

# Islam: Past, Present and Future

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## Abstract

*History of Islam has different events and important happenings which can be termed as turning point in the history of believers. These can be broadly speaking divided into past, present and future. In the past, the purification of the religion was the dominant cause. However the time left its imprints over the believers and new concepts and realities entered the Ummah. This divided the unity of the Muslims. Thus intensified and expanded the conflicts with in the Muslim societies. This was taken up as a golden opportunity by the extremists to propagate Jihad for the desired change. Currently Islam is associated with violence, bombing, terrorism and fundamentalism. Here the question arises as to what will be the future of Islam? The future of Islam can be discussed at two levels: community and politics. Muslim community still believes in the vitality and universality of their religion, also for them Muslims will dominate the future. While at the political level one has to take into consideration the relations between Judeo-Christian west and the Ummah. It is argued here that the resurgence of Islam in 21 century is not a new phenomenon, it has a history, and presently the radicalization of Islam is a short epoch which will be replaced by a self-confident & moderate neo- Islam. This research work discusses the future of Islam, in the context of Community and politics. It also thrashes out the past history of Islam as a prelude to understand the present and with the help of past and present tried to find out the future course of this religion. The research is divided into different parts. First the introductory remarks, secondly the explanation of some concepts, thirdly the link with the past and next will be about the future course and finally the concluding remarks.*

**Keywords:** Islam, Revival, Extremism, Community, Politics and Neo-Islam

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## Introduction

Islam with the message of peace and submission appeared on the dark horizon of Middle East and soon engulfed the whole world. The small Muslim state formed at Madina by the Holy Prophet Hazrat Mohammad (SAW) became the silhouette of world Empire and Ummah – the new community of the believers of Islam- ruled the globe, extending from North West Africa to Central Asia.<sup>1</sup> Muslims erected world famous empires and even contributed in the renaissance of Europe - religion which pulled Europe out of the Dark Ages.<sup>2</sup> One can find the great contribution of Muslims in varied fields of culture, language, religions, social sciences, architecture, science, industry and agriculture, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, physics, education, cosmetic, crafts and art<sup>3</sup> and produced world renowned academics, scientists, intellectuals, physicians, mathematicians, travelers, artists, philosophers and even poets. However history did not do justice and no due appreciation has been given to the Muslims by the western scholars. Also with the tides of time Ummah (the new community of believers of Islam) lost its zenith and power.

With the passage of time Ummah, due to its internal conflicts and external pressures, lost its unity and vigor and soon came under the influence of new emerging world powers. The masters became the slaves and the western empires colonized the Muslim world and believers' community after First World War was divided on the criteria of nation states. This division further weakened the concept of Ummah because now the governments of Muslim world took decisions on the criteria of my nation right or erroneous. For them the important is to go for their national interests rather than to think of collective interests of the community, religious brotherhood and Islamic solidarity. On the surface it seems as if the Ummah has lost its existence. Nevertheless, on many occasions the world saw the inner unity among the members of Ummah.

The post second world war period witnessed the come back of the believers of Islam: Muslim countries after the colonial rule acquired their independence, became the nucleus of energy resources, produced renowned leaders, scholars and scientists, fought wars with major powers of the time, not only served the interests of super powers but also challenged the hegemony of the main powers and showed their strength and unity spiritually and materially<sup>4</sup>. Out of all these the most important events of the Muslim world were:

- The creation of state of Israel in late 40s is considered as the dividing line between west and the Muslim world, between believers and non believers. The state of Israel in the heart of Middle East symbolically keeps the spirit of Ummah alive which

is strengthened by the discriminating policies of the west and the wars which major countries of Ummah fought with Israel and the on going struggle of the Palestinians for their rights.

