

Islam in our times

Modernism: is a trend of thought that affirms the power of human beings to create and improve and reshape their environment with the aid of scientific knowledge, technology and practical experimentation. In other words, there is no place for religious knowledge. On that basis who ever tries to promote whatever the religious knowledge would then be backward and unprogressive, totally against the modernism.

This topic is of great importance and a very provocative. In particular, the time in which we are living on is very challenging especially for Muslims. In addition, western world and media is in fact questioning and debating that Islam is outdated, failed to fulfill the needs of the modern world. Moreover, they profoundly claim that the Islam is backward and only reliable for the people of 1400 years ago. Therefore, it is very important to understand the terminology of modernism, because different people think of differently.

However, the question comes that why they took that position against the religion of Islam. The reason is that when the Americans made the constitution back in the 18th century, which was created by their best, enlightened minds of that age in which they tried to establish the rules for justice, brotherhood, equality etc. In the middle of that constitution article one section 2 paragraph 3, is the statement that **black people would be considered equivalent to 3/5th of a white man.** However, with the civil rights movements, this article was amended.

So they said, if there be needed such radical changes even after 200 years what about a constitution that came back 1400 years ago, must be amended. It cannot possibly stand as it is. When they look at **Magna Carta, which is the expression of democracy,** all were changed with the passage of time. Therefore, Islam in their view having no difference than others because they do not think of it as divine, not revealed by Allah swt, but made by a person himself named Muhammad PBUH in the 6th century. In other words, system should change with the time.

But anyhow modernism is not a bad thing in itself, but the culture that came with it is a bad thing.

Effects of modernism on Muslim thoughts

When we talk about the influence of modernism on Muslim community, we come to know about the different people thinking of differently about Islam.

1. Islam is completely irrelevant

Among Muslims, we see that **Kamal Ataturk 1st president of Turkey in 1923,** who after world war and the dissolution of Ottoman Empire, began a secularist movement on a very wide stage. He tried his best to eradicate Islam from its basis.

- He instructed that the Azan should be given in Turkish.
- In the mosque, the chairs like in churches should be introduced.
- The prayers should be done in Turkish.
- It was illegal to wear a turban on the head and he had to wear a bowler cap.

- Hijab was not allowed.

However, he never succeeded for a long time.

2. Part of Islam is irrelevant:

Those who think of that in a view that cultural ties, family, festivals, Eid and individual rituals are acceptable in Islam because they bound people together as it is a societal interaction. However, the other parts, which have to deal with the governess, legal system, hadud system etc., these are not relevant. That is why they want a secular state within a Muslim state and mostly of thinkers today are of like this.

3. All of Islam is relevant:

Those who is in the opinion, thinks that Islam is relevant for all times even in this modern world, and who believe in so would be called as fundamentalists and equivalent to terrorists by the modernist, either openly expose or quietly hold in to their hearts. In fact, after 9/11 in USA, the New York Times showed a list of points by which one could identified a fundamentalist or a terrorist. That means, if a Muslim is walking among you, how to distinguish between him and a moderate Muslim.

They listed as:

- He prays five times a day
- He fast in the whole month of Ramadan
- He does not shake hands with the women

All that means if a Muslim is a practical Muslim he becomes a fundamentalist in sight of them. On the other hand a non-practical Muslim which we called as a Friday Muslim, who only show himself in the masjid only on Friday or only in the Ramadan, these are the moderates.

Good effects: Modernism in itself is not a bad thing, but the culture that comes with it, that what matters, which destroys the cultures and moral values. E.g., In Sweden, it is perfectly legitimate to have a sexual relation with his mother, daughter or sister. This is what they called modernism.

- This modernism also comes with the good effects. In the beginning, the father (pop) was not allowed to marry as it became a tradition among them which is not a part of religion but now with the modernism it has been allowed.
- In the Hinduism, when the husband died and while his body burning on fire, his wife which they belief, had no soul and her only duty was to serve her husband, should jump into the fire. The Hindus, now with this modernism made it illegal on government level and also somehow abolish the differentiation of the cast system among them.
- It also helps in overcoming the superstitiousness among the people and help them to analyze and think about the false believes related to it.

