



Journal of World Religions and Interfaith

ISSN: 2958-9932 (Print), 2958-9940 (Online)

Vol. 3, Issue 2, Fall (July-December) 2024, PP. 179-203

HEC: <https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/services/faculty/journals/Documents/Merged%20policy%20and%20recognised%20list%202024.pdf>

Journal homepage: <https://journals.iub.edu.pk/index.php/jwrih>

Issue: <https://journals.iub.edu.pk/index.php/jwrih/issue/view/203>

Link: <https://journals.iub.edu.pk/index.php/jwrih/article/view/3299>

DOI: <https://journals.iub.edu.pk/index.php/jwrih/article/view/3299>

Publisher: Department of World Religions and Interfaith Harmony, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan



Title Foundational Sources of Western Thought and Civilization: An Historic Exploration from the Islamic Perspective



Author (s): **Dr. Riaz Ahmad Saeed**
Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Thought and Culture, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, Pakistan.



Dr. Sabah Naz
Lecturer, Department of Islamic Thought and Culture, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, Pakistan.



Received on: 24 November, 2024

Accepted on: 10 December, 2024

Published on: 31 December, 2024



Citation: Ahmad Saeed, D. R., & Naz, D. S. (2024). Foundational Sources of Western Thought and Civilization: An Historic Exploration from the Islamic Perspective. *Journal of World Religions and Interfaith Harmony*, 3(2), 179–203. Retrieved from <https://journals.iub.edu.pk/index.php/jwrih/article/view/3299>



Publisher: The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan



Journal of World Religions and Interfaith Harmony by the [Department of World Religions and Interfaith Harmony](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#).

Foundational Sources of Western Thought and Civilization: An Historic Exploration from the Islamic Perspective

Dr. Riaz Ahmad Saeed

Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Thought and Culture,
National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad.

Email: drriazsaeed@gmail.com

Dr. Sabah Naz

Lecturer, Department of Islamic Thought and Culture,
National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad.

Email: sabah.naz@numl.edu.pk

Abstract

The contemporary era is considered the most established period of human intellectual history, an age of culmination of human thought, civilization, and philosophy. The diverse theories, unique concepts and innovative ideas have reached their zenith with the intense competition of thought and civilization. In such a competitive scenario, Islamic and Western civilizations have acquired special attention, role, and status in the global sociopolitical context. Every civilization has some special features and elements which make it distinct from others. This study will deliberate the foundational sources of western thought and civilization regarding its historic exploration from within the Islamic context. A historic and analytical research methodology has been adopted for a better understanding of western and Islamic thoughts by comparing different aspects of both perceptions. It is perceived that Western civilization is a mixture of Greco-Roman Civilization including tenets from Judeo-Christian sources which evolved through centuries to reach its current position while the Islamic civilization has revealed footings with a socio-religious and religio-political rich history. Therefore, the impact and status of the two civilizations are different from each other due to distinct epistemological considerations.

Keywords: Foundational sources, Western civilization and Thought, Islamic perspective, exploration.

Introduction:

Our age is the most established era of human intellectual growth, the age of culmination of human thought, philosophy and civilization. Human ideas and intellect have reached the level of their highest elevation. New ideas are being generated gradually, discarding and replacing old perspectives. The scholars of every religion, faith and ideology are using modern and postmodern techniques and approaches for their discourses and expressions. In this scenario, the competitions of thoughts and civilization are on the highest level. The foundations and originality of thought and civilizations are being discussed heatedly. The Islamic and Western civilizations have adopted a very special kind of role and status in modern sociopolitical and socioeconomic contexts. Islamic thought and civilization are based upon revealed instructions and human inference in the light of revealed guidance while Western thought and civilization are man-made developments. Islamic civilization has divine foundational sources while Western civilization is a secular one. Moreover, Islamic thought and civilization may be counted as significant developments laden with golden principles and the richest thought in human history. One of the exemplary services of the Holy Qur'ān is to make its followers free from irrelevant physical and mental boundaries and it provides humanity with a new global foundation of thought, ethics, and civilization.

Contrary to this, Western thought has its foundation transformed through human intelligence. Western civilizations are constructions of a secular approach rather than divine. It should also be noted that every civilization has some special features and elements, so it is necessary to get familiar with them before any criticism and analysis. The Western civilization is a composite of Greek and Roman civilizations. According to a scholarly investigation, the major sources of its ingredients are Secularism, Darwinism, Capitalism, Nationalism, Materialism etc.¹ Western and Islamic systems of thought have become leading concepts of our worldview today.

Islam is a divine and revealed thought and civilization while Western thought and civilization are considered secular civilization and thought of the Modern world with dominant power and authority. This study will discuss the fundamental sources of Western thought and civilization to point out their ultimate distinctions. In this regard, for a comparative stance from an Islamic

¹ Nadvī, Syed Abū al-Ḥassan 'Alī, *Insānī Dunyā par Muslamānon kay 'Urūg-o-Zwāl kā Athar (The Impact of The Rise and Fall of Muslims on the Human World)*, Majlis Nashriyyāt -e- Islam, Karachi 1992, p. 197-203. Nadvī, Syed Abū al-Ḥassan, *Islam and the World the Rise and Decline of Muslims and its Effect on Mankind*, Islamic Academy UK, 2005, p. 102.

perspective, it is important to highlight the constituents of each civilization with later developments. Side by side, this investigation will show how both civilizations have contributed toward various aspects of living styles, what are their inbuilt characteristics required for human respect, guidance and well-balanced progress?

Fundamental Sources of the Western Civilization:

It is difficult to determine and judge the foundational sources of any thought or civilization, especially of Western civilization. Different scholars present different points of view about Western civilization, thought and philosophy. A historical Hadith of the beloved Prophet ﷺ also leads us towards the foundation and history of the West. The Kindest Prophet ﷺ once said; “*You shall fight against Fāris (Persian Empire) one or two times, and you shall conquer it. But the Romans (West) have many edges. (You shall fight against Romans again and again). If you shall succeed on one end it shall express the other edge*”.² According to a Will Durant; “Civilization is social order promoting cultural creation. Four elements constitute it: “economic provisions, political organizations, moral traditions, and the pursuit of knowledge and arts”.³

It should also be realized that Western thought is not an abstract system but a combination of many ideas and isms. Ghāzī (2009) argued about the West likewise; “The West is not considered a piece of land. It is a dominant thought and civilization (which was developed in the context of Judeo-Christian tradition, Roman laws, Greek Philosophy, Secularism and Modern Sciences”.⁴ According to Nadavī (1995): “Every civilization has some special features and elements which are necessary to know before any criticism to it. The Western civilization is a mixture of Greek and Roman civilizations. Its major sources are Secularism, Darwinism, Capitalism, Nationalism, and Materialism etc.”⁵ Lakhvī (1965b) comments on this as:

“A lot of historical, social, political, economic and religious factors have played their role through times in the formation and development of Western thought, but the role of three major aspects has been vital and

(*Ibn-e-Abī Shaība's Compilation of* ²Ibn-e-Abī Shaība, Abu Bakar, *Musannaf Ibn-e-Abī Shaība*, Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī Beirut, n. d, Ḥadīth no.18772. *Ḥadīth on Fiqhī Order*)

³Durant, Will, *The Story of Civilizations*, Simon & Schuster Publishers New York 1954, Vol. 1, p.1.

