Islamic Studies - 3

Q No. 1.
CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES OF UMMAH AND SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS.

INTRODUCTION:

Ummah refers to an Arabic word which translates in English to as nation while the word ummah is defined as not merely a nation bounded by ancestoral or geopkaphical boundries but a community of believers bound together under The guidance of Allah It is a group of people from diverse backgrounds ancestry, locations and nationalities. A community without borders. In Quran, Allah has mentioned ummah as one nation and with one Lord i.e Allah. The verse translates as:

"And verily this ummah of yours
is one ummah and I am your
Lord and Cherisher, therefore fear
Me and no other"

(Al-Quran)

Quran mentions ummah as word for nations with dibberent religions like ummah of Hazrat Musa (A·S) or Ummah of Hazrat Isa (A.S). The ummah of Muhammad (S·A·W) is known throughout Islamic history

and world as community of believers united in their devotion to one God (Allah). The ummah Today consists of 57 sovereign states and comprises of over 1.5 billion people. It has vast political and economic importance however, the Islamic ummah is divided and facing a number of external and internal challenges. The external challenges include Western colonization through globalization and western domination in geopolitics while The internal challenges include rise of extremism, sectarian divide, terrorism, lack of technology and scientific advancement, lack of education both religious and contemporary, unrest in Middle East, political disunity among muslim word and ideologies. To address these mamouth of challenges Muslim world needs to unite and let go of their divides to be able to rise and advance. They need to focus on education, technological advancement and curb the issue of terrorism and pose a peaceful image of Islam.

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES TO MUSLIM UMMAH

1- INTERNAL CHALLENGES

a- Rise of Extremism

Extremism has been a major issue of muslim world which is portrayed in The form of terrorist attacks and is one of the major reason of declined image of Islam. The 9/11 attack gave rise to Islamophobia and ever since then we haven't been able to solve this

issue. Extremists are not the true face of Islam as the world believes rather they are far away from Islamic teachings and potray a negative image in the world thus hatred towards Islam and Muslim increases. Rise of extremism is stifling ~~shifting~~ the development of conditions conducive to the development and growth of vibrant institutions of higher learning and civilization.

b. Sectarian divide:

Another challenge that muslim ummah face is the sectarian divide among muslims. The shia-sunni divide has been a defining factor in various conflicts and tensions specifically in middle east. The Saudi-Iran rivalry due to sectarian divide has been amplified because of power struggles. ~~In~~ Due to this divide, muslim ummah is indulged in fighting with each other instead of fighting others and gain power in the world. The rift causes the decline in advancement and growth of muslim nation as their energies are spent on fighting over sects.

c. Terrorism

The issue of terrorism has caused the muslim nations ~~a~~ to disunite. The terrorism has been a issue/challenge for muslims ever since 9/11 when it surfaced as a major attack on ~~innon~~ innocents. Pakistan still face terrorism in the form ~~of~~ of TTP resurgence and other millitant groups along with other muslim nations. Terrorism damages

the image of Islam and muslim nations. It attacks innocent people and is a hurdle in uniting muslim ummah. Imam of Al-Azhar Mosque in Cairo, Egypt said about terrorism:

"Attacking innocent people is not courageous, it is stupid and will be punished on the day of judgement."

Terrorism is, was and never will be accepted as it targets innocent lives and has nothing to do with Islam.

d. Lack of technological advancement:

Muslim world is badly lacking in scientific and technological advancement. For technology, IT and military requirements, Muslim world is dependent on U.S. United States, China, Germany, Japan etc. The contribution in science and technology by Muslim world is insignificant. Muslim scientist are nowhere to be found in the major segments of science. Turkey however is showing some progress. The lack of technological advancement is the reason why Muslim world is so far behind than the rest of the world.

e. Lack of Education:

Muslim world is also far behind in education both contemporary and religious. Our young generations are not taught about Islam properly rather we are only absorbing the interpretations of rigid scholar potraying Islam only limited to worships. Furthermore, contemporary education in Muslim

world is also lagging. There are over 85000 Univerties in India and er only 174 in Pakistan. The top universities in the world are also from the non-muslim countries only few from Pakistan and Turkey came in top 500 of the world. The number of foreign books translated in other languages are more than those translated in Arabic combined. The looming issue of intellectual crisis is a serious challenge to muslim world causing humiliation and stagnation in growth.

f. Political Disunity of Muslim World:

Another Internal challenge of muslim world is disunity in political leadership among muslim ummah. The mission of Hazrat Muhammad (S.A.W) was to bring peace and unity among feuding tribes of pre-Islamic days. However, after the demise, the Arabs went to wars and disputes among tribes over the right to succeed the leadership of Muslim ummah. These disputes and power struggle disrupt administration and as a result muslim nations largely remain underdeveloped, uneducated and inable to positively contribute towards the well-being, growth of Muslims.

g. Middle East crisis:

The subsequent failure to establish stable and democratic governments in middle east specifically after Arab Spring in 2011 is now on the verge of collapse. The recent genocide of Palestinians at the hands of Zionists and

the unresponsiveness from middle eastern countries like Saudia, Iran etc has unveiled how disunited muslims are and how they can't fight for themselves and their brothers. Middle east is formerly Muslim region is subsequently under crisis and has become a farce in world in direly in need of a saviour.

2. External Challenges:

a. Western Colonization in form of Globalization:

Globalization according The popular wide spread view has positive benefits as it increase economic activity and growth and according to some scholars will benefit Muslims in economic growth. While in its current manifestation, it is only benefiting the West. West is accumalting more wealth and underdeveloped is becoming more resource ridden. Similarly through globalization, west is inculating its cultural norms and principles all over the world specifically effecting muslim nations.

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS TO CHALLENGES:

The disunity among muslim ummah is only benefiting west and they subsequently heightened it. and In order to grow and advance in the world and dominate in geopolitics muslims need to unite and solve their issues as they have potential and history to rule the world politics. The solutions include providing education, promoting unity, by use of media in positive way and curb extremism.

1. Reforming Religious Education to Curb Extremism and Terrorism.

To solve the issue of terrorism and extremism, government need to inculcate The religious education at various levels starting as early as schools. The reformation of previous r syllabus of Islamic studies is also needed. The introduction of seerat of Hazrat Muhammad (S·A·W) is also needed and teachers should teach The practical lessons from seerah to guide students how to live their lives as per Islamic teachings. Also in madrassah proper islamic teachings to be taught to prevent The rise of extremists. Furthermore students of madrassah also provided with contemporary education so that they can contribute to The society. Teachers should be taught first in order to guide the students towards right path.

2. Positive Role of Media:

Islamic governments should cooperate with media houses to promote The positive and true image of Islam through advertisment, projects and entertainments projects. Media should introduce educative / religious content in their entertainment projects and should be sensitive to religious sentiments.

3. Role of International Muslim Community

International Muslim Organizations like OIC

needs to proactively and effectively play its role in unification of muslim ummah. OIC needs to bring muslim countries together on one platform and try to resolve the divide between them through dialogue.

CONCLUSION:

Muslim Ummah is lagging behind then the rest of The world due to disunity among them. To be able to rule the political arena of the world and regain their status as a nation, they need to unite themselves and pay attention to their educational, scientific and technological advancement. As Islam preaches about unity and brotherhood. In Surah Al-Baqrah, Allah urges us to unite and strive for one goal.

"To each is a goal to which God turns him; then strive together (as in a race) towards all that is good. Wheresoever you are, God will bring you together. For Allah has powers over all things"

(Al-Baqrah)