The ways of religious approximation in thoughts and words of Imam Reza (Peace be upon him)

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Abstract
This paper, at first focuses on comprehensive issues about social unity and Islamic religions approximation, then despite political and social issues and opposite groups, explain the role of Imam Reza (peace be upon him) in this regard, the aspects of social unity and religion approximation in the of Imam Reza's thoughts and His role. It is the point which is worth attention that Although Imam Reza has been in the critical condition of the low facilities, but he used the most accurate and complete solutions for unifying Islamic religions approximation, to take advantage of his role. So that the true objective in Razavi deed sand words, along with the development and wise guiding, In order to maintain the unity of Muslims Islamic religions approximation, is clear evidence. The most important sira of Imam Reza is wisely encountering and his interaction with the various issues.

Key words: approximation, Islamic religions, Imam Reza (peace be upon him)

Introduction
Today Sunni and Shia and even the subset of each of these two religions have different words and jurisprudence, which both religions work for redemption and adjustment. These religions, lie beside each other at the same continent and same geographical environment, and also countries are at the neighborhood of each other with different religions and various believes. The way of this coexistence, is in accepting and relying on common religions. We should communicate with Muslims on the basis of Islam and Muslim principle, and interact with other religions on the basis of human traits and friendship, yet broadcast our thoughts and religious reasoning, so no one can be unaware of right, and begin the cultural jihad by interaction, and also show religious deeds by their thought and actions. This may not result, unless trying to do religion approximation. We should note that, religion approximation, not only means unite religions and deposit trick religious, but also it relies on unity at religious and human interaction with other religions and also respect to their right and their ideas. Holy Koran and our great leaders ordered us to unity and avoidance of separation. The order for resorting to God, as in Koran says: " And hold ye fast, all of you, to the cord of Allah, so and separate not " and about the brotherhood of believers said: " the believers are but brethren", and about the common religious believes of Muslims and also having common Holy Book and common kiblalah, all of these define the true unity between Muslims, and Imam Reza (peace be upon him) as a qualified leader who his insight result of Holy Koran and our prophet, besidethinking to this main issue, always challenge for diction and opinion and also doing functions and unifying guidelines.
Conceptualization
-Religion approximation
The meaning of approximation is that Ulema of every religion, study other religions and conclude that all of them have common ideas about the principle of believes (Islam). In the Holy Koran, unity means coherence, unification, coordination and adherence. In aya 18 of sura Ibrahim we read that “... the likeness of those who disbelieve in their lord, their works are like ashes upon which the wind bloweth on a stormy day, they shall not be able to get aught of that which they have earned. That is the straying far-off”. All muslims have common ideas in the principle of Islam, namely belief to God, unification of God, and prophecy of mohammad (peace be upon him), and belief to doomsday. So, the approximation between Islamic religions include: approximation among them by scientific, verbal, expository, anecdotal, doctrinaire and juridical...discussions, and realization of this issue depends on gathering Islamic religion Ulema at the unitlocation and propound Ijtihad visionary issues in a friendly environment in order to get the Islamic facts and truths, and also spread the conclusions of discussions among the followers, and the purpose of Islamic religion approximation is that, muslims consider themselves as a single community, as in Koran says: “Verily this community of yours is a single community, and I am your Lord; so worship me”.

The approximation among religions doesn’t mean that they should transact their religious components with each other. But it says that besides using religious commons, the followers of different religions, should realize more aspects of religious truth. Thus, Mohammad_praise and greeting of God to him and his family_ ordered by God sake to make a conversation with the followers of other religions and invite them to the common religious issues. Then, our innocent Imams- peace be upon them_ who had free time to do this, did it seriously.
Islamic religions
The meaning of Islamic religions, are those group of Islamic famous juridical schools, which have coherence Ijtihad system, and documented to Holy Book and custom. By the view of global society of Islamic religions approximation, these recognized juridical religions are as follow: Hanafi, Shafei, Maleki and Hanbali from Sunni and duodecimal and Zeidi and also, Bahreh from Shia and Abazi religion which survived from Khavarej- with more modification.

Islamic religions approximation
The meaning of approximation among Islamic religion, is the scientific and cultural aspect of unity, and this will not realize, unless in a single community and by gathering great jurisconsult of Islamic religions who are ware of ideas and votes of religions, and also by propounding problems in a safe and gentle atmosphere and far from any bias, and with mutual polite and respect and also on the basis ofunderstanding and exchange of views and ideas to get the Islamic truths and facts in the by scientific, verbal, expository, anecdotal, doctrinaire and juridical aspects... and finally spread them, is the result of these arguments and disputations among the followers of religions.