⁴Ghāzī, Maḥmūd Aḥmad, *Islām awr Maghribī Ta’lūqāt, (Islam and Western Relations)* Zawār Academy Karachi, 2009, p.11.

⁵Nadavī, Abū al-Ḥassan ‘Alī, *Islam and the World*, Islamic Academy London, 1995, p. 192-275.

basic, 1- Greek philosophy 2- Roman socio-political approach, and 3- Revolt against Christianity”.⁶

While the Western civilization seems new, but this civilization has conventional roots of thousands of years old. According to some scholars, the beginning of the Reformation movement in Europe was established in the 12th century. ‘Alwī (2011) comments as.

“The suffocated Christian society of Europe felt a pleasant change in the 12th century. Some rays of love and knowledge spread in a harsh environment of hate and ignorance. There were three sources of this light, 1- Muslim-West interaction, 2- Greek philosophy, 3- Reformation movement”.⁷

The scholars differ on the basic sources of Western thought and civilization. In the light of the above discussion, we say that Western civilization and thought have six fundamentals and historical foundations. These are Greek Philosophy, Roman Approach, Judeo-Christian Tradition, Secularism and modern sciences. The major parts of Western thought and civilization are man-made. The interest in religion and revealed scripture have less importance in the systems of Western thought. So, it has no agreed-upon sources like Islamic thought. This was only an overview of Western thought and civilization. In the next lines, we will mention briefly the foundational and historical sources of Western thought and civilization because the modern trends in fundamental human rights, civil liberties, and other freedoms depend upon these sources.

1. Greek Philosophy as Foundation of Western Civilization: Most scholars agreed with the point that the history of Western thought and civilization is the history of Western philosophy. McNeill (1996) noticed; “A History of Western Thought is apparently a history of Western philosophy which started in the 6th century BC with Thales, the father of Greek philosophy, and thus the father of philosophy in the Western world”.⁸ Hence, we shall start our journey to trace the foundation of Western thought from Greek philosophy.

Greece was the earliest model of Western thought and civilization. If we observe the ancient Greek society, we will find that it consists of poor farmers and landlords. They were fighting with each other, the farmers were discriminated by landlords and aristocrats because of the uneven division of resources. History did

⁶Lakhvī, Muhammad Ḥammād *Historical Foundations of Western Thought, Al-Qalam* 15:2 (2010):, p.57.

⁷Alwī, Mustafiz Aḥmad, *Tehzīb kā Barzakh, (Isthmus of Civilization or Barzakh of Civilization)* Pūrab Academy Islamabad, 2011, p.12.

⁸McNeill, William, *Rise of the West*, University of Chicago Press USA, 1996, p.484.

not record the coming of any Prophet or Messenger of God into the Greek regions. They were pagans and had no sacred teachings about human respect, duties and rights. A society with such a background may cause difficulties and danger for humanity. In this situation the importance of reformers and thinkers becomes significant. History tells us about the reforms of Solon (638-558BC) against these suppressions and discrimination in the state of Athens. Lakhvī (1965b) comments.

“Solon’s reforms accumulate the public from the repression of the aristocracy and granted them such a pleasant and impartial environment for liberty and rights of the common people. Moreover, Solon launched a political theory with restricted power to the government and equal rights to the general people”.⁹

Because of these reforms and civil activities, the Athenian government in 600 BC is considered the first democracy in Western history. According to Saylor foundation’s research, “Athens may be remembered as the first democracy of the world, but its democratic government developed very leisurely, and only appeared after an extensive series of reforms”.¹⁰ The cost of citizenship was to serve the state and government. In other words, they were the servants of a kingdom which could use them for any difficult task the public was forced to follow the command. Athens was considered the most powerful and richest in that era of Greek history.

In the 5th century BC, Greek philosophy took a new twist with the appearance of Sophists. They denied all fixed and permanent rules of state and society and stressed that ‘Man is the measure of all things. Therefore Gettell (1964) said; “These principles and regulations differ very much, conflicting with the government”.¹¹ Socrates was the other important figure in ancient Greek philosophy. He presented a new principle contrary to the Sophist philosophy which is called the Universal Principle of Justice, equality and righteousness. He firmly understood that politics and governing are arts and that not every person or society has the ability to rule the people. Qudwāī (1926b) observes.

“Socrates considered that the constitution of the state and education system must be made resolutely appropriate to that very goal because the total

⁹Lakhvī, *Historical Foundations of Western Thought*, p. 58.

¹⁰<http://www.saylor.org/hist301/#2.3.3/> Accessed: 28/2/2019.

¹¹Gettell, Raymond G., *History of Political Thought*, George Allan & Unwind ltd. London, 1964, p.43.

system of state would be in the control of these particular persons because political skill is not an art which can be achieved by everyone”.¹²

So, the governing was the right of only a few most eligible persons. In other words, this differed from the idea of the public democratic government. Gettell (1964) rightly comments; “He [Socrates] insisted on political education, attacked the extensive democracy of his time, with its assumption of equality between men and its official choices by lot, and suggested that the state be ruled by intelligentsia’s aristocracy”.¹³ In its actual sense, the present Western political system is the same as it was in Greece in the name of democracy.

Another eminent Greek philosopher was Plato (427-347 BC), the great pupil of Socrates. Plato’s *Republic* is considered as his worthiest contribution. In his political theory, Plato focuses on state powers. Plato’s political thought rejected the popular will of the people as democracy, and it centered on the national theocracy without taking into account the economic structure of the society. According to Boyle’s (1691) observation; “Plato’s political doctrine looks to revolve around theocracy, militarism, nationalism, hierarchy, liberalism, totalitarianism, and the absolute disregard of economic arrangements of the community”.¹⁴ For his suggested powerful state, Plato denies the rights of person and community. Mujīb (1998) argues; “According to Plato’s political philosophy, the state is a collection of persons for the function of the completion of human desires which could never be done without the state”.¹⁵ In his social thought, Plato focuses on justice and happiness and joins them together.

Boyle mentions the same.

“An important claim of Plato’s Republic is justice and happiness that they are placed and dropped together. He said in a dialogue with Socrates, ‘Pursue justice because justice itself is so immense that nothing that is achieved by injustice could be superior’”.¹⁶

Plato is not a categorical supporter of gender equality and social equality.¹⁷ Instead, he divides society in three categories.¹⁸ The fourth most

¹²Qudwāī, Hāshim, *Europe kay ‘Azīm Sīyāsī Mufakkirīn, (The Great Political Thinkers) Āwāz* Foundation Lahore, n. d., p.33

¹³Gettell, *History of Political Thought*, p.46.

¹⁴ Blackburn, Simon, *Plato’s Republic: A Biography*, Atlantic Press New York, 2006, p.107.

