

WHY MUSLIMS WANT AN ISLAMIC STATE?

AN ISLAMIC STATE FOR PAKISTAN: PART-1

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The question why Muslims want an Islamic State is a strange question. For Muslims should not and, as a matter of fact, could not as Muslims but want an Islamic State. This is the only natural course for them. If they wanted anything else, then an explanation would perhaps be called for; and not in the case when they want it. But because of a host of reasons an explanation to this effect has become necessary.

First, the intellectual and religious background of the world of Islam is very different from that of the West and as such it becomes difficult for the Western and West-oriented observers to grasp and appreciate the Muslim mind. It is, therefore, necessary that the Islamic concept of religion and the Muslim outlook on politics should be clearly understood. Then alone would it be possible to have a better understanding of the contemporary Muslim resurgence.

Secondly, quite a few amongst the educated younger generation in the Muslim world have somehow been estranged from their own cultural and intellectual tradition. Primarily under the influence of Western education and media they have imbibed popular Western political concepts and are thing of introducing them in the Muslim world without any regard for the Muslim tradition as such. And as if through a cruel conspiracy of circumstances, the reins of power in many a Muslim country have passed from the hands of the erstwhile Imperialist powers to this very class of West-oriented Muslims the need for a precise presentation of the Islamic case has increased manifold.

Islam holds that Allah has created the Universe and in the final analysis He alone controls and governs it. He created man and provided him with all that is needed for the progress and growth of life and civilization. To fulfill his material needs God has endowed the world with all kinds of material resources and substances which man can harness to his use. To cater to his spiritual, cultural and social requirements, man needs Divine Guidance which has been provided through His Prophets. It is this Guidance which constitutes the religion of Islam.

Life is a unity. It cannot be divided into water-tight compartments. The function of religion is to direct the affairs of life in all its dimensions. That is why its domain is life in its entirety, and not any specific aspect of it. Consequently it not only gives an outlook on life and reality but also lays down the basic principles on which man's relationships with his own self, with other human beings, with society and its institutions and finally with Allah the Creator is to be structured. It looks upon life in its totality and provides guidance for every field of activity. The mission of a prophet, according to Islam; is not merely to cater to spiritual elevation alone. His mission is to purify the beliefs and ideas of man about 1 Reality, to purge his soul of all impurities, to awaken his moral consciousness and to use this moral elan for the reconstruction of society and for remolding the whole matrix of history.

This has been the mission of all the prophets of God and Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the last of the prophets to whom God's Guidance was revealed in its completeness and who established an ideal social order a complete civilization in accordance with this Guidance. It is this Guidance which is enshrined in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, the word of God and the example of the Holy Prophet, and constitutes the religion of Islam.

The Qur'an explicitly asks man to submit to God with a complete submission and to accept His Guidance in every field of activity. The call of the Qur'an is:

"O ye who believe I enter into Islam wholly and follow not the footsteps of the Satan, verily he is unto you an enemy manifest". **(2:208)**

The mission of the prophets, according to the Qur'an, is the establishment of virtue and justice in accordance with the revealed guidance.

"We verily sent our messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance, (i.e. the authority to establish Justice), that mankind may observe the right measure; and He revealed iron (i.e. coercive power) wherein is mighty power and (many) uses for mankind and that Allah may know who helpeth Him and His messengers, though unseen". **(57:25)**

"He it is who hath sent His messenger with the Guidance and religion of Truth, that He may make it supreme over all other ways, however much the Mushrikeen (those who associate others in authority with Allah) may be averse". **(61:9)**

Thus Islam wants to fashion one's entire life according to the principles of individual and social behaviour revealed by God and does not confine itself to the precincts of the private life of the individual alone. Politics, on the other hand, studies the relationship of man with the state and of man with man. In Islam this too is the domain of religion, which comprehends all aspects of life. Islam does not admit of any separation between religion and politics; it wants to conduct politics also in accordance with the guidance provided by religion and to use the state as the servant of the Lord. The Qur'an lays down that Allah is the Sovereign and the Law-giver and His revealed law must be adopted as the law of the land. According to the Qur'an:

"The command is for none but God; He hath commanded that ye obey none but Him: that is the right path". **(12:40)**

"Verily, His is the Creation and His is the Law".