- The Iranian revolution, known as Islamic Revolution, of 1979 not only challenged the supremacy of super power USA but also established Islamic Sharia, in Iran. The west, for the first time, observed the successful coming of religion in politics. This was conceived as a threat for the interests of the west and western countries were apprehensive about the spill over impact of the revolution not only among the Muslim world but also for the countries where Muslims are in minority. Also this showed the sign of life to some what dead image of Ummah- that Muslim countries still have the desire to go for Islamic laws and system.
- Afghan Jihad against USSR in 80s is another significant episode which again challenged the superiority of another super power and also showed the existence of internal unity and brotherhood among the failing Ummah - the people are ready to fight and die for the sake of religion and religious brotherhood? Muslims from all over the world participated in Afghan Jihad, thus availed the opportunity to establish the broken contacts among the members of their own community. The Muslims through out the world showed their sympathies and solidarity with the people of Afghanistan. Consequently Afghan Jihad practically revived the concept of Muslim brotherhood. The proceeding years showed that now no one can stop the revival of Ummah and also what so ever happened in this world it directly and indirectly affect the believers of Islam and Islam respectively.
- The end of the cold war once again highlighted the idea of Ummah. The independence of Central Asian states, rich in energy resources and Muslim majority areas, once again gave a boost to the phenomenon of Islamic block which is somewhat equated with the idea of Muslim community.
- The event of 9/11 also affected the religion of Islam and its believers immensely. This event stamped Islam as the evil and the iniquitous religion of the world. So much negative has been said about the religion<sup>5</sup>. The Muslims are portrayed as extremists, unethical, ready to die and kill. They considered west as their enemy and are prepared to launch Jihad, holy war, against them. Thus Islam became the catching phrase in media. Debates started over the TV channels regarding Islam, its nature, policies, preachings, Holy Quran and its believers, while the people, through out the world, started reading about Islam. This opened

the new horizon to understand Islam. Lots of research started in this regard along with new courses on Islam being offered in the western universities. Youth, in west and east, are trying to comprehend this religion. In this scenario new terms are being associated with Islam, out of all these, fundamentalists or fundamentalism gained currency.

### **Islamic Fundamentalism?**

The question arises: is it apposite to term Islam as fundamentalism and Muslims as fundamentalists? This is a term devised by the west themselves (historical aspects of fundamentalism is out of scope of this research). Scholars have the consensus that revivalism is the suitable term for the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism.<sup>6</sup> Malise Ruthven in *Fundamentalism: The Search for Meaning*, is confident that the fundamentalism can be found among the believers of Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, Hinduism and Buddhists. It would be unfortunate if the term is attached to some specific religion or region only.<sup>7</sup> while the Bobby S. Sayyid in a *Fundamental Fear*, approached this phenomenon in following words, “fundamentalism is not specific to Muslims; they are just one example of same thing that is a general feature of our contemporary world.”<sup>8</sup> Somehow after 9/11 the extremism and terrorists is associated with Islam and Muslims respectively. The same phenomenon taking pace among other religions have been either ignored or not given due consideration by the scholars.

Before proceeding it must be kept in mind that presently Muslims are member of two different and some what contradictory worlds. Contemporary international system based on the criteria of nation state and Ummah whose membership is based on religion. Both are at odds with each other. When Ummah was colonized and divided on the criteria of nation states, many new and some what alien ideologies, concepts and systems made their way into in the Ummah. However all these, due to one reason or another, were discarded by the majority of the believers. Thus are presently turning towards their own religion. For them Islam is a complete code of life which cannot be replaced by any other ideology or system. Currently Muslims became more aware of their Islamic identity.<sup>9</sup> The affirmation of the Muslims of their own identity and growing interest in their religion is explained by the John O. Voll<sup>10</sup> as “reaffirmation by Muslims of their faith”. Whatever explanation may be given for the Islamic revivalism, broadly speaking it manifests itself at two levels, social and political:

- i). At the first level the believers in this age of reasoning and science became more religious and this concept is based on

“an all embracing system of life – a faith as well as an ideology and Programme of life”.<sup>11</sup> It’s the belief of every Muslim that Islam is a complete code of life. This is the conviction of even those Muslims who are living in the west and getting education in the secular institutions and systems. The believers living in any part of this globe does try to implement their religious values, even most modern, westernized and educated individuals do believe in some religious norms and values. One can cite lots of examples from the Ummah. And one such example can be the growing use of *parda* among the Muslim women through out the world. I witnessed the growing use of, if not proper veil, headscarf by the young Pakistani girls. This is their religion Islamic norm along with believe that *parda* is for the safety and security of the women. Also Muslim youth, women and men of all ages are inclined towards the religion.

