

Islamisation of Muslims

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Sunday, January 10, 2010

Introduction

This topic occurred to me after I read the news about Malaysia, a country where nearly fifty-five percent of the total population is Muslim. The news item reported that Malaysian Christians started using the word 'Allah' instead of God. This infuriated the Muslims and consequently they staged violent protests and even burnt some churches. The Muslim processions raised the slogan, 'Allah is only for us.' This incident shook me and made me realize that the need of the hour was to Islamize the Muslims.

It is appalling to note that these Muslims could not see the great dawah opportunity that lay before them. If the Christian clergy had started using the word 'Allah', this common ground could have become the stepping stone for doing dawah work. But blinded by their prejudices, Muslims failed to perceive the prospect of dawah work. This is despite a clear verse in the Quran that ordains,

"Let us come to a word common to us (dai and madu)." (3:64)

The reason for such unwarranted protests by the Muslims is their community-based thinking. It is this mindset which makes them feel threatened.

Erroneous notion of monopoly of faith

The very first verse in the Quran dispels the notion of monopoly of faith. It says,

"All praise is due to God (Allah), the Lord of the Universe." (1:1)

It is most unfortunate that Muslims have not been able to understand the meaning of the very first verse of the Quran. God (Allah) is not a monopoly of Muslims; no where does the Quran mentions that Allah is the Lord of Muslims. In fact, it is interesting to note that Muslims did not even coin the word 'Allah'; it was a part of the Arab culture even before the coming of Prophet Muhammad (period of jahiliyyah).

The incident in Malaysia provides yet another testimony to the fact that Muslims merely read the Quran but do not take guidance from the Book of God.

Propagation of falsehood

The entire blame of propagating falsehoods about Quran and Islam lies on ulema. For instance, they associated a new dimension of "disrespect" with the Quran and issued fatwas against its distribution among the non-Muslims. This made the Muslims bereft of the spirit of spreading the Quran and consequently made them distant from the teachings of Islam. According to the Quran,

"You (believers) are indeed the best community that has ever been brought forth for
(the good of) mankind (khair-o-ummat)." (3:110)

"We have made you (believers) a middle nation, so that you may act as witness for Mankind."
(2:143)

Muslims were referred to as the khair-e-ummat, which was indicative of them being the inheritor of the mission of the Prophet. Companions were trained by the Prophet himself and they consequently trained the next generation of Companions (Tabayeen) and so on. So despite Prophet Muhammad not being there, the succeeding generations continued to receive the training. To keep a check, the system of criticism was allowed in the society so that the actions of believers could be monitored. Criticism therefore had a crucial role to play so as to ensure that believers adhered to the right path and continued practising the following injunction of the Quran:

"Believers, believe in God and His Messenger" (4:136)

This verse indicates that the Muslims need to be Islamized in every generation. In other words, those Muslims who are believers by virtue of their birth in the tradition are to be made Muslims by choice. This is a continuous process. According to a Hadith,

"Every hundred years, God will raise a person (mujjadid) who will Islamize the Muslims."
(Abu Dawud)

This is required because degeneration invariably creeps into the practice of the adherents of an ideology. However, it is equally important to note that one man alone cannot suffice to correct the entire environment unless he has the acceptance and support of the entire society. Only if the society has the right spirit, can it avail from the criticism raised by such a person (Mujaddid).

Importance of right environment

In 1831, a group of Muslim ulema revolted against the then ruler of Punjab, Maharaja Ranjit Singh. They wrongly construed their efforts to be a form of jihad and began calling themselves as jihadis. While these so-called ulema were basking in their false glory, a senior person from among them – Maulana Meer Mehabub Ali tried to guide them by explaining that what they were doing was not jihad, because according to the Quran, jihad is actioned only after mutual consultation. (Quran: 42:38)

It means that a series of deliberations and discussions are a prerequisite to any struggle. It cannot be impulsively driven; unfortunately ignoring his advice, they went on war and consequently died. Such behaviour was contrary to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad whose decisions always succeeded deliberations. According to a hadith, whenever he faced a situation, Prophet Muhammad used to say,
“Please offer me your advice.”

Unfortunately, the environment of acceptance no longer exists so even if one rightful person exists in the society and tries to give advice, no one listens. Similarly, ulema participated in the mutiny of 1857 in large numbers to do “jihad” against the British. Sheikh Muhammad (an alim at Deoband) said that such jihad was illegitimate (haram in Islam), but no one listened to him and the “jihad” claimed the lives of many ulema.

