

Muslim Ummah: Roles And Responsibilities To Rule The World Again

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Abstract

Islam is a religion that can give us the true and complete guidance in all spheres of the life for the definite success. The rise of Islamic caliphate and ruling the world till centuries is the evidence of this claim. Unfortunately, today Muslims are confused and bewildered how to take the middle ground between the two extremes of modernism and traditional Islam, if the modernism is the only way of progress and prosperity in present era as west claims. After the two centuries of supremacy, west claims what Lord Cromer, the British high commissioner in colonized Egypt, once announced in 1880: "Islam reformed is Islam no longer". As the result, this claim opened the door of further discussion, and there has been wide divergence of opinion among Muslims scholars concerning about the adaptation from the modernism and postmodernism. It is essential to preserve the authentic inheritance of Islamic traditions in order to break away from the massive influence of modernity. Muslim Ummah must attitude is to be taken towards the colonial and postcolonial powers.

Keywords: Modernism, Postmodernism, Traditional Islam, Muslim Ummah.

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1. Introduction

The 19th century was the century of the domination of modern Western philosophies in the scientific, cultural, social, economic, defence, political and even intellectual fields. Modernity has rejected everything that is incompatible with reason and logic, and they had also rejected religion as irrational. It was in the 1950s and early 60's that new trends came to the fore and postmodernism theory was accepted rapidly by academics, thinkers and social scientists.

In postmodernism¹ the intellect lost its supremacy and the rational forces were accepted. Postmodernism is primarily characterized by pluralism, whether cultural, religious, or literary.

On the other hand, the Muslim Ummah, after maintaining its supremacy in the scientific, cultural, social, economic, defence and political spheres for a thousand years, they influenced by the both of these movements rationalism then pluralism. They had lost their glory and their decline extended to every field of life. Their strong association with the Islamic ideology had weakened.

Some Islamic modernists individuals embraced the intellectual supremacy of Western civilization² and to interpret Islamic teachings to be in line with Western thought and civilization, e.g. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Ghulam Ahmed Qadiani, Ghulam Ahmad Pervez etc. The modernist West subjugated Muslim society by its power, changed their thoughts and philosophies and enslaved them mentally, economically, culturally and socially. Islam does not accept defeat in the spirit of disbelief, So, the relationship with the secured and sacred source (Qur'an and Sunnah) was weakened, but not broken. So, soon the Muslim society took a stand and within a century or two it broke the chains of slavery. Although the effects of intellectual and mental slavery still linger, far less and far more.

1.1 Statement of problem

In this paper, in the context of present problems of modern time, role of Muslim Ummah and its responsibilities has been described.

1.2 Literature Review

The following books and articles are directly related to the review of literature about the concept of rise and decline of Muslims in past. i.e. Shkaib Arslan, Asbab e Zwal e Ummat. Abu al Hasan Ali an Nadwi, Muslmanon kay Arooj o Zwal ka Dunya pr Asar. Sayyad Abu Ala al Mododi, Islami Nizam e Zindgi aur us kay Bunyadi Taswwurat etc. To avoid to prolong the discussion I mention few of them here, although a lot of books and

articles have been written on this topic.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the definition of Muslim Ummah according to the Qur'an?
2. In which dimension did the Muslims try to get out of the decline and to what extent did they succeed?
3. What kind of initial and necessary steps do Muslims need to take in order to rise again?
4. What are our core responsibilities as the last Ummah in the present age?

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To identify the responsibilities of Muslim Ummah to deal with the decline of Muslims.
2. To explain and highlight the solutions of those problems that Muslim Ummah is facing in modern time.
3. To outline the characteristic features of, the strategy that should be adopted in Muslim society for the survival, revival and implementation of Islamic teachings and values in response to the intellectual and cultural hegemony.

1.5 Research Scope

Although a lot of articles and books have been written about this concept but my specification of research would be about the solutions of problems of Muslim Ummah in this time of modernity in the light of Quran and Sunnah. To clarify the different aspects of the role of Muslim Ummah, I will focus on Qur'an, Sunnah and basic Islamic traditions.

1.6 Research Methodology

Analytical Research Methodology was opted to evaluate all the facts and information pertaining to the research and topics being analyzed.

After the liberation from Western colonialism⁵ in the middle of the twentieth century, the Muslim communities and the religious elements, played a significant role through the reforms movements.

The decisions that have been taken regarding the rejection and adaptation of theories and ideas of western thoughts, we can categorize these movements into three main categories:

- **Movements of reconciliation.**
- **Movements of resistance.**

- **Movements of mysticism.**

Let's take a brief look at these movements.

