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Islamiat Mock

Question No 7

Religious and Political Extremism --- evaluate.

Introduction

Extremism is a concept that is not new in this world. Various organizations, individuals or groups pursue an extremist stance to further their interests or goals. Religious and political extremism is also carried out by the same people, who under the guise or veil of religion or politics pursue an extremist agenda. Muslims around the world have been continuously marginalised. However, this marginalisation does not mean that it gives them any right to take up an extremist (religious or political) stance.

Islam in no way advocates for extremism. It is a sad tragedy that some groups ^{use} the name of Islam as means to further their interests.

Throughout history, this movement can be seen and some marginalized communities have taken ^{up} this stance.

Causes of taking up such a stance vary from community to community, and solutions too. However, Islam and its teaching are polar opposite of this stance.

GENESIS OF EXTREMISM - POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS

Man throughout the ages has taken up different means to further his goals and objectives. These

means included dialogue, agitation and many others. The latter falls into the category of extremism. Extremist behaviour can be defined as

"Taking an unorthodox stance that often includes the use of violent and force inducing tactics to achieve one's goals or objectives."

In the eyes of many scholars, political extremism is a movement when a group of individuals starts adopting measures that are agitational in nature. These measures may go out to the extent of alienating entire communities, groups etc. Speech that causes or induces hate among is also a sign of political extremism. Prominent examples of political extremism are of Socialist Party of Germany in 1939.

Similarly, religious extremism is a process that includes religions ^{interpreted} as a ~~weapon~~ in a way that leads to the extremist tendencies. Moreover, religion is used as a means to propagate extremist ideologies. Religions around the world promote inter-faith harmony and dialogue. However, some malicious elements use the garb of religions to justify their acts (extremist). The most prominent example is when the Islamic state of Syria and Iraq established Sharia law as the basis for their extremism.

MARGINALIZATION - A ^{CAUSE} ~~RESULT~~ OF EXTREMISM?

Marginalized communities are ^{more} prone to extremist tendencies as compared to mainstream ones. However, extremism is not the best way to achieve goals and objectives.

The worst cases of marginalization were in Apartheid South Africa. Although, they had the choice the Black South Africans never took up a political extremist stance against the government of the day. The revolution of South Africa was referred to as a bloodless and peaceful revolution.

Islam, an advocate of moderation, never advocates for taking an extremist or violent stance. The struggle of the Holy Prophet is more than evident. The social boycott of Makkah, the overall treatment of the pagans with Prophet (PBUH) should've been more than a justifiable cause for him to take up an aggressive and extremist stance. However, he didn't do such. When victory was achieved during the conquest of Makkah, he ordered that no soul or life be harmed a stance ^{so what should've been} contrary taken if he were a religio-political extremist.

Marginalization, does play a role in realising future politico-religious extremist movements. However, through prompt dialogue and redressal of their concerns might lead to them being mainstreamed and nipping the evil in the bud.

ISLAM, MUSLIMS, MARGINALIZATION

IN THE WORLD

Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world and is the second most practiced one with followers in the billions. After 9/11, there has been a growing wave of anti-Islamic sentiments and hate towards Muslims. Some might agree, this wave has ostracized Muslims from society. In some ways, marginalized them to the fringes of the community.

Hate-filled comments and association of Muslims with terrorists might have exacerbated this dilemma. However, those residing in those communities did not take up violent or extremist stances against them.

If they did, what difference would there be between them and the extremists. The Prophet (S.A.W) had many chances to take revenge from the nay-sayers (Pagans). However, he prayed for them at Taif and on many occasions he withstood all the torment.

Similarly, the conduct shown by Muslims was not religiously ^{that} for matter politically extreme, even if they were marginalized to some extent.

STEPS TO REVERSE EXTREMISM AND

MAINSTREAM MUSLIMS

a) Inter-Faith Dialogue

This is extremely important, as the problem lies in not understanding the differences of the aggrieved parties. If communities start to communicate, majority of the problems start to solve themselves.

b) Opportunities for Muslims to Compete to be increased

Economic incentives are a major factor in dissuading people from taking an extremist stance. Similarly, marginalized Muslims should be mainstreamed and given opportunities to compete rather than taking up violent tent.

c) Identifying Causes of discontentment among the community

Another point of concern is if a community is taking an unorthodox path for redressal of their concerns. Steps should be taken to identify and bridge those gaps.

d) Having a proactive approach to Identify Signs of Extremism?

As countries grapple with the threat of terrorism, proactive approaches need to be taken to ensure marginalized communities are not recruited or used by malicious entities.

CONCLUSIONS

All in all, Muslims around the world need to tackle this perception problem by fixing their conduct and following the ways of the Sunnah. Adopting methods such as religious or political extremism have no benefit as they burn fire sooner or later. It is better to address your adopt non-violent approaches as those pay for more.