

Q) What are the motives of extremism in Pakistan? How can society get rid of extremism by following the teachings of Islam?

Introduction

Islam is a religion of peace, it opposes extremism of any kind. It is said by the Holy prophet that "O people! Save yourself from excess in religion because earlier communities were destroyed due to excess in religion" (Ibn Majah). It is said that there were communities before that were too conservative and were deeply involved in excess of religion that they were destroyed. Islam is a religion of moderation, it also asks us to live our worldly life as well. Similarly, as anything in excess quantity is bad for one's health, excess in religion is also bad for one's overall well-being.

Motives of extremism in Pakistan

Extremism exists in Pakistani society and in some places it is too strongly engraved in the minds of people that, it gets difficult to curtail it. Motives of extremism in Pakistan are:

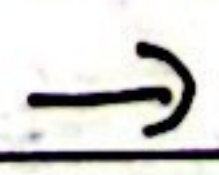
① Divert people from the true teachings of Islam

There are many secular and non secular groups that exist in our society to divert

Muslims from the original teachings of Islam. They do this to create a strong divide within Muslims so they can achieve their hidden agendas. Similarly, in order to break something powerful, you need to create a divide in them and this is what they are doing, trying to break us by creating a rift between us. However, this is not an easy task as Muslims are strongly united because of their religion.

② Create unrest in society

Our Muslim community is very strong, but because of the influence of western culture in our society, many Muslims have started to deviate from the true teachings of Islam. There are Muslims who are modern and there are Muslims who thoroughly follow Islam and they believe in the extremist tendencies of our religion. The leaders, who are funded by international agencies identify this gap and spark a fire in between them. Once a fire has been sparked, it leads to violence and creates unrest in our society. This is one of the motives of extremism in Pakistan. However, if we "Adopt the path of moderation (and) you will reach your destination" (Al-Bukhari) we will never indulge in any kind of violence and our society would be a peaceful society.



③ Damage the reputation of Pakistan

In addition to the above, another motive of extremism in Pakistan is to damage the reputation of Pakistan. The reason for doing so that Pakistan would be labelled as an extremist state and there would be no foreign direct investment in Pakistan, no international tourists would visit Pakistan. It will face continuous instability and this instability would help the non-state actors to fulfill their motives in Pakistan. Once a damage is done to a reputation of a country it takes a lot of effort to win the trust back of the international community. Therefore, this is why they want to damage the reputation of Pakistan.

④ Violent extremist Islamist organizations want to promote their agenda

Since the withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan, the violent extremist organizations have gained strength in promoting their agenda. Many violent extremist organizations such as the TTP and the newly formed TDP want to promote their extremist agenda in Pakistan and eventually settle here. Their agenda is against the western influence and they want to enforce strict sharia law in Pakistan and their confidence has increased since the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban. Hence, this is what is their motive to spread extremism in Pakistan.

How can society get rid of extremism by following the teachings of Islam

① By following the true spirit of Islam

If any muslims follows the true spirit of Islam, he/she can never indulge in any kind of extremism. The reason is that our religion is based on moderation and it believes in the worldly life as well. Abu Huraira reported that the Holy prophet (P.b.u.h) said "Verily, the religion is easy and no one burdens himself in religion but that it overwhelms him". It can be seen that Islam is an easy religion and it is us who have made it difficult for us and the rest of people. Therefore, it is necessary to follow the true spirit of Islam.

② Avoiding extremist scholars of Islam

In order to get rid of extremism in Islam, it is necessary to avoid those scholars who preach extremism and not just avoid them but also teach and expound them with the true teachings of Islam. The extremist scholars want to spread their personal agenda to other people but one should avoid them and remember the true teachings of Quran and the teachings of the Holy prophet (P.b.u.h). It is said by the Holy prophet that "Downtfall is certain for every form of extremism" (Musnad Ahmed). Therefore avoiding the teachings of extremist scholars can help get rid of extremism.

③ Taking real life examples from the teachings of the Holy prophet (P.b.u.h)

Teaching of our Holy prophet (P.b.u.h) is the second source of law of Islam after the Holy Quran. Following real life examples of the Holy prophet (P.b.u.h) can rid extremism. When the time Holy prophet (P.b.u.h) moved to Madinah he lived there with all kinds of non muslims and all of them lived peacefully in Madinah and they even altogether protected Madinah in the Battle of Trench. As it is mentioned in the Holy Quran that "There is no compulsion in religion (2:256) hence if there was extremism in Islam, Holy prophet would have forced everyone to accept his narrative, but he never did so as Islam is a religion of peace and there is no extremism in Islam.

④ Learning Quran and its translation by heart

The Holy Quran is the primary source of law. Anyone who reads it thoroughly can never be a part of any kind of extremism. Quran contains everything from how to live a daily life too the life of hereafter. The more you learn about Quran, the more better you learn how to differentiate between right and wrong. As it is said in the Holy Quran that "and we have revealed the book to you explaining clearly everything (16:89). Therefore, it can be seen that the

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Holy Quran contains everything and once you deviate from it you can fall into all kinds of extremism

Conclusion

There are many motives of extremism in Pakistan such as to divert people from the true teachings of Islam, create unrest in society, damage the reputation of Pakistan and the urge of violent extremist organizations to promote their agenda. All of these motives of spreading extremism can be destroyed by following the teachings of Islam. If Muslims follow the true spirit of Islam, avoid extremist scholars, implementing real life examples of the Holy prophet (P.b.u.h) in their daily lives and learning the Quran by heart can help minimizing the extremism that exists in Pakistan as it is said by our Holy prophet (P.b.u.h) "My followers will never agree upon an error" (Bukhari).