Modernism in Islam:

Now after we understand what modernism is, the question arises that is Islam outdated or does it adapt the modernism? In Islam, we have two sources of law, one source we call as shari'a and the other source we called as fiqh. Normally they both translated as Islamic law so people do not understand the difference between them.

- Shari'a is the name of revelation by Allah swt, which based on the Quran and the Sunnah, which is unchangeable like the believing fundamentals of Islam, laws and rules like hadud including cutting of a hand upon stealing, Qisas upon murdering, etc.
- Fiqh a kind of ijihad, on the other hand changes its phases according to the time and situation and given circumstances. It actually based on the information from which we deduce the laws of fiqh, when these information changes the law changes. E.g., smoking tobacco, when it first reached to the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century, Muslims scholars had to analyze it and put a rule upon it, because according to Islamic law there is rule for everything. Either that thing is fard that you must do it or it is mustahab which is recommended or mubah that which is neutral in ruling not having swab or sin or makrooh disliked by Islam or haram which means prohibited. Every action will fall into any category. When they saw that and analyze its affects that cigarette cause bad mouth smell, they said it is makruh because they ruled in the light of the hadith in which Prophet PBUH said, "that whoever eat raw garlic and onion, should not come to our mosques". Because at the end of the prayer we turned to each other and saying salaam, it will be very offensive for others.

However, in 1979 surgeons of America proved that this thing causes cancer and cancer leads to death. Therefore, after that Muslims scholars those who were not fanatical and had the understanding with the fiqh, they went back in order to analyze the facts of sharia of the laws which cause death, and they found the ruling as haram. As Allah says in the Quran: Do not kill yourselves, (Sura al-Isra) In addition, the Prophet PBUH said, "whoever kills himself will find himself repeated that act eternally in the hell."

Islam does not oppose modernism in a sense of technological developments if utilized in positive way. Using technology against others or to kill them, obviously Islam opposes that.

Challenges in the modern times

1. **Islam as stranger:** You will be treated as a stranger whenever you go anywhere in the world. Everyone will look at you like you are the creature of the outer world. Prophet PBUH said, “This religion began as a stranger and will end up as a stranger”.
2. **False Prophet Hood**
 - **Mirza Ghulam Ahmed:** We have in this modern time, who in the name of Islam has tried to promote this some of the modernist values. Among them are the Qadiyani's or ahmedi's. Mizra Ghulam Ahmad, the leader of Qadian is a British-engineered false Prophet who appeared in India to quell resistance against the British colonialists. He claimed to be the Messiah as the similitude of Prophet 'Eessa, the Mahdi, a Prophet, a Messenger, and the second advent of Prophet Muhammad simultaneously. He invited his fiercest opponent, Molvi Sanauallah Amratsari, to a prayer duel. He advertised his supplication to Allah pleading Him to annihilate the liar amongst the two in the lifetime of the truthful one, by Cholera or by Plague. He considered them to be the sign of Divine Anger and Punishment. Mirza subsequently died of cholera a year later.
 - **Rashad Khalifa:** We had in our recent times another false Prophet, who claimed Prophet Hood in America, named Rashad Khalifa.
 1. He claimed that he discovered the mathematical miracle of the Quran, the number nineteen.
 2. He instituted the practice of female imam, so his wife used to lead salah in his temple and males and females stand side by side and hijab is not needed for woman.
 3. He denied the hadith and after that he claimed that there are some verses in the Quran, which is incorrect in order to fulfill his claim. E.g, in sura al-qalam, there is a letter . When he calculated the noon letter, which is 18 in number, so in order to claim his miracle he changed the letter ن as نون. However, that is not in the text of the Quran in any of the manuscript.
 4. He also said that I will die a natural death, but shortly after that someone killed him in his own temple in 1991. However, his followers continued his thoughts as submitters international.
 - **Quraniyun:** Another trend that we have as Quraniyun, they only believe in Quran and leave the hadith as inappropriate source of Islam. Prophet pbuh warned about these people 1400 years before: “A time comes when a man leaning on his couch and holds the Quran in his hand and say that whatever I found in the Quran halal, I make halal and whatever I found in that haram, I made haram.”

In addition, some denies some part of the hadith which they do not understand with their intellectuals. The example of that they commonly give in defense of

their practice, is the hadith of the fly. That hadith is in the sahih al-bukhari, one of the most authenticated source of the Sunnah, it stated as, Prophet PBUH said: “if a fly falls in your drink, dunk it in and throw it out and take your drink, because under one wing of it there is disease and on the other one is cure.”