"If any do fail to establish and decide by what God Hath revealed, they are the unbelievers.....the unjust.....the evil-doers" **(5:44, 45, 47)**

Islam uses political power for the reform of the society and "does not leave it to degenerate into 'the last resort of the scoundrel'. It rather makes the Prophet pray that the rulers be converted to the creed and become its support.

"Say: O my Lord I Let my entry be by the Gate of Truth and Honor and likewise my exit by the Gate of Truth and Honor; And grant me from Thy presence a ruling authority to aid me". **(17:80)**

Maulana Maududi, in his Tafheem al-Quran explains the above verse as follows:

"That is: either grant me power on earth or make any ruling authority, any state, my supporter, so that I may, with the force of the coercive powers of the state, establish virtue, eradicate evil, put an end to the surging tide of corruption, vulgarity and sin, set at right the disruption and persecution that have engulfed life and administer justice according to Your revealed law".

(Abul A'la Maududi, Tafhimul Qur'an, Vol.11, Lahore, 1954, p. 618)

This is the meaning of the verse and all leading authorities like Hasan Basri, Qatada, Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir have explained in similar words. This view is further supported by the hadith:

"Allah, through state power, puts an end to that what He does not eradicate merely through the (the word of) Qur'an".

This shows that reforms which Islam wants to bring about cannot be carried out by sermons alone. Political power is also essential to achieve them.

This is the Islamic approach to politics and state. And the logical consequence of this approach is that the state must be moulded on"-Islamic patterns. This is a dictate of the Islamic faith and cannot be disregarded by the faithful. The Western concept of the separation of religion from politics - that of secularism - is foreign to Islam and the adoption of it would be the very negation of the Islamic concept of polity.

This problem has become very serious with the spread of political freedom. In the past, Muslims were not free to fashion their political life according to their own likes and dislikes. They were under the yoke of Western imperialism and had no freedom to order their affairs according to the Islamic principles. But after the attainment of independence they are free to adopt whatever way of life they like. If, even after the attainment of this freedom, they do not adopt the Islamic way and instead of enforcing Islamic law, choose to run their state on some other basis, this avoidance of Islam on their part would amount to no less than a form of national apostasy - something of which Muslims cannot even think of.

This concept of Islam, further supported by the practice of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), of the Khilafat-i-Rashida and of the multitude of Muslim reformers, impels Muslims to strive for the establishment of Islamic State. Here a clarification is perhaps called for. There is a basic difference between a Muslim State and an 'Islamic State'. A Muslim State is any state which is inhabited and ruled by the Muslims. An Islamic State, on the other hand, is one which opts to conduct affairs in accordance with the revealed guidance of Islam and accepts the sovereignty of Allah and the supremacy of His Law, and which devotes its resources to achieve this end. Any state that makes this commitment, legally and politically becomes an Islamic state, in the same way as one who commits himself to the Kalima becomes a Muslim, even though he may not have actualized Islam in his life. The essential demand of this commitment is to strive to translate Islamic values and principles in actual life-stream. A Muslim state becomes a potential Islamic state by this commitment. But it becomes an actual Islamic state by living upto Islamic norms. That is why Muslims all the world over, are longing to convert their Muslim states into Islamic states.

This move is spreading throughout the world of Islam and has become one of the most important topics of our age. The establishments of Pakistan, the demand for the enforcement of the Shariah in almost all Muslim countries, the revolution in Iran, the Jihad in Afghanistan represent symptoms of this upsurge in the Islamic Ummah.

A perusal of Islamic history reveals that throughout the long range of fourteen centuries, no ideal other than Islam has ever spurred Muslims to any great action. Islam is the very breath of their life; it alone has moved them to accomplish great feats of glory. Any other ideal has never caught their imagination, has never moved them to sacrifice their entire existence, and has never won any popular support amongst them. Prof. Wilfred Smith, while surveying the problems of nationalism in the Muslim world, admits this unique phenomenon of Islamic history. He observes:

"No Muslim people have evolved a national feeling that has meant a loyalty to or even concern for a community transcending the bounds of Islam".

