

## ***Modern World and Islam: A Case of Democracy in Islam***

***Dr. Naseem Akhter***

***Associate Professor/Chairperson, Department of Islamic Studies  
Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University, Peshawar, Pakistan  
khtr\_nsm@yahoo.com***

***Dr. Shumaila Rafiq***

***Lecturer in Department of Islamic Studies & Arabic  
Women University, Sawabi Pakistan.***

***[Shumailarafiq06@gmail.com](mailto:Shumailarafiq06@gmail.com)***

***Dr. Sohail Akhtar***

***Lecturer in History***

***Ghazi University Dera Ghazi Khan, Punjab, Pakistan***

***[sakhtar@gudgk.edu.pk](mailto:sakhtar@gudgk.edu.pk)***

### **Abstract**

*The paper is an analytical study of the concept democracy in modern world and in Islam. The two concepts have big difference due to the different thinking of the western Philosophers and the teachings of Islam. West claim that the center of power are the people in a state while in Islam it is clear that Allah Almighty is the power of all and He is supreme and sovereign and the people are only the representative on earth. Islam protects the human rights not only but introduced a system of Shura rather than an electoral democracy. So both political systems have differed with one another. This paper highlights the two concept of democracy.*

***Keywords:*** *Islam, West, Democracy, People, State, Society etc.*

### **Discussion**

It is the matter of history making that all the races of human being have been using some code of life or the other so as to lead their lives on such a pattern as was in consonance with the certain demands of their respective times. Man has always been concerned with two basic requirements: the material and physical sources. These are essential to maintain the relation between body and soul; and, the moral and cultural norms are necessary to say

### **Modern World and Islam: A Case of Democracy in Islam**

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the solid foundations of the individual as well as collective life. The most Holy Quran has fulfilled both above mentioned requirements. He bestowed upon the earth an infinite fountainhead of such sources as are necessary to make up material and physical need. Furthermore, He also sent his prophets and messengers with tremendous wealth of ethical and cultural codes so as to teach them how to lead an ideal life. The name that can be given to such an elevated code is "Religion". Infact, religion is the most required and basic need of the human beings. This is way, we, while going through the annals of mankind do not come across any society, civilization or any people who may have ignored their religions. It is impossible to count religions because we do not have much information regarding the norms of people of the whole world as yet. It can be stated that thousand followers of numerous religions are present ever today. Only major religions can be discussed at present.<sup>1</sup>

Many people take the advent of Islam with the last Holy prophet (P.B.UN). But it is no so, Islam is the same religion as was preached from the Adam up to Muhammad's age, Ibrahim, Moses and Christ were, infact the Muslims but later on, their followers debauched their teachings. Christianity and Judaism, are, in-fact, the distorted figures or forms of Islam. Islam literally means obedience terminologically; it should be taken that Islam is the other name of submission to the will of God. After discussing the essential features of the major religions of the world, naturally, one asks what importance these religions have in the present age. Do they retain original form? Are the Books of these religions without the least collaboration? Can these religions come to expectations of the modern man? Are these religions applicable in the modern world? Do they offer a perfect system of life? The system of life of these religions in order to see if these are applicable in modern world or not. Christianity and Buddhism do not give any complete system of life. for, their main emphasis is on morality and nothing else. Though Hinduism and Judaism supply more than morality yet the former is

particular in its appeal due to caste-system and later neither preaches nor encourages the non-Jews to be Jews. The main reason of the short-comings of the aforementioned religions is owing to the absence of flexibility and strictness. Neither of these religions is complete in itself nor has a universal appeal. As far as the Bible and the Torah are concerned, they have the ample proof of the coming of last prophet after Moses and Christ. Torah says "I (God) will choose one of them a prophet like you and put by holy Verse into his mouth, and the same way. Christ said "But Paracletes (the praised one) is the soul of purification whom God will send after me (my name). He will teach you all and all things which I have told you, will be reminded to you by him". Unlike these religions, the Deen presented by the Holy Prophet is perfect in every inch and is the Last Message of God for the whole human-race. God decrease in the holy Quran" Today. I made Dean perfect for you and my bestowal unto you is complete and I (God) selected the Islam as "Doen" for you".<sup>2</sup> Islam deals with life as whole, for, it covers all the spheres of life; physical spiritual, economic, moral, social, personal etc. It fears to corner of ale untouched. Hence it is the wisest system of life of all other religions