¹⁵Mujīb, Muhammad, *Sīyāsī Falsafah, (Political Philosophy)* Nigārishāt Publishers Lahore, 1998, p.39.

¹⁶Simon, *Plato’s Republic: A Biography*, trans. Benjamin Jowett. .Istanbul: Kitap Projessi, 2014, p.108

¹⁷Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Benjamin Jowett, Lerner Publishing Group, Inc. 2015, p.170-171.

renowned figure of Greek philosophy is Aristotle (384-322 BC). Western thought and civilization are much influenced by Aristotle's philosophy due to his extreme advocacy for freedom and democracy. To him 'the general creation' called human beings, are social animals on earth. An Indian scholar Bhandārī (1963), argues; "Aristotle considers liberty and equality as the basic elements of democracy and explains the freedom as doing what one wishes".¹⁹ According to Lakhvī (1965b);

"Backdrop of Aristotle's observation against the democratic system is similar to Plato that very notion of a society separated into diverse classes. He is also afraid of human equality because he deems equal rights and freedom to everybody means no rights or freedom at all".²⁰

When we understand Greek philosophy in the context of Western thought, it appears that the Greek philosophy is overall atheistic, pagan and secular. In fact, it is slavery oriented which divides society, state and power. Many studies show that the foundation of slavery had been laid down by the Greeks in human history. Vlastos (1995) also discussed this phenomenon.²¹ Finley (1979) commented that: "But one should not try to deny the truth that, without the instrument of slavery, the culture of the ruling class in Greece could in no way have become what it did."²² While slavery was prohibited legally or theoretically in all periods of the Greek empire, some scholars observe that Greek thought accommodates slavery. According to Zaidī (1963), "It seems the Greek philosophers, recognized slavery as somewhat natural".²³ In *Tārīkh-e-Jamhūrīyyat*, Razzāqī (1957) rightly noticed; "That's why Aristotle considers that slavery is an essential social aspect, and a depressed class is necessary for the horizontal running of a social organism".²⁴ These studies show that modern Western philosophy is a new brand of thought stemming from early Greek society. Bernard (2006) opines.

"The participation of Greek philosophy in the Western philosophical tradition is not calculated simply by the reality that antique philosophy

¹⁸ *Plato divided society into the producers, the auxiliaries, and the guardians. The guardians ruling party. They are chosen from among the ranks of the auxiliaries. The producers have no share in ruling, they merely obey what the rulers decree.*

¹⁹ Bhandārī, D. R., *History of European Political Philosophy*, Bangalore Publishing Co. India, 1963, p.38.

²⁰ Lakhvī, *Historical Foundations of Western Thought*, p.64.

²¹ Vlastos, Gregory, *Studies in Greek Philosophy: Socrates, Plato, and their Tradition*, Princeton University Press, 1995, p.91-95.

²² Finley, M. I., *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology*, The Viking Press New York, 1979, p.12

²³ Zaidī, BH. *Message of Freedom from Magna Carta to Lahore Pledge*, Asia Publishers India, 1963, p.1.

²⁴ Razzāqī, Shāhīd H, *Tārīkh-e-Jamhūrīyat, (History of Democracy)* Institute of Islamic Culture Lahore, 1957, p.73.

created several grounds of enquiry which carry on to the current day. It appears also in the reality that in every age philosophers have gazed back to antique philosophy”.²⁵

From this humanitarian centred theory, modern Western scholars derived the philosophy that absolute freedom means humanism. According to ‘Askarī (1997); “Actually, they saw a community of living persons without any faith in the start or end of this world, so they decided all matters in the context of human desires. This idea developed in the theory of ‘humanism’ in Europe afterwards in the 16th century”.²⁶ Therefore, we may observe and add that most of the Modern Western theories related to human needs and requirements are linked to ancient Greek Philosophy with some alterations. Let us not forget that Greek philosophy, considered as one of the foundational sources of modern Western thought, contains atheist and pagan tendencies and it has nothing to do with divine revelation.

2. Roman Sociopolitical Approach: According to the majority of scholars, the Roman socio-political approach is another constituent of modern Western thought because Romans replaced the Greeks. The kingdom of Rome arose around three hundred years before the Christian era. According to Lecky (1890):

“Romans were the successors of Greeks. They were supreme in power, Army and administration over the Greeks but in art, literature, architecture and civilization they could not beat the Greeks. So, they always mentally had been subdued and they copied the Greeks in every field of life without any hesitation”.²⁷

Comparatively, they were more republican and human-centered than Greeks. According to Mujīb (1998); “Definitely, the Stoic thinkers (Zeno was their leader in 300BC) assisted in the spread of Greek civilization but they entirely altered the approach concerning the classic political philosophy of Greeks”.²⁸ Romans were also different from the Greeks in practical political life. Ḥammād (1965b) observes: “Roman leadership focused on governing the state rather than rising theories and philosophies. Hence, they established a powerful judiciary on the base of united Roman law through mutual assistance and aristocracy which was the power of the Roman Empire”.²⁹

²⁵William, Bernard, *the Sense of the Past*, Princeton University Press London, 2006, p.8.

²⁶Askarī, Sayyid Hassan, *Jadīdiyyat, (Modernity)* Idāra Farūgh-e-Islam Lahore, 1997, p.26.

²⁷Lecky, William Edward, *History of the European Morals* Vol. 1, Longmans Green London, 1890, p.131.

²⁸Mujīb, *Sīyāssī Falsafah, (Political Philosophy)*, p.78.

²⁹Hammad, *Islam Maʿn Ḥurrīyyat-e-Fard kā Taṣawwur, (Individual Freedom in Islam)* Lahore: University of the Punjab, 2001), p.132.

Democracy in Roman Empire was the dominant factor but unfortunately, it was not a scheme for human rights and liberties but one to cauterize the nearest population, states, and nations and rule over them. Barq (2011) commented about the Romans as; “The expansion of Greco-Roman democracy was a birth of a powerful Roman Empire and civilization in 265 BC. With the passage of time, its victories expanded over many countries of Europe, Africa and Asia till 117 CE.”³⁰ It was the great civilization and power which ruled over the majority of the world till its decline in 1453 CE.

The prominent Roman political philosopher Cicero made excellent contributions to establishing Roman Empire as a republican commonwealth. He presented the moral laws for the public and state as a general law of the Roman Empire. According to this law, the state should be governed according to the will of individuals of the state. A Western political philosopher McIlwain (1932) observes; “The law is general to all people and to God and as mature as time is also the basis of the state itself, a state is no more else than an organization in law”.³¹ Cicero suggested that moral law should be an essential source of state laws and the constitution. Gettell writes in ‘*History of Political Thought*’; “He [Cicero] understood that moral laws are as valid to political affairs as they are to personal matters, and that right law is true reason in accordance with nature, it is of the universal appliance, fixed and eternal”.³² Cicero understood that equal liberties, rights and other facilities can be enjoyed only in the commonwealth of the public.

