

# Analysis of Tribulation in Muslim World & Future

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*"If He wills, He can remove you, and substitute whomever He wills in your place," [Quran; 6:133].*

*"ALLAH would never change a favour that HE has conferred upon a people until they change their own condition" [Quran;8:53]*

*"surely Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition [Quran;13:11]*

## Introduction:

Islam revolutionized the primitive oppressive societies not only in the Middle East but all over the world. Islamic civilization led the world for over thousand years, but the cracks started to be noticed since 15<sup>th</sup> century C.E. Ultimately the Christian West dominated the world through colonization but failed to cause any considerable dent in the ideology of Islam, which is based upon justices, equity & high morality. After end of colonial period the Islam resurged to again dominate the lives of its adherents. In fact despite their propaganda, the Imperialist West could not root out Islam from the hearts and daily lives of Muslims. The colonial powers, replaced Islamic Shari'ah with Western law, but the personnel affairs of Muslims continue to be governed by Shari'ah. During 21<sup>st</sup> century there is world wide demand among Muslim societies to turn back to Shari'ah but the stooges of colonial masters resist on the pretext of taking society back to the past. In fact the system based upon justice and equity does not suit their oppressive designs to amass wealth and power among few in the ruling elite which controls the power and economic centres. The Arab Spring and other movements in most parts of the Muslim world reflect the desire for change, which has to come since days of oppressor regimes are numbered.

Once we look back in to the history, it is found that that the Muslims excelled not only in military power but in all other fields including science and technology. The influence of Islamic learning on the West has been phenomenal; extracts from Encyclopaedia Britannica is self explanatory:

*"The decline of Muslim scholarship coincided with the early phases of the European intellectual awakening that these translations were partly instrumental in bringing about. The translation into Latin of most Islamic works during the 12th and 13th centuries had a great impact upon the European Renaissance. As Islam was declining in scholarship and Europe was absorbing the fruits of Islam's centuries of creative productivity, signs of Latin Christian awakening were evident throughout the European continent. The 12th century was one of intensified traffic of Muslim learning into the Western world through many hundreds of translations of Muslim works, which helped Europe seize the initiative from Islam when political conditions in Islam brought about a decline in Muslim scholarship. By 1300 C.E when all that was worthwhile in Muslim scientific, philosophical, and social learning had been transmitted to European schoolmen through Latin translations, European scholars stood once again on the solid ground of Hellenistic thought, enriched or modified through Muslim and Byzantine efforts."*

*"Most of the important Greek scientific texts were preserved in Arabic translations. Although the Muslims did not alter the foundations of Greek science, they made several important contributions within its general framework. When interest in Greek learning revived in Western Europe during the 12th and 13th centuries, scholars turned to Islamic Spain for the scientific texts. A spate of translations resulted in the revival of Greek science in the West and*

coincided with the rise of the universities. Working within a predominantly Greek framework, scientists of the late Middle Ages reached high levels of sophistication and prepared the ground for the scientific revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries.” According to Will Durant, the Western scholar, “For five centuries , from 700 to 1200 (C.E), Islam led the world in power, order and extent of government, in refinement of manners, scholarship and philosophy”.

The famous Egyptian scholar Syed Qutab in his Arabic book “*Hal Nahnu Muslimoon*” [Are We Muslims] discussed the reasons of decline of Muslims societies. Main points of his analysis with some variations have been included in this article.

### **Origin:**

On pondering some mind boggling questions arise: How the Muslim civilization started to degenerate and how this degeneration got spread all over the world? Was it possible that after the demise of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and the decline of the directly received spiritual guidance from his person, the Muslim society could still maintain the high standards for long time?

It will be unrealistic to answer in positive, but it will be equally unreasonable to say that after the demise of Prophet (pbuh) the magnetic effects of his inspiring teachings got severed and the Muslim society started to degenerate. This is not only unrealistic but also against the faith. It is unrealistic because it amounts to state that the man does not have belief in the high moral values of human life and to implement such values there has to exist some supernatural force, power or personality and when such thing is non existent the faith diminishes. This amounts to not only degrading the human capabilities but also showing ignorance the practical character of hum being in history. Man has always been not only believing in the high moral values, traditions and principles but has been striving for their preaching and survival. Many people of intellect suffered while making such noble endeavours. Moreover it also amounts to ignore the historic reality that Islam has been a living driving force of humanity for over thousand years. Such a thought is against the faith of a Muslim because thinking that the elaborate arrangements made by God of sending the last Prophet (pbuh), the last book (Quran) to establish a just balanced society by the Prophet (pbuh) based upon the guidance and laws provided in Quran was just for short period? Such a thought is so worthless that it is not even worthy of attributing to the perishable wise people what to talk of All Mighty God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

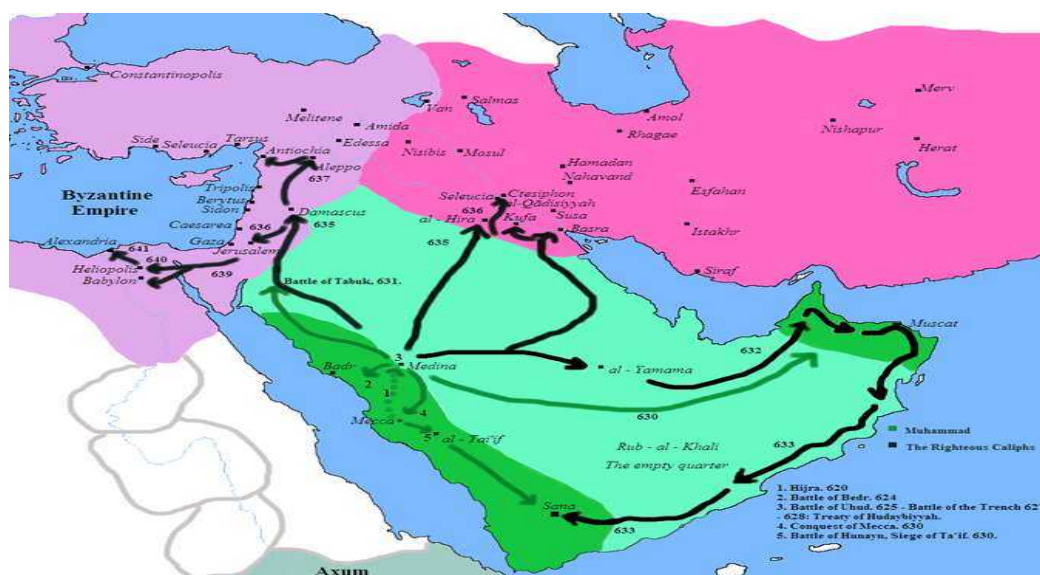
Impossible, it is totally unrealistic to even think that the foundations of Muslim society got disintegrated and the society degenerate after the demise of the Prophet (pbuh) and that his spiritual influence dwindled. Similarly this is also unrealistic that the same standards of glorious heights be maintained which were present during his time, it is imperative that some aspects show tendency to decline. Actually it happened that till the time Prophet (pbuh) was present, the personalities of the companions immensely benefited to gain moral and spiritual heights. When society lost the benefit of presence of such personalities of companions the people turned back to the bounds of their own personalities, they started living within the bounds laid down by Islam.