The people who negate the need of Religion hold that the modern scientific age has no room for any religion. August Comate presents their objection very lucid way. He is of the view that human thought can be classified into three phases. To him, religion comes first, philosophic or metaphysical the second and scientific idea is the third one. He aggresses that some religious ideas were chattered by philosophy while the rest were replaced by the scientific ides. This presumption is invalid because no classification of evolution of human thought is possible because of its complexity. Infact. Religion, philosophy and Science have been in process of evolution simultaneously and have been exercising their impact on one another. Their impacts on one another sometimes proved complete mentally and sometimes contradictory. Infact it was the philosophers who paved the way for Religion

### **Modern World and Islam: A Case of Democracy in Islam**

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on the rational grounds. Furthermore, Science has its limitations too. It is concerned with that which is concerned with human senses.<sup>3</sup>

Science was taken contradictory to religion by the religions scholars. Therefore, the Muslims accepted Greek concepts with such a creative power as was absent in scientific concepts. It made people declare that Science did not approve religion. The answer to such people is given by the religious scholars. They argue i. Science as being the human-knowledge may err in observation. Through senses, hence it is not the Perfect Truth. Unlike it, there is no chance of error in revealed knowledge or book: Religion is related to Faith and Faith is name of man's inner state. The particular Contribution of Islam to world religious thought lies in the new concept of God-head, of Man, and the Brotherhood of Man. After Islam, Allah is no longer the authoritarian Jehovah of Mosaic Time. He does not have need to send down his Son to redeem mankind. He is neither the dual principle of good and evil of Zoraster' nor a mere evolutionary concept in Buddhism or a philosophic idea as in Hinduism, a social idea as in Confucianism or an esoteric formula as in the Elusian, Mithraic and Manichaeon Mysteries. He is described as "RAB" the creator, provider, preserver and His chief attributes are understanding and compassion. Although He is liberal in distribution of His bounties and His blessings descend freely to these whose hearts are pure and wholly devoted. His wrath knows no bounds to those who neglect the holy commands a written on democratic modern political vociferously masses. The last two bloody and cruel Great Wars bear out the truth. In fact, politics is at grips with religion and nobody listens to the dictates of conscience and the cares for the taints of morality. The West that has given birth to most of the modern scientific, social, economic and political ideas is being blindly imitated by the under-developed and developing nations irrespective of their religious affiliations and beliefs. of the people. The politician who have become the monopolists in the socio-economic and political fields to lead the masses, are solely responsible for

most of the modern sufferings and the scourge of war.<sup>4</sup>

The concept of democracy has been changing throughout political history. The political philosophers and thinkers had held different views and defined the idea in different ways. The requisites, sources of power and degree of control by the people have also differed from country to country. The Greeks and the Romans who had been the fore-runners in the various fields, had their own concepts of democracy. The city state of Greece can be called the oldest form of democracy in which all the people or the citizens shared in the general administration of the state affairs. Or Democracy is a form of government in which supremacy of power is vested in the people by the voters collectively; and it is administered either by the officers appointed by them. According to Chambers Dictionary it also means state of society characterized by recognition of social and equality of rights and privileges-political, legal equality. The definition most accepted of democracy is: 'Government of (Abraham Lincoln) the people, for the people, and by the people'. But with increase in the populations and growing size of the state, the old idea of general participation has become impossible. Now-a-days the affairs of the state are run and governed by the chosen or elected representatives of the people. Thus the idea of democracy and its contents have been changing with the times. Or Let us now examine what democracy means, how it is actually administered and its functions. How do the present concepts and their application fit the Islamic set up?

In this modern era of the world there is a different attitude of the people in politics and political system because new concepts of politics have been adopted by the people of various countries. Now it is different from the past and new approaches have been involved in the societies on different basis i.e. cultural, racial, ethnic and religious. The phenomenon of the authoritarian democracy brought new conditions in the state system. Democracy created a new soul in the state with the theme of fundamental rights and responsibilities.

### **Modern World and Islam: A Case of Democracy in Islam**

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They need justice and socio-political and economic equality and facilities for all people of their party or group associations. In this sense there is no democracy in parities. Only the party in power is the nation. It means too many things for many people. Irrespective and inclined. Democracy can be direct as in ancient Greece; or it may be indirect-the popular modern form that is government by means of elected representatives and not through direct control. In the real sense democracy is not mere counting of votes but a way of living in society. We are living in the most confused age of democracy. The elected representatives simply raise their hands and follow the whims of the leader of the majority party without weighing right and wrong, or blindly follow party manifesto without caring for the common and collective good. They go to the voters or address public meetings only for the sake of getting votes. Once they are elected, they do as they please and even cross the floor in self-interest. There in them. is no positive check or control of the electorate? Only the rich can afford to fight the elections and use all fair and foul means to win. In such limited democracy only particular families dominate the national politics. All these ideas and practices are against the spirit and teachings of Islam. The glaring flaw of western democracy is the source of real power or authority. In modern democracy all power belongs to the people. They choose their representatives for a term of five years, who make the laws. There is no control of the electorate on the legislative functions. The party in power tries to enforce new policies and new laws. Thus there is no socio-economic stability and peace. Party system also breeds regionalism and factions and justice is sacrificed at the altar of political expediency and convenience. Thus the whole order becomes corrupt and invites authoritative rule. We had the worst experience during last forty years.<sup>5</sup>

