا، الذي كانوا قالوا له، فابق على وعلى نفسك، ولا تحملني من الامر ما لا يطيق... فظن رسول الله ﷺ انه قد بدا لعمه فيه بداء انه خاذله ومسلمه، وانه قد ضعف عن نصرته والقيام معه قال: فقال رسول الله ﷺ يا عم، والله لو وضعوا الشمس في يميني والقمر في يساري على ان اترك هذا الامر حتى يظهره الله او اهلك فيه ما تركته¹¹

¹⁰ Abd al-Malik bin Hisham, *As-Sīrah an-Nabawīyah*, Vol. 1, p 239

¹¹ Ibid. Vol. 1, p 240

(O nephew! Your people came to me, and spoke to me like this (the things that the people said) so have mercy on me and on my life too. And do not burden me with such a burden that I can't bear it. Then the thought came (in the heart of) the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) that even uncle will not help me now. And He will be handed over to them. It is as if he should not expect help and support from him either. He said: O uncle! Even if they put the sun on my right hand and the moon on my left hand, and ask me to leave this matter, I will not leave it. Until if Allah Almighty gives him dominion or I die.)

After that, the people of Quraysh held talks and dialogues directly with the Prophet ﷺ at different times. In which they also gave different kinds of temptations, but he gave them only one answer on every occasion:

ما بهذا بعثت اليكم انما جئتكم من الله بما بعثني به وقد بلغتكم ما ارسلت به اليكم، فان تقبلوه فهو حظكم في الدنيا والآخرة وان تردوده على اصبر لامر الله تعالى حتى يحكم الله بيني و بينكم¹²

(I have not been sent to you with these things. I have only brought what He has sent and I have delivered to you that with which I was sent to you. So if you accept it If you take it, then it is your good luck in this world and the hereafter, and if you return it to me, I will be patient with God's command. Until Allah decides between you and me.)

In addition to the people of Quraysh, the Prophet ﷺ held talks and dialogues with Jews and Christians at different times. A prominent example of this is Najran's delegation. This delegation consisted of sixty (60) people. Fourteen (14) of them were among the elite of the Christians. On reaching Madinah, he met the Prophet ﷺ, then He asked them some questions, and they asked Him some questions. After that, Prophet PBUH invited them to Islam.

Allama Ibn Saad (died 230 AH) writes about this:

ان لا نباهلك فاحكم علينا بما احببت نعطيك ونصالحك ،فصالحهم على الف حلة، الف في رجب و الف في صفر اوقية كل حلة من الاواق¹³

(That we will not argue with Him about the originality of their religion, so we are ready to accept whatever you decide. Therefore, you ﷺ made peace with them for two thousand pair. One thousand in the month of Rajab and one thousand in the month of Safar. And every One Oqiya (one hundred and fifty- two grams of silver) must also be paid with the pair.)

However, Messenger and gave them complete freedom regarding religion. And you (peace be upon him) wrote a formal letter to him in return. After that, these people requested him to send a trustworthy person with them, so that he can decide between them in their financial disputes. He sent Abu Ubaida bin Jarah with them¹⁴.

¹² Ibid. Vol. 1, p 241

¹³ Muḥammad ibn Sa'd, *Aṭ-ṭabaqāt al-kubra*, (Beirut: Dār al Kutub al'Ilmiyyah 1997), Vol. 1, p 267

¹⁴ Abd al-Malik bin Hisham, *As-Sīrah an-Nabawiyyah*, Vol. 1, p 244-6

Treaties and covents:

Treaties have been used since ancient times as a natural requirement to promote inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations. Because treaties have been considered as the best means of solving all inter-ethnic and inter-religious problems and complications. From the study of Sirat-e-Taybah, it is known that Allah Almighty allow the Prophet ﷺ to make agreements with other religions. It is stated in the Quran as:

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ عَابَدْتُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ فَمَا اسْتَقَامُوا لَكُمْ فَاسْتَقِيمُوا لَهُمْ¹⁵
(مگر جن لوگوں سے تم نے مسجد حرام کے پاس عہد لیا ہے سو جب تک یہ لوگ تم سے سیدھی طرح رہیں تم بھی سیدھی طرح رہو۔)

(Except those you have made a treaty with at the Sacred Mosque? So, as long as they are true to you, be true to them.)

