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BATCH - RWP 73

What are the contemporary challenges of Muslim Ummah and their solution according to teachings of Islam?

INTRODUCTION:

The Muslim Ummah whose foundation was laid 1400 years ago once thrived as Muslim ruled over half the world. The "Islamic Golden Age" which made profound contributions in fields of science, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy were a source of envy for the Europeans who were at the time stuck in dark ages. The Muslim Ummah of today however faces a bleak reality. Islam which is the very bedrock of the Muslim Ummah faces decay due to rising sectarianism. Rising religious extremism has eroded the peaceful image of Islam through terrorism. Islamophobia is once again on the rise as right-wing politics becomes the new norm. Furthermore, the un-Islamic authoritarian rule in Muslim states where leaders engage in corruption and decadence is also an imminent threat to the Ummah. The biggest threat of all is nationalism that has allowed for hegemony and monopoly of western organizations. These have effectively undermined organizations like OIC built to unify the Muslims. As the Muslim world lags behind the West, we become increasingly dependent on them. The Muslim world now engages in neo-imperialist practices for overlooking the plights of Muslims in Palestine. The rise of globalization further corrodes Islamic civilization. The only way forward for the Muslim Ummah is to look back to the message of brotherhood, unity, tolerance, consensus given

by Islam. Muslims need to once again focus on their education, fund economic growth and curb nationalism through reforms in OIC. We need to present to the world the rightful image of Islam.

1 SECTARIANISM: THE DIVIDE IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

Sectarianism plagues the Muslim world and has become a source of discord and instability in Middle East. Proxies and Militias funded by Sunni majority ~~USA~~, Saudi Arabia fights against proxies of Shia majority Iran. Take the example of Syria where discord and instability prevailed since the Arab Spring of 2011 as Bashar-Al-Assad regime funded by Iran and Russia fought against US and Saudi funded anti-Bashar-Al-Assad forces. The same is true for conflicts in Yemen as well as Iraq. This sectarianism is not limited to Middle East it also plagues Pakistan where recently in Peshawar the death toll reached 130 in 10 days. The father of Iranian Revolution, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini is quoted to have said.

"If a dispute takes place among Sunni and Shiite brothers, it is harmful to us all, it is harmful to all Muslims."

2 RISE OF RIGHT-WING AND REVIVAL OF ISLAMOPHOBIA:

Far-right parties across the globe are gaining traction with their anti-immigration and anti-Islam rhetoric.

The rise of BJP in India spelled an increase in Muslim hatred. The ideology of "Hinduvata" inspired by work of V.D. Savarkar titled "Hindutva" who is a Hindu considers Hindus to be "the true sons of the soil" as their holy places reside in India while Muslim's holy lands are outside it. The Human Rights Watch Report highlighted how Modi used hate speech against the Muslims. In the West the rise of right-wing has revived the "The Great Replacement Theory" a conspiracy theory propounded by Renaud Camus (2011). He theorized that Europeans would be replaced by middle Eastern and African immigrants. It is this fear of replacement that has pronounced itself in the form of Hijab ban in France in 2010, anti-immigration protests in Poland and Christ Church Mosque attack in New Zealand in 2019.

3 TERRORISM; MANIFESTATION OF RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM:

Today what threatens the global image of Islam is terrorism that stems from religious extremism.

Pakistan is the biggest victim of this extremism, with 52,000 casualties reported between 2002 and 2013 alone. TTP still remains a threat to stability in Pakistan. Terrorist organizations like IS-K and ISI carry out terrorist attacks on Muslim soil under the guise of wanting to develop Shariah Law yet they stray from Islamic teachings. Pakistan ranked 2nd on Global Terrorism Index 2024.

A.G. Noorani in his book Islam and Jihad states "Fundamentalism is malaise of the twentieth century."

Terrorism which manifests as a result of extremism has nothing to do with Islam. Sheikh Abdul Rahman al-Sudais says

"It would be a grave calamity when followers of this phenomenon (terrorism) use religion as camouflage, because true Islam stands innocent from all that."