All these things do not fit in the Islamic order. Islam gives a complete code of life. In Islam politics cannot be separated from religion. Unlike Christianity that has created Sunday attitude towards religion, Islam covers the

whole life and activities of man from cradle to grave. Islam means being at peace with oneself, the world and the God. It aims at establishing balance between the two aspects of life- the spiritual and the material world of God and the Holy Prophet (PBUH) The Holy Quran is the repeat His Word to the whole world. In Islam all sovereignty belongs to Allah and Power to rule is a Holy Trust. It is not the legislature that makes laws, for all laws are given in the Holy Quran. They are just and for all times. The Parliament has no right to change the priorities laid down in the God's book; nor can it finish or suspend the right granted by the Quran and the Sharia. The Quran is addressed to the entire do the deeds of unrighteousness. Humanity, transcending all barriers and limitations of colour race, religion or time. It is the best guide and guardian of mankind and guides man the spheres of life-temporal, spiritual in all individual and collective. It contains instructions for the conduct of the head of the state as well as for simple and common man, for rich as well as the poor, for men and women, for judges and the businessmen, for peace and war, for home, for commercial and material prosperity as well as spiritual well-being and moral excellence.

The Muslims are commanded to hold fast to the rope (religion) of God. In this lies success as well as salvation of both this and the other world. This idea of the life hereafter dominates the functioning of institutions in life. In politics also man has not been allowed to transgress the limits of justice, social and economic equality granted by Quranic laws must be maintained t all costs. The second source Sunnah-the supreme of laws in Islam is law of teachings of Prophet (P.B.U.H.) that represents the interests will, of the supreme Sovereign-Allah. The Sunnah and supports the purpose of the Holy Quran. The Prophet was not only a messenger but he was also appointed as a leader, head of the state and teacher by Allah. Thus in Islam Quran. Sunnah is the second source of law after the In the Holy Quran there is no reference to any political system except monarchy. The Quranic stories tell that there had been king- and rebels

### **Modern World and Islam: A Case of Democracy in Islam**

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good and bad; kind and tyrants, God fearing against Heavenly father. God has the sent his messengers to guide humanity in all walks of life. "To every nation we have sent a messenger", says the Quran. In the opinion of the Great Sufi and spiritualist Shah Wali Ullah the solution of all our social. Political and economic ills and evils lies in real Muslim state Muslim state. This can be raised on the Islamic laws laid down in the Sunnah. According to the Holy Quran and him deep insight into Islamic teachings and practices, Islamic state is like Presidential and Unitary form of government in Its organization, powers and duties.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Modern Democracy Islamic State**

The taints and teachings of Islam are really democratic. Democracy is a way of living in society. Nowhere have we found a better system than Islamic order that recognizes. Equality of rights and are important for the peaceful society. Likewise, no system whether capitalism, communism, socialism has guaranty to the better and just economic order than that of Islam. We find no where the concept of honest earning (Halal) except in Islam. Islam is more than any other, a totalitarian religion. It compasses the whole man, not his religious consciousness alone. It imposes a common veneer of general religious culture. It tells how to think correctly, how to live correctly, and how to organize correctly. Thus in Islam, the social laws are considered very important and integral part of religious law as an integral part of the submission to Allah. It is only by observing duties to God (Huququl Allah) and to the society (Huququl (bad) real democratic state can be built. Zakat, (Namas), Fasting (Roza), Prayer Haj and Jihad (Holy War) combine the dual duties in Islamic democracy. Prayer is a means of purification of the soul, fasting teaches self-control and spiritual discipline. It is a means of conquering physical desires and make man humble. Zakat means wealth "which is taken is God's due. It from the rich and returned to the poor". Haj is another way of demonstrating devotion and love for Allah. The pilgrimage unites the Muslims