The Roman idea of human freedom and equality is the continuation of Greek thought in a more appropriate way. Roman scholars claimed that a strong state is the best way to defend and provide human liberties and rights. Lakhvī mentions; “According to Roman philosophers the state is a necessary organization and natural body which assures rights, responsibilities and tasks for both the person and the government”.³³ These attractive reasons caused the public and aristocrats to get affiliated with Roman Empire because it represented law, power and civilization. This notorious popularity greatly affected the civil population of the Empire. Slavery acquired a social and legal justification by national law. The studies tell that the national law and natural law contradicted each other. This

³⁰Barq, Ghulām Gīllānī, *Europe Par Islām kay Iḥsānāt*, (Benefactions of Islam upon Europe) Al-Faisal Nashran, Lahore, 2011, p.31.

³¹McIlwain, C. H., *The Growth of Political Thought in the West*, Macmillan New York, 1932, p.116.

³²Gettell, *History of Political Thought*, p.83.

³³Lakhvī, *Historical Foundations of Western Thought*, p.67.

conflict affected Roman society very much in both positive and negative ways. In the opinion of Mujīb (1998);

“In fact, slavery was legal according to the National Law but it confronted with Natural Law because all human beings are born free with reference to the Natural Law.”³⁴

Another important aspect of Roman thought was immorality. The elite class of Romans was free from all laws and responsibilities. According to Edward (1993); “Idea of immorality was the essential approach of [what] elite Romans thought about themselves, both as a nation in relation to those who were not Romans and as persons relative to the state and one another”.³⁵ The Roman State was not completely republican but it was a limited democracy, and the citizens were divided into the nobles and the poor. ‘Ain-ul-Haq argued as;

“There was a senate which consisted of selected persons. The citizens of Romans were divided into two main groups, the Patricians and the Plebeians, the first consisted of riches and enjoyed all the rights but the second one was poor and had no rights”.³⁶

To other nations Romans were wicked and cruel. The collection of slaves, wealth and resources of other nations was their famous engagement, even after the embracement of Christianity as a religion. In this respect ‘Allāmah Iqbāl’s (d.1938) reservation towards the destruction of the Western civilization is a well-made point;

تمہاری تہذیب اپنے خنجر سے آپ ہی خود کشی کرے گی

جو شاخ نازک پہ آشیانہ بنے گا، ناپائدار ہو گا

“Your civilization will commit suicide with its own dagger
Because a nest built on a slender bough cannot last”³⁷

Furthermore, Sheikh Hāmid (2007) asserts; “The Roman context is prominent in Western thought and civilization. History shows that the Roman Empire’s leading motif is colonialism. To enslave other population, countries, resources and leadership have been its biggest contributions of it”.³⁸ Modern

³⁴Mujīb, Siyāsi Falsafah, (Political Philosophy), p.90.

³⁵Edward, Katherine, *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome*, Cambridge University Press NY, 1993, p.2.

³⁶‘Ain-ul-Haq, Sayed, *Tehzībāyn (Civilizations)*, ‘Alī Book Depot Karachi, 1966, p.474-475.

Sa’d Publications, ³⁷Iqbāl, ‘Allāmah Muhammad, *Kullīyyāt-e-Iqbāl, (Collections of Iqbal’s Poetry)* Lahore n. d., p.174.

American Empire on the Track of Fall (³⁸Kamāluddīn, Hāmid, *Rubah Zawāl American Empire*, down) Īqāz Publishers Lahore, 2007, p.29.

Western civilization and thought stand on the pillars of colonialism, imperialism and capitalism, both as a great civilization of the World and as the continuation of Greek slavery in the modern era. The historical expression of the Roman Empire has the greatest affiliation and link with the modern British and American Empires.

3. Judeo-Christian Tradition: Judeo-Christian tradition is another most significant foundation of modern Western thought and civilization. The term Judeo-Christian has ancient roots in Western history, as well as in the Biblical traditions. An early propagator of Christianity to other nations, Saint Paul, wrote in his letter to the Romans; “I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For that I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew”.³⁹ Western theologian Garry North writes; “This lexis of Paul, advises Christians not to visualize that God has finished dealing with the Jews as a split people. Paul made it apparent that the eschatological trust of the church of Jesus Christ is fixed closely to the change of the Jews as a people at some prospect position in history”.⁴⁰

The English dictionary defines the term “Judeo-Christian” as; “The issues or matters concerning to or originated from both the Jewish and Christian faith and theology: Judeo-Christian ethics”.⁴¹ Hughes (2012), defines the Judeo-Christian tradition in a comprehensive way; “Judeo-Christian tradition is a term used by Christian scholars since 1950 to cover professed general moral principles footed on Judaism and Christianity. Now, it has become part of American public faith and is frequently used to promote inter-faith cooperation”.⁴² Bernard Lewis says;

“We are facing a requirement and a movement for surpassing the stage of matters and polices and the government that trails them. This is no less than a spare of civilization the possibly illogical but definitely historic of an earliest rival against our heritage, and Judeo-Christian tradition”.⁴³

The importance of Judeo-Christian tradition determines the importance of religion in the West. Ghāzī (2010) comments on the religious aspect;

³⁹ Romans 11:1.

⁴⁰North, Garry, *The Judeo-Christian Tradition*, Institute for Economics Texas, 1990, p.5.

⁴¹<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Judeo-Christian+tradition/> Accessed: 30/8/2017.

⁴²Hughes, W. Aaron, *Abrahāmic Religions, On the Uses and Abuses of History*, Oxford University Press London, 2012, p.71-75.

⁴³Lewis, Bernard, The Roots of Muslim Rage, *The Monthly Atlantic* September, 1990, p.60.

“Many scholars say it has been just out of their simplicity that the West adopted secularism and has cast away religion from their lives and now they are free from any kind of religious bigotry. I think it is only simplicity, they forget the fact that they deleted religion from the public sphere not from all spheres”.⁴⁴

We can think, that the West is trying to overcome the religious issue. They want to use religion for their wide economic and social objectives. Although Islam is not a part of Judeo-Christian tradition some scholars suggest including it in this term. Hughes (2012) comments; “The attempts in the current years have been made to substitute the term Judeo-Christian with Abrahamic religions to comprise Islam”.⁴⁵ Although the terms Abrahamic faiths or Semitic Religions had were introduced in the Western world in the ancient times, they may not fulfil their requirements, because every term has its own special meaning and historical context. The historian and religious scholar know very well that Islam used the term “People of the Book” as a religious term in the Qur’ān and traditions of the Prophet ﷺ.

Some theologians and scholars see it as a common base of unity and culture because one part of the revealed text of both is the same, as well as the Prophet Abraham is common. Several scholars, such as Hughes (2012) have this idea; “Abraham [Prophet Ibrahim AS] has a fundamental role in each faith. This thesis supports the discovery of something constructive, general trust or ethical bond that Jews, Christians (as well as Muslims) allocate till today due to their common spiritual ancestor-ship”.⁴⁶ If they would intentionally go head-on these steps, these efforts could lead to peace, prosperity and stability.