There is a difference between ‘Islam’ and the person of ‘Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)’, this difference was stated by his closest companion Abu Bakr Siddique at the time of demise of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh): “O’ people listen if any one of you worshiped Muhammad, let it be known that he is dead, however whosever worshipped Allah, He is that ever living Being who can never die” Islam is also the word of ever living God, so it shall never die. The effects of Islam in the human intellect is eternal, because it is the Islam which establishes the direct link with the eternal God, which is the main reason of their adherence to His commands, obey His guidance and make His obedience as their way of life. The benefits of life of Prophet and blessings are not limited to his life only, his personnel life [Sunnah] is available for ever to

those who want to be benefited. This is the reason that even after his demise, the people remained Muslim, though their lives were not always exemplary. It is the way of Lord that no era remains permanently however it was required that at least once an exemplary era should have come in to existence so that a bright picture of golden era of purity remains available as a source for guidance and practice at all times for the future generations. The adherents of golden era of Islam would achieve the heights in every age, even if long time lapses and people get off the tack, they can still come back to the right path. It is due to this Golden Era of Islam, which acts as a role model that during fourteen centuries Muslims have been through various periods of turmoil followed by glory.

It was important that even after the Prophet (pbuh) Islamic society would continue to follow Islam, live according to tenants of Islam and spread all round as long as Allah wishes. It is a reality that this plan has been successful to a great extent, for a very long period in history Muslims continued to live according to tenets of Islam. Though in all spheres of life the high standards set by the Prophet (pbuh) and his companions could not be maintained, but despite this the Muslim societies maintained its superiority over all the other known civilizations, systems and values. Orientalist Welfared Contovel Smith said: "Among all the efforts done in the world for the establishment of justice, struggle by Islam was most the greatest and effective". Similarly many other Orientalists have mentioned that Islam gradually enveloped all the aspects of life till most of the known world came under its influence. Even Europe got the enlightenment during all the stages of its renaissance. According to Brevelot: The high standards of humanity achieved by all the modern civilizations till now are the same which Muslims fused in to the human conscious, which Europe got form the Muslims during Crusades, through learning in the universities of Muslim Spain and North Africa.

The illusion among some Muslims that Islam declined after the period of Prophet (pbuh) and Guided Caliphs is totally baseless. It is more appropriate to say that, after them the exemplary era ended and traditional era started, though this era according to Islamic standards is traditional but according to the world history it was the golden era of human civilization.



Conquests of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and the Rashidun.

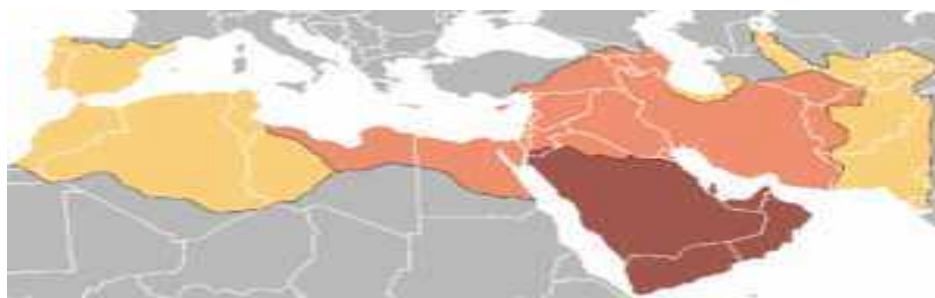
### Beginning of Deterioration:

#### Umayyad Era

The decline started after the period of Four Rightly Guided Caliphs, the first four Caliphs who ruled after the death of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) are often quoted as the Khulafah Rashidun. The Rashidun were either elected by a council or chosen based on the wishes of their predecessor. In the order of succession, the rashidun were: Abu Bakr (632-634 CE),

Umar ibn al-Khattab, (Umar I) (634-644 CE), Uthman ibn Affan (644-656 CE) and Ali ibn Abi Talib (656-661 CE).

The Umayyad Caliphate (661-750 CE/41–132 AH) was the second of the four major Islamic caliphates established after Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). It was ruled by the Umayyad dynasty, whose name derives from Umayya ibn Abd Shams, the great-grandfather of the first Umayyad caliph. Although the Umayyad family originally came from the city of Mecca, their capital was Damascus. At its greatest extent, it covered more than five million square miles (13,000,000 km<sup>2</sup>), making it one of the largest empires the world had yet seen, and the seventh largest contiguous empire ever to exist. After the Umayyads were overthrown by the Abbasid Caliphate, they fled across North Africa to Spain (Al-Andalus), where they established the Caliphate of Córdoba, which lasted until 1031. However the Muslim rule in Spain ended in 1492 C.E.