- ii). At the second level, politics in the Muslim world also revolves around religion. Even the most secular, western educated leaders used Islam for their political purposes. In Pakistan leaders like General Ayub, Z.A Bhutto, General Zia Ul haq, Benazir Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif, General Musharaf, bring into play the religion to enhance their popularity, legitimacy and power. None of the leaders can dare to say something against their religion or make laws that are against Islam. Many of them employed the slogans as *Khadame islam* (servant of Islam), or *farzande Islam* (son of Islam) to get the support of the general public. This also indirectly helps in the popularity of the religion. One can witness the resurgence of Islam in Pakistan after a General Zia’s *Nifaz-i-Nizam-i-Islam* of late 70s.<sup>12</sup> General Zia in order to gain the legitimacy for his unconstitutional rule utilizes Islam as a final resort and declared the establishment of system based on Islam. He employed religion at every occasion to get the support of the general public of Pakistan. Although it’s the desire of every Pakistani to enforce Islamic laws or Shariat but this desire took a concrete movement and force after the Zia’s Islamization Programme. Same kind of situation existed in the entire Muslim world. Where any rulers find problems related to their legitimacy and popularity they find the final resort in religion.

Thus the Muslim countries are caught in the dilemma of dual identity and are confused as to which identity to be

followed and given preference. International community demands the modern self interest and pragmatic approach while the Ummah force them to follow the opposite itinerary.

One can understand the present situation of the religion by comprehending the past and this will throw the light on the future predictions of Islam.

### **Islamic History: Past, Present and Future<sup>13</sup>**

The different phases of Islam can be categorized as past, present and future.<sup>14</sup>

#### *Past*

The Islam as religion shines on the horizon of Saudi Arabia in 7<sup>th</sup> century by the Holy Prophet Hazrat Mohammad (SAW) and instantaneously enlightened the whole world. Its universal message – “fight against injustices and any kind of deprivation, oppression and idolatry”<sup>15</sup> helps it to spread throughout the universe. With the passage of time Muslims became the master of almost every corner of the earth, ruling from Asia to Africa and latter also enlightened the continent of Europe. This religion produced greatest empires and civilizations that spread throughout the world. As a result Muslims spread their religion to every corner of the world and Ummah came in contacts with the rest of the world’s culture, ideologies and systems. New concepts, ideas, thoughts, entered Islam. Thus the religion which was practiced by the Holy Prophet (SAW) and his successors could not maintain its purity and dynamism. Unfortunately the glory and prominence of Islam was diminished. The masters became the slaves and decline and devastation became the fate of Muslims.<sup>16</sup> At this stage of history of Islam, few believers realized the condition of the Muslims and came forward to save their religion and to eliminate the unIslamic practices that entered the religion. Thus an attempt had been made by the Wahhabis’ to purify the Islam and follow the same Islam which was practiced at Madina and Mecca by the Holy Prophet (SAW) and his followers.<sup>17</sup>

Wahhabism as a movement was started by Shaikh Mohammad Ibn Abdal Wahhab in 18<sup>th</sup> century, tried to “*clear religious practices and thoughts from all its alien elements to save the Muslim people from diving wrath.*”<sup>18</sup> The movement emphasizes the oneness of God, criticized religious festivals and innovations of modernization, it call for implementation of shariat.<sup>19</sup> The impact of wahhabism is felt throughout the Muslim world,<sup>20</sup> All those movements which started in the different parts of Ummah showed the general characteristic: Muslims left the pure

Islam, superstitions and erroneous belief polluted the religion, thus it's necessary to go back to original Islam and for this jihad is obligatory.<sup>21</sup> All those movements which were started due to *Wahhabism* were unable to sustain the pressure of time.<sup>22</sup> They lost their dynamism in front of new realities of life. That was the time when European powers were passing through the period of renaissance, of 14<sup>th</sup> century, and were replacing the Ummah.