The modernist says that how’s that possible because we all knew that fly always comes with disease. Therefore, by saying, that under one wing is disease and other has cure, this is nonsense. The Prophet PBUH could not possibly had said this. Moreover, they rejected the hadith as it goes against their logic.

Another example what the Prophet PBUH said: “do not sleep on your stomach”. At that time the followers only accepted it without arguing, but nowadays we come to know that doctors explains that many backbone problems comes from sleeping in this position, like disc slip and deflection in the curvature of the spine, is all due to sleeping in this position. So the concept behind explaining this all those things what Quran and Sunnah expresses which science haven’t discovered yet, doesn’t means that they are wrong.

- **Intellectual challenge:** Western dominators think that Muslims have allowed themselves to be dominate in many ways, so they try to degrade them by plotting against Islam and Muslims. They are suppressing Muslims by using following methods:
 - Domination of the media
 - Domination of the educational institutions.
 - Establishment of schools and universities directly under the supervision of non-Muslims.
 - Setting up different parties and provide them with support and strength who in the name of Islam promote western civilizations and culture to oppose Islam like Kamal Ataturk and many others.
 - Sponsoring those whom they called elite (anti-Islamic mind) to give fatwas against the Quran and the Sunnah.
 - Funding the educational scholarships to Muslims so they come to their country and to contaminate their minds and dominated by them.
 - Destroying the Arabic language so that Muslims feel shame in speaking of Arabic language, because if you leave Arabic language that means you have destroyed your whole foundation regarding Quran and the Sunnah.

- **Economic challenge:**

- Dominating all the raw materials in the Muslim country so that they do not own any of them. In 1974, Nigeria was the third largest oil producing countries in the world and today it does not own its own oil reserves which is still larger in the world but BP, shell, Exxon occupied all the rights of oil in Nigeria. They take out that oil and sell it back to the Nigerian government and all that due to IMF.
- Making dollar their currency as a standard and a source of value and eliminating the gold. They did that because those countries who possess the most reservoirs of gold would dominate the country as Allah has blessed the Muslim countries with all these blessings but they trick the world and made the paper currency as standard of world economy especially the dollar. Moreover, they used that money to buy the gold resources of that country and rule over them.
- Drowning the development countries with compound interest through the international monitoring funds and World Bank.

- **Political challenge:**

- The worst challenge that the Muslim ummah is facing now a days is the destruction of the Muslim khilafa of Ottoman Empire in 1924. Because when the Muslims had their global Islamic state, even it was weak but still a kind of a head on the body and the Muslim had somehow a reference but now the head has been captivated from the body.
- In addition to that establishment of Jews state in Palestine, to use it as a satellite to control a part of the world having 2/3 resources of the entire planet. This was a geopolitical economic move.
- Dividing the Muslims into their independent state giving them their own sovereignty.
- Moreover, they choose the leader for their own choices and fill their stomach with aids, in order to dominate by them.
- Another challenge is military alternative for what they are trying to change the concept of jihad from the mandate of Islam. Allah says to us in the Quran: “O believers! Shall I direct you to a commerce that will deliver you from a grievous chastisement? Have a faith in Allah and His Messenger and strive in the way of Allah with your possession and your lives. That is better for you if you only knew”

And the Prophet PBUH said, “that the Jihad is the upper most tenant of Islam, because it is the true Jihad when the rest of them is protected.”

- He also said that “the time will be come when the nation of the world will gather around you (as united nation is doing today) like a group of people gather around the plate of food, means that they gather around the Muslim nation like a buffy dinner, and choose whatever they want. You like Iraq or Syria, Lebanon or

Afghanistan.., The companions asked when will this hadith come because Muslims were most powerful at that time at fath makkah, will be at that time in minority? He PBUH said, at that time you will be in a great number as we are today 2 billion. However, your enemy will not have any respect and fear of yours. He said, that would happen when you will start having attachment with the world and start hating to die even a small wound in the way of Allah swt.” (Abu Daud)

So these are the some basic challenges which Muslims should think about it and need to find the solution of the problems of the modern time if they need to survive and dominate into the world in order to raise the words of Allah and prevail justice among the people.

Mega Lecture