In one of the verses, the order to fulfill the covenant with polytheists is mentioned:

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ عَابَدْتُمْ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْفُصُواكُمْ شَيْئاً وَلَمْ يُظَاهِرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَحَداً فَأَتِمُّوا إِلَيْهِمْ عَهْدَهُمْ إِلَىٰ مُدَّتِهِمْ¹⁶
(سوائے ان لوگوں کے مشرکین میں سے جنہوں سے تم نے عہد کیا ہے پس ان میں سے کسی ایک نے تم پر کوئی چیز ظاہر نہیں کی اور نہ ہی عہد شکنی کی ہے پس تم بھی عہد کی مدت تک عہد کی پاسداری کرو۔)

(As for the polytheists who have honoured every term of their treaty with you and have not supported an enemy against you, honour your treaty with them until the end of its term.)

It is clear from the above mentioned verses that Allah Ta'ala has ordered the Prophet ﷺ to make agreements with non-Muslims and to fulfill them. This is the reason why you entered into various types of agreements with other religions. Your moral character practically calls the observance of agreement as a requirement for true faith and correct belief.

There is not a single example in the early history of Islam, in which the people of Islam have broken the covenant with other religions. On the contrary, the jurists have forbidden for such a mischief and deceit, in which a contract is being violated, are prohibited.

When the Holy Prophet came to Medina, the Jews and the hypocrites were busy creating chaos in the tribes of Aos and Khazraj and spreading hatred between the Ansar and the Muhajirin. Due to which the internal situation in front of Prophet was very complicated, because at that time there was no central system in Madinah¹⁷. Therefore, for the stability of the state of Madinah, inter-religious relations were very indispensable.

¹⁵ Al Quran 9:7

¹⁶ Al Quran 9:4

¹⁷ Maulana hamid ansari, *Islam ka Nizam Hakumat*, (Lahore: Makta ul Hasan), p 77

Therefore, in view of these goals and objectives, he compiled a treaty a few months later, the purpose of which was to declare the city of Madinah as a civil state for the first time and to establish its management and constitution. This document was interpreted as the Treaty of Madinah, thanks to which the society became the cradle of peace.

The Prophet ﷺ through the Treaty of Madinah, laid the foundation of a society that advocated universal humanity. This Constitution was not only important for that time but was the guiding principle for all future Muslim rulers that how they should deal with their non-Muslim subjects. From the Treaty of Madinah to the United Nations, all the constitutions and publications that have come to the fore have been based on the Treaty of Madinah, because it is the first constitution of humanity.¹⁸

From the above discussion, it became clear that when the Prophet ﷺ laid the foundations of collective life after the migration, he not only ensured the protection of Muslims to make Madinah Munawwarah a political unity, but also made Madinah a peaceful society. All the tribes and rulers (including the Muhajirin, Ansar and Jews) made such agreements in which every person of every religion was given the opportunity to express his opinion with complete freedom along with the protection of life, property and religion.

Diplomacy:

Diplomatic activity plays a key role in building friendly relations with other nations and religions. Although the principle of diplomacy has been practiced in every nation since ancient times, it did not have a permanent role until the middle of the Middle Ages. Also, diplomacy was initially conducted on the deceptive lines of secret treaties, alliances and aggressions, which led to diplomacy to be considered, for a certain period of time, a fraud in international relations, but until the nineteenth century, diplomate was considered an honest liar who protected the interests of his state.¹⁹

So, Dr. Hafiz Mohammad Yunus explains its importance:

The office of diplomacy has been going on since ancient times, that is, since civilization, culture, state affairs and laws have been formulated. The study of Greek, Russian, Iranian and Chinese political science shows that they had the office of embassy. In the era of Jahiliyyah, Even when the Arabs were socially divided into different groups, and clans and there were centuries-old rivalries and enmities between them, even then they believed in diplomacy for reforming the situation and resolving disputes and have diplomates. For diplomacy from their tribe they would choose the person who was united in strength, language, eloquence, courage, bravery and understanding of affairs.²⁰

¹⁸ Dr. Muhammad Hameed ullah, *Ehd-e-Nabvi Main Nizaam-e-Hukmarani*, (Karachi: Urdu Acadmy Sindh 1981), p 76-86

¹⁹ Dr. Mahmood Ahmad Ghazi, *Muhazirat-e-Seerat*, (Lahore: Al Faisal Nashran o Tajran) p 36

²⁰ Dr. Hafiz Muhammad Yunus, *Rasool ullah ka Safarti Nizaam*, p 38

Every nation has always been looking for country, wealth, power and glory through diplomacy. Their goal was to gain power by conquering their opponents, that is why they used treachery, breaking promises, cheating and they seemed to be flattering.