2. **Reconciliation Movements.**

At the time of Muslim decline, the traditional structure of Muslim society was shattered by colonialism, and now when the independence somehow was achieved, the Muslims had to make a fresh start. But the western colonialism often transferred power to those who were influenced by modern thoughts and philosophies.

After the First and Second World Wars, the Muslim rulers adopted the Westernization and modernity. Muslim religious forces tried to resist but were unsuccessful and had to reconcile with the current system. You could also say that they took the path of reconciliation instead of confrontation to change this situation, that is, they wanted to change this system by accepting it either unwillingly or willingly and staying within it, so that it to be made acceptable to the Muslim Ummah, and West both. This stance was first taken by the father of Islamic modernity Jamal-ud-din Afghani (1838-1897)³ and then adopted by the other religious elements.

2.1 **Applied dimension of reconciliation**

Keeping this background in mind, it would be useful to analyse the acceptance of political system of west(democracy) by these religious forces. The West and the pro-Western Muslim rulers wanted to impose Western democracy in the Muslim states. (Even though its spirit and basic principles were against Islam as the traditional authorities claimed). Some religious forces took up the position of resistance but failed, they realized then, if this democratic structure accepted some of the basic tenets of Islam, it could be considered an acceptable model in Muslim society as well as in the West. So therefore they, declared it "Islamic Democracy". Moreover, they took part in the elections and became a part of this system and tried to change it and make it better in Islamic terms. The Muslim Brotherhood first engaged in electoral politics in Egypt in the 1980s and in Jordan as early as 1989.

In Morocco the Party of Justice and Development elected its first parliamentary representatives in 1997. In Indonesia the Prosperous Justice Party took part in legislative elections in 2004. In Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan, chairman of the Party of Justice and Development in 2002 won a majority of seats in that year's general elections, formed a pragmatic Islamist government that cultivated diplomatic relations with Western powers.

2.2 **Result of this strategy**

- Political elements succeeded in making their place in the western democratic system

for the survival of the Muslim Ummah and their worldly interests.

- Those who sought to revive Islamic thoughts and civilizations did not generally succeed in this system, such as in Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nigeria, Egypt, Syria, Libya, Tunisia, etc.
- Those who were found success to establish the traditional Islam, for example, in Algeria, Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan the West resisted it at every level and Started trying to destabilize them.

These elements are working on this reconciliation strategy considering their position to be correct, advocate it and argue in its favour. The issue is not limited just to the politics but the role of the state has become so wide in modern times and its involvement in every field of life has increased, so as the result, the Islamic modernism has prevailed everywhere under the patronage of Governments in all spheres of life like education, culture, law, economy, etc. But if the results of this strategy are examined objectively, the question arises: has this strategy of reconciliation been successful to solve all current issues of Muslim world e.g. Islamophobia, racism, terrorism and economic crisis etc. The present situation of 1.8 billion Muslims reply to this question in negative.

2.3 Movements of Resistance

Some groups in Muslim countries who have been liberated from the West have decided not to accept Western influence but to create a resistance among the people against them in order to oppose the atheistic civilization of the West and its local agents. They decided that a movement should be launched and a collective system should be formed which is purely Islamic and rejects Western influences altogether.

These groups could not adopt a policy of patience, wisdom and moderation, they clashed with other religious groups and Muslim governments, as a result they lost even a little of the power what they had, some of them are Jamaat-ul-Hijra and Takfir of Egypt, Hizb ut-Tahrir and Taliban of Pakistan. Al-Qaeda can also be considered a part of this movement that attacked Western civilization and tried to convince the people of the West that they would be pay back them in the same coin.

2.4 Results of resistance.

The West has become enraged on this unbridled resistance by these movements., they have decided to destroy the powerful nations of the Muslim world by force and make them weak and helpless. The United States, therefore, has launched a global war against Muslims (and Islam) by declaring them terrorists, and is dragging the United Nations, Europe, and

other countries into its fold by its power and influence.

In short, the strategy adopted by some Muslim religious elements to put up military resistance against Western thought and policies has further weakened Muslim society. These elements are unable to fight a regular war against the West, it has limited to the guerrilla warfare and occasional suicide attacks.

There are two questions that arise about their strategy,

- How will Muslims benefit from the decline of the West, especially the United States?
- How the resistance policy of these Muslim groups could lead to the decline of the West and the rise of Muslim Ummah?

