

⇒ CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES TO MUSLIM UMMAH AND THEIR SOLUTIONS ACCORDING TO TEACHINGS OF ISLAM

Ans: The first ummah came refers to the global community of Muslims bound together by fate. The ummah came first came into being at the time of Charter of Madinah. As the constitution of Madinah was drawn up it bound together the muslims of Madi Makkah and Madinah, and the jews as one community under a formal structure of governance. This community was found on the basis of unity, religious tolerance, brotherhood and spiritual cooperation. However, the ummah of today is faces many threats and challenges such as disunity, extremism and terrorism. The ummah has strayed from the teachings and solutions taught by Islam and has given into disintegration. This answer looks into the contemporary challenges faced by the Muslim ummah and what solutions can be found by in the teachings of Qur' Islam.

⇒ DISUNITY:

There is structural disunity among the muslims of today. Not only is there sectarian (Shia/Sunni) disharmony, there is a lack of support for between muslim countries. Currently, the most serious issue is that of Palestine. Although, it is constantly being attacked by Israel the

muslim world has failed to take a united step in order to help and stand against the apartheid state of Israel. Similarly, Yemen starves and there is a lack of international attention from the muslim world. The tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia because of Shia / Sunni differences also persists. The muslim world is divided and ignorant of the suffering of its brother countries.

This goes against the teachings of Islam and the spirit of unity and solidarity it encourages. The Quran says, "Obey Allah and his Messenger and do not quarrel among yourselves lest you lose your heart and your momentum disappear" (8:46). Establishing unity and alliance within the Islamic world is in accordance with Islamic teachings. The muslim ummah should disallow any conflict among schools, sects or races and meet on common ground. Such unity would put a stop to civil wars and the seemingly unceasing turmoil. The muslim should be envisaged as one body by each and everyone and the Prophet (PBUH) hadith should be kept in mind, "The Muslim Ummah is like one body. If the eye is in pain and if the head is in pain, then the whole body is in pain".



## ⇒ Extremism

There are two dimensions to the idea of extremism in regards to the challenges faced by the muslim ummah. Firstly, there is an severe rise in religious intolerance and secondly, there is a growing belief among muslims that their version school or sect is superior to that of the other. Both of these severely weaken the bonds between the Ummah. To address the issue of religious intolerance first. just recently, a Christian man was beamed to death by a mob of muslims. Not only is this a horrible example of street justice, it also goes against the teachings of Islam. The Prophet (PBUH) always preached tolerance through his Sunnah. Once when a funeral of a jew was passing by, he stood up. when reminded by his companions that it was a funeral procession of a jew, the Prophet (PBUH) replied, "Was he not a human being?" From this, we can infer that before viewing another as anything else, one should see him as a human being first and adhere to the basic rights of humanity.

The other issue of extremist thought is believing that one's school or sect is superior to the other and to have prejudice. Not only is this belief harmful but people have used violence to assert their superiority, ~~see~~ Shia-Sunni violence especially an example of this. Sectarian militancy against Shias extends throughout ~~not just~~ Pakistan, but Pakistan. It is



important to remember Islam's emphasis on unity once again. It's also important to keep the Prophet's teachings in mind, as he said in the farewell sermon, "An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a White has no superiority over a Black nor a Black has any superiority over a White except by piety and good action". A lot can be learned from this statement. The Prophet (PBUH) preached equality, and we can take this to extend ~~to~~ to different sects and schools and not just limited to races. Furthermore, the ~~only way~~ the statement encourages one to practice good action and deeds instead of exercising prejudice and violence over those whose beliefs differ from one's own.

⇒ Blasphemy :

Connected to the idea of extremism is the issue of blasphemy laws that have perceived blasphemy and how that has led to public lynchings. Recently, an angry mob of Muslim men almost lynched a woman after misinterpreting the Arabic calligraphy on her dress for Quranic verse. Not only does this ~~is~~ the action of these men imply their perceived superiority over the woman but also that someone has given them the right to exercise so-called justice when that is not the case. ~~By~~ Islam has strong system of justice ~~where~~ which is there to

addresses any issues of blasphemy should they occur. According to Hadith, blasphemy is indeed punishable by death but it is the right of the state or government to execute this punishment. As The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said, "And whoever among you fulfills his pledge, his reward is with Allah; and whoever commits something of such sins and receives legal punishment for it, that will be considered as expiation of the sins —". The emphasis should be on the use of 'legal' here which falls under the authority of the justice system and. So, public burnings over perceived blasphemy only add to the extremist view of the muslim ummah which is spreading in the world and portraying Islam in a negative light. It is important to understand Islam and its teachings in its entirety. The ummah needs to re-return to the teachings of Islam, hadith, sunnah and Quran.

### ⇒ Terrorism:

the emergence of terrorist organizations such as ISIS and al-Qaeda have propagated a negative image of Islam and collective muslim ummah in the world. In some situations, the existence of these terrorist organizations have spelled death and danger for Muslims who have been killed in retaliatory attacks by non-muslims afraid of these terrorist groups and who think every muslim practices the



same radical ideology. It is difficult to challenge to deal with and the best the Ummah can do is spread the true meaning of Islam and detach themselves as much as they can from these extremist philosophies. One of the meanings of the word 'Islam' is peace and this has been emphasized repeatedly in both Quran and Hadith. So the Quran says, "O you who believe! Enter absolutely into peace (Islam)" (2: 208). In every practice of Islam, from that of sacrificing a goat to conduct in war, every aspect preaches peace. It is important for the Ummah to spread this message clearly on global forums so enemy powers and countries can no longer justify their violence against what they term 'radical Islamic fundamentalism'.

### CONCLUSION:

From the issues highlighted in this answer, it is apparent that the muslim Ummah of today has lost all the qualities that were characteristic of the first Ummah. There is now disharmony, religious intolerance, a lack of acceptance of differences of religion or sect and rising extremism. To overcome these issues, it is important to return to the teachings of Islam, to understand, relearn and accept practice what's taught in the Quran and Sunnah. This is for each individual as only a collective reform would bring change in the challenges faced by the Ummah.