

Islam in America

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As Islam is rapidly spreading in America and in the Western countries, one wonders at this miraculous gravitation. Some of the Orientalists attack Islam for they think it is spread by sword. How much truth lies in propaganda needs detailed discourse and dissertation. To date the Muslims are divided into sects and factions.

They are being beaten and persecuted. They have neither say nor sword. Then how it becomes that the world is rapidly being attracted towards Islam? It seems as the whole globe is under the surging billows of Islamic influence and renaissance. It is very simple to understand. Islam is being liberated from the tenacious clutches of monarchy and priesthood. The dictatorial cassocks are being torn apart into pieces. The dogmatic and ritualistic approach and interpretation of Islam is being rejected. The scientific, natural, rational, pragmatic, progressive and moderate interpretation of Islam is being welcomed throughout the world.

Because of non-scientific approach the Muslim world is still lagging behind in many fields particularly in the fields of science and technology. Every sane person must admire the Western scientific progress and also its concern about human rights. We must also appreciate the human and modern approach of the Western thinkers in the fields of social sciences. We owe much to them.

The intellectual services of Roussou, J .S. Mill, Voltaire and Bertrand Russell are worth mentioning in the fields of rationalism and democracy. In my opinion the real Islam will emerge from Europe which provides ground for open debate and discussion. The Muslim world lacks freedom of thought. The Muslim clerics oppose rational inquiry. The Mutalazites preached rationality but were strongly opposed by the Asharites.

The Muslim fanatic sectarians and extremists still debate on historical disputes and differences. We must differentiate between the present and the history of the Muslims. History should be read as a mirror. We should learn lessons from history. We should not study history with prejudiced and jaundiced eyes. We should not fight on non-issues.

Moulana Abul Ala Moududi in his book entitled, Khalafat Wa Malukiyyat (The Caliphate and The Monarchy) had commented on some policies of some Sahaba like

people of all faiths. America and the West need natural and rational religion. Their scientific minded people have rejected whims and superstitions.

The material and immoral economic and political system has impelled them to seek new spiritual and mundane values. Islam provides them both peace of mind and peace of society. Islam keeps equilibrium between the spiritual and material values. Islam condemns sexual perversion and moral promiscuity. This is the reason Islam is rapidly spreading in America and in the West. So many books have flooded the American market dealing with the views of American Muslims.

The Americans, after the Islamic revolution of Iran took serious notice of Islamic Revival and Renaissance. They wanted to know how an icon like Raza Shah Pahlavi was thrown upside down. People in America desired to know about the spiritual force behind Islam, which mobilised and motivated the masses of Iran to rise against the king of Iran to dethrone him. Then the tragic incident of September 11, 2001 gave a big jolt to America. They wanted to know the causes of this big catastrophe.

Some American analysts criticised both Islam and the Muslims. Some only criticised the Muslims. Some said Islam is a peaceful religion, only a handful Muslims are terrorists. The writers like Irshad Munjee wrote books misrepresenting Islam while writers like Bernard Lewis wrote books with positive intentions. His book entitled "Islam in the Crisis," is praiseworthy attempt. Professor Malcolm Clark in his book titled "Islam in Dummies" has devoted a full chapter on this subject. He on page 243 writes "The United States exhibits the worlds 'greatest religious diversity."

Because of religious liberty and immigration from around the world, American Islam is more diverse than Islam anywhere else. Thirty or forty years ago, few Americans knew any thing about Islam. Today according to a 2002 poll, 28 percent of Americans are personally acquainted with

a Muslim. The Jews and the Muslims of America will automatically develop good relations the day the burning issue of Israel-Palestine is resolved. It is very imperative to bring different faith to one platform. In unity lies American glory and future.

The people with subversive intentions are sowing



some policies of some Sahaba like Hazrat Uthman and Hazrat Mouwiyya. It was the result of his independent scholarly research. Instead of benefiting from his research a horde of dogmatic and short-sighted clerics sarcastically condemned him and branded him an infidel and heretic.