The history of Unity and Approximation
The history of Islamic unity comes back to the beginning of Islam, when the followers of our prophet debated with each other, and Koran prohibited muslims from this work. Among them in Ohod battle, when God in Ale Emran Sura says: “And hold ye fast, all of you, to the cord of Allah, so and separate not”, emphasizes on unity and prohibit of differ, implicate the occurrence of division among them. The history of Islam after our prophet till now, experienced difference and concision among Islamic religion. In fact, the history of approximation in scientific, cultural and visionary comes back to the third century and after that. Around the end of thirteen century and after that, some of the great Ulema, invited Muslims for unification (unity), who among them Seyyed Jamale Addin Asad abadi and his students are main persons. About 500 hundred years ago in Cairo, established a center by the name of “ Approximation Center among Islamic religions”, and choose approximation among religions instead of Islamic unity or unification that predicated before that time, which indicate religion protection, proximity among them. In fact, its religious, scientific and cultural aspect is more distinctive than political aspect. Finally, the purpose of approximation is creating friendship, kindness and amiability among Muslims.
Pioneers of religion approximation and its important
The number of religions that came through times for Islamic jurisprudence were 38 religion, from the beginning of second century till half of 4th century\(^2\). The main religions after 4th century including: Imamieh, hanafieh, Malekieh, Shafeieh and Hanbalieh. Studying in Islam history, at the time of innocent Imams and their pupils, indicate that beside having different thoughts with muslim jurisconsults and religious, those great people had scientific discussions and professor and student relationship with them. We know many people who common narrators between Shia and Sunni, and there is more than ten thousands narratives at the Sunni main book. At the next era after Imams were some great Shia pioneers like: Sheikh Mophid, Seyyed Morteza, Sheikh Toosi, Allameh Tabresi (the writer of Majma olbayan), the first martyr, the second martyr, Seyyed Jamal eddin Asad Abadi, Seyyed Mohsen Amin, Abdul Hoseyn sharaf eddinn, Ayatollah Broojerdi, Imam Khomeini, and ... who had been taught different Islamic religion jurisprudence, and observe the way of presenting jurisprudence and word. Meanwhile loyalty to the religions of our prophet, they had no bias in presenting lessons and used of all quotations and defended of their ideas by practical and sober reasons. All people know that how important is the religions approximation, and all of them are aware of that, so the previous Shia and Sunni Ulema tried to do their best to realize it by surveying juridical, verbal, expository basis and scientific discussions and arguments, and their challenges were significant, and they created one of the most magnificent epics of Islam history in political, religious and ... by their challenges.

The role of Imam Reza(peace be upon him) in social unity and religion approximation
By a little studying on belief and behavior of Imam Reza (peace be upon him), it is clear that although He couldn’t make government, but considered administrating of society on the basis of unification and being kind with other religious and approaching them together, as the main programs of a successful and desirable government. Imam Reza (peace be upon him)’s travel to Iran caused to spread Shia, but Iranian people both Shia and Sunni loved our prophet’s family, and giving great culture to people and creating an astute look in people for Islam and invalidate archly politics of Bani Abbass, were great deeds. That time, there were other religions and their relationship with the agents of different religions in Iran, which Imam Reza (peace be upon him) made conversation at many communities. At least, this conversation had two results: first, it was the messenger of a peaceful and symbiotic relationship with other religions, which the experiences of Iranian people showed that it was so effective. Second, the premier, stronger and thoughtful logic of Imam Reza (peace be upon him) at encountering with religions, was clear which equipped to their reasons in favor of their religion. By traveling Imam Reza(peace be upon him) to Iran and concurrent welcoming of Shia and Sunni from Imam, aroused a kind of unification and correlation between Islamic religions and in other words to approximate Islamic religions and also to fight with deviating factions, Imam Reza (peace be upon him) enterprise to introduce real school of Ahle beyt (our prophet’s family), and also emphasize on thralldom and being God’s servitude, and necessity of acting it and expressing deviations in

