

Q) Contemporary challenges of Muslim Ummah and their solutions according to the teachings of Islam.

Introduction:

Islam, as it has been declared by the Holy Quran, is the perfect and a complete religion as mentioned in Surah al Mائدة - verse 3. "This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed my favor upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion."

Allah in Quran talks about Islam as a complete religion and guidance for Muslims. In the contemporary world the Muslim Ummah, comprising nearly of one-fifth of the global population. It has vast territories, immense potential in human and geopolitical resources from different part of the world. However, in spite of its significance, Muslim Ummah faces many challenges such as, disunity between Ummah, the rise of Extremism, economic instability and poverty, lack and backwardness in education and technology and the distorted image of Islam etc. For Muslim Ummah to prosper in this modern world, they need to cope with certain challenges.

Contemporary Challenges faced by Muslim Ummah:

1. The disunity and fragmentation in Muslim Ummah:

Muslim world is plagued with its disunity and division. The Ummah is divided into various sects, school of thoughts, and nationalities leading to lack of unity and cooperation. They are unable to cope with the challenges that are happening in the modern world. The Ummah is regressing further backwards. Unfortunately, personal quarrels and lust for power prevents Muslim nations to work for the advancement and better future of Ummah. As a result, Muslim nations remains largely underdeveloped, poor and unskilled.

2. Rise of Extremism and Terrorism.

The challenge of extremism and terrorism facing the Muslim Ummah is growing more serious by the day. That is because of a small minority of extremists who claim to be Muslims, but their actions are rejected by the vast majority of Muslims who condemn violence and terrorism. This extremism is often fueled by political and economic grievances. Muslim countries are increasingly coming under intense pressure from religious extremists and fundamentalist movements to impose their versions of Islamic doctrines that are generally hostile in nature.

3. The struggle against Economic inequality and poverty.

Muslims are facing significant economic disparities, poverty, unemployment and lack of access to basic necessities. Though many Muslim countries are blessed with rich resources, yet they are unable to put such resources into practice in order to serve and defend Islam and Muslims. The rich Arab countries are plagued by unchecked lavishness and misusing the resources. Meanwhile, their spending in useful sector like education, science and social sector development to uplift the Muslim society is negligible.

4. The education and knowledge deficit poses a critical challenge to individual and societal progress.

Muslims are facing significant gap in education, and intellectual pursuit. They are lacking in scientific and technological advancement. The Muslim world for their technological, military and health requirements are dependent on Non-Muslim nations such as US, China, Japan etc. There are only

few universities from Pakistan and Turkey that managed to come in the top 500 of the world. Most of the Nobel Prize winners are from the West.

5. Islamophobia and the inability of the Muslim world to portray the real image of Islam.

Muslims around the world are facing great discrimination and hatred. The Islamic faith and Ummah have become the subject of ridicule and humiliation. The uncivilized image portrayed by Al-Qaeda, Taliban and Daesh of the Muslim Ummah, perpetuating fundamentalism and intolerance, have hindered the Muslim community's participation in the modern world, particularly in education, science and technology.

Solutions according to the teachings of Islam:

1. Unity and Solidarity of Muslim Ummah to generate effective responses to the challenges:

"And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided" (Surah Al-Imran: 103)

In this ayah and several other ayahs of the Quran, Allah stresses the importance of Muslim unity. Muslims should ~~have~~ strive for unity, cooperation and solidarity, recognizing their shared identity and purpose. The Muslim world needs to address the current challenges faced by the Ummah. Especially, the sectarian divide among the Muslim world is a major hurdle in evolving a united response to their challenges. The Muslim world need to stand strong and united in the face of those who are trying their best to discredit and slander the Ummah and practice their Deen according to the teachings of The Holy Quran and Sunnah.

2. Promoting a moderate and balanced approach to life.

According to Sahih Bukhari, our Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "Moderation is the best of all things".

Moderation in Islam is considered a virtue and a key aspect of a believer's character. The Quran and Hadith encourage Muslims to avoid extremism and excess in all aspects of life, whether it be in religion practices, worldly affairs or personal relationships. According to the Holy Quran,

"And thus we have made you a moderate community, then you will be witnesses over people and the Messengers will be a witness over you".

3. Reinterpreting the Islamic teachings of Quran and Hadith in the context of the present day with the help of Ijtihad:

Ijtihad is an innovative approach to reinterpret Islamic teachings in the present day, allowing for independent reasoning and interpretation of Islamic law and teachings. Through ijtihad, Islamic scholars and thinkers can re-examine traditional interpretations, address contemporary issues and develop new legal and ethical frameworks that are grounded in Islamic principles but adapted to modern circumstances. By employing ijtihad, Muslims can ensure that Islamic teachings remain relevant and meaningful in the present day.

The Quran says,

"And those who strive for Us, We will surely guide them to Our ways. And indeed God is with those who are righteous and those who do good."

(Surah Al-Ankabut 69)

4 Economic justice can help the Muslim Ummah overcome the challenges of the contemporary world.

Economic justice is a crucial element in empowering the Muslim Ummah to overcome the challenges of the contemporary world. By promoting equitable distribution of resources, fair trade and social welfare programs, Muslim communities can reduce poverty, inequality and unemployment. Moreover, economic justice will promote human development which as a result will allow Muslims to contribute meaningfully to the global economy and society.

Allah in the Quran commanded Muslims to do justice in following words,

"And when you judge between people, judge with justice"
(Al-Nisa - 58)

5 OIC needs to play an effective role to counter the challenges faced by the Muslim Ummah:

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has a vital role to play in addressing the challenges confronting the Muslim Ummah, including Islamophobia, political instability, economic underdevelopment, and social justice. To effectively counter these challenges, OIC must strengthen its institutional capacity, enhance cooperation among member states and develop innovative solutions that leverage the Ummah's collective resources and talents. Through effective leadership, strategic partnerships and people-centered initiatives OIC can help unlock the immense potential of the Muslim Ummah and create a bright future for the generations to come.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the Muslim Ummah faces a multitude of challenges in today's world, but Islamic teachings offer a comprehensive framework for addressing these issues. By embracing principles of unity, moderation, education, justice and economic fairness, human rights, and reinterpreting the teachings of Quran and Sunnah, Muslims can work towards a brighter future. It is crucial for the global Muslim community to come together, leveraging their collective resources and strengths, to implement these solutions and create a more just, peaceful and prosperous world for all. Through this collective effort, the Muslim Ummah can rise above its current challenges and fulfill its potential as a compass for the benefit of all humanity.