

ISLAMIC STUDIES

Assignment # 2

TOPIC:

Contemporary Challenges of Muslim Ummah and their Solutions according to the teachings of Islam

Answer:

Introduction: The Muslim Ummah today is facing numerous challenges that have caused a serious damage to their overall development. These challenges include disunity among Muslims, political instability and bad governance, socio-economic underdevelopment, extremism and terrorism, lack of quality education, and technological and scientific backwardness. There is a dire need to solve these issues because unless they are solved, the Ummah would continue to move towards darkness.

Contemporary Challenges of Muslim Ummah:

- Disunity among Muslims:

There are forty-nine Muslim majority

countries in the world. More than 24.1% of the world's population is Muslim, with an approximately 1.9 billion. The fifty-seven Muslim countries of the world, however, are disunited, and thus Muslims are suffering from atrocities at the hands of non-Muslims.

Muslims are being massacred in Palestine and Kashmir but the powerful Muslim states are silent. Muslim states are not only divided but they also fight with one another to create their own influence as is evident in the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and the weak status of OIC.

Moreover, the internal sectarian divisions within a Muslim state, such as Shia-Sunni divide, contribute to conflicts and weaken the unity of Muslim Ummah.

● Political instability, bad governance and corruption:

Many Muslim-majority countries are experiencing political unrest and instability, often due to conflicts, authoritarian regimes and lack of democratic governance. There is a general lack of democracy,

political participation and representative institutions. Fundamental rights and freedoms are denied and there is hardly any recourse to independent judicial systems. Moreover, the rulers ^{and leaders} of Muslim countries are incompetent. They are enjoying their royal way of life by subjugating the masses. They are involved in corruption and are ignorant of the problems of the people. Thus, Muslim countries lack good governance.

● Socio-economic underdevelopment:

Poverty, population explosion, illiteracy, unemployment and inequitable distribution of resources generally characterize the Muslim world. In most Afro-Asian Muslim countries, about half of the population lives below poverty line. Of fifty-seven OIC member states, more than one-third are 'least developed countries' (LDCs). Moreover, the collective GDP of the Muslim world is just about 5% of the world GDP. More than half of Muslim countries have less than 50% of literacy rate. The expenditure on science and technology is absmally low.

• Extremism and Terrorism:

Extremist groups that claim to represent Islam, such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda, continue to pose significant threats not only to the safety and security of the Ummah but also to its global reputation. These groups exploit religious sentiments to further their political agendas, causing divisions and violence. Some of them are internally-directed against their rulers like the Taliban of Afghanistan, while others target the West like Al-Qaeda that has emerged as the focal terrorist network targeting Western interests and pro-Western countries.

• Lagging behind in education:

The daunting problem encountered by the Ummah today is their lagging behind in education. Almost half of the world's Muslims are illiterate. Benazir Bhutto has written in her book "Reconciliation: Islam, ^{Democracy} and the West," "It is notable that fifty seven member countries of OIC have approximately 500 universities, compared to 5,000 universities in the United States and 8,000 universities

in India..... In addition, the Muslim world spends 0.2 percent of its GDP on research and development, while the Western nations spend more than 5 percent on their GDPs."

This is the reason that Muslims are also scientifically and technologically underdeveloped.

Solutions of the Challenges of Muslim Ummah according to the Teachings of Islam:

Islamic teachings offer numerous principles and guidelines that can be applied to address the contemporary problems faced by Muslim Ummah.

- Promoting unity among Muslims:

There is a dire need to promote unity among the various Muslim countries of the world. OIC can learn lessons from the effective integration of European countries through the platform of EU. Muslim countries are rich in natural resources and can trade with one another. This will help to boost their economy. Moreover, the sectarian divisions within the Muslim Ummah can be addressed by following the teachings of Islam. Islam stresses the importance of unity and brotherhood.

among Muslims. Promoting inter-sect dialogue and understanding can help bridge divides. Allah says in the Quran:

اِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ اِخْوَةٌ فَاصلِحُوا بَيْنَ اِخْوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

Translation: "The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy." (49:10)

• Ensuring political stability and justice:

Islam emphasizes the importance of consultation in governance. Implementing systems where leaders consult with the community can promote justice and stability. Allah says in the Quran:

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَاَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنِهِمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

"And those who have responded to their Lord and established prayer and whose affair is determined by consultation among themselves, and from what We have provided them, they spend." (42:38)

Moreover, ensuring justice for all is a fundamental principle in Islam. Fair and transparent legal systems that uphold the rights of individuals can help reduce political instability.

• Promoting economic development:

Islam mandates the giving of Zakat (charity) to help the poor and needy which can reduce economic disparity. In the words of the Quran:

انما الصدقات للفقراء والمساكين والعاملين عليها والوفاء
 قلوبهم وفي الرقاب والغرمين وفي سبيل الله وابن
 السبيل فريضة من الله والله عليم حكيم

“Zakah expenditures are only for the poor and for the needy and for those employed to collect [zakah] and for bringing hearts together [for Islam] and for freeing captives [or slaves] and for those in debt and for the cause of Allah and for the [stranded] traveler - an obligation [imposed] by Allah. And Allah is Knowing and Wise. (9:60)

Moreover, Islam encourages ethical business

practices and prohibits exploitation which can help foster economic development and reduce poverty.

• Combating extremism and terrorism:

Extremist ideologies can be counteracted by promoting a correct understanding of Islam through education. It is essential to emphasize the peaceful and compassionate teachings of Islam. Islam promotes unity and brotherhood, and condemns violence. The local communities can be engaged in dialogue and cooperation in order to address the root causes of extremism. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

ادع الى سبيل ربك بالحكمة والموعظة الحسنة
 "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best."
 (16: 125)

• Improving education:

Islam encourages the pursuit of knowledge for both men and women. The first commandment revealed to the Holy Prophet (PBUH)

in the Cave of Hira was "iqra" which meant "read." The Prophet (PBUH) was sent with the supplication:

رب زدني علما

"O Allah, increase my knowledge." (20:114)

Thus, it is crucial to invest in education systems and promote lifelong learning. Combining religious education with modern scientific and technological knowledge can produce well-rounded Muslim individuals. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) has said:

"Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim."

Conclusion:

In the light of the above discussion, it can be concluded that the Muslim Ummah is facing significant problems today due to the disunity among them, political instability, poor governance, economic underdevelopment and low literacy rate of Muslim countries. This has damaged the reputation of the Muslims worldwide. These issues can be solved by adhering to the Islamic teachings and principles in order to

work towards a more just, peaceful and prosperous future of the Muslim Ummah.