Obstacles and problems in realization of Islamic nation approximation:
Social political obstacles and problems:
Imam encountered with many obstacles and problems and political constraints and also with different challenges from Abbasi government by various aspects, in order to creating social unification and Islamic religion approximation, because like Omavi governors, the most important engagement of Abbasi governors in this era, was protecting political power of succession. Thus, by different ways for protection and continuation the political power, they tried to stop social unity, and as a result cause to difference, division and separation among the people of Islamic community. Heterogeneous and anti-religious and non-religious spectrum and groups: Beside political problems and obstacles, Imam Reza (peace be upon him) was encountered with anti-religious and non-religious spectrum and in other words encountered internal and external adversary, in realizing social unity and Islamic religion approximation, so He should found a way to solve these problems. The history shows that many arguments of Imam Reza (peace be upon him) were in thought contrast with leaders of these religions and non- Islamic thoughts like Jewish, Christian, Zoroastrians, Sabbian, Nestorian, Indian Brahmans. In order to create unity and correlation between Islamic religions and in other words to approximate Islamic religions and also to fight with deviating factions, Imam Reza (peace be upon him) enterprise to introduce real school of Ahle beyt (our prophet’s family), and also emphasize on thralldom and being God’s servitude, and necessity of acting it and expressing deviations in
their believes and conspiracy at this group. Also He used the most strictly conflict with the masters and commanders of these group, and called them as atheist and kaffir, and said them: “talk to the same extent that be compatible with our dignity and our being. We are God`s servants and real needful of His court. We die, live, eat and sleep, and all of these attributes are beyond of our dignity and some kind of indirection and even polytheism and atheism 1.

Necessity, importance and the place of social unification:
The idea of Razavi social unification had some tools, that its facilities for its realization must be prepared. By the view of Imam Reza (peace be upon him), the most necessary issue related to realization of social unity is justice. Because “justice is prerequisite of theist” 2 and for creating social/ community unification, the social justice should be spread as the main context of unity, since there will not be social unification in a full of cruelty and burdensomesociety. At the insight of Razavi justice, it means main principle of justice which the creation of universe, and all plans of the world is based on it, and the holy book and religious expression is based on and to realize it. As God says in Koran: “ The word of thy Lord doth find its fulfillment in truth and in justice. None can change His words, for He is the one who heareth and knoweth all. In Razavi thoughts, human being had been created in many groups and in different religions, and various believes and tastes. Accordingly, Muslims have different ideas and believes, too. So, these different ideas caused many tensions and conflicts between them. Now, by Imam Reza (peace be upon him)’s point of view, different ideas should not be obstacle of social unity, and we should have unification with different ideas. Therefore, all human and then all Muslims should ignore their personal ideas and tastes and racial and sectarian and …, and by focus on their Islamic and human common principles, hold to the cord of Allah by believing theism, so it will be a basis to get Islam’s purposes and its jurisdiction, knew the justice and freedom as a necessity and basis of social unification, and in principle He didn’t consider different ideas as an obstacle for realizing unification, and found the social unification as the only way to get to the aims of Islam and its all-round justice, and in order to reach to such aim, and following it to the approximation between Islamic religions utilized of existence facilities and invited all people with all kinds of Islamic religions and factions to this work.

The focuses of social unification to approximate religions:
Admitting difference between thoughts and tastes:
By Imam’s view, if this pervasive principle, namely recognition of difference between thoughts and tastes, admitted correctly and in a religious common frame and ethics, not only it will be an obstacle for many social conflicts, but also by considering its effect in removing moral and cultural basis, lead to active social unification along with maturity in community. The truth, in Razavi sira is what Koran says: “And surely He hath created you by stages” 5. With such analysis at Razavi insight, it is natural that different people have different comprehensions of scientific truths and religious educations. The history witnessed that Imam didn’t allow people to force their believes to others, and excommunicate religious opponents because of their believes and religious apprehension, so that even some Imam’s followers objected with Him about this problem. But He said them: “God gave special talent to any people, and said that it is impossible that human can go beyond that talent and reach to higher degree that is not apt. Then, don’t distance the people who are in low position than you, and don’t force them to do works that they cannot do” 6. Thus, Imam Reza (peace be upon him) in encountering and regarding others, specially religious opponents, attend to their different psychological traits and consider their necessities, in order to create social unification and Islamic religions approximation. Then, admitting difference between talents, Ijtihad, Faith, people comprehension and stages of believers’ faith, all are the base of such view.

Admitting Koran’s focus of universality and brightness of its concepts and doctrines:

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The first axis of unity making axes, for Islamic religion approximation in Razavi insight, is admitting the focus (axial) of Koran of universality and brightness of its concepts and doctrines, so that create social unification and Islamic religion approximation, since removing many thought oppositions and also divisive tensions and social-political sedition will solved by referring to Holy Koran. Since, Koran is the foundation of the best moral and social life in a united society.