Also that:

"In the past, only Islam has provided for these people this type of discipline, inspiration and energy".

(Wilfred C. Smith, Islam in History, Princeton, 1957, p.77)

This is a unique feature of Islamic history and the move of the Muslim people towards the Islamic State is the natural function of their history. Any other move simply cannot succeed.

Thirdly, the experiment of the Western countries with secularism is in no way encouraging. Separation of politics from morality and religion has created more problems than it has solved. The result is that there is skepticism in thought, confusion in values, expediency in standards, vulgarity

in behaviour and opportunism in diplomacy. Politics has become out-and-out Machiavellian and this state of affairs has greatly impaired the poise and tranquility of international life. That is why, in the words of a philosopher, although the modern man has "learned to fly in the skies like the birds and to swim in the oceans like the fishes, but has failed to learn to live on earth like human beings". That is why the renowned historian Arnold Toynbee even doubts the value of secularism as an ideal. He says:

"Perhaps it is impossible to attain secular happiness for the individual by pursuing this secular happiness as an ultimate end in itself; but it is conceivable that secular happiness for the individual may be produced as an incidental by-product if the individual is aiming at something else that is spiritually above it and beyond it. Secular happiness may be a by-product of trying to carry out the spiritual aims that are common to all the higher religions: the effort to take sides with what is good against what is evil and the effort to attain harmony with Absolute Reality or God".

(Arnold Toynbee, Christianity among the Religions of the World, Oxford University Press, London, 1958, p.562)

Iqbal has also very forcefully pointed out the real malaise of the Western culture. He says:

"Both nationalism and atheistic socialism, at least in the present state of human adjustments, must draw upon the psychological forces of hate, suspicion and resentment which tend to impoverish the soul of man and close up his hidden sources of spiritual energy. Neither the technique of medieval mysticism nor nationalism nor atheistic socialism can cure the ills of a despairing humanity. Surely the present moment is one of great crisis in the history of modern culture. The modern world stands in need of biological renewal. And religions, which' in their higher manifestations are neither dogma nor ritual, can alone ethically prepare the modern man for the burden of the great responsibility which the advancement of modern science necessarily involves, and restore to him that attitude of faith which makes him capable of winning a personality here and retaining it hereafter. It is only by rising to a fresh vision of his origin and future, his whence and whither, that man will eventually triumph over a society motivated by an inhuman competition, and a civilization which has lost its spiritual unity because of its inner conflict of religious and political values".

(Muhammad Iqbal, Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, Lahore, 1954, pp. 183-189 (Emphasis ours))

"Humanity needs three things today-a spiritual interpretation of the Universe, spiritual emancipation of the individual and basic principles of a universal import directing the evolution of human society on a spiritual basis.... Believe me, Europe

today is the greatest hindrance in the way of man's ethical advancement. The Muslim, on the other hand, is in possession of these ultimate ideas on the basis of a revelation.....Let the Muslim of today appreciate his position, reconstruct his social life in the light of ultimate principles, and evolve ... that spiritual democracy which is the ultimate aim of Islam".

(Muhammad Iqbal, Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, Lahore, 1954, pp. 183-189)

With this belief and this realization, Muslims are trying to carve out their own path and to set, by establishing a political order on the moral principles of Islam, an example before a world torn by secularism, nationalism and communism.

Fourthly, they are faced with the problem of communism. Communism has shaken the Western world and the specter is now haunting the Muslim East. Communism is a social philosophy, but in the last analysis, it is an ideology which is a product of secularism and atheism and which emerged to fill the vacuum created by the disintegration of religion in the West. Poverty and social disorder had always have been. There Communism appeared on the scene only when religion, the hope of the people, was destroyed. It is a product not mainly of poverty but essentially of materialism and secularism and religion alone can meet its challenge. R. N. Crew- Hunt rightly says that:

"It is, in the last analysis, a body of ideas which has filled the vacuum created by the breakdown of organized religion as a result of the increasing secularization of thought during the last three centuries, and it can be combated only by opposing to it a conception of life based upon wholly different principles".