With the passage of time, the term Judeo-Christian has adapted a new connotation in the West and especially in America; both communities have organized themselves into separate religious communities. In 1952, Dwight Eisenhower, the presenter of an International Conference of Christians and Jews, stated in his key address; “All people are created by their God. In other terms, our structure of government has no reason until it is established in a sincerely considered religious belief, and I do not care what it is. With us obviously, it is the Judeo-Christian tradition”.⁴⁷ In current politics, this issue has also gained

⁴⁴ Buzdār, ‘Abdul Qādir, “Islam and the West, Specific Study of Dr. Ghāzī’s Thoughts”, *Biannual al-Īdhā’* 28:2 (2014), p.219-239.

⁴⁵ Hughes, *On the Uses and Abuses of History*, p.72.

⁴⁶ Hughes, *On the Uses and Abuses of History*, p.57.

⁴⁷ Hennery Patrick, “The Traditional History of a Civil Religion Proof-Text”, *The Journal of American Academy of Religion* 49:1 (1981), 35-47; <http://jaar.oxfordjournals.org/content/XLIX/1/35.full>.

importance and the party known as “Conservative” uses it in its election campaigns. According to Wilcox (2010); “The Christian right is an effort to re-establish the Judeo-Christian ideals of a country that is in profound ethical fall. They think that society bears the need for solid foundations of Judeo- Christian traditions and they seek to mark laws that represent these morals”.⁴⁸ This historical term is also used to improve the relationship between Jewish and Christian communities. Jackson (2006) observes.

“We are associates in an extensive and affluent spiritual history, the Judeo-Christian traditions. Many blacks (Christians) and Jews have a mutual zeal for social justice at home and peace outside. We should look for stimulation of the strength, encouraged by a new idea and new potential. We should revisit the elevated view. We are joined by Moses and Jesus”.⁴⁹

In the contemporary West, especially, in America, this term also proved to be the basis of a new cultural or civilizational war. Prager (2019) comments; “The idea of Judeo-Christian values does not respite on a claim that the two faiths are alike. It endorses the theory that there is a mutual connection of ideals based on the Bible, carried into our civilization by the beginning generations of Biblically oriented Protestants, that is central to American history, culture, and institutions”.⁵⁰ The theory of the clash of civilizations⁵¹ was proved to be food for thought. Western scholars mostly use it against Muslims. Hunter (1998) refuted the hypothesis of “clash of civilizations.” It is a dim picture concerning the relationship between Islam and the West without addressing the question of interactions.⁵² In particular, in this framework, the Muslim community has been portrayed as fundamentalists and the root of every evil in the world. Muslim identity is thus being considered wrongly, within an irrelevant context a challenge and threat to the West.

4. Secularism as the core foundation of Western Civilization:

Secularism is unanimously said to be one of the foundations of modern Western thought and civilization. Margaret Marcus observes: “The society of the ancient Greek was the earliest in history to divorce its institutions, customs, arts,

⁴⁸Wilcox Clyde, *Onward Christian Soldiers: The Religious Rights in American Politics*, West View Press New York, 2010, p.13.

⁴⁹ Hartman, Douglass, “One Multicultural Nation under God”, *Journal of Media and Religion* 4:4 (2005), 207-234; http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1207/s15328415jmr0404_1.

⁵⁰<http://www.dennisprager.com/the-case-for-judeo-christian-values-part-v/> Accessed:30/9/2019.

⁵¹ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, New York, 1996.

⁵² Hunter, Shireen T., *The Future of Islam and the West: Clash of Civilizations Or Peaceful coexistence*, Praeger Publishers Westport, USA, 1998.p.6-7.

and science from religion. In other words, that of the ancient Greeks was the first truly secular society (and the modern Western civilization is the reflection of it)".⁵³ Roman and Greek civilizations, which were the foundations of the modern Western civilization, are based on purely material aspects, without any religious or spiritual sentiments. Here, Şiddiqui (1991) argues.

“The Greek civilization was the first apparent model of the present Western civilization. It was the first-ever civilization based on the secular philosophy of life. And as the owners of this special philosophy of civilization, they spread it all over the world”.⁵⁴

In the West, religious supremacy and interference of the Church in state affairs have a long history. In Europe, there was a time when the Pope had the authority to make or dismiss kings. The supremacy of Christianity in the polytheist Roman Empire is a well-known fact of history. Nadavī (1992) said, “The revolutionary incident of that age was that the Roman Empire adopted Christianity as religion. Although Christian historians consider this a great victory of Christianity, it was an incident which changed the Christians’ basic creeds and deeds”.⁵⁵ The clash of Religion and Science in the West also has a long history. In the age of Reformation and Renaissance, this confrontation had become prominent. Al-Sibāey (2000) states:

“When the mind of the Western intellectuals opened due to interaction with Islam, the result was very different from the Church’s teachings. Then they refused in the name of knowledge of all mythology and Christian Dogma. As a result, the long clash between religion (Christian Dogma) and science began”.⁵⁶

Although Christianity conquered the Roman Empire in 325 CE, it is also a fact of history that the acceptance of Christianity by King Constantine was due to political reasons, not on the base of willingness and understanding. Because of this, they could not sweep out the ancient Roman beliefs but the principles of these religious systems got mixed with each other. Draper (1875) wrote;

“Political reasons had led the emperors to look with favour on the admixture of Christianity and Paganism, and by this means the bitterness of the rivalry between those antagonists was somewhat abated. The heaven of the

⁵³Maryam Jamīla, *Western Civilization Condemned by Itself*, Vol.1, Yusuf Khan Lahore, 2000, p.1.

⁵⁴Siddīqūī, ‘Abdul Ḥamīd, *Insāniyyat kī Ta‘mīr-e-Nau Aur Islam*, (Human Renaissance and Islam) Islamic Publishing Lahore, 1991, p.21.

⁵⁵Nadavī, ‘Abul Hassan, *Insānī Duniyā Par Muslamānūn kay ‘Urūj-o-Zawāl kā Athar*, (*The Impact of The Rise and Fall of Muslims on the Human World*) Nashrīyāt Karachi, 1992, p.208.

(*The Glittering Aspects of Civilization*) ⁵⁶Sibāey, Muṣṭafā, *Islamī Tehzīb kay Darakhashān Pehlū*, Islamic Publications Lahore, 2000, p.15.

Popular, the fashionable Christianity was the old Olympus, from which Greek divinities had been removed”.⁵⁷

Both thoughts: Paganism and Christianity ran side by side for about one thousand years, but Christianity had not been able to totally demolish the Greek and Roman Hellenistic (Paganism) thought. As a result, this combination could not bring any positive change in public and elite life or reform society. In other words, Christianity could not reform society. According to Lecky (1903); “Dark Ages (Millennium Christian Era) is one of the most contemptible in history [and civilization of this age have] no justification of the common boast about the regeneration of society by the Church.”⁵⁸ Hence, with the passage of time, the distance between Christianity, scholars and the public has gradually increased. Improper hardness from the Church, the royal but corrupt life of the Pope and his companions, and the enmity of knowledge and indulgences issues shaped a protest against the Church. Every mistake of the government was ascribed to the Church because the public held the Church responsible for everything.