Resorting to Prophetic Sira and Sunnites
Just like other honorable people at Razavi insight, resorting to Prophetic Sira and Sunnites is the second original source of Sharia and one of the most important unity making axis in the society which is agreed by Muslims to approximate Islamic religion. Holy Koran, recommended Islam Prophet as a correlation and empathy of Muslims. Imam Reza (peace be upon him) by referring to Holy Koran’s Aya in different sections of arguments and other conversations between Muslims, and to realize social unification and religion approximation, introduce our Messenger as an interpreter and explainer of the meaning of Koran, Duty of obedience, and the final arbiter in conflicts and trials and also recognize the correct from incorrect, and consider the results of disobedience from his orders like disobedience from God’s orders which should be punished. So, Imam Reza (peace be upon him) used the Messengers’ words to speech about the social unification, and measured correctness and incorrectness of His words and sentences by Messengers words, so that considered the opposition with it as an infidelity or atheism.

Therefore, one of the most important axis of unity in a religious society, and may be one of the most important mental criteria by the view of Koran and Sunnite and also in Razavi nature and insight, isobedience of common basis and foundations of the principles of religion. The principles like: Believe in God, unseen, prophecy of prophets and resurrection day; and also confession to the oneness of God and to what our prophet said, allow the people to enter in the Muslim scope and have individual and social rights which is special in Islam. The unity making strategies of Imam Reza (peace be upon him) to approximate Islamic religions:

Promoting rationalization and openness:
Imam Reza (peace be upon him) for rationalization in society and in order to create social unification and approximate Islamic religions, modeled of openness in their works. The history witnesses that not only, Imam didn’t allow the inquisition, but also when some of His followers objected Him, He rejected and criticized their work, and said: “if God wanted that all people believe in God, and if so, the servants will not deserve oblation and reward. But, they should think freely and believe in God with the power of rationalization and thought and without any force”. This word of Imam is sufficient for all openness people to know that how much He valued for human freedom.

Intellectual Assistance and correcting mistakes:
Attending to problems and answering philosophical, expository, Juridical, conscience and … questions, is one of the clearest symbols of Imam Reza (peace be upon him)’s Unitarianism. Imam Reza (peace be upon him) addressed creating social unification and Islamic religion approximation by forgetting cruelty of government, and informed Muslims of divisive oppositions by enemies of Islam. In order to save Muslims from destruction and obliquity of divisive words, at first interpret Koran Ayas correctly, till save them from misunderstanding of Ayas. Then, explained issues in a beautiful and understandable manner to them, and if some of these groups with that time’s government tried to create division and confusion, didn’t give up their stubbornly believes. Imam criticized them with words and practical positions, strictly.

Leaving battle, conflict and tolerate others:
Imam Reza (peace be upon him), by admitting and recognizing the phenomenon of intellectual differences and different tastes and human nature, invited Muslims to leave battle and conflict, and in other words guided them to social unification and Islamic religion approximation, and asked them to respect to others’
believes, despite there is different layers of meaning in religious educations, and by correct orientation to
oppositions address the religious commons and Islamic religion approximation, so prepare setting to more
emergence of unity and maturity in community. Imam Reza (peace be upon him)‘s frequent
recommendations on speech so that people understand and also not- imposing believes more than their
patience is objective evidence for this issue. Also, Imam frequently recommended to hide some ideas that
are unacceptable for common people, and encouraged them to tolerate others’ believes and leave
intellectual conflicts and religious controversy of Muslims with each other, because of their intellectual,
social, educative and moral harmful results which by imam ‘s witness, the only result of these hostilities is,
resurrecting some last bad memories and also history conflicts, and another focus on creating social
unification and Islamic religions approximation, since by His view, clearing differences leads to more malice
and as a result distance main rout of community from unity.

Negating Sectarianism and Racism:
In studying societies, the reasons of divisions and boundaries are: language, color, race, or ethnic group or
tribe, or poverty and wealth and social class or slavery and freedom and ... . But in Imam Reza (peace be
upon him)‘s thought as a wise Leader in creating social unification and Islamic religions approximation
and of protecting these issues, none of the above mentioned factors, are the boundaries of division, this
Imam sees all people the same in expression and action, and with following Koran and the Messenger and
His Family, he just consider “virtue " as a prominence criterion. So, He never differentiate between His
friends and followers, in Arab and Ajam( non-Arab ), poverty and wealth, and know all people the same,
and consider them in society and beside each other and as a single nation. Imam’s Sira is not limited to
Negating Sectarianism and Racism aspect to social unification. But Imam pays special attention to this issue
by supporting deprived people even in other sects and religion groups, since in His kindly insight, creating
welfare and common wealth and realizing a favorable life for all classes of people are the main purposes of
Islamic leadership, and this not only lead to spiritual eminence, but also results social unification and even
interest them to religion.  