of the world into one international fraternity. All distinctions of color, class, race and community are erased. Jihad teaches to sacrifice everything, property, wealth and life for the glory of God and righteousness. According to Great Indian Lady Sirojini Naidu Islam presents ideal democracy as she says: "Islam as a universal preached its followers and practiced democracy to protect the rights of the people. It is democracy in Islam as embodied five times a day, when the peasant and the king kneel side by side and proclaim. "God alone is Great". According to Islam everything is from God and belongs to Him. He has sent Muslims in this world to uphold his laws, to follow the path of virtue and shun vice, to establish justice, to weigh and measure honestly, to help the needy, to give to the poor, to obey the parents, respect the neighbors, to assist the travelers and the welfares, to feed the hungry. It has enjoined greater responsibilities and duties on the rich and the well-to-do. It is only Islam that teaches how to live correctly in family, in the society and in the state. Thus democracy as a way to live in society can be established only in truly Islamic state. According to Islam the Head of the state must be a good and practical Muslim and a male. He must carry on the affairs of the state, according to the laws laid down by the Quran and the Sunnah.<sup>7</sup>

If he digresses from the path of Islam as ordained by Allah, the people have the right to remove him. But they must obey the Head unquestioningly if he abides by Islamic laws. The head is to be assisted and advised by Majlis-e-Shura in carrying on the administration of the state. The Holy Prophet himself and the Calipha-e-Rasheedn were advised by the best learned and honest shuras. He is to be chosen by general consensus and is responsible to Allah. All officers of the state are accountable for their actions and they cannot digress from the standard and norms prescribed by the Quran and Sunnah.

Party system or opposition is against the teaching and spirit of Islam for it breeds regionalism, factions, hatred and disunity. The people have been granted the right to remove and change the Head if he does not act and govern

### **Modern World and Islam: A Case of Democracy in Islam**

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according to the tenets of Islam. Thus Islam stands for true democracy social justice, equality, equitable distribution of wealth, regard for individual rights, eradication of nepotism and favoritism, bribery and hoarding safety and respect for human life and property irrespective of class, religion or party, for peace, right of worship recording faith and brotherhood the last Sermon of the prophet is paper name is the Magna Carta of Human Rights the gist of Islamic democracy and Sovereignty belongs to Allah. This is the first feature of Islam's political system which distinguishes it from a Western concept of sovereignty or Western secular political system.<sup>8</sup>

"A political system can be designated as the interactions through which values are authoritatively allocated for a society" While the word Sovereignty is derived from the Latin word "Supremus" which means supreme. Although the political scientists do not agree on one definition of sovereignty yet they recognize it as the supreme political power in a state which is absolute, permanent, exclusive, indivisible, all-comprehensive and subject to none. Despite its importance, there is also no unanimity of opinion about the locus of sovereignty. According to some Roman Jurists of old, the emperor was sovereign; according to British jurists, Parliament is sovereign being representative of people; according to socialists, sovereignty lies in proletariat class; but many modern political scientists place sovereignty in the whole people.<sup>9</sup>

Quran says: "O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female. And have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is Knower Aware" The Prophet of said at his last address, "No one is superior to another except on the basis of pious conduct. All human beings descended from Adam and Adam was made of clay."<sup>10</sup>

In Islam for government a term Khilafat is used which means as all the human beings of the world are 'Khalifa the subordinate of Allah' almighty and

representatives of the Allah on the earth. This is the purport of the verse "Surely, we are going to place our representatives (Khalifa) on earth" <sup>11</sup> But some people endorse that all human beings not be considered Khalifa of Allah due to acts as they not act upon Quran and Sunnah. <sup>12</sup>

### **Democracy in Islamic perspective**

In the meaning of Khilafah is to be the head of the Muslims to establish and enforce the Deen on behalf of the Prophet (PBUH). Keeping the religious sciences alive, establishing the pillars of Islam, establishing Jihad and managing the affairs of Jihad, for example: organizing armies, giving stipends to Mujahideen and distributing booty among them, establishing justice and justice, boundaries Enforcing the Shariah and abolishing atrocities, enjoining the good and forbidding evil."<sup>13</sup>

"Islam is the bearer of democracy" and sometimes the term "Islamic democracy" was coined, although Western "democracy" not only has nothing to do with Islam, but is the antithesis of the political ideology of Islam, therefore with Islam. It is clearly wrong to transplant "democracy" and to glorify democracy with Islam. Everyone knows that Islam advocates the idea of caliphate, according to which the head of the Islamic state is declared responsible for the implementation of the divine decrees on the earth as the caliph and vicegerent of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). It is claim that there is no clear concept of the political system of Islam in the Holy Quran, but there are certain basic indications from which it can be deduced that the democratic system is close to the Qur'an and the Quran. "And they do their work by consulting each other".<sup>14</sup> Another place "O you who have believed, do not ask for things that, if they are revealed to you, would be distasteful to you."<sup>15</sup> In the early days of Islam Rasoolullah carried out all political, military, economic and social matters in consultation with the Companions.