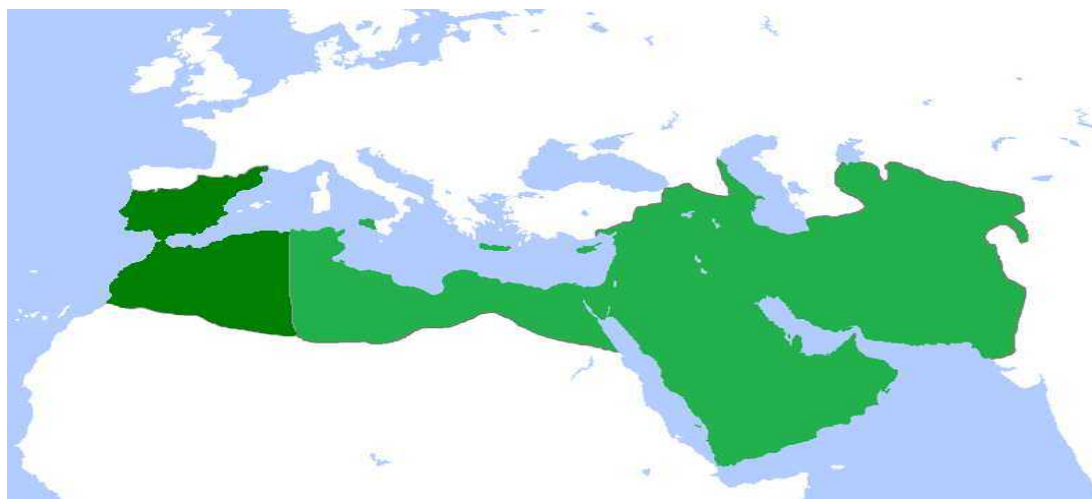


During Umayyad era the Islamic principles of power politics and financial politics suffered setback with the beginning of family inherited kingship of oppression. The ruling elite and court cronies adopted feudal way of life as against simple Islamic way of life. There were exceptions like Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz (682-720) an Umayyad caliph who ruled from 717 to 720 C.E. Among Muslims he is considered one of the greatest men and leaders in history, he is commonly regarded as the fifth Caliph Al-Rashidun due to his rule based upon Islamic principles. However despite this change the society in general remained Islamic. The evil penetrated the ruling elite limited to the capital city. It was limited in nature restricted to the financial mismanagement and politics. The ruling elite despite these irregularities personally believed in the Islamic principles. They used to decide the matters of common people according to Islamic law [Shari'ah]. However they made use of loopholes in the matters of politics and finances related with their person and close relatives. This was wrong but this wrong was limited in nature, which did not go beyond the capital city to reach the masses. With the exception of few the life of common people was not affected by this evil. Muslims live their lives according to the Islamic teachings and run their affairs accordingly. They remained practically committed to the preaching of Islam to the other parts of the world. They were well aware of the honor and awards which Allah has kept for the Prophet (pbuh) and believers. They were conscious of the heights and superiority which is inculcated in the hearts of believers due to their faith. They were well aware of their responsibilities towards society and fellow being as believers. They realized the merits of brotherhood of believers. They well understood the meanings of mutual love, cooperation and were conscious of their being a unique community [Ummah]. If any one traveled to other Islamic country despite different governments avoided differences, considered them as brothers and socially interacted as brothers. They treated each other with sincerity like relatives. They were conscious that the real owner of wealth is God which is to be shared by people with equity and justice, the rich is not entitled to Zakat [charity] and the poor are to be helped. They were aware that their personal conduct should be according to the wishes of Prophet and Allah, even if they had to suffer hardship. This was considered as great struggle. They realized that the law of Allah [Shari'ah] was eternal for the benefits of all sections of society. They knew that to attain real power and to dominate it is important to get the people out of darkness of the illiteracy and ignorance which required persistent efforts and struggle.

In fact these feelings and realization was the main cause of success of Muslims in all spheres of life which left lasting impact in history.

### **The Abbasid Era:**

The Abbasid Caliphate, was the third of the Islamic caliphates. It was ruled by the Abbasid dynasty of caliphs, who built their capital in Baghdad after overthrowing the Umayyad caliphate from all but the al-Andalus region. The Abbasid caliphate was founded by the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad's youngest uncle, 'Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib, in Kufa in 750 CE and shifted its capital in 762 to Baghdad. It flourished for two centuries, but slowly went into decline with the rise to power of the Turkish army it had created, the Mamluks. Within 150 years of gaining control of Persia, the caliphs were forced to cede power to local dynastic emirs who only nominally acknowledged their authority. The caliphate also lost the Western provinces of al-Andalus, Maghreb and Ifriqiya to an Umayyad prince, the Aghlabids and the Fatimid Caliphate, respectively. The Abbasids' rule was briefly ended for three years in 1258, when Hulagu Khan, the Mongol khan, sacked Baghdad, resuming in Mamluk Egypt in 1261, from where they continued to claim authority in religious matters until 1519, when power was formally transferred to the Ottoman Empire and the capital relocated to Constantinople.



During the Abbasids period Iranian influence increased in the formulation of state policies and running of affairs of state, consequently some alien thoughts also made their way in to the pure teachings of Islam. The most prominent being the philosophies of “Tasawaf” and “Separation of knowledge form acts, which does not match with the “Exemplary Practices” of Islamic thought. Hence various immoral activities crept in the capital. In the palaces of Caliphs, lords and their cronies; slave girls, singers, and jokers were found in abundance. There were tendencies to take pride in such immoral activates like fashion, display of wealth , dancing, singing etc totally alien to Islam which were not acceptable. These acts of oobscenity & lewdness in the palaces were spread all around by the writers and other beneficiaries for their own purpose. Such writings and actions of funfair became means to get closer to the ruling elite and to gain personal benefits. No doubt some part of these evils did affect the other segments of Muslim society but it would be wrong to assume that all segments of society were fully immersed in such degenerated un-Islamic activities.

Although in the books of history especially written by the Western writers effort has been made to highlight this aspect but this is mere distortion of the facts. Any one who get the information about Islamic society just one generation earlier to this period would know the way of living among Islamic countries, how people lived in the villages, the stark difference in their life style will be noticed instantly. It would be found that the difference in the lifestyle of the ruling elite and the common people was great, they followed the Islamic way which was different to the life in places of capital city.

Aim is not to explain the history of Muslim Caliphs and Kings, rather the whole Islamic society is in sight to, the history of those people is kept in view who formulated a realistic nation based upon this thought as part of their belief. As mentioned earlier the evil practices in the royal courts and the capital city did effect the masses but this effect was comparatively minimal. Hence if on the one side in the royal palaces events of lewdness, drinking, dancing etc wasting money and efforts on these useless activities; on the other side in the same capital city there were religious scholars who away in seclusion were busy in translation and constructive ideological and theological work. These scholars were quietly busy in the scholarly pursuits in their observatories, laboratories and libraries. The theologians and experts in jurisprudence were busy in learning and research adding to the treasure of Islamic Fiqh; the Islamic jurisprudence an expansion of the code of conduct (Shari'ah) expounded in the Quran, often supplemented by tradition (Sunnah) and implemented by the rulings and interpretations of Islamic jurists. Fiqh deals with the observance of rituals, morals and social legislation in Islam. The experts in geography were exploring the land of God through tourism and recording their scholarly memoirs so that in the field of knowledge their status should be determined by their scholarly research. Apart from them there were trades and preachers who travelled long distances as far as Far East, China and Indonesia on one side and Western Sudan, North Africa, West Africa on the other side. The Mujahedeen were busy in confronting the enemies of Islam, the non believing kings did not allow the peaceful message of Islam to reach their subjects. They had to be subdued to provide freedom from the oppressor rulers and provide freedom of choice to people to accept Islam or continue with their previous faith, as Quran teaches: "there is no coercion in the matters of Faith"[Quran;2:256].