Encouraging to social and emotional relationship and religious brotherhood (fraternity)
We can report Imam Reza (peace be upon him)‘s frequent recommendation to religious brotherhood and
expressing realization ways for social coexistence of Muslims and even followers of different religions, in
different cases and arenas to social unification and Islamic religions approximation. Moral and religious
principles such as: affability, fraternity, well association with opponents, well behaved, ignoring others
fault, good-willing/ well-wishing and trying to help people, and meet their needs, help to religious brothers
to prove the correctness, consultation and use of others ideas and emphasizing to peace, regarding, visiting,
and other moral and emotional aspects are clear examples in His Sira and Sunna. Also, preventing of ethnic
and tribal bias and other false preferences are the main realization ways of this purpose. Also, this
honorable Imam, about creating social unification and Islamic religions approximation recommend His
companions and says that: “you can’t impart all people with your property, then do this by good
behavior”. By such view, many pessimistic, excommunication and humiliation to others removed and the
social unification and Islamic religions approximation had spread in the society.

Right extremism and distance of Hatred and Malice:
By Imam Reza (peace be upon him)‘s point of view, the opposition derived from political- social factors,
and what is on the basis of love and hatred and, the grouping and sectarian arrogances, and not for
understanding and planning and thinking about religion and discovering the truth, not only is
unacceptable, but also should prevent of it, and in fact, this is a factor to social unification. As, some of the
Koran’s explanatory Ayas show, some abominable oppositions derived of stinginess, aggression, envy and
dogmatism of opponents.

Regarding religious considerations of opponents:
Respecting to religious feeling and emotions of Muslim groups to each other, is one of the unity making
principle in the society. Not only thislead to correlation and dependence between human being, but also, by
psychological and security view, it has considerable effects. Imam Reza (peace be upon him) pays special
attention to this principle, namely degrading treatment along with insult and ridicule to any idea and

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believe, is sentenced, even if it was baseless. And by His view, Muslims should attend to not stimulate religious feelings of their opponents.

**Emphasis on presence and synchronization at worship, ceremonies and social customs:**
It is clear that, Imam Reza (peace be upon him)’s frequent calling, just like our great messenger and other Imams (peace be upon them), in emphasizing on Muslims to participate at worship, social- religious customs, and presence at Friday and grouping prayer and ... that were under the influence of intellectual political opponents and probably Imams enemies, was for creating social unification and Islamic religions approximation, so that this Imam was participating at these customs to create empathy and Islamic brotherhood and religion approximation between Muslims, and recommended others to participate and presence and synchronization and accompaniment with other Muslims.

**Conclusion**
Unification and integration of Muslims and necessity for union and speaking agreement among them, and also, necessity for monotheism of word around the axis of Monotheism for all theists in the world, are the result of basis educations and teachings of Islam and principles of Koran culture. Accordingly, Holy Koran determines one of the most important and effective purposes of prophecy of our Messenger, as the creating familiarity and kindness and understanding instead of hostility and opposition, and if someone in history consider these as an instructive deeds, will find these meaning from masterpieces of Mohammadi prophecy (peace be upon him). In the second half of the second century AD (Hijri), and after basic changes at civilization, we see the growth and maturing deviate thoughts and emerging different sects and religions at the world of Islam. These groups, besides other previous religions, began to propagandize their believes. Thus, Imam Reza (peace be upon him), as a greatest Islamic thoughtful and the leader of the Imamiah current of religious thought, encounter with atheist and eclectic. Diversity of believes in one side, and different amount of their risk for real Islam on the other side, are two main variables at how does Imam Reza (peace be upon him) interact and choice the way of battle. Also, by considering the quoted narrations from Imam Reza (peace be upon him), we can draw a logic course of encounter ways. At the first stages, Samin al hojaj, used of argument and conversation for guiding astray people. In this way the basis, is using of the believes and texts which are accepted by addressers and also using religious texts and intellectual arguments. At the second stage, used of pathology of deviate believes, by presenting inadmissible comprehension of Koran Aya and narratives, and also by referring to forging and falsification, so that recognizes the source of forming such incorrect believes. This Imam used of other tools, such as interpretation and glossing the texts which their appearance cased to misunderstanding.

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