A new series of propagation of Islam began in 6 Hijri with the Sulah Hudaibiyah, when the state of Madinah was protected from conflicts, fights and external attacks. The Holy Prophet PBUH started a new propaganda campaign as diplomacy. And with mutual consultation, at the first opportunity, they sent ambassadors to Qaiser, Kasra, Najashi and other sultans.

Dr. Muhammad Saeed Ramzan Al-Booti writes:

The invitation which Rasulallah ﷺ brought was not for a specific nation but for all human beings. His message was general for all humanity. He planned and tried to convey his invitation to all the rulers and emperors of the earth. Hazrat Anas says that the Prophet ﷺ wrote letters to the Kasari, Qaiser, Najashi and powerful rulers and invited them to Allah Ta'ala.²¹

The Prophet's (PBUH) seerah provides the principle of protecting the life and property of diplomats, so that the ambassadors can fulfill their duties with complete comfort. Although some of the messengers mocked the religion of Islam, he did not impeach them for being messengers. Hazrat Abdullah bin Masoud narrates that Ibn Naha and Ibn Athal came to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) on behalf of Al-Musailmah Qadab as messengers to Madinah, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

انتشهد انى رسول الله ؟ قالوا: نشهد ان مسيلمه رسول الله ، فقال رسول الله ﷺ: آمنت بالله ورسوله
لو كنت قاتلاً رسولاً لقاتلتكما. قال عبد الله : فمضت السنة ان الرسل لا تقتل²²

(Do you bear witness that I am the Messenger of Allah? So they both said: We bear witness that Musailmah is the Messenger of Allah. So the Messenger of Allah said to them: I am the Messenger of Allah and I believe in His Prophets. If I had killed the Messenger, I would have killed both of you. Then it became a Sunnah and method that Messengers should not be killed.)

Hazrat Abu Rafi narrated that Quraysh sent me to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ for something. When I saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, Islam entered my heart, and I accepted. So I said: O Messenger of Allah! By Allah! I will never go back to them. Then the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said:

انى لا اخيس بالعهد البرد ولكن ارجع فان كان فى نفسك الذى فى نفسك الآن فارجع²³

²¹ Dr. Muhammad Saeed Ramzan al Buti, *Fiqh ul Seerah*, Translator: Dr. Muhammad Razi ul Islam, (Lahore: Nashriyat 2010), p 473

²² Ahmad bin Hambal, *Al Musnad*, (Beirut: Muasasat Alrisalah 2000), Vol. 6, p 306

²³ Sulaymān ibn al-Ash'ath, *Al Sunan*, Vol. 2, p 24

(Indeed, I do not break the covenant and promise, nor do I harm the messengers, but go now, if you are true in your determination and intention, then go to the Quraish and after fulfilling your duties, come back.)

Commenting on this hadith, Allama Shokani (died 1250 AH) writes:

ففي هذا الحديث دليل على انه يجب الوفاء بالعهد للكفار كما يجب للمسلمين ، لان الرسالة تقتضى جواباً يصل على يد الرسول فكان ذلك بمنزلة عقد العهد²⁴

(In this hadith, it is argued that it is wajib to fulfill the covenant made with the infidels in the same way as it is wajib to fulfill the promise made to the Muslims. Because every message requires a response reached by the same messenger, who brought the message. It is considered a kind of contract.)

From the above-mentioned traditions, it became clear that even if the ambassadors of other religions express such views (in which killing is obligatory according to Islam), still these ambassadors should not be harmed. Especially when their political messengers have failed in their purpose and the negotiations have ended in vain. Nevertheless, they should be send back in complete safety to their country, where they are satisfied with their safety.

However, your style of diplomacy does not recommend to create relations only with independent and stable countries, but also seeks to create harmony with non-sovereign countries.

CONCLUSIONS:

In the light of the biography of the Prophet ﷺ and the history of Islam, there are the basic aspects of relations with other religions. Among them, the first dimension is non-compromising, i.e. the people of right and wrong should be intimidated by falsehood and create such a change and flexibility in their position or point of view. That the point of view of the people of right and wrong should be compatible or at least there should be no conflict. There is absolutely no room for this in Islam. The other dimension is the discussions and dialogues of which there are prominent examples in the Makkah and Madani period. The third dimension is that of treaties, which is a bright chapter of Islamic history. And the fourth dimension is diplomacy, thanks to which the message of Islam was brought out of the land of Arabia to every kingdom near and far.

²⁴ Muhammad bin Ali Al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-Awtar*, Vol. 8, p 431