It is well known historic fact that after eight centuries of the Muslims in Spain they were totally eliminated from that country after Christian recon quest. If the Muslims had used force, military or economic there would not have been any Christian left in Spain to have kicked the Muslims out. One cannot charge Muslims with using the sword to convert Spaniards to the Islamic religion. Today, Islam is still spreading all over the world and Muslims have NO sword!! The Muslims were also the masters of India for almost thousand years, but they did not force Islam down the Hindus. In Spain and in India, the Muslims were no paragons of virtue, yet they obeyed the Qur'anic injunctions. Indonesia and Malaysia in the Far East and The majority of the people on the East coast of Africa as far down as Mozambique, as well as the bulk of the inhabitants on the West coast of the continent are Muslims, but history does not record any invading hoards of Muslims from anywhere. The Muslim traders and preachers through their good conduct and moral righteousness achieved the miracle of conversion. This forced De Lacy O'Leary in to write : *'History makes it clear however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of the sword upon conquered races is one of the most fantastically absurd myths that historians have ever repeated.'* ["Islam at the Crossroads" London, 1923, p.8]

James Michener says: *"No other religion in history spread so rapidly as Islam. The West has widely believed that this surge of religion was made possible by the sword. But no modern scholar accepts this idea, and the Qur'an is explicit in the support of the freedom of conscience."* ...['Islam: The Misunderstood Religion,' Reader's Digest, May 1955, pp. 68-70:]

While Muslims were confronting the enemies of Islam all around, the common Muslim living in the villages and all around was just simple Muslim living according the basic tenets of Islam, he had fully applied Islam in practice. They got guidance from Allah through Quran and His messenger through his Sunnah, avoiding prohibitions [*Haram*] and striving for permissible [*Halal*]. The common Muslim endeavoured to protect all the social traditions in line with Islamic teachings.

It does not mean and naturally it should not be that his society was complete and exemplary ideal Islamic society, because such an ideal & complete society has never existed in any society of the world. Not even in the society guided and trained by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in person. It means that in that society good and evil were dominated by higher goodness and the lower traditions were dominated by the higher traditions.

The society of Abbasids era was inferior to the Umayyad era, but it was Muslim society which despite some deviations here and there lived generally according to the tenets of Islam.

### The Era of Ottoman Turks:

After the Abbasids came the era of Ottoman Turks. The Abbasids' rule was briefly ended for three years in 1258, when Hulagu Khan, the Mongol khan, sacked Baghdad, resuming in Mamluk Egypt in 1261, from where they continued to claim authority in religious matters until 1519, when power was formally transferred to the Ottoman Empire and the capital relocated to Constantinople. *Osmanlı Devleti* was a Turkish empire which lasted from 27 July 1299 to 1 November 1922, when the Sultanate was abolished.



The Ottoman Empire was one of the largest and longest lasting empires in history; such that the Ottoman State, its politics, conflicts, and cultural heritage in a vast geography provide one of the longest continuous narratives. During the 16th and 17th centuries, in particular at the height of its power under the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent, the empire was one of the most powerful states in the world – a multinational, multilingual empire that stretched from the southern borders of the Holy Roman Empire to the outskirts of Vienna, Royal Hungary (modern Slovakia) and the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth in the north to Yemen and Eritrea in the south; from Algeria in the west to Azerbaijan in the east; controlling much of southeast Europe, Western Asia and North Africa. At the beginning of the 17th century the empire contained 32 provinces and numerous vassal states, some of which were later absorbed into the empire, while others were granted various types of autonomy during the course of centuries. With Constantinople as its capital and vast control of lands around the Mediterranean basin, the empire was at the centre of interactions between the Eastern and Western worlds for over six centuries. After the international recognition of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) headquartered in Ankara, by means of the Treaty of Lausanne signed on 24 July 1923, the GNAT proclaimed on 29 October 1923 the

establishment of the Republic of Turkey as the new Turkish State that succeeded and formally ended the defunct Ottoman Empire, in line with the treaty The Ottoman Caliphate was abolished on 3 March 1924.

Before adopting Islam, a process that was greatly facilitated by the Abbasid victory at the 751 Battle of Talas, which ensured Abbasid influence in Central Asia; the Turkic peoples practiced a variety of shamanism. After this battle, many of the various Turkic tribes including the Oghuz Turks, who were the ancestors of both the Seljuks and the Ottomans gradually converted to Islam, and brought the religion with them to Anatolia beginning in the 11th century.

**The Ottoman legal system accepted the religious law over its subjects.** The Islamic Shari'ah law system had been developed from a combination of the Qur'an; the *Hadith*, or words of the prophet Muhammad; *ijmā'*, or consensus of the members of the Muslim community; *qiyas*, a system of analogical reasoning from earlier precedents; and local customs. Both systems were taught at the Empire's law schools, which were in Constantinople and Bursa.

The Ottoman Empire was always organized around a system of local jurisprudence. Legal administration in the Ottoman Empire was part of a larger scheme of balancing central and local authority. Ottoman power revolved crucially around the administration of the rights to land, which gave a space for the local authorities develop the needs of the local *millet*. The jurisdictional complexity of the Ottoman Empire was aimed to permit the integration of culturally and religiously different groups. The Ottoman system had three court systems: one for Muslims, one for non-Muslims, involving appointed Jews and Christians ruling over their respective religious communities, and the "trade court". The entire system was regulated from above by means of the administrative *Kanun*, [laws]. The *Kanun* law system, on the other hand, was the secular law of the Sultan, and dealt with issues not clearly addressed by the Shari'ah system.

These court categories were not, however, wholly exclusive: for instance, the Islamic courts which were the Empire's primary courts could also be used to settle a trade conflict or disputes between litigants of differing religions, and Jews and Christians often went to them to obtain a more forceful ruling on an issue. The Ottoman state tended not to interfere with non-Muslim religious law systems, despite legally having a voice to do so through local governors. *Tanzimat* reforms drastically affected the law system. In 1877, the civil law (except family law) was codified in the *Mecelle* code. Later codifications covered commercial law, penal law and civil procedure.

There is no doubt that the Turks brought Islam to the new heights though their military conquests, but this reality can not be ignored that many important meanings of Islam also suffered in their hands. In other words during the Ottomans era Islamic thought became stagnant due to lack of intellectual growth. Right from the early days, the specialty of Islam has been its dynamism. Islam has be a dynamic driving force in every aspect of life, be it the victories in warfare or attaining new heights in the field of knowledge of Fiqh, theology, science and technology, economy, philosophy, politics or social sciences. In fact no aspect of human life was outside its folds. When the Ottoman Turks attained the power they concentrated more in the field of military power to gain victories in the battlefields but othe aspects of life suffered due to strangulation.