The radicalists always oppose rational interpretation of religion. By quoting this example my sole purpose is to illustrate the fact that the Muslim world is intolerant and oblivious of hard facts of history. They do not want to infer scientific conclusions from historical events. The Muslim world is engaged in purposeless debate of historical disputes.

A few years past I was in Saudi Arabia. I was in the entourage of the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyam Khan. One day I asked a security officer who was looking after us about the political freedom in Saudia. He was bewildered and horrified on this question and alluded me to avoid such questions as Saudia is a monarchic regime. It is my considered opinion that majority of the Muslim States are autocratic and monarchic.

Hence their interpretation of Islam is imperialistic and autocratic. On the other hand the Muslims living in America and in Europe have full freedom to express their ideas which is a great gift of Western civilisation. I strongly appeal to the Muslim scholars living in America and in the West to interpret Islam in its true context and spirit.

I am shocked to see that even in these advanced countries our mosques and Islamic centres are occupied by radical, traditional and dogmatic clerics. From the pulpits of these mosques still we are spreading sectarianism and dogmatism. I very humbly submit that in our mosques we should hire the services of properly educated, moderate, and enlightened clerics. There should be some basic standard for their employment.

The sectarian and short-sighted lot of clerics will definitely destroy and damage the peaceful atmosphere of these countries. Such elements will misuse liberty and create serious law and order situation in these countries. If the Muslims want to save their coming generations from the dreadful dragon of sectarianism, dogmatism and extremism, then they should discourage such hardliners.

The American Bill of Rights grants freedom of speech, press, religion, peaceful assembly and request to change the governments. This Bill enshrines democratic and human values. It guarantees social, political and religious liberties. But this does not mean that these liberties should be negatively used. It is a great challenge for the Muslims living in America and Europe.

Besides mutual harmony and peaceful co-ordination we should enhance and encourage inter-dialogue. We must learn to live and preach love and respect.

...souvereign inter-... tions are sowing the seeds of hatred and discrimination between the Jews, Christians, and Muslims. American Muslims come from three groups. African-American Muslims, immigrants, and white American converts. Malcolm Clark further writes: "Over the past decades, estimates of the number of American Muslims escalated rapidly until by 2001, figured six to ten million were frequently mentioned.

If true, the US Muslim population is larger than the US population." The Muslims have built mosques and established Islamic centres and organisations all over America such as CAIR (Council on American Islamic Relations); AMC (The American Muslim Council); MPAC (Muslim Political Action Committee); AMPCC (American Muslim Political Co-ordination Council); UMAA (Universal Muslim Association of America). Besides, some other famous organisations like ACNA and ASNA are quite active in this field.

Some African-Americans started a movement named the Nation of Islam a few decades past. Actually it was a movement of some Blacks against slavery. Islam was used as a new identity for Blacks in America. Basically they were Simulationists. They attacked Christianity for justifying slavery. They needed a revolutionary cult to mobilise the Blacks against the Whites. As, Islam preaches equality and condemns slavery these people sought refuge in the revolutionary spirit of Islam.

In America we have many Muslim sects as well. The Sunnis, the Shias, the Wahhabi, the Ahle-Hadith and the Sufis are the major Muslim sects in America. After the tragic incident of 9/11 in New York, the Muslims are facing some social problems in America. At some places the hate crimes took place. As the Americans are civilised people there was no genocide of the Muslims in any part of America.

We must appreciate this human aspect of American life. Had such an incident occurred in India numberless Muslims would have been persecuted? Even if such incident had happened in any Muslim country countless non-Muslims would have been killed. We are intolerant people. I admit that a few hate crimes have been reported in America and England but they have condemned by general public and the respective governments.

About the life and conditions of the American Muslims some of the writers have contributed much. Particularly John Esposito, Jyvyonne Haddid, Ilyas Yunis, Zahid Bokhary, Karen Leonarn, Muhammad Nimer, Dr S. M. Akbar, Dr Muqtader Khan and Ms Asma Gull have contributed much in this field. Summing up, it can be said that the Muslims can earn and learn in America. They should participate in the social and political activities, otherwise they will be secluded. The Muslims must embrace moderate values and shun all proclivities of prejudices. They must unite to live honourably.

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