By 16<sup>th</sup> century European powers surpassed the Muslims and Ummah was colonized by the European emerging powers and the colonial masters provided modernization, new isms, system, theories and concepts to their subjects. Muslims were impressed and overwhelmed by the scientific knowledge and development of the new masters. In this context once again the understanding emerged that under the pressure of westernization and modernization the survival of Islam became eminent. Here a new class emerged to whom Yousef M. Choueiri, called Islamic reformists and Islamic modernists,<sup>23</sup> these people tried to

*“...reinterpret Islam in the light of new questions and issues brought by modern life. Maintaining that Islam and modernity, revelation and reason, were compatible, they advocated religious, legal, educational and social reforms to revitalize the Muslim community.”*<sup>24</sup>

Such situation resulted in the appearance of three eccentric groups among the members of Ummah, Secularist,(to replicate the west),Traditionalist,(austere to their own ideology), and Islamic Reformers, (believe in western innovation).<sup>25</sup> However out of all the three groups the last group influenced the Ummah.. Leaders like Jamal-ud- Din Afghani, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Allama Iqbal, Mohammad Abdhu, laid the foundation for new thinking and era. For them now imperative subjects were scientific and modern education, system of government, democratic reforms, and political parties, rule of law, foreign relations, and rights of citizens.<sup>26</sup> If critically analyzed, almost all the Reformist movements exhibited the following common characteristics: To go for modernization, political reforms, patriotism, democracy, status of women in the society, renaissance in the area of education in general and Islamic education in particular.<sup>27</sup>

Once the period of decolonization, after the end of First World War, started, Ummah was divided on the criteria of nation states. The reformists, who actively participated in the decolonization process, started demanding reforms from their respective governments.<sup>28</sup> Thus under pressure the newly emerged states introduced new concepts like democracy, market economy, parliament, modern and scientific

education, women rights, human rights and rule of law.<sup>29</sup> Implementation of such modern concepts helps the Ummah to become the responsible member of the international community. With the passage of time following important trends emerged in the Muslim world:

- Firstly, the believers of Islam became the member of this international community. They became familiar with the modern emerging trends in politics, economy, security and the working of the international system. They started getting the modern education and for better life opportunities migrated to the advanced countries of the world. This helps them to come in contact with the west and secure respectable positions in the respective countries and became the important member of the western society. Some of them also went to these countries to get modern advanced education. When they returned they brought with them the new western and modernized ideas along with realization about the condition of their co-religious in their respective countries.
- Secondly, however, on the other side the governments in the Muslim world were unable to solve or properly address the domestic problems of their people and as a result the unsatisfied groups condemned the modernists for emulating the west.<sup>30</sup> Thus these individuals wanted to set the house in order.
- Thirdly, after independence the Ummah was unable to resolve the major issues like Palestine, Kashmir, Creation of the state of Israel, imperialistic and discriminating policies of the major powers pertaining to Muslims' problems. The appalling conditions of the people living in these territories mourned by entire Ummah. With the passage of time, it took a shape of force and soon engulfed the Ummah. For them reformists has westernized the Muslim societies and threatened the Islamic identity and are unable to provide any solution to the problems faced by the Muslims. In the name of modernity un Islamic practices started taking roots among the Muslims. The only solution laid in the Islamic system and to implement the system Jihad is obligatory.<sup>31</sup> Thus the beginning of radicalism and extremism started taking place among the Muslim societies.<sup>32</sup>

### *Present*

If we try to search for the kernel of radicalism among the Muslim society, two facts require especial attention.