In the council of Saqifa Bani Saadah, the Ansar decided that their caliph would be Saad bin Ibada. The position of the Ansar was that the caliphate was

### **Modern World and Islam: A Case of Democracy in Islam**

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their right. Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Umar Farooq argued that since Quraysh is well-known in Arabia and the Islamic state is expanding, therefore the Caliph should be from Quraysh so that he can run the system of the expanding state. After consultation and understanding, the Ansar and the emigrants accepted Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique as their caliph. He took the general pledge of allegiance in Masjid Nabawi. It was a democratic decision through which the foundation of democracy was laid in the political system of Islam. In the sermon given by the first Caliph of Islam after assuming power, he declared "equality" and "accountability" as the basic principles of the political system. After consulting his companions, Hazrat Abu Bakr recommended the name of Hazrat Umar as his successor. Hazrat Umar's name was presented to the Muslims present in Masjid Nabawi and their support was obtained. According to Islamic historians and thinkers, the unanimous concept of the rightful caliphs and companions was that the caliphate is an elective office that should be established with the consultation of Muslims and their free opinion.<sup>16</sup>

Hazrat Umar RA established a council to choose his successor which included Hazrat Ali RA, Hazrat Uthman RA, Abdul-Rahman bin Auf RA, Saad bin Abi Waqas RA, Zubair Awam RA and Abu Talha bin Abdullah RA. Hazrat Umar appointed his son Abdullah as advisor to this council, he did not have the right to vote. Abdullah bin Auf consulted the Muslims about the caliph and called a meeting of the Muslims in the Prophet's Mosque and presented the name of Hazrat Uthman as the caliph with their support and consent. Muslims swore allegiance to him. After the martyrdom of Hazrat Uthman, the Companions made Hazrat Ali the Caliph.

According to Masoodi tradition, Hazrat Ali said, "My allegiance cannot be done secretly, it must be done by the will and consultation of the Muslims. Hazrat Ali was chosen through open allegiance in the Prophet's Mosque."<sup>17</sup> As if "Islam agrees with the principle of democracy that the government should be

formed, changed and run by the opinion of the people".

### **Conclusion**

Islam is a universal religion and it has explanations for all aspects of life. Western form of democracy does not exist in Islam, but Islam promotes democratic principles and promotes democracy in many ways. While in Western democracy individuals are said to be the source of government and power, Islam propagates protecting their interests by declaring people as the real heirs of the society and the state. As if Western democracy also claims to be the guardian of human rights, Islam also insists on protecting the rights of people through the Caliph and Shura. The caliphs were chosen through consultation, which was in accordance with the spirit of the Qur'an. Although the consultation was limited according to the circumstances, this process cannot be called dictatorship in any case. The political system based on democracy is the closest to the principles of the Quran and Sirat, however, the reason why the democratic concept of Islam is opposite to the western political concept is the inspired principles of Islam, which are necessary for Muslims. This proves that despite the fact that the concept of electoral politics and democracy in modern times is not present in Islam, Islam has been instrumental in creating institutions like public opinion and Shura for the development of democratic requirements.



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- <sup>1</sup> Raies Ahmad, Muslim Political Thoughts, Lahore, 1996, P. 23
- <sup>2</sup> Alquran, 5:3.
- <sup>3</sup> H. Jamil, Western Political Thoughts, Lahore, 2013, P.72.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid, P.86.
- <sup>5</sup> Usman, Muslim Siyasi Afkar, Lahore, 2011, P.26
- <sup>6</sup> Raees Ahmad Jaffari Mashriq k Siyasi Afkar, Lahore, P.354
- <sup>7</sup> Amir, Shahzad, Muslim Political Thoughts, Lahore, P.69
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid. P.74
- <sup>9</sup> "Sovereignty". A Dictionary of Law. Oxford University Press. 21 June 2018.
- <sup>10</sup> Al-Qur'an 49:13.
- <sup>11</sup> Al-Quran, 2: 30
- <sup>12</sup> : Quran - 6:165; 27:62 and 35:39).
- <sup>13</sup> Shah Wali Ullah, Azalat—ul-Khafa An Khilafat-ul Khulfa,, PP-2-3
- <sup>14</sup> Al-Quran, 3:104.
- <sup>15</sup> Al-Quran, 6:101.
- <sup>16</sup> M. Afzal, Tareekh-e-Islam, Lahore, 2008, P.320-21
- <sup>17</sup> Masoodi, Murwaj-ul-Zahab, Karachi, 1985, P.446.