Secularism is not only a term but an ideology and behaviour. Scherer (2011) writes; “That secularism is an ideology. That it is a central cognitive condition of modernity. That it is a key player in the leading narratives about modernity. That it is an institutional formation that governs the conduct of individuals and communities”.⁵⁹ Taylor (2010) defines secularism as;

“It is generally agreed that modern democracies have to be “secular”. There is perhaps a problem, certain ethnocentricity, involved in this term. But even in the Western context the term is not limpid and may in fact be misleading. What in fact does it mean? There are at least two models of what constitutes a secular regime. Both involve some kind of separation of the Church and State. The state can’t be officially linked to some religious confession”.⁶⁰

Secularism is not only the separation of religion from political, social and economic affairs but practically an approach and ideology to remove religion from the society and state. There are many modes and versions of secularism which exist all over the world. Some countries have no separation between religion and state, but they are called secular as India and America some countries

⁵⁷Draper, William, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*, Appleton New York, 1875, p.72.

⁵⁸Lecky, *History of the European Morals, Vol.2*, p. 6-7.

⁵⁹Scherer, Mathew, “Landmark in the Critical Study of Secularism”, *Cultural Anthropology* 26:4 (2011), p.612; <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1548-1360.2011.01115.x/abstract>.

⁶⁰Charles, Taylor, “The Meaning of Secularism”, *The Hedgehog Review* 12:3 (2010), 23-35; http://iasc-culture.org/THR/THR_article_2010_Issue_Fall_Taylor.

are called secular and they promote their mainstream religion and radical behavior to others as Europe especially does against Islam. Therefore, scholars divide secularism into two major divisions, one is simple secularism which means separation of religion from collective lives and the other is radical secularism, which hates and dislikes religion even in personal life.

Mawdūd (2010) says it is easy to distinguish between radical and non-radical secularism:

“It is possible to distinguish between fundamental or ideological secularism, which argues for a complete partition between state and religion, and the moderate shapes that exist where secularism has become the order of the day. In nearly all of Western Europe there are points of symbolic, institutional, policy and financial linkages between the state and aspects of Christianity”.⁶¹

Laski’s (1936) views this as:

“In the period between the Reformation and the French Revolution a new social class established its title to a full share in the control of the state. In its ascent to power, it broke down the barriers which, in all spheres of life save the ecclesiastical, had made privilege a function of status, and associated the idea of rights with the tenure of land. To achieve its end, it affected a fundamental change in the legal relationships of men”.⁶²

It is noted that from the history that the Secularism and Religion have been opponent in the west in Christian era. According to Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas views;

“Because of the confusion caused by the permeation of Western elements, the religion from the outset and as it developed resolutely resisted and diluted the original and true teachings of Christianity. Neither the Hebrews nor the original Christians understood or knew or were coconscious of the presently claimed so called ‘radicalism’ of the religion as understood in the modern sense alter its development and secularization as Western Christianity and the modern interpretation based upon reading or misreading.”⁶³

In the West, the majority of people associate religion with a kind of slavery. A Western celebrity once said; “As my family is liberated from slavery, I

⁶¹ Mawdūd, Tāriq, “*Secularism, Religion and Religious Identity*”, *The Political* 81:1 (2010), p.5-14; https://www.academia.edu/2658039/SECULARISM_RELIGION_AS_IDENTITY.

⁶² Laski, Herald J., *Rise of the Liberalism*, Harpers & Brothers New York, 1936, p.11.

⁶³ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, , *Islam and Secularism*, International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization , Kuala Lumpur, 1993, p. 21

am liberated from the slavery of faith”.⁶⁴ Many well-known and popular actors including Leonardo DiCaprio do not believe in any religion. In Western countries, secularism has become an ideology of life while Christianity has accommodated itself with this ideology.

5. Liberalism a modern trend in Western thought and civilization: Liberalism is another most important fundamental source of western thought and civilization. “Liberal” means enlightened and free. After the Renaissance movement in the Western world, many theories and thoughts took birth. One of them is liberalism. The liberal approach or thought represents new values which appeal to man’s rationality and provide him with maximum individual rights, freedom and liberties. Liberalism has many branches, two of them very significant. One is the classical and the other is the radical or modern, Classical liberalism rejects orthodoxy but believes in some moral and political Western values (non-revealed). It also advocates the maximum role of government to provide liberal values and individual liberties and rights. In general political terms, liberalism is defined as; “Liberalism resembles a family portrait of principles and institutions, recognizable by certain characteristics-for example, individual freedom, political participation, private property, and equality of opportunity”.⁶⁵ The increasing development of secularism and atheism in the Western world is due to liberalism, which breaks every social and moral barrier of society.

Liberalism as a political theory talks about maximum liberty and individual rights for all. According to the Mannkall (1987) Report;

“Liberalism as a political and moral philosophy is centred on two main principles-these individualism and liberty. Firstly, liberalism places the individual at the heart of society and argues that the highest value social order is one that is built around the individual. Secondly, the purpose of the society is to allow individuals to reach their full potential if they want to and that the best way to do this is to give the individual as much liberty as possible”.⁶⁶

Currently, liberalism is a representative Western approach, most Western policies were made in the light of this approach. With the passage of time, this approach is losing its importance in the West and currently, a most dangerous and radical approach known as Postmodernism is going to replace it. The Postmodern or Radical approach represents the absolute tendency of individual freedom and

⁶⁴ Smith, W Allen, *Celebrities in Hell*, ChelC Press London, 2002), p.75.

⁶⁵ Doyle, M., “Liberalism and world politics”, *American Political Science Review* 80: 4(1986), 1151-69.

⁶⁶ <https://www.mannkal.org/downloads/scholars/liberalism.pdf>/ retrieved: 22/2/2019.

maximum rights. This approach has become a challenge, for the West as well as for all humankind in our age. This is a very radical approach which rejects all kinds of faith, values, laws and traditions of the state and society. Therefore, it is concluded, that the enmity of religion and blind following of science and human intellect has led the West to a *cul-de-sac* (closed-end Street). Thus, Lecomte du Nouÿ (1947) rightly observed.

“The modern unease arises mostly from the truth that intellect has deprived man of all motives for existence by rising in the name of science. Still, religion is required to give a sense to human life, a reason for the attempt, and an inspiring end to achieve”.⁶⁷

In this way, the tendency for absolute freedom is increasing day by day in the West. Liberty (of speech, press, association and information) is not absolutely free in the West, but people demand it continuously. Maliverni (1083) wrote; “Maximum liberty is a cornerstone of our society, yet it is still subject to exceptions. The main exceptions are set out in the second paragraph of article 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights”.⁶⁸ As a result, the religious norms and symbols are under the threat of blasphemy, Islamophobia and hate speech. There are two main trends of freedom in the present socio-political context, which differ from each other.