(R.N. Crew-Hunt, The Theory and Practice of Communism, London, 1951, p.6.)

Douglas Hyde, a former editor of the Daily Worker, London, endorses the same analysis. He writes:

"Communism is not, first and foremost, a social or political problem. It is a spiritual problem and only if we understand this, shall we see why it has spread in this particular age and no other. Its rapid growth would not have been possible in the age with a faith. Only in a pagan, faithless age was it possible for such a philosophy and way of life to spread to millions of men..."

"Communism uses the very poor in times of crisis or when a revolutionary situation develops. This is its main interest in them. Social justice is the thing upon which it feeds. It is not the originator of Communism. The spread of Communism and Communist influences has been made possible by the spread of wrong ideas, wrong values, and wrong standards. Still more, it has been made possible by the existence

of large numbers of people with no standards, no values, and often all - but no ideas at all."

"Communism is the expansion of a deep speculative ill. Its influence can, in the long run, only be countered by the spread of the Faith."

(Douglas Hyde. The Answer to Communism, London, 1951, p. 46-50)

Muslims believe that the greatest bulward against Communism is Islam. Islam is the faith and religion of around one billion human beings. It is the force which has moved them in the past and which is the sheet-anchor of their present existence. It is an ideal which inspires them and can move them to action, effort and sacrifice. It is a social philosophy which stands for justice and well-being and offers to mankind a just moral, political and economic ideology of its own. Islam not only gives them an ideal to live and die for, it also establishes a social order in which equity, justice and fair play reign. Such an ideology alone can check the onward march of communism. The negative ideology of secularism cannot cross the way of the positive movement of materialism and communism. Muslims see in the Islamic State the surest answer to the crisis of our age.

Finally, secularism has become a historical anachronism. It emerged at a particular stage of Western history, as a reaction to medieval hegemony of the Christian church in the West. It played its innings along with its counterparts of nationalism and Laissez faire economics and politics. The trio made organic whole. Nationalism is no longer the god of politics. Internationalism and inter-dependence have changed the face of 19th century nationalism. Laissez faire is no longer the idol of economics or politics. Contemporary state is becoming more and more of an ideological state and contemporary economy is a welfare economy with a positive role for the state. In this changed historical scenario secularism is becoming more and more irrelevant. Now every people realize that they need an ideology. Public policy has to have some positive value- foundations which the apparently negative philosophy of secularism cannot provide. The future growth of civilization is possible only on the basis of an ideology and a positive programme.

Moreover, the experiment of secularism in the Muslim world has been a harrowing experience. Whether one looks at Turkey under Kamal Attaturk or Iran tinder the two shahs or to other shorter experiments in Egypt, Pakistan, Algeria or West Asia, secularism has always been introduced through despotic rule and has survived as long as despotism continued. The moment people got an opportunity to express their will; they threw such despotic regimes in the dustbin of history. A distinguished historian of culture, Prof. Filmer S.C. Northrop succinctly observes that secularism and democracy are not compatible in the Muslim world. "I believe", he observes, "This is one of the reasons why such law (i.e. secular law) usually has to be put in first by a dictator. It cannot come in as a mass movement because the masses are in the old tradition".

(See: F.S.C. Northrop, Colloquium on Islamic Culture, Princeton University Press, 1953, p. 109)

Secularism, whenever and wherever, imposed, from the above by despotic regimes are has engendered social schism, ideological crisis and political tension in the society. The resources of the nation wasted in mutual conflict between the secular despotic rulers and the islamically oriented masses. A society divided against it can never attain anything great. It becomes an easy pray to neo-colonial forces waiting in the wings. The experiment has been too horrid to be repeated. The only alternative is not to fight with the faith and the values of the people but to sincerely strive to live upto them.

This is, in brief, the contemporary Muslims case for an Islamic State and herein lies its importance for the Muslims in particular and for the world at large in general.

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