First, the process of decolonization not only provided independence to the Muslim world on the internationally accepted



criteria of nation state but also subside the concept of Ummah. The Muslim world, colonized by the western powers, considered the west as the main reason for their problems- religious, social, economic and political. They fought for their independence with the conviction that after independence they will be able to solve their problems and predicaments. However the post independence scenario gave rise to many internal and external issues. Internally majority of the Muslim countries are unable to provide the solutions to the said problems, thus further the frustration, dissatisfaction and annoyance among their citizens. Externally, ethnic, territorial, security and political disputes raised their head among the Muslim countries, which for the time being faded the concept of Ummah among the believers.

Secondly, the originator of new nations in order to find a respectable place and position among the international community adopted modernity for the traditional and some what conservative societies. Modern education, defense, infrastructure even ideologies were provided to the people. Some of the Muslim countries achieved splendid results, but majority of them couldn't control the growing contradictions between modernity and traditionalism. The idea that the ruling elite are trying to undermine the Islamic identity of their states and prefer the westernization and secularization over Islam started taking roots. Also the promised achievements and developments on the name of modernization were hard to achieve. With the passage of time the believers started feeling dissatisfied and slowly and gradually started demanding the change in the existing system which they labeled as alien, extraterrestrial and un-Islamic<sup>33</sup>.

Under such circumstances the individuals with radical ideology declared jihad as the only mean to bring such change. To spread the ideas and to get the support of the masses, the organizational structure was also provided. Two such organizations are worth to mention: In 1928 Muslim Brotherhood was founded in Egypt by Hasan Al Bana a school teacher<sup>34</sup> and Jamaat-i-Islami founded in 1941 by Maulana Maududi in Lahore<sup>35</sup> were such organizations. Both organizations professed to implement Shariat in their respective countries and among other countries of the Muslim world. The west is being criticized and jihad against the pro western regimes among the Ummah is mandatory. They rejected the influence of west in any field.<sup>36</sup>

The seed of radicalism thus has been sown and nurtured by different organizations, with radical ideology and strategy, that are formed in the Muslim countries: Jamaat al-Jihad, salvation from Hell (Egypt), AMAL, Hizbullah (Lebanon), Islamic Tendency Movement, Renaissance party (Tunisia), Muhahidin-i-Khalq (Iran), Islamic Salvation

front (Algeria), Taliban, Jamat-i-Islami (Pakistan), are few examples to cite. The analysis of Islamic radicalism exhibited the following common characteristics: existing systems in Ummah are not Islamic, Muslim rulers are under the control of west and are serving the interests of US, Shariat must be implemented in the Ummah, for any change Jihad is obligatory and criticized the dismal position of Muslims towards major issues faced by ummah.<sup>37</sup>

Yousef M. Choueiri, has mentioned the following countries as the breeding ground for radicalism:

- Egypt, Syria and Iraq.
- Algeria, Tunisia and Libya.
- Indonesia, Pakistan and Bangladesh.
- Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco, the Sultanate of Brunei, the UAE, Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain.
- Malaysia, Afghanistan, Palestine, Lebanon, the Sudan and Nigeria.<sup>38</sup>

With such categorization it seems that the Ummah is being driven towards extremism. The reasons for such analysis can be external and internal. Let me take the second reason first. Internally all the Muslim countries exhibit one or other following problems: poverty, illiteracy, corruption, political instability, injustice, economic crisis, anti American and anti west feelings, human right violations, and discrimination. These are the breeding grounds for the radicals and extremists, who lost their faith in the existing systems. On the external front Muslim world has to face the territorial and ethnic disputes with their neighbors, distorted image of their countries and religion, anti Islam policies of the west, dependency on the west for every kind of assistance and support, control of foreigners on the energy resources of the Ummah, discriminating policies of the major powers of the world for the Muslims and Global war on terror. Under such circumstances frustration and extremism became the characteristic of the Muslims. Muslims finding no solutions of their problems, along with the discriminating policies and attitude of the west, force the Muslims to join the ranks of radicals.