The Turks [and Moguls in India] were not well aware of the importance of knowledge as it is well known and recorded in history that while Europe was getting benefited for the fountains of knowledge from Islamic sources to lay the foundations of Renaissance the Muslims lagged behind. This has been summarized in Encyclopedia Britannica, as mentioned earlier, which is again reproduced:



**“The decline of Muslim scholarship coincided with the early phases of the European intellectual awakening that these translations were partly instrumental in bringing about. The translation into Latin of most Islamic works during the 12th and 13th centuries had a great impact upon the European Renaissance. As Islam was declining in scholarship and Europe was absorbing the fruits of Islam's centuries of creative productivity, signs of Latin Christian awakening were evident throughout the European continent. The 12th century was one of intensified traffic of Muslim learning into the Western world through many hundreds of translations of Muslim works, which helped Europe seize the initiative from Islam when political conditions in Islam brought about a decline in Muslim scholarship. By 1300 C.E when all that was worthwhile in Muslim scientific, philosophical, and social learning had been transmitted to European schoolmen through Latin translations, European scholars stood once again on the solid ground of Hellenistic thought, enriched or modified through Muslim and Byzantine efforts.”**

**“Most of the important Greek scientific texts were preserved in Arabic translations. Although the Muslims did not alter the foundations of Greek science, they made several important contributions within its general framework. When interest in Greek learning revived in Western Europe during the 12th and 13th centuries, scholars turned to Islamic Spain for the scientific texts. A spate of translations resulted in the revival of Greek science in the West and coincided with the rise of the universities. Working within a predominantly Greek framework, scientists of the late Middle Ages reached high levels of sophistication and prepared the ground for the scientific revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries.”** According to Will Durant, the Western scholar, **“For five centuries , from 700 to 1200 (C.E), Islam led the world in power, order and extent of government, in refinement of manners, scholarship and philosophy”**.

The Turks [also applicable to India under Moguls] even lacked the Ijthehad [modernization, updating] in Fiqh & theology, to safeguard the piety. They continued to consult the existing inheritance of knowledge of Fiqh and theology and froze this treasure of Islamic knowledge rather than adding to it. Fiqh is the symbol of progress in the Islamic society. Due to the same reason during that critically unpleasant era of trials, the social progress also retarded along with the stagnation in Fiqh. This was such a great loss that there is no other such example found in the Islamic history.

Even during this period the Islamic societies protected their legacy but these traditions had lost their meanings, effort was done just in appearance without spirit, though they were sacred but lacked the ability to achieve the real purpose. Take the example of Pardah [privacy and covering of women] in Turkish style which in appearance looked sacred in the social system. But behind this Pardah during their last days, in the Ottoman palaces all sorts of evil activities were taking place behind the veil.

This is that unpleasant era when real threat to Islam began because the most dangerous aspect to stop the growth of a thought or to make it stagnant. When a society become stagnant then its fall becomes evident, just matter of time. During this period [Umayyad to Ottomans] Islam had to confront many internal and external threats like internal rivalry of rulers, onslaught of Mongols and Tartars, persistent attacks by Crusaders. But when the period of stagnation came in the era of Ottomans, this was the gravest and most serious threat. The Christians waiting for such an opportunity took full advantage and launched multiple attacks from all directions. Despite all these tragedies and attacks which Islam had to face from the internal and external enemies, did Islam cease to exist? No, not all.

### **Onslaught of Western Imperialism:**

To achieve domination over Islam, the Western Christians had to use all their resources for over a century. Then for another century they used every kind of force to finish Islam. To

establish their ascendancy over Muslim countries they used all crooked techniques and thoughts but they failed to end Islam. After the last onslaught of Christians there was a big dreadful revolution in Islamic world but this perverted revolution proved to be the biggest mischief [*Fasad*] and root of deterioration of Muslim sociology.

Although the Islamic society became weak and stagnant after this mischief and great deterioration but did not decline, because in the Islamic belief has extraordinary ability to survive against all odds. It is due to this tendency of survivability that despite numerous debacles it suffered due to infighting of Muslim rulers for power and onslaught of Mongols and Christian Crusaders it regained strength after some period to become a dominant force. This ability to survive again resurfaced during the bad periods in Ottomans rule to strive for independence. It was this force of Islam which appeared in the form of Wahabi movement in Hijaz, Mehdi movement in Sudan and Syed Ahmad Shaheed, influenced by Shah Abdul Aziz, son of Shah Waliullah in India. These movements were such that they could have revived Islam in pristine form. But the imperialism did not provide an opportunity to the Islamic awakening; it acted swiftly to with all its evil resources to eliminate Islam from its roots.

### **Most Dangerous Attacks on Islam:**

#### **Deceit for Distortion of Islamic Thought:**

The imperialists did not only rely on the use the military power as being done in the past, but along with military power they employed all sorts of overt, covert and scientific means including use of deceit to distort the Islamic teachings. Then they used the media to spread this distorted form of Islam among Muslims to pollute their minds so that even if they fail through their missionaries to convert the Muslims to Christianity, at least they would be disgusted form Islam.

The Christens has digressed from the teachings Jesus Christ (pbuh) who said: *“Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”* (Mathew;5:17-20)

The Paul abrogated by saying: *“But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.”* (Romans;7:6).

Hence the Christianity is without Law or Shari’ah; they tried to introduce same deviation in to Islam. The Shari’ah in Islamic countries practiced form centuries was replaced with the Western law. Shari’ah was restricted to the personnel matters like marriage, divorce etc. Moreover when the Christian Imperialism made its ingress in to the Islamic world, it was beginning of the disillusionment and mischief. Strange type of thoughts were introduced to Islam which were unknown in the entire Islamic history even in the periods of turmoil or zenith. It was discussed that that the religion [Din] has nothing to do with social system, economics, Din has no role in the life in individual, its relationship with society and government. Din has nothing to do with the social customs, dress of women. Din has nothing to do with arts, generalism, radio, television and cinema. In short Din has nothing to do with the life of an individual; hence Din should be totally excluded form the life and individual spends on this earth!

Now in the Islamic societies one can find people who say that as long as an individual offers *Salah* [prayer] and keep Fast [*Soaum*] he/she is a Muslim, he is free to follow the economic

system from any non Muslim sources or make basis of his thoughts and traditions on any non Islamic system. Hence in Islamic societies some women are found to state that as long as the intentions are good one is Muslim but it does not imply that a Muslim woman or girl can not keep relationship with other boys/men. Neither being a Muslims means that woman should not wear dress according to latest fashion even if by this dress her breast, back, arms and legs appear naked or even on the beach, apart from covering small parts of body rest is kept naked. Moreover they think that with all the latest Western fashions on nudity if they have to participate in a dance party, it does not affect their faith as Muslim.

