**Woke People and Qalb-e-Saleem (Part I)**

[Aliya Anjum](https://dailytimes.com.pk/writer/aliya-anjum/)

November 25, 2021

Woke is a mindset.  The word entered the English dictionary in 2017.  Its meaning is stated as being “alert to racial or social discrimination and injustice.”

Woke is a growing trend in the US. The Quran mentions Qalb-e-Saleem, whose literal meaning is an undamaged and sound heart.  It is an immaculate conscience, imperative for salvation.

“The Day whereon neither sons nor wealth will avail, except him who brings to Allah Qalb-e-Saleem (a pure heart). [Al-Quran 26:88-89].”

To achieve a Qalb-e-Saleem, one needs to consciously modify their instinctive behaviour, from evil to good.   Our nafs (inner self) inclines us to evil, as Prophet Yusuf (AS) said:  “And I do not absolve my inner self of blame. Surely, man’s inner self often incites to evil.”(Quran 12:53)

We have been given the free will to halt evil thoughts and to allow the voice of our conscience to emerge triumphantly.

We, humans, were sent to the earth to be tested.  Faith without good deeds and good deeds without faith, both close the doors to paradise, the Quran tells us. We were created as social beings, so our social conduct constitutes a big chunk of our deeds.

Islamic economics avoids the social and environmental ills of capitalism, as well as the denial of individual talent and economic gains of socialism.

Social justice is key to Islamic living.  Islam as a religion is pragmatic and its commandments encompass the entire spectrum of a person’s earthly life.   Muslims of today have confined Islam to clothing and empty ritual.  This is why Muslims are some of the most backward people living in some of the most unjust societies on earth. Being woke is secular but it has its origins in Christianity. Protestantism originated in Germany with Martin Luther, in the 16th-century Christian Reformation.  Protestantism has a work ethic, which emphasizes diligence, discipline, and frugality.

Protestant European immigrants founded the United States of America, on this work ethic, and turned it into a superpower through hard work, ethical conduct, and enterprise. This is even though the United States was created practicing genocide and the ethnic cleansing of the Native American population, for British colonisation.  Racism was their deadly vice-owing to certain false religious beliefs arising from the Jewish book of fiqh i.e the Talmud about the two sons of Prophet Nuh (AS) Shem and Ham, who were favoured and condemned with white and black skin color respectively.

American society’s social evolution has been remarkable since the 1960s when they tackled the notion of white supremacy for the first time.  Ever since then, their society has socially progressed and of late social media supercharged it–giving it tremendous momentum.

If we observe social changes in American society in the last 60 years, we can see a clear trajectory of pursuing impeccable morality.  The trajectory of American social evolution is educational for those of us in the global south because the US is a bellwether of trends.  They are unwittingly following a path, which the Quran and the sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) advocate, but which has been ignored by Muslims.

The United States of America was an apartheid state, but it changed itself.  Beginning in the 1960s, the US legally embraced racial equality.  Although there is still huge room for improvement, it is politically incorrect to be a racist, and the law has provisions against racism.  In 2020, the social evolution of the last 60 years gave birth to the woke Black Lives Matter movement (BLM), which quickly gained world attention, not just because of blacks but because of whites too. BLM  can be seen as restating the prophet’s (PBUH) last sermon where he famously said: “All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black nor a black has any superiority over white except by piety (taqwa) and good action.”

Unfortunately, Islamic societies of today are some of the most racist and divided, whereas the western world is aiming to correct their thought patterns viz-a-viz racism and its close cousin, colourism.

After racism, classism is the second biggest issue that human societies face.  The working poor suffer the most.

Within the US, the formation of Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in 1905 by socialists, anarchists, and radical trade unionists, pressured the capitalists to treat the working class better. However, the industrial manufacturing sector then shifted to Asia, beginning in 1980, where the working poor were again oppressed.

After becoming informed, American consumers heeded the call of their conscience.  Beginning in the 1990s the American public rejected apparel and footwear produced in sweatshops or manufactured using child labor.  This led to positive changes in the procurement policies of American businesses. With outsourced manufacturing, the US is now a service-based economy.  Hiring temporary workers allows big businesses such as Walmart, Amazon, and others to hire temporary workers and impose harsh working conditions on them.  However, voices are raised about such exploitation in print, electronic and social media.  American Labor movements are once again on the rise to initiate change.

Capitalism oppresses the poor, and hence ensuring rights is a constant struggle.

Apparel contract manufacturing Muslim countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh etc virtually do nothing to protect their industrial workers, including minors.  Their textile industry is forced to comply with labor laws and regulations by western businesses.  However, they find ways to defeat the spirit of the law, by faking to follow the letter of the law.  In the oil-rich Arab Muslim states, the blatant exploitation and abuse of workers are rampant since no outside parties have a say in their matters.  Even progressive countries like Malaysia are not immune from mistreating immigrant workers.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had said about slaves: “They are your brothers whom Allah has put under your control, so feed them with the same food that you eat, clothe them with the same clothes you wear and do not burden them with so much that they are overwhelmed; if you do burden them, then help them.”(Sunan Abi Majah 3690).

The rights of employees–who are free men or women–are far greater.

Islam, being a pragmatic religion, essentially constitutes a “third path” between capitalism and socialism.  Islamic economics avoids the social and environmental ills of capitalism, as well as avoids the denial of individual talent and economic gains of socialism. Islamic economics, however, only exists in books.

Instead of following a righteous third path, Islamic economies are embodying the evils of both paths since social justice is not ensured.  Public intellectuals, liberal activists, and the Islamic clergy rarely raise a voice for it.  The state is too busy in realpolitik to give any thought to Islamic governance. The greatest vice of classism is the suffering of vulnerable groups, beginning in childhood.

In Pakistan, malnutrition is a major issue facing our children.  A 2018 paper published in the prestigious National Institute of Health (NIH) website in the US states, “According to the National Nutrition Survey, 33%of all children were underweight, nearly 44% were stunted, 15% are wasted, 50%were anemic.”

In the US, welfare assistance is available to counter this phenomenon, even if it is far from perfect.   In Riyasat-e-Medina during the days of the Caliph Umar bin Khattab, a stipend was allocated for every child in the Islamic state.  In present-day Pakistan, almost all efforts to feed the poor are private initiatives.

In the domestic turf, every culture has evil stepmother folklore.  However, Americans retrained their thinking patterns to treat children as innocents.   Even with a high divorce rate and broken families, Americans try to ensure the well-being of children.  The state provides foster care to those who need it and legal adoption is a common practice.  Co-parenting is about two divorced parents looking out for their kid/s from their broken relationship.  Stepmothers today try to step up to a caretaker role.  It is politically incorrect to be an evil stepmother.  This is in line with the practice of the Prophet (PBUH) of showing kindness to children.  Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: “He is not of us who does not have mercy on young children nor honor the elderly.” (Hadith Tirmizi 1920).

(To Be Continued)

*The writer is an independent researcher, author and columnist. She can be reached at aliya1924@gmail.com.*