#### *Future*

It seems as if the radicals or fundamentalists are going to over power the Muslim world. Different terrorists' organization started functioning and all the arrested terrorists are Muslims. After 9/11, the debate started about the future of Islam. The scholars and analysts are of the view that Fundamentalist, radicals or extremists will rule the Ummah, for this they cited the examples of many organizations with fundamentalist's ideology

and large following currently operating in the Muslim world. The media, electronic and print, is full of successful stories of extremists. This is one side of the picture. However, what have been missed by the analysts are the following points:

Firstly, attention is drawn to the fact that presently for a monolithic religion, Islam, different terms are used by the scholars like western Islam, American Islam or Asia Europe Islam. However, it's a fact that there is only one Islam.<sup>39</sup> Muslims make only distinction on the basis of sects and the division of Ummah is only for the identification and recognition among the believers, as mentioned in the holy Quran.<sup>40</sup> In all these the basic tenants of Islam are the same. In addition where ever the Muslim exists, they do believe in the concept of religious brotherhood thus depicting the inner unity and cohesion among the Muslims. It's the fact that geographical boundaries did segregate the Ummah, but among them beside geographical, ethnic, social, historical division do exist the spiritual unity and, that is, what Islam is about. Either one is in the continent of Africa, Europe or Asia, once the individual recite the Kalama and became Muslim he also became the member of Ummah<sup>41</sup> – thus he like all the Muslims, with in their particular geographical and socio-cultural setup, has to perform all the rituals of Islam. Beside this, every Muslim prefer his social responsibilities over his personal, thus even at the micro level tries to keep alive the concept of Ummah. Consequently the Muslim community understands and realizes the advantages of unity and harmony.

This sense of unity is further enhanced by the collective memory<sup>42</sup> of colonial masters on one side and on the other hand presently the discriminating policies of the west further advanced the sense of togetherness. In order to achieve the pride of sovereign state, almost every Muslim country fought the liberation wars. During the decolonization process Muslims laid their lives for, liberation, honor and sovereignty and faced the atrocities and mayhem of their foreign masters. After independence, although the Muslim world achieved the status of sovereign states, but became the target of neo colonialism by the west and super powers respectively. Muslims had to tolerate the creation of state of Israel on the Arab soil, subjugation of Palestinian land, atrocities against Palestinians, control over the energy resources of Middle East and now the new planning to control the resources of Caucasus, Caspian Sea region and Africa and discriminating policies for Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Chechnya and Pakistan. Apathy towards Muslim problems furthers the desire among the Muslims to formulate a mechanism which can reduce their dependency on west and major powers of the world. Presently OIC, do represent the Ummah but

because of internal and external problems, pro western policies of the members of Ummah, lack of unity among Ummah, this organization is unable to truly represent the block of the Muslim countries.

Further, Muslims do believe that Islam and Peace are interrelated and consistent. For them Islam does not preach aggression, bloodshed or terror. Thus who so ever teaches terror in Islam they discarded them as *kafir* – non believer. In 2009, all the religious scholars in Pakistan collectively denied the role of violence in Islam and considered the terrorists as non Muslim. They gave the fatwa that Islam does not believe in suicide attacks. This decision is hailed by almost all the citizens of Pakistan because every Muslim is a normal human being with respect for law, believe in democracy, human rights, and know their rights and duties. They wanted serenity, economic development and progress not only for themselves but also for the entire universe. Like every normal peace loving human being they dream of prosperous future for themselves and for their next generation.

Mark Steyn, in his article “Future belongs to Islam”, discussed three major reasons for this, demographic decline; the un-sustainability of the social democratic state; and civilizational exhaustion.<sup>43</sup> Taking the first point it is worth to mention the demography of world religions as under:

- Christianity: 2.1 billion
- Islam: 1.6 billion
- Secular/Nonreligious/Agnostic/Atheist: 1.1 billion
- Hinduism: 900 million
- Chinese traditional religion: 394 million
- Buddhism: 376 million
- Primal-indigenous: 300 million,
- African Traditional & Diasporic: 100 million
- Sikhism: 23 million
- Spiritism: 15 million
- Judaism: 14 million<sup>44</sup>