The Muslims (especially Pakistan and Afghanistan) got nothing but the United States itself is bent on destroying them today.

September 20, 2001, Bush addressing the congress, after 9/11 incident, announced “our war on terror begins with Al-Qaida but it does not end there, it will be not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated,”⁴

Nothing will be gained from this because along with this policy of resistance, a united, organized and effective effort for the development, strengthening and making prosperous or victorious of the Muslim society is impossible. On the contrary, the ultimate resistance policy is disrupting and weakening the Muslim society as these jihadist organizations have opened a front against the US and Europe as well as against the Muslim rulers and states who have joined hands with the US and Europe.

3. **Movements of Mysticism.**

Some Muslim religious groups have adopted a different way towards the West and its policies. They ignored and overlooked the social, political and economic issues of Muslim society. They promote the process of conveying the basic teachings of religion to the people, which is limited to the reformation of individuals, and purification of their minds and souls. The whole emphasis of these mystical groups is on producing a man of good character.

Even they don't bother if the ruler of a Muslim country is good or bad. whether he enforces Islam in common life of Muslim society or not. They think that these are political issues and they have to avoid them, usually they do not participate in political processes. Here is a reservation from west on their weak organizational structure, the west claims that it's much easier for the terrorists to hide under the umbrella of these groups.

Here is a question for such kind of groups:

Despite their undoubted sincerity with Islam, how can their ideology be considered correct which ignores to give the solutions of social, political and cultural decline of Muslim Ummah?

3.1 New strategies needed for reformation.

Our discussion so far has focused on the strategies adopted by different movements for the survival, revival and implementation of Islamic teachings and values in the Muslim society in response to western intellectual and cultural domination. We also discussed about their success and failures. No doubt their stance and strategies proved to be flawed and ineffective.

Let's think about;

1. Will the Islamic globe follow the same track till the bottom of deadly end or will there be a revival as the Greeks and Latins woke up after their decline?
2. Should we sit idle and wait for the rejuvenation without taking any initiative?

The answer will be negative obviously. The crux of all this debate is:

There are two paths to go,

- To walk with the ideology of western civilization towards an ultimate decline having the false understanding that we are independent and self-standing.
- To dominate this western civilization and defeat their so-called ideologies of materialism, humanism, and modernism etc. by revival of Islam, the complete code of human life, so that we can be the true guides and mentors of mankind as we were before. As ALLAH Almighty mentions in holy Quran that *You are the best of the Ummahs raised up for the men, you enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong and believe in Allah.*⁵ *He announces about the ultimate domination of Muslims if they are believers.*⁶

Moreover, we have to look at the west's attitude towards Islam before we can devise the new strategies.

Some western thinkers have come up with the idea of the clash of civilizations after 9/11, because, in their opinion, religious differences and other issues have now become secondary.

Samuel P. Huntington in "The clash of civilizations and the Remaking of World order"⁷ explains how clashes between civilizations are the greatest threat to world's peace but also how an international order based on civilizations is the best safeguard against war. He mentioned how the population explosion in Muslim countries and the economic rise of East Asia are changing global politics. These developments challenge western dominance.

They make west realize that just Islam has an ideological strength that can challenge the west. Unfortunately, the west has accepted this ideology.

In a situation where the survival and stability of Islamic ideology and tradition is in danger, Western theories and philosophies are continuing to dominate the Muslims thoughts, it is imperative that this issue is to be reconsidered and the situation to be addressed.

3.2 Outline of the new strategy

The key points in shaping the new strategy in my opinion should be:

3.3 Tolerance and peace.

It is clear that domination can't be achieved through military confrontation in present era. It can increase the hatred of the West and take them away from Islam and Muslims.

The peace treaties of Madinah, Hudybiah and Najran shows that Islam is the religion of peace. Islam announces that peace is for all regardless of their nationality, sex, race, religion or other status based on justice for all.

In the present situation when Muslims are weak economically and they are not united, the military confrontation with the West is not the solution of our problems. Yes, if a Muslim country is attacked, then defence is both a legal right and a compulsion.

3.4 Focus on educational sector

Islamic organizations and institution should focus to reform the field of education which can play a key role in the development of a true Muslim individual and then society. No doubt Education brings a silent revolution.