Apart from this there are such men and women found in Muslim societies who openly announce their secular / atheist views. They say that Din is symbol of orthodoxy, rigidity and primitiveness hence it should be abolished so that the nation wake up to resume its march towards press. Such thoughts are result of devilish struggle which Christian Imperialism has been waging against Islam from last two centuries, which has been granted new impetus after 911. The racial and religious profiling and discrimination of Muslims in Europe and USA is testimony to the same fact.

### **Christian Missionaries Onslaught:**

Well organized effort was made to convert the Muslims to Christianity, they gained limited success in it, so the tactics was changed, in the words of Father Zomer: "It is not important to convert the Muslims to Christianity but in reality we should endeavor to change the Muslims thought in spiritual and social aspects conforming to Christian thought".

### **Freedom and Equality of Women:**

Freedom of women and their rights, education and her social and physiological development forms part of Islamic thought. However Islam does not forms it as basis for religious and moral decline. Allah says: "**Mankind, remain conscious of your Lord, who has created you all out of a single soul, and out of it created its mate.**"(Qur'an;4:1); "**I will not let the good deed of any among you, whether a male or a female, be wasted:**" (Qur'an;3:195). . Although man and woman have been created equal, but they are not identical. Both have been fashioned differently from each other, so their roles and responsibilities are also different. The Prophet (peace be upon him) appreciated good treatment of women, he said: "The best among you are those who treat their wives best. I am indeed the best of you in the way I treat my wives." When this is compared with the notion that prevails among the overwhelming majority of men in the Muslim world, it is found to be at variance with the Prophet's instructions. In his last address, Prophet (peace be upon him) said; "O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have right over you. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom you do not approve, as well as never to commit adultery". [The details have discussed in my previous article: "**Women In Islam; Emancipated Not Subjugated**" published in DJ, available at <http://aftabkhan.blog.com>]

### **Orientalist Fitnah [Tribulation]:**

Orientalism is now used to describe a pervasive Western tradition, both academic and artistic, of prejudiced outsider interpretations of the East, shaped by the attitudes of European imperialism in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Western writers very cleverly first praise some aspects of Islam to develop the confidence in reader of being unbiased. Then they inject the poisonous propaganda against Islam to tarnish it image. They have done great work in this regards to study the Arabic history, language and culture. Some of their efforts are commendable but one has to be conscious of hidden deceit, their aim remains anti Islam. They

have been able to create a class among Muslim intellectuals who have fallen pray to their nefarious designs, which continues.

Edward Said, the Palestinian born Christian & American intellectual is most famous for his work on 'Orientalism', which he perceived as the inaccuracies that are the foundation of Western thought toward the East. In his most famous book, *Orientalism* (1978), Said claimed a "subtle and persistent Eurocentric prejudice against Arabo-Islamic peoples and their culture." He argued that a long tradition of false and romanticized images of Asia and the Middle East in Western culture had served as an implicit justification for Europe and the U.S.'s colonial and imperial ambitions. Just as fiercely, he denounced the practice of Arab elites who internalized the U.S. and British orientalist's ideas of Arabic culture.

"So far as the United States seems to be concerned, it is only a slight overstatement to say that Moslems and Arabs are essentially seen as either oil suppliers or potential terrorists. Very little of the detail, the human density, the passion of Arab-Moslem life has entered the awareness of even those people whose profession it is to report the Arab world. What we have instead is a series of crude, essentialized caricatures of the Islamic world presented in such a way as to make that world vulnerable to military aggression." Said asserted that **much western study of Islamic civilization was political intellectualism bent on self-affirmation rather than objective study, a method of discrimination, and a tool of imperialist domination. Orientalism had an impact on the fields of literary theory, cultural studies and human geography, and to a lesser extent on those of history and oriental studies.** Taking his cue from the work of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, and from earlier critics of western Orientalism such as A. L. Tibawi, Anouar Abdel-Malek, Maxime Rodinson, and Richard William Southern, Edward Said argued that Western writings on the Orient, and the perceptions of the East purveyed in them, are suspect, and cannot be taken at face value. According to Said, the history of European colonial rule and political domination over the East distorts the writings of even the most knowledgeable, well-meaning and sympathetic Western 'Orientalists'.

"I doubt if it is controversial, for example, to say that an Englishman in India or Egypt in the later nineteenth century took an interest in those countries which was never far from their status in his mind as British colonies. To say this may seem quite different from saying that all academic knowledge about India and Egypt is somehow tinged and impressed with, violated by, the gross political fact – and yet that is what I am saying in this study of Orientalism." Said argued that the West has stereotyped the East in art and literature, since antiquity – such as the composition of *The Persians* by Aeschylus. Even more so in modern times, Europe has dominated Asia politically so that even the most outwardly objective Western texts on the East were permeated with a bias that Western scholars could not recognize. Western scholars appropriated the task of exploration and interpretation of the Orient's languages, history and culture for themselves, with the implication that the East was not capable of composing its own narrative. They have written Asia's past and constructed its modern identities from a perspective that takes Europe as the norm, from which the "exotic", "inscrutable" Orient deviates. Said concluded that a Western writings about the Orient depict it as an irrational, weak, feminized "Other", contrasted with the rational, strong, masculine West, a contrast he suggests derives from the need to create "difference" between West and East that can be attributed to immutable "essences" in the Oriental make-up.

### **Corruption of Education System:**

Another attack was against the education system. The Western colonial powers replaced the existing Islamic education system with Western education system, specially designed to produce clerks for the government jobs. This education system was different to the education system in vogue in their own countries. This retarded the intellectual growth among the Muslims, though there were some exceptional cases where the brilliant Muslims reached the

Western universities to benefit from the fruits of modern education. On return they introduced some reforms in their parent countries.

### **Global Wave of Materialism & Immorality:**

But this is not the only cause of degeneration and deterioration of Muslim societies apart from it there is another effective factor: The whole world is affected by the wave of immorality full of evil and turmoil based upon materialism. It develops hatred for the religion and pulls towards the animal instincts; there is no other example of such wildness in the human history. More over this immorality is supported through science and technology and the modern thoughts. In the name of progress and development a great philosophy have been evolved so that this evil is popularized. The positive side is that such an Islamic thoughts and practices are restricted to a specific class, its not popular among masses. The primitive Mullah [Imam or prayer leader] despite his limitations of modern knowledge acts as a barrier to vulgarity & immorality and the common Muslim folk listen to him patiently with respect.

### **Oppression breeds Extremism:**

The imperial West has planted another seed of discord at the heart of Muslim world in the shape of Israel, resulting in endless wars in Middle East and Muslim world. Till the issue of oppressed Palestinians and Muslims at Kashmir, Chechnya, Philippines and elsewhere are resolved the world peace remain threatened. Western and US desire to control the energy and other resources of Muslim world has resulted in wars.