A modernist Muslim scholar Afzal-ur-Rehḡmān (1993) stated on the modern Western trend of liberty;

“The Western trend of freedom is a license to like and dislike without any moral and ethical restrictions, but in Islam, there is another concept of freedom and the West is not aware of this. It is an objective right from Almighty Allah with some restrictions and responsibilities”.⁶⁹

A Master level research from Michael D. Alley stated that:

“Western civilization is deeply rooted in liberal education. Many would argue that it was Socrates that founded liberal education in ancient Greece about 2500, years ago. Liberal education attempts to liberate people's minds, allow the development of new ideas and new opinions, and free people from their own ignorance and prejudices”.⁷⁰

⁶⁷Pierre Lecomte Do Nouÿ, *Human Destiny*, Longman Green & Co. London, 1947, p.13.

⁶⁸Giorgio Maliverni, “Freedom of information in European Commission of Human Rights and International Convention on Civil and Political Rights”, *Human Rights Law Journal* 4(1983):443-460. https://www.academia.edu/4672897/Freedom_of_Information.

⁶⁹Afzalur-Rehḡmān, *Shakhṣī Āzādī* (Personal Liberty), Feroze Sons Lahore, 1993, p.159-60.

⁷⁰Michael D. Alley, *The Decline Of Western Civilization: How Value Relativism Caused The Erosion Of Western Philosophical Activity*, A Master Thesis, Morehead State University, Kentucky, 2010, 18

We find two trends in the modern sociopolitical context one is the representative of freelance, unlimited freedom and individual rights which is called liberalism and the other is the representative of bounded and limited freedom with reference to some social and moral values. The West is the representative of the first one and Islam of the second one. Furthermore, liberalism has many kinds and divisions and now as an emerging trend radical liberalism is going to the top, which is a danger for Western thought as well as for the whole of humanity because it does not believe in any legal system, or ethical norms, values and social bindings.

6. Modern Sciences and Western Civilization.

In the contemporary era, Modern Science has become a most imperative factor and an element of contemporary Western Civilization. After the separation of religion from state affairs, modern science with its exclusive interest in a materialistic basis is rightly seen as a counter-balance to Christianity's emphasis on spirituality. However, secularists tend to overstate the tension between the two while underestimating the extent to which raw materialism places science at odds with the whole of Western tradition. For example, where the Greeks understood ethics and human nature as the highest pursuits of their philosophy, the science of psychology has been used to deny both morality and the human soul, turning man into nothing more than an animal and the mind materialistic like a robot. This conflict is not essential to modern science. Modern science is understood as the pursuit of knowledge in its particular sphere, it has contributed a great deal but has been made into an all-encompassing replacement for philosophy, the common good and the religion has become a "venom" for the human being. But we should not forget that science is not solely an inheritance of the west but the Islamic Tradition of Science has also greatly contributed to the collective consciousness of humanity and the overall body of science. According to a scholarly comment;

"The ascendancy of the West started in the eighteenth century, and though powered by a variety of scientific and technological breakthroughs, was either a lucky outcome of random historical forces or the result of borrowings from the "East." Writers in this camp focus on economic factors, ignore the unique Western origins of modern science, and ignore the legal and institutional foundations that enabled Western civilization to continue its ascendant path".⁷¹

We may end our discussion on sources of Western Civilization by quoting a renowned philosopher, thinker and mystic, Sheikh Badiuzaman Said Nursi

⁷¹Jack A. Goldstone, "Efflorescence and Economic Growth in World History: Rethinking the 'Rise of the West' and the Industrial Revolution," *Journal of World History* 13, no. 2 (2002): 323–89.

(1877-1960) understanding. He appeared as a great critic of modern Western civilization because it acts contrary to the fundamental teachings of the revealed religions, its evils have come to outweigh its good aspects. In the face of its injustices, consumerism, wastefulness, depravity, inequalities and much more, he cites verses of the Qur'ān encouraging frugality, contentment, hard work, brotherhood and prohibition of usury and interest and at the same time the beneficial utilization of technology and knowledge of science. Thus, he stated, “the application of these would heal humankind’s ‘wounds’ and allow a civilization to grow the virtues of which would prevail over its evils”⁷². It is perceived from the discussion, that for spiritual and social benefits of human beings the Islamic civilization must prevail but we should also get benefits from western civilization by using its modern scientific discoveries.

Distinctions of Islamic Thought and Civilization:

When we try to compare sources of both systems of thought it is observed that the major sources of the two are not aligned with each other. The main controversy lies between divine-oriented or man-oriented, as Islamic thought is a revealed thought and is based upon revelation while Western thought is human made and it has evolved in a historical process. According to Islamic scholars, the sources of Islamic rights and liberties are the same as the sources of Sharī‘ah. Al-Hagīl (2004) argues; “The sources of Islamic Rights (liberties) are the sources of Sharī‘ah”.⁷³ The primary sources of Islamic Sharī‘ah are only two, Qur’ān and Ḥadīth. Allah expresses this in the Holy Qur’ān as:

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ
وَالْحِكْمَةَ

“He sent among them a Messenger from among themselves, reciting unto them His Verses, and purifying them, and instructing them the Book and the wisdom”.⁷⁴

The Prophet ﷺ reminded about these primary sources in his last sermons during Ḥajj in the sacred place of ‘Arafāt, “*I left among you two things, you will not go astray as long as you hold on to them: the Book of Allah and my Sunnah*”.⁷⁵ This Ḥadīth of the Prophet ﷺ presents basic sources of Islamic thought with finality, completion and safety. Another verse of the Qur’ān also describes

⁷² Nursi, Badiuzamn Said, *The Damascus Sermon*, Sozler Publications Istanbul. 1996, pp. 126–131.

⁷³ Al-Hadīl, Sulaymān ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, *Human Rights in Islam and Refutation of the Misconceived Allegation Associated with These Rights*, Supreme council for Islamic affairs, UAE, 2004, p.41.

⁷⁴ Al-Qur’ān (III: 164)

⁷⁵ *Mu’īā Imām Mālik, (Imām Mālik’s Compilation of Aḥādīth) Ḥadīth no.1661.*

authenticity as well as everlasting impact of the Holy Qur’ān. Almighty Allah pronounces in the Qur’ān that:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

“Verily, We have sent down the Dhikr and surely, We will guard it”.⁷⁶

Kamālī explains this verse as: “The Text of the Qur’ān or Ḥadīth may convey a command or a prohibition”. He adds further; “According to the general rule, a command (*Amr*) conveys obligations (*Wajūb*) and prohibition (*Nahī*) conveys *Tahrīm* unless there is evidence to suggest otherwise”.⁷⁷ These verses of the Glorious Qur’ān tell us about the two authentic primary sources of Islam; one is the Qur’ān and other is the Ḥadīth of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). All other sources of the Islamic thought like *Ijmā’* (Muslim Scholarly Consensus) and *Qiyās* (Analog reasoning in Islamic Law) are human inferences in accordance with objectives of the *Sharīah*. The framework of the Islamic thought does not contradict with the message of Qur’ān and Ḥadīth

In Western perspective, the sources of Western thought and civilization are the ultimate results of human experience and evolution. Any kinds of revelation or religion are excluded from among those sources. These sources are doubtful, Islamic and Western scholars do not agree upon them. Different scholars present different views regarding sources of Western thought and civilization. Some Western scholars count four elements of civilization. According to Durant (1981), any permanent civilization has four elements; “Civilization is a social order promoting cultural creation. Four elements constitute it: economic provisions, political organizations, moral traditions, and the pursuit of knowledge and arts”.⁷⁸ Some scholars consider the Western civilization and thought as a continuation of Roman and Greek civilization. Lecky (1903) argues; “Romans were the successors of Greeks. They were supreme in power, army and administration over the Greeks but in Art, Literature, Architecture and Civilization, they could not beat the Greeks. So, they always mentally had been subdued and they used to copy the Greeks in every field of life without any hesitation”.⁷⁹ Muslim scholars share the same point of view. Lakhvī (1965b) articulates this as:

“Though a lot of historical social, political, economic and religious factors have played their role through times in formation and development of Western thought, but the role of three major aspects has been vital and

⁷⁶ Al-Qur’ān (XV:9)

⁷⁷ Kamālī, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence*, p.12.