4 NATIONALISM AND DIVERGENCE FROM MUSLIM IDENTITY

In recent years there has been a rise in nationalism. This very nationalism threatens the common Muslim identity. Muslim countries now focus on their own individual vested interest and effectively overlook the plight of Muslims globally. UAE signed the Abraham Accords in 2020 normalizing ties with Israel. Such decision based on national interest undermines the Muslim unity and plight of Palestinians which is an important issue for the Muslim world. Iqbal warned of this in his poem "Patriotism"

"Country is the biggest among these new gods!
... Is the plunder of the structure of Holy Prophet's Religion"

5 HEGEMONY OF WEST AND NEO-IMPERIALISM:

The Western world dominates the International system. The economic system based on US dollar is exploited to subjugate the less developed Muslim countries and to make allies of the richer Muslim countries. Iran has been under US sanctions and recently faced bombing by US jets.

attacking Israel. The western alliances undermine organizations such as OIC and make countries like UAE their allies for imperialist agenda. Sudan came out with a dossier accusing UAE of funding militias and mercenaries to exploit the instability for economic gains. African nations are exploited by West for their resources and Muslim countries like UAE have become allies of US in this.

6 DECADANCE OF MUSLIM LEADERS AND REGRESSION OF MUSLIMS

Muslim leaders engage in corrupt practices and actively subjugate dissent. Pakistan has suffered from authoritarian leaders who engage in corrupt practices and undermine the development of the populace. Muslim today lag behind the Western world because their economies are debt ridden under influence of western institutions like IMF. Muslim who were once architects of modern science have now become flounders of backwardness. As corruption runs rampant in Muslim countries, its populace lags behind in education, health, mortality rate.

THE PATH TO ASCENDENCY OF MUSLIM UMMAH

1- REVIVAL OF GLOBAL MUSLIM IDENTITY:

For Muslim

Ummah to overcome these challenges there is a need to revive the global Muslim identity. This can only be done through Islamic teachings of brotherhood.

"The believers are but one brotherhood, so make peace between your brothers. And be mindful of Allah so you may be shown mercy."

(Surah Al Rahman 49:10)

Muslims need to unite as brothers and work together to overcome Western hegemony.

2- UNITY AMONG MUSLIMS

Muslims need to overcome sectarian divide and unite together against the forces that wish for decline of Muslim Ummah. Allah says

"Indeed, this, your religion, is one religion, and I am your Lord, so worship Me. And they divided their affair among themselves, (but) all to us will return" (Surah Al-Anbiya 21:92-93)

3- PROPAGATE THE PEACEFUL IMAGE OF ISLAM

In order to tackle the rising Islamophobia, it is important that we propagate the peaceful image of Islam. Allah says in Quran

"And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say 'Peace'." (25:63)

4- REVIVE THE MESSAGE OF TOLERANCE:

Islam is a religion of peace that makes no compulsion. It tolerates the presence of other religious minorities as was the case in early Muslim empires. In Quran Allah says

"Let there be no compulsion in the religion."

The right direction is distinctly clear from error". (Quran 2:256)

We need a consensus across the Muslim world that shuns terrorism and funding of proxies that lead to discord among Muslim Nations.

5- RECLAIM GLOBAL INFLUENCE

Muslims need to once again reclaim the global influence. We need to realize that the West is not our ally, rather they are involved in our subjugation. Allah warns in Quran.

"O believers! Take neither Jews nor Christians as guardians — they are guardians of each other." (5:51)

Muslims need to bring the Palestine issue on the global stage and pressurize the West for a two state solution that liberates the Palestinian population. UAE and other Muslim countries must not normalize ties with Israel.

6 ACCOUNTABILITY OF LEADERS

Muslim countries rank high on the corruption index. The leaders across the Muslim World grow weaker and corrupt under influence of Western forces. Muslims across the globe need to hold their leaders accountable. These leaders must realize the responsibility they shoulder for which they will be questioned. In Quran Allah says

"On the Day when We shall call together all men with their respective Imams..."

(Surah Isra 17:71)

CONCLUSION

The Muslim Ummah of today faces a dark age characterized by Islamophobia, extremism, sectarianism, decadence of its leaders, Regression and hegemony of West. The Muslims in order to once again revive the Ummah must follow the Islamic teachings of brotherhood, unity, tolerance, accountability to undermine the Western influence and revive, reform and reclaim the Global Muslim identity. In order to push through this dark age, the Ummah needs to unite today more than ever before.