We have to take this kind of initiatives:

- I. Work at the grass root level and spread thousands of such schools and colleges in the Muslim society who emphasis on character building.
- II. The curriculum should be based on Islamic ideology and Islamic worldview; educational experiences of the West must be kept in mind but not be a replica of Western education.
- III. The Curriculum must be based on fundamental beliefs of Islam. Ethics and moral values are the part of every activity in this educational model.
- IV. Analytical Study of Social sciences, and its branches must be the compulsory part of this outcome based curriculum.
- V. Learning international languages should be the important characteristic of this curriculum.
- VI. Sports for physical fitness and Training of Self-defence must not be ignored.
- VII. Positive use of electronic and print media should be the part of training.

- VIII. The idea of this kind of education can produce a large number of intellectuals, scientists, engineers, etc. adorned with characteristics of an ideal Muslim, who will follow the teachings of Islam in their lives in a positive way and reflect these teachings wherever they go, move and serve.
- IX. If they participate in the formation of public or government institutions, they will establish them on the basis of Islamic principles and, where necessary, they benefit from Western experiences.
- X. Through print and electronic media, they can dispel misconceptions and misunderstanding about Islam among the intellectuals of the West, gradually hatred and prejudice against Islam and Muslims will be ended and then the magnetic force of Islam will draw them towards itself, no matter, how much their rulers oppose it.
- XI. If it is done on a large scale in Muslim society, it will definitely help to promote Islamic thoughts and culture, restore its identity and strengthen the Muslim society as a whole.

4. **“TAZKIYA” of individuals.**

In spite of the reconciliation with this typical political, social, and judicial systems, we must develop the system of TAZKIYA to prepare the true believers who will be the key of future success.

As Quran describes the characteristics of a true believer in Surah Al - Mu'minun

*“Successful indeed are the believers, those who offer their Salah (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness, and those who turn away from Al-Laghwa (dirty, false, evil vain talk, falsehood, and all that Allah has forbidden), and those who pay the Zakat, and those who guard their chastity (i.e. private parts, from illegal sexual acts), except from their wives or (the captives and slaves) that their right hands possess, for then, they are free from blame; But whoever seeks beyond that, then those are the transgressors; Those who are faithfully true to their Amanat (all the duties which Allah has ordained, honesty, moral responsibility and trusts etc.) and to their covenants; And those who strictly guard their (five compulsory congregational) Salah (at their fixed stated hours), these are indeed the inheritors, Who shall inherit the Firdaus (Paradise), They shall dwell therein forever”.*⁸

The Holy Prophet Muhammad [S.A.W] describes the believer in his sermon:

"Blessed is he who earns his living through lawful ways and he whose inward status is good, outward is decent; spends his surplus wealth in charity; abstains from excessive talking; people remain safe of (any) evil from him; he treats others with justice. Surely whoever believes in Allah fears Him, and whoever fears Allah guards himself against the

evils of this world."⁹

In the light of above mentioned attributes we have to establish an active and efficient system of spiritual retreat and character reformation. Masjids and Khanqahs can be the best places for this reformation. The work of reformation should go from the bottom to the top and not from the top to bottom. These places will produce such Role models who will work hard to achieve excellence in every walk of life, they will be the people whose simple lifestyle, spiritual personality and impressive character will make the world amazed and the young generation will try to follow them.

5. Better Dawah Strategy

أُدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ¹⁰

Invite (people) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good counsel. And argue with them in the best of manners. Surely, your Lord knows best the one who deviates from His way, and He knows best the ones who are on the right path

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَ لَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَ لَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ¹¹

Say, "O people of the Book, come to a word common between us and between you, that we worship none but Allah, that we associate nothing with Him and that some of us do not take others as Lords instead of Allah." Then, should they turn back, say, "Bear witness that we are Muslims."

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ¹²

There is no compulsion in Faith. The correct way has become distinct from the erroneous. Now, whoever rejects the Tāghūt (the Rebel, the Satan) and believes in Allah has a firm grasp on the strongest ring that never breaks. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

We know that Islam is a missionary religion, but in these verses, Allah Almighty reminds us that beliefs cannot be imposed on any non-Muslim by force. Therefore, the invitation should be extended gently, diplomatically and strategically. Sufficient knowledge of Islam, Strong faith, wisdom and kindness are essential elements of da'wah work, arrogance, harshness and disdain should be avoided. We being Muslim Ummah are still able to give a lot to the West, such as a stable family system, peaceful life, great values, peace of mind and heart, etc., so mankind should not be deprived of the blessings of Islam as it is the only authentic revealed religion of the world given by Allah almighty.