⁷⁸ Durant, *The Story of Civilizations*, Vol., p.1.

⁷⁹ Lecky, *History of the European Morals*, Vo.1, p.131.

basic, 1- Greek Ideology 2- Roman approach, and 3- Revolt against Christianity(Religion)”.⁸⁰

It is also an admirable idea that Muslims have always tried to establish peaceful co-existence with the West though these efforts were destroyed due to some misconceptions and incidents. Ḥamīdullāh (2011) writes; “The beginning of Muslim relations with West was very good. But after the murder of the Islamic Ambassador by the Roman Governor, it turned into hostility. After-effects of this incident can be felt up till now after many years of this incident”.⁸¹

Islamic and Western interaction did not occur in a peaceful environment but in the field of war and weapons. Therefore, from the first day, Islamic and Western thoughts have become opponents to one another in every field of life. This opposition has been due to their historical role and contribution to global politics and civilization.

There can be another factor which is religious, Western thought is historically linked to Christianity and Islamic civilization is linked to Islam. Western thought is a combination of many facets of human nature and ideas of human history. Many social, cultural, political and religious factors have taken part in its creation. The basic difference between Islamic and Western thoughts is a revelation, which makes Western thought different from and sometimes opposite to Islamic thought. Concerning this point, Mawdūdī (1979), observed; “A purely materialistic civilization, its whole system is empty of any concept that favors a God centred life. It opposes Islam and seeks to eliminate those primary values on which Islamic thought stands”.⁸² Western civilization is based on the human intellect and as it does not depend on any revealed religion, its resultant thought system allows maximum liberty for the human wishes, as Amin (2013) argued:

“The Western civilization is based upon humanism, individualism, liberalism, secularism and capitalism, rather than upon a revealed religion or thought. Humanism and individualism mean a human being is free and is not dependent on any God, which he is compelled to follow with his obedience. He is lord and owner of this world, and his status is central and primary in this universe. He is independent and is not bound to follow any

⁸⁰Lakhvī, *Historical Foundations of Western Thought*, p.57.

Beacon Books Lahore, 2011, p.347.,⁸¹Ḥamīdullāh, Muhammad, *The Prophet of Islam*

⁸²Mawdūdī, Syed Abū al-A‘lā, *Islam and Secular Mind*, Islamic Research Academy Karachi, 2008, p.76.

divine guidance from Almighty Allah given in the shape of revealed Books and by prophets”.⁸³

History is an eyewitness that any thought and “ism” which have not been derived from the revelation of Almighty Allah could not become beneficial to humanity. The current sociopolitical scenario of the world is also living proof of the harmful impacts of Western thought. Human beings are much suffering from the venomous fruits and impacts (social, political and moral) of contemporary Western thought and civilization.

Equal rights and freedom for everybody mean no rights or freedom at all. Contrary to this, the Book of Allah announces that;

يَأْمُرُهُم بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُجِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ
وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ

“For he (The Prophet ﷺ) commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil; he allows them as lawful what is good (and pure) and prohibits them from what is bad (and impure); He releases them from their heavy burdens and from the yokes that are upon them”.

A great number of references from Qur’ān and Ḥadīth are available in this regard.

“The Prophet of Islam brought them a new synthesis of existing religious thoughts and customs. He fashioned a new order and community, deeply rooted in and joined by a religious vision; old notions and traditions transformed into the light of Islamic sources as a new wisdom of identity, commonality and authority. At the heart of the movement, Islam’s special monotheistic vision and way of life (revealed ideology)”.⁸⁴

Hence, we may consider the Islamic and Western systems of thought as two different approaches; the first one is the religious or Islamic approach which is the representative of limited and bounded freedom and rights with reasonable social and moral values and the second one is the modern liberal approach which is the representative of maximum or absolute freedom. However, even if they accept some limitations on personal liberty, they exclude the religious and moral norms. The alternative to western liberty is the Islamic approach, thought and civilization.

Conclusions:

⁸³Muhammad Amin, *Āzādī-e-IzhārkaḡNām Par (On the Name of Freedom of Expression)* (ed. Khalid Mateen), ‘Ilm-o-Irfān Publishers Lahore, 2013), p.33.

⁸⁴Esposito, John L, *The Islamic Threat Myth or Reality*, Oxford University Press New York, 1993, p.30.

Western civilization and thought have different fundamentals and historical development and expansion. These are the ramifications of Greek Philosophy, Roman Approach, Judeo-Christian Tradition and repercussion of Secularism. A major part of Western thought is manmade and unrevealed a juxtaposition of different cultures, so it has not agreed-upon foundational sources like Islamic thought. One may observe historically that ancient Greek society which created some main ingredients of Western thought and civilization had uneven social trends prevailing between deprived segments of society and landlords as well as an unequal division of resources. Plato's political theory focused on the state power rejecting the popular will of the people as democracy and it centered on the national theocracy without dealing with the economic structure of the society.

It has been found that human equality, equal rights and freedom to everybody mean no rights or freedom at all, that in the West they considered slavery an essential social aspect and the view that a depressed class is necessary for the horizontal running of a social organism is the integral factor of Western Civilization where National law and Natural Law contradict each other. This conflict seriously affected Roman society. Although Cicero thought that the moral laws hold both for the public and the state in which the state should be governed according to the will of individuals of the state. However, the elite class of Romans was free from laws and responsibilities while citizens were divided into the nobles and the poor. Islamic thought is embellished with equality and stability in all respects satisfying the needs of humanity.

After these broad-based findings, we may add that secularism and religion are not only two different and dissimilar viewpoints but also have different aftermaths as history has shown. Islam does not accept the division of secular and sacred, public and private, politics and religion. All over the world and especially in the Western societies Christianity and Judaism are silent on the separation of Religion and State but Islam does not accept it because it is not only faith or creed but a complete code of Life. Islam does not divide the unity of human beings into an incompatible duality of soul and matter. In Islam, Allah and the Universe, soul and matter, religion and politics are unified into each other. Hence, Islam rejects all kinds of so-called divisions of public and private, religious and secular. A unique feature of Islamic thought is that it does not divide life into water-tight compartments of matter and spirit. Islam does not believe in asceticism. It does not stand for life denial but for life fulfilment.