Today the Muslim society finds itself at the crossroads. There are divergent views on conduct of Jihad, an important doctrine of Islam against oppression & illiteracy. The term "Jihad" has much wider significance than a military campaign and open warfare as commonly perceived. Jihad could be with "the heart" (intentions or feelings), with "the hand" (weapons etc) a simple action, such as standing firm in defence of the cause of Islam or "with tongue" (expression through speech or writing etc). This may require speaking out in public, for extending invitation of Islam to non believers (*Dawah*, preaching), against ignoring Islamic principles, and writing articles or publishing books to promote Islam. Since Islam is the faith of "Peace", the early Muslim community was urged to conduct the Bigger Jihad (*Jihad Kabira*), through Qur'an, i.e. preaching of Allah's message. Allah says in Qur'an: "therefore, do not yield to the unbelievers, and make Jihad (strive) against them with this Qur'an, a mighty Jihad (strenuous striving)." (Qur'an;25:52).

Some people feels that due to suppression and exploitation of Muslims by neo-colonialist powers (Western) on one hand and politico-military suppression of Muslims at Palestine, Chechnya, Kashmir, Philippines and occupation of Iraq, Afghanistan, on the other hand, there is no other option but to resort to Jihad with arms. Due to ineptness of world and Muslim powers, the extremist non government armed groups are resorting to violence and extremism. Being weak in the modern weaponry, they follow the old dictum. "Every thing is fair in love and war". The terms Jihad is being used by such groups of desperate people who are at times are involved in suicide bombing and violence against innocent civilians including women and children. Such heinous crimes against humanity by few zealots are having disastrous consequences for the entire Muslim community (*Ummah*).

While violence and terrorism [by oppressor states] is to be rejected unanimously, there is dire need to lay down the basic parameters for conduct of Jihad. Firstly the existence of a well recognized legitimate political authority or government in the area where armed struggle is to be conducted against oppression be prerequisite. Secondly laying down of objectives to be achieved and parameters. Thirdly the availability of means and resources to achieve the objectives. The peace as and when visible should be given a chance. However one has to find answers to the questions like: Is killing of innocent civilians, women and children whether Muslims or non Muslims justified on the name of Jihad? Can the declaration of Jihad with

arms be left at the discretion of few individuals, religious zealots and stateless groups? Or should it be the responsibility of the Islamic states keeping in view the teachings of Islam, national interests and the prevalent system of international relations (UN, OIC and other forums)? Muslim scholars and leadership through dialogue with the international community, have to analyze the reasons of this pathetic state and find out practicable, realistic and just solutions on long term basis to make the world safer place for every one.

At present the Muslim scholars are mostly devout and sincere but (with some exceptions), they generally lack in the knowledge of science and technology. They know little about other Social Sciences i.e. sociology, psychology, anthropology, economics, political science, and history. Only few have studied 'comparative religions' in-depth. The research to deal with the issues and challenges of present time in realistic and practicable way is very limited, rather nonexistent. This state has been reached over a very long period, due to the negligent attitude, fixing of wrong priorities and lack of interest by the Muslim societies, besides many other reasons. Consequently a very medieval face of Islam is presented, which appears to be extremely rigid, primitive, intolerant to difference of opinion and at times aggressive, which is far from reality. Against all the odds and despite all these limitations, it goes to the credit of traditional *Ulema* (clergy) which is keeping the candle of Islam alight. It is high time that the Muslim societies besides developments in the field of education, science, technology and industrialization, address this problem by injecting the fresh intellect in the field of religious scholarship. Thus the 'Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam' proposed by great modern Islamic philosopher Dr. Muhammad Iqbal over seventy five year ago to meet the challenges of this time through *Ijtihad* could be achieved by modern Muslim intellectuals and scholars. This will enable the Muslims to regain the lost glory and gain respectable position in the community of nations in this modern world. While there could be divergent views on the conduct of 'Jihad' as an 'armed struggle', in the present scenario, but there is unanimity '*Jihad Kabira*'; the peaceful struggle with the Qur'an.

### **The Future:**

These internal and external factors resulted in the great deterioration and discord in Muslim societies, however despite all these efforts to crush Islam; doubtless to state that the future belongs to Islam! This may appear to be strange and surprising, but its not an overstatement, let's see how?

The Western imperialism made all out efforts to obliterate Islam by firstly dividing them in to small states, then sowed the seeds of discord and hatred among these small Muslim states. The separated the Din from Muslim society and excluded Shari'ah from the life of Muslims. Every movement which started for revival of Islam to make it a driving force was crushed. Education policies were formulated with the view to create confusion and doubts in the minds of young Muslims and to keep them away from the real sources of Islamic knowledge. In every Muslim country a team of such pseudo scholars and thinkers was created who had hated it with no real knowledge about Islam. They consider Islam as a symbol of stagnation, illiteracy, degeneration, reactionary and anti modernism. Any movement among the thinkers for the revival of Islam was instantly ruthlessly crushed since it was considered as a grave threat to the two centuries of effort by the Christian Imperialism, they succeeded in this effort.

The Muslims not only went away from Din rather were practically excluded from the mainstream Islam, though yet they bear Muslim labels like names. Such Muslims claim to follow such an Islam which does not exist in the real world. The imperialists were able to suppress the movements in Muslim countries which worked for revival of Islam.

So what happened next? In USA, which has spend billions of dollars on Christian Missionaries, and Islamic movement started with in black Americans, which by now has followers in millions. American tried to suppress this movement through oppression, assassinations and imprisonment, widely reported in American press. But the message of

Islam was spreading fast even in jails. According to US press since they were Muslims they bore all hardships and no amount of oppression could digress them from their noble mission. After 9/11, despite hostile propaganda to malign Islam with terrorism, discrimination of Muslims in France, Germany, Switzerland, Norway and other European countries; Islam remains the fastest growing religion in Europe and USA among whites and all other races. Western women are leading in the race to accept Islam.

USA who spent lot of money in Africa to stop the spread of Islam was forced that its agents should raise the banner of Islam so that at least the Muslim areas of Africa should remain under the control of its cronies and puppets. The Islamic movements had smashed the Christian missionary efforts. No one can work against Divine Will of His light to exist in the world: *“Fain would they put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light however much the disbelievers are averse.”* [Quran; 61:8]

Now leaving apart the world of Islam now let's look at the Western world which is riding the tide of progress and development. Today whole West is suffering from the worst type of deprivation in the form of “Spiritual Deficit”. It can only exist if God decides to finish the humanity. But if it is destined that the humanity has to exist for some more time, then man must wake up from ignorance and try to get out of the hell its falling in. The fact is that humanity is gaining consciousness. Humanity has realised that there is a vacuum in the life which can neither be filled with economic prosperity, political system, social organizations and sex nor by physical comforts available in abundance more than ever. In fact this is spiritual vacuum formed due to hollowness of faith.