By adopting the strategy of conquering the hearts and minds of the Western souls,

we can criticize the weaknesses of the western philosophies that proved to be flawed and harmful to humanity intellectually and scientifically but positively, and present the model Islam based on equality, human's rights specially women's rights, justice, anti-racism etc. the west is passing through the crucial situation of violation regarding above-mentioned issues, and already west admitted that Islam has the best solutions for human's crises.

Napoleon Bonaparte as Quoted¹³ in cherfils, Bonaparte et Islam Paris, France, PP. 105,125.

"I hope the time is not far off when I shall be able to unite all the wise and educated men of all the countries and establish a uniform regime based on the principals of Qur'an which alone are true and which alone can lead men to happiness"

H.G. Wells stated *"The Islamic teachings have left great traditions for equitable and gentle dealings and behaviour, and inspire people with nobility and tolerance. These are human teachings of the highest order and at the same time practicable. These teachings brought into existence a society in which hard-heartedness and collective oppression and injustice were the least as compared with all other societies preceding it.... Islam is replete with gentleness, courtesy, and fraternity."*¹⁴

6. Need of Rapid growth

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ----¹⁵

"Surely Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition"

This verse stands as a true example of the power and strength that God has given us if we stay connected to Allah Almighty with obedience and trust. In fact, Muslim Ummah need is that instead of falling into a confrontation, it should quietly take rapid steps for the development and progress of Islamic society. which includes a self-sustained economy and the best welfare system. This model should be in accordance with the Islamic model of development as it was in the golden age of the Rashidun Caliphate.

- To achieve this goal,
- A 100 percent literacy rate in Muslim society is required.
- Of course, getting out of the clutches and debt of the international financial institutions is the most important thing.

7. Required Leadership

The formulation and implementation of a new strategy also requires a strong leadership who can implement it wisely, that Qur'an and Sunnah specify leadership qualities in our leaders.

He almighty states:

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أُمَّةً مُهْتَدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ وَإِقَامَ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءَ الزَّكَاةِ وَكَانُوا لَنَا عَابِدِينَ.¹⁶

“And We made them leaders, guiding by Our command; and We inspired them to do good works, and to observe the prayer, and to give out charity. They were devoted servants to US”.

The main aspects of leadership are Knowledge and Power as Qur’an states:

قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهُ بَسْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِسْمِ وَاللَّهُ يُؤْتِي مَلَكُهُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ -¹⁷

“He said, “Indeed, Allah has chosen him over you and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature, and Allah grants his kingdom to whom He pleases, and Allah is Ample-giving, knowing”.

أَلَا كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ، وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، فَالْأَمِيرُ الَّذِي عَلَى النَّاسِ رَاعٍ، وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ -¹⁸

The Messenger of Allah as saying: “Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock. The Amir (ruler) who is over the people is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock....”

A famous and influential thinker Peter Drucker (1909 – 2005) says:

Leadership is not magnetic personality—that can just as well be demagoguery,” Drucker asserted.

Leadership is the lifting of a man's vision to higher sights, the raising of a man's performance to a higher standard, the building of a man's personality beyond its normal limitations”.¹⁹

Keeping in view all above directions, instead of traditional religious elements, Muslim civil society should be led by those who are tooled up with modern education, indeed must connected with their past, religion, and values. Similarly, young people should be prepared and mobilized for future leadership, those who have a clear vision, those who understand this strategy and are willing to play a dynamic role with sincerity and passion.

8. Conclusion

Muslims, now need guiding principles that will not only save Muslim society from the deadly disaster of Westernization and modernity but will also guide the Muslim Ummah towards global progress and domination in the Islamic context. Our position is that this is an important issue and Muslim intellectuals, philosophers, policymakers should consider it and draw their own conclusions. Obviously, stagnation does not solve any problem and new strategies need to be devised in new circumstances. And this is possible only with free and critical thinking, so it is necessary to have a dialogue between the Muslim intellectuals on this subject which we have started.

In this paper I have tried to present the reasons then tasks and goals to come out this economic, intellect downfall and degradation.

Under stated strategies, we have come to the conclusion that international Islamic institutions and organizations should conduct such kind of researches which are based on the reasons and solutions of current problems faced by Muslim Ummah. The stated strategy with the advantages and disadvantages, has capacity to apply country wide or worldwide. We are still trying to achieve stability and aren't ready to change the present system. Finally, we can say that this document does not reach to the exact solution of the problems that Muslim Ummah is facing these days, however, it does highlight the important aspects, an analytical view of what is happening with the Muslims and what they need, therefore, this paper can be a first initiative, or a first call to drag the attention of Muslim authorities.

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