And for the year 2020, world Muslim population by geographical regions are as under:

- Total: 1790 millions
- Asia: 57%,
- Africa: 29%,
- Europe: 12%, and
- America: 2%<sup>45</sup>

Out of all these religions Muslims have the highest rate of fertility. This rate of fertility not only increases the numbers of Muslims but also helps them to participate in world affairs. Muslim world with high population, dissatisfied with the internal situation of Ummah along with desire to get education from the western institutions and live better life will make Europe/USA as their destiny. Thus they play their decisive role in the socio political and economic set up of the said continents.<sup>46</sup> The example can be the election of Saeeda Warsi, a Muslim, as a chairperson of conservative political party of UK 2010 and also she became the first Muslim minister in the cabinet of the new government in UK. Also Amir Khan, a Muslim, is the renowned boxer of UK. While “by 2050, 60% of Italian will have no brother, sister or any other family relations”.<sup>47</sup> This shows that the need of the western world will be filled by the immigrants from the non western countries and definitely Muslims will play their role.

Presently Muslims as minorities are living in almost all countries of the world. This is beneficial in a sense that the spirit of coexistence developed between the westerners and Muslims and removes any kind of mistrust.<sup>48</sup> This also helps the non Muslim people to understand and comprehend Islam and discard any kind of negative propaganda against the Muslims. Also this moves the world towards the dialogue rather than to the clash, as Islam and so do the Muslims believe in unity in diversity.

Taking another point is that Muslims do have the futuristic goals and vision.<sup>49</sup> They have the concept of coreligionist and practically exemplified by the Holy Prophet (SAAW). This gave a vision to the Muslim youth that how they can inculcate and save the spirit of brotherhood for the entire world. This is not just confined to the Muslims of particular region with Muslim majority population rather this is also applicable to those Muslims who are living as minorities.

*Islam is more than a religion. It is first and foremost a vision, a societal project and a system of socio-cultural values. A system which defends the principle of cultural diversity. This is one of the reasons of its success and rapid spread because it did not impose a homogeneous cultural system.*<sup>50</sup>

He further said:

*“You can bombard and bulldoze towns and buildings but you can never do the same to values which are the most resistant components in the socio-cultural components of all societies”.*<sup>51</sup>

The un-sustainability of American system is well argued by Lawrence Jacobs and Desmond King in the book, *The Unsustainable American State*, “It focuses in particular on the state-produced inequalities and administrative incoherence that became so apparent in the post-1970s era”<sup>52</sup>. Even the unsustainable systems of the European states are being discussed in detail by different scholars. Taking one dimension, economy it is being argued that:

In many countries, working people have suffered an absolute decline in living standards. In the United States, the real weekly earnings of production and non-supervisory workers (in 1992 dollars) fell from \$315 in 1973 to \$264 in 1989. After a decade of economic expansion, it reached \$271 in 1999, which remained lower than the average real wage in 1962. In Latin America, a continent that has suffered from neo-liberal restructuring since the 1970s, about 200 million people, or 46 percent of the population, live in poverty. Between 1980 and the early 1990s (1991–1994), real wages fell by 14 percent in Argentina, 21 percent in Uruguay, 53 percent in Venezuela, 68 percent in Ecuador, and 73 percent in Bolivia.<sup>53</sup>

As far as the Muslim world is concerned, they do have the comprehensive economic system based on concept of personal requirement and luxuries, charity, with no interest rate and no place for corruption and misuse of public revenue rather promoting the concept of social harmony.<sup>54</sup> It is basically based on the philosophy of social welfare.