This void is indicated by the general discomfort faced by people which results in psychological and nervous breakdown, depression, high blood pressure, suicide and even mental breakdown. This is happening despite availability of all the comforts and pleasures which industrial civilization has provided to mankind. In reality as the people get absorbed in lustful pleasures while their level of madness is increasing on one side and the feeling of spiritual void is increasing in the consciousness on the other side. Soon the humanity will gain consciousness from slumber to realize that the solution to fill this void is faith, faith in One God [Allah], there is no alternative to it. This Faith does not mean to dress up in multicolored gowns like a sage playing with rosary or to ignore all aspects of human life to get immersed in spiritual Manifestations or to attain the state of ecstasy. Rather this belief would encompass the human intellect, body and spirit.

Such a complete belief existing on the earth is Islam and none else. It is not necessary that in such a situation the people's name be Muhammad, Ali or Ahmad but humanity after its long hard earned experience will conclude that Islam is that desired Din or belief which can keep all aspects of life in harmony and avoid its destruction by splitting apart of different human aspects.

The main hurdles in the way to Islam as seen now would be eliminated once people would start coming towards it. It will not be the first revolution in the history of mankind, in reality once humanity is alerted on existence of the spiritual void, then the thoughts and beliefs which appears to impossible to change get dissolved very easily. When man realizes that he is unfortunately misguided, he voluntarily accepts every such organization which pleads for Din or belief system. Waywardness and misguidance is the real cause of present turmoil. In such as situation people abandon the evil practices of pleasure and are contended with the balanced natural means of pleasure. They feel real satisfaction in such legitimate means of pleasure.

All the means of attraction and pleasure which are now part of personality of modern women, due to which she gets pleasure for her being and which now appears indispensable to her, are now source of fear, insecurity and discomfort. It is true that she feels existence of her 'self' due to it but it is so wide in its application that the personality of other women also becomes

part of it. Consequently the other woman possess her fiancé, lover or husband resulting in to disintegration of family, end of relationships leaving deep unforgettable scars.

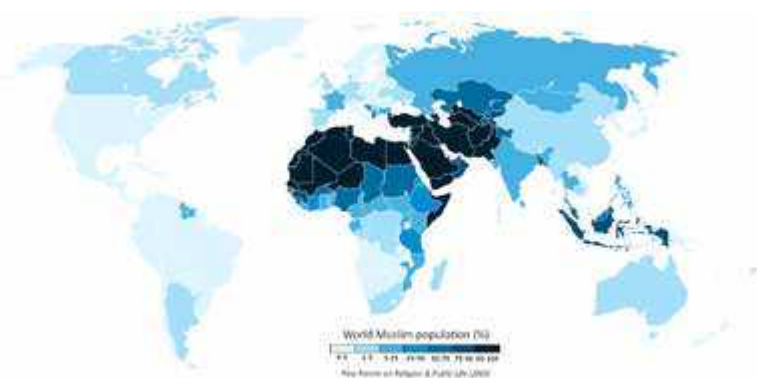
Soon women will realize that she does not need these artificial thing. It is batter for her that she should adopt the natural fair means and abandon the mischievous styles and practices.

Then people will revert to Din and religion and that Din will be Islam. The power of Din is much more powerful than the power of human determination because its basis are that Sunnah or way of Allah which He has kept in the nature of human being which works with in. When the time comes... in fact in the beliefs there is no count of one or two generations. This is not important when it would happen. Most important is that it will happen and Islam will establish itself because yet in the destiny written by God, destruction of humanity is not planned. Hence soon the time will come.

The Muslim generations has rendered great sacrifices to cover the great divide between disbelief and Islam, they suffered great hardships in process. Can any thing be equal to it in value. No nothing can be equal to it. These are the great sacrifices which can only be rewarded by Allah in this and next world. Allah has guaranteed that their reward is with Him:

“God will certainly aid those who aid his (cause); - for verily God is full of Strength, Exalted in Might.”[Quran;22:40]

### **Conclusion:**



The long colonial era has not ended, but changed its form to Western Neo-colonialism, the practice of using capitalism, globalization, and cultural forces to control a country (usually former European colonies in Africa or Asia) in lieu of direct military or political control. Such control can be economic, cultural, or linguistic; by promoting one's own culture, language or media in the colony, corporations embedded in that culture can then make greater headway in opening the markets in those countries. The corrupt regimes and dictatorship [military or pseudo democratic] in the Muslim countries act as the cronies and agents of imperial powers to serve their masters. There is awakening now, Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Syria and even Pakistan are showing the symptoms of change to gain real economic independence.

The society based upon Islamic principles is not the society of ascetics and hermits. Adornments, recreation and fine arts within limits of morality and decency are also for enjoyment of believers. Ethics and human rights are accorded high priority. Many such aspects projected as ‘Dilemma’ are nothing but ‘Delusions’. In the words of Eqbal Ahmad: “We are chasing an Islamic order ‘stripped of its humanism, aesthetics, intellectual quests and spiritual devotions.... concerned with power not with the soul, with the mobilization of people for political purposes rather than with sharing and alleviating their sufferings and aspirations.”

Allah says: “Say: Who hath forbidden the adornment of God ██████████ which He has brought forth for His devotees, and the good things of His providing? Say: "All these things are for the enjoyment of the believers in the life of this world though shared by others; but



these shall be exclusively theirs on the Day of Resurrection. Thus do We make Our revelations clear for those who understand. Say: The things that my Lord hath indeed forbidden are: shameful deeds whether open or secret; sins and trespasses against truth or reason; assigning of partners to God for which he hath given no authority; and saying things about God of which you have no knowledge.”(Qur’an;7:32-33).

**Thus despite all the odds, Islam has The Future, Muslims have to adhere to the golden principles of Islam. It is totally unfair to totally blame the enemies if Islam for conspiracies and mischief, which had always been there. The Muslims have to share the blame as well, they have to put their house in order and remember :**

*"ALLAH would never change a favour that HE has conferred upon a people until they change their own condition" [Quran;8:53]*

*"surely Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition [Quran;13:11]*

The renowned British scholar and statesman Sir George Bernard Shaw summed up the future of Islam in these worlds:

**"If any religion had the chance of ruling over England, nay Europe within the next hundred years, it could be Islam." "I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him - the wonderful man and in my opinion for from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Saviour of Humanity."..."I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness: I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today."**[*The Genuine Islam,' Vol. 1, No. 8, 1936*]

***'Truth has come and falsehood has vanished. Verily, falsehood is bound to vanish.'*[Quran;17:81]**

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