

Q Contemporary challenges for Muslim ummah and their solutions by the teachings of Islam

## Introduction

Global power dynamics have never been static. Change is a universal trait and with each change are accompanied unprecedented challenges that the world has to meet. Muslim ummah has unfortunately lost its prestige that it once enjoyed in the global order and that has primarily been caused by its inability to adopt, adapt and advance with the passage of time. The golden age of Islam, which was once a lived reality has been reduced to a phrase of the past. What enabled Muslims to once build a strong empire was its strong dependence upon following the teachings of Islam. As Muslim world's current position is gloomy it still possess the immaculate cultural and religious reservoir which can strengthen it to combat all the adversities that have halted its prosperity. It is high time for the

Ummah to cope up with the challenges of modern world by making multifaceted changes in the current standing of the Muslim world, however, this change has to maintain the spiritual richness of the Islam as Islam in itself is the best code of life that guarantees prosperity in all ages, as Holy Prophet has said:

"I have left you with two matters which will never lead you astray as long as you hold to them: The Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet." (Al-Muwatta 1661)

## Internal Shortcomings

### ① Intellectual Stagnation:

Growth of a society in the modern world is associated with education which ultimately leads to innovation in research and prowess in academia.

Muslim civilization was the centre of learning and literacy. Its academic contributions in the field of astronomy, mathematics, architecture and culture set the foundation of the modern scientific growth. From there literary contributions as well as research and innovation has declined significantly in the region, with only 2 of the universities from the Muslim world in the global top 500 and in country that was made with the ideology of Islam that is Pakistan has a literacy rate of 63% according to PSLM-HEIS

## ② Extremist Narrative:

Islam which is the religion of peace has been maligned with islamophobia due to particular extremist groups that operate in the Muslim countries. These Muslim extremist outfits claim to be the voice of Islam and Jihad, however they misinterpret Islam and Jihad and as a result tarnish the positive and humanitarian side of Islam. The infamous September 11 attack

instigated a wave of hatred and prejudice against the Muslims who were labelled as fundamentalists to which Muslims still struggle in showcasing a positive side in international forums. Terrorist militant groups like TTP and ISK have wreaked havoc amongst south Asian countries of Pakistan and Afghanistan as well as posing an extra regional threat.

### ③ Political Craps and Sectarism.

Division amongst Muslims is a major flaw that destroys the brotherhood which is the very core element of the Islamic social fabric. Muslim ummah today is divided at such a level that it is not just confined to sect as in the Sunni and Shia differences between them but along with that they are also divided politically. Muslim world has grown materialistic they have let western capitalistic values corrupt them and they have formed alliances on

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the basis of worldly gains. Abraham Accords of 2020 and the silence of influential Muslim countries over the carnage of hundreds of thousand Palestinians who have lost their lives speak in volumes about their dismemberment.

### External Domination

#### ① Colonialism and its legacy:

Muslim world is no longer <sup>though</sup> under direct colonial rule, West has enshrined in them the after-effects of colonial empire. In the recent past, just a few centuries back, imperial West took on a mission of civilising the world. The occident, which the West called itself, was the civilised, rational society while the Gulf countries were considered to be erratic, eccentric, irrational dependent and backward. As postcolonial thinker Edward Said writes in his book "Orientalism":

"The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since the time of antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences."

The purpose of Orient - Occident bifurcation was to create a difference; ~~to~~ to tell that West and the Gulf are not alike. They conveyed a prejudiced message that the East needed the Western values and hence they justified the colonial rule. Even today many locals have turned to form that opinion which results in losing one's own identity.

② Globalisation: rise of soft power:

Today the world is more connected than it ever was and that global connection is of trade, commerce sports, art and the influential media and its pop culture. Muslim world in the modern times is

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lacking behind in its influence in arts, culture and tapping the media, which is heavily under the influence of the West, while it embodies non-Islamic values it has penetrated into our society.

### ③ Technological Standstill:

In the 21st century science as well as progress in the technology has grown exponentially. From warfare to education, trade and even automobiles all are constantly being automated, digitalised, reinforced by Artificial Intelligence. In such times of the world only those countries can progress which adopt to these needs and invest in the technology sector to promote advancement.

### Solutions for Muslim Ummah in the Teachings of Islam

Muslim ummah has to look nowhere to find solutions to these problems

beyond the revelation of the religion of Islam. There is no problem which can't be solved by taking guidance from Quran and Sunnah.

### ① Emphasize Islamic Brotherhood.

One of the major drawback of contemporary Muslim world is lack of unity and brotherhood. Pakistan has fought with Afghanistan, Saudi had clash with Yemen, such demonstrations are against the spirit of Islam and weaken the Muslim unity. Platforms like OIC can be utilised to expand Muslim network and to make sure that such organisation gain as much strength, unity and support from the Muslim world that it can stop Western massacre of the Palestinians. By promoting Islamic brotherhood and moving beyond sectarian divide, Muslims can form an axis of resistance.

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② Reinterpreting Jihad for the World: Muslim

Ummah has a burden on their back and that is to portray positive side of Islam. West claims that Muslims are fundamentalist and they often point at the earlier expansionist rise of Islam. Muslims have to advocate that even in the past Muslims fought for justice and righteousness and not for killing people or using coercive tools to force Islam. As Quran state

"Whoever wants he should believe, and whoever wants he should disbelieve." (18:29)

③ Need for Ijtihad:

With antireligious values and propagandas being spread without bounds there are unprecedented spiritual and moral dilemmas that should be resolved by reconnecting with Islam. Teachings of Islam are not static and hence should be interpreted by connecting to the

Challenges of the modern world.

(4) Educating the Importance of Learning.

It is true that majority of the knowledge in all the fields is coming from the West which in turn allows them to be subjective about it. Knowledge itself can never be subjective for example scientific study is not backed by beliefs rather it is empirical hence objective, however, as Mohammad Asad has coined the term "Philosophy of Science" is the interpretation of that objective knowledge which is to be avoided. Mohammad Asad in his book "Islam at crossroads" has advocated for education and learning of that factual, empirical scientific study without instilling western ideology.

### Conclusion

Muslim ummah has challenges to deal with but notwithstanding these troubles their unity and staunch belief in Islam can lead them in reemerging as the dynamic force of the world.