Therefore, just a single person does not suffice. To facilitate the following of the right path, there is need for a society which is amenable to criticism and discussion; the onus of which is upon the educational institutions that must inculcate the right behaviour in Muslims. Criticism protects from hypocrisy but because the madrasas and mosques could not create such an environment, negative emotions prevail amongst the Muslims.

Futile struggles

In 1948, the Balfour verdict divided Palestine between Arabs and Israelites. Arabs grew resentful and began plotting the ouster of Jews and anyone who condemned the Arabs was branded as an agent of Jews. One such person painfully said, 'My people will get to know that I did not betray them. I was no agent (of Jews) and the welfare of my people governed my thinking. I hope that when the clouds (of suspicion) fade away, the sun (of my loyalty) will shine.'

I would like to reiterate that rightly-guided individuals always existed but due to lack of spirit, majority deviated from the rightful course. According to a Hadith,

"If not one good soul is left on Earth, doomsday would strike." (Muslim)

During my visit to Aligarh, I met an acquaintance, Maulana Taqi Ameen, (Head of the Department of Islamic Studies, d.1993). As we were talking, a young man barged in the room and interrupted our conversation. He vehemently criticised the administration for their lack of action against the disrespect shown to Prophet Muhammad. Maulana Ameen tried to pacify him by saying that in a similar vein, disrespect has been shown to God in speech and writing but no one tries to retaliate so why this time? The young man said, "God is everyone's, but Prophet Muhammad is ours". This erroneous concept of 'ours' is widely embedded in the psyche of Muslims who think that God, Prophet Muhammad, Quran and even the universe belongs to them. An ancient poet wrote a couplet,

Since the world and whatever it contains belongs to God, so all of it is ours.

It is a highly condemnable thought because it questions the essence of creation. If everything belongs to the Muslims, why then did God create others? There exists a dire need to overhaul the mental make up of the Muslims and create an environment where they can learn to value criticism even if it be from an individual.

Importance of following

God bestows super wisdom upon one individual and the masses follow him. This is the law of nature, which is cited in the Quran in the following words,

“(We) raise some of them above others in rank.” (43:32)

The principle of having one imam at the mosque trains individuals to become followers. Unfortunately, people do not follow the guide practically. While they follow an Imam as per a ritual, in actual fact no mosque teaches that this exercise is a training to arouse the spirit of following among its adherents. Contrary to this, the situation in present times is much the opposite. If a man talks about peaceful resolution of a problem, he is branded as a coward and if he speaks of restraint, he is derided. God's scheme therefore, runs on two occurrences. God grants super wisdom to a person and secondly, there exists the rest of the society which must follow the wise man.

Conclusion

The phenomenon of deviation among Muslims is not a recent one but maximum deviation took place at the time when a plethora of opportunities emerged. For instance, ever since the British Empire in India overthrew the Mughals, Muslims newspapers showcased only negative emotions as the voice of the masses. No one used the media to inculcate the spirit of dawah for the madu who had reached the doorstep of the dayee.

It is ironical to note that while the Quran is filled with man-oriented thoughts, the discourses of Muslims are restricted to their community. Blinded by their prejudices, these Muslims are unable to see the dawah opportunity that lays unavailed because if you start hating your madu, you cannot do dawah with them. A good dayee is one who adheres to the following teaching of Jesus Christ: “Love your enemy”, that is, love even the one who is your enemy. Unfortunately, the present-day Muslims have become so entrapped in their supposed psychology of oppression that they fail to perceive the dawah opportunities that galore. In his book, a Muslim author defined globalization as a means of enslaving the world. This is a highly absurd argument because globalization in reality amounted to opening up of global opportunities for undertaking dawah work and marked an explosion of the dawah realm.

Dawah mission was not an ordinary task. Since the Muslims became bereft of the spirit of doing dawah work, they developed a ghetto mentality and started living in seclusion. This further hampered any scope of universal thinking in the minds of these men.

Dawah inculcates compassion and sympathy for fellow human-beings and revolutionizes the entire personality of an individual. In failing to dawah work, not only do we remain unsuccessful in spreading the word of God but we also put our development at stake. This is because it is the spirit of dawah which arouses the incentive to know about the prevailing situation and developments. In other words, leaving dawah work amounts to risking unawareness.

Therefore, the responsibility of those who have to do dawah work increases manifold so that they can compensate for those who are doing little or no dawah work. We must therefore rightfully channelise our energies so as to accomplish the arduous task that lies ahead.

May God guide us to the right path!