Muslims living in Europe can profess their religious principles at the same time they can perform the civil life of the western societies. Muslims in the west wanted to bring up their children according to their own religion. The youth is western in look but still they are Muslims, they do have the concept of Ummah and this is strengthening by the discriminating policies and attitude of the indigenous. The old generation still in nostalgic feeling remember their own culture and values while the new generation has the sense of alienation and deprivation. After 9/11 this sense of alienation has been further deepened where the Muslims are labeled as terrorists and Islam as terrorist religion. This youth became effervescent. Youth is turning towards the religion, especially the educated one, but here it must be kept in mind that these people are not extremists. They are educated; most of them get education from the west, modern religious people, who just wanted to live in a peaceful manner and make this world more comfortable for the humanity.<sup>55</sup>

It is not possible for the fundamentalists to implement their ideology in the modern world. The prototype is that of Taliban government in Afghanistan. Taliban tried to rule Afghanistan on the

principles of strict observance of sharia and Islamic laws. The fate of Taliban revealed the results. It's not possible to run the modern day nation states in a conservative manner. Even these people do not have a coherent well articulated economic and foreign policies; they are unable to understand the ground realities of the modern political system. Also they oversight the complexities, obligations and responsibilities involved for being the members of this global system. Modern day nation state organization is an intricate and is the part of international scheme, which is based on some basic principles. No one can run the system according to their own rules and principles and also the system cannot be changed by force. Thus such type of ideology and people, who can cause any threat to the existing setup, will not be welcomed by the international community.

This leads to the next point, that majority of the people of the Ummah are not with the fundamentalists. They are liberal and moderate and go for democratic system of government in their countries. The example can be of Pakistan where although the religious political parties did contest every election but they never had the enough following which could give them ultimate victory. Even in the most religious and conservative societies like north of Pakistan, they lacked the popular support. Every Muslim country tries to project it self as a liberal and modern state and their foreign policies are west oriented, trying to catch up with the west in every field. Although, every Muslim country do have the distinct culture, values and norms which they highly valued and does not want to westernize it, but nevertheless, people did accept the western modernity and comforts. Thus extremists' elements might on few occasions and under some particular circumstances seem to be successful, because some unsatisfied group of people joined them, but in the long run they will not rule the earth. However for this the strong commitment is required at national and international level.

### **Conclusion**

Few observations, from above discussion, need to be highlighted. First, the current phenomenon of radicalism is the chain of revival movements of Islam, which took different insignia as revival, reform and radicalism.<sup>56</sup> This radicalism will not last for a long time and will be replaced by the moderate-liberal Islam. As all the Muslims believe in the peace message of Islam and also the youth of Muslim world is more educated, scientific research oriented, believing in reasoning with futuristic vision to work for the development of this universe as Islam reckons in the unity in diversity. Also Muslims living in all the continents of earth do enjoy the comforts and blessings of modernity and

scientific developments; they admire the development and achievements of the west. Thus majority of them discarded the extremist ideology of the radicals.

However, the poverty, human rights violations, illiteracy, discrimination, and weak roots of democratic values, in the Muslim countries did help extremists to popularize their cause among those who are deprived and feel some what unfortunate. Such support can be reduced by the Muslim governments by adopting such policies which encourage the participation of people in political system, equality, rule of law and protection from abuses and denial of justice.

On the other side, the west also has to positively contribute in shaping the future of Islam. The west has to adopt policies which are more pragmatic and non-discriminating and can reduce the friction with the Ummah on just one issue and that is to stand for the rights of Palestinians. With this, one can say with confidence that if not all half of the anti west sentiments among the Muslim world can wipe out. Also the western media has to stop its propaganda against Islam as terrorist religion. First they have to understand this religion particularly the concept of Jihad. In Islam jihad means to struggle for something. Even if some one is struggling to earn his lively hood is doing a jihad. Rather than equating this term with war or terror. Also, west being secular is unable to understand the values of spirituality and religious attachment. They have to give space to other religions and cultures and instead of labeling them as extremists try to understand the root causes of such phenomenon.

Thus, the future of Islam is dependent on a balanced approach by the Ummah and the west. How the Muslim governments deal with the extremism and how they solve the basic problems of their people directly affect the Islamic future discourse. For west, pro Islamic policies and dialogue with civilizations can help them to make this universe a place for every one.



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