

## ARTICLE

### How can Islam be implemented in the Present Age?

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Whose work is it to deduce solutions from the Quran and Sunnah for solving the problems that keep arising from day to day, and what are the qualifications required of those who perform this task? The answer to this question was provided by the Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wasallam) himself when All approached him asking:

"O Prophet of Allah, what would be your instructions for me should a situation arise for which we find no guidance (from the Quran or your Sunnah), nothing of command or forbidding?" The Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wasallam) replied, "consult the fuqaha (jurist) and the pious and do not act upon a lone opinion."

Two Conditions: The words hardly require explanation. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wasallam) lays down two conditions for anyone to be looked upon as worthy of finding solutions from the Quran and his Sunnah: the consultees should be, faqih as well as pious devotees. The importance of the first is obvious. Only he can understand the purport of the Quran and the Prophet's Sunnah, who has an in-depth knowledge of both, should be well acquainted with their commands, and should have devoted his life towards understanding the spirit of the Shariah. Similarly, he should be one who does what religion requires him to do. One whose deeds do not correspond with Islamic commands, who cannot distinguish between the permissible and the forbidden, cannot possibly understand the spirit of any Islamic requirement. To deduce correctly is, indeed, to discover the truth. And Allah bestows the gift of recognizing the truth on him who reveres truth by performance of deeds.

Allah says in Holy Quran:

"If you are (pious and) Allah-fearing (taqwa), He will bestow on you the gift of discriminating between right and wrong." [Infaal: 29] .

These words of the Quran specify that piety and devotion are pre-requisites of the ability to distinguish between right and wrong. None can otherwise qualify for this ability. In the words of Mufti Muhammad Shafi, (Tafsir M'arif al-Quran), "resolving problems, not mentioned the Quran and Sunnah, can be only by mutual consultation of religious jurists and the pious. To impose an individual opinion on Muslims is criminal. "

But this is what the modernists do not like. They do not think it necessary to be learned or a jurist or pious for eliciting commands from the Quran and Sunnah. For a long time they have been proclaiming: "the Ulema should not have a monopoly of the Quran and Sunnah"; "there is no Papalism in Islam, therefore the right to formulate laws cannot be left to any particular group"; to interpret the Quran and Sunnah is any Muslim's privilege"; in matters connected with Islam, the Ulema cannot be given the right of veto"; and so on.

Such slogans are to be found in every modernist writing and it is necessary to expose the mischief underlying them.

The first slogan is: "there is no Papalism in Islam, therefore, no special group can be given the right to make laws."

It seems that the projectors of this slogan are either unfamiliar with the evils of Papalism or they deliberately want to mislead the simple-minded people.

Anyone with the least realistic spark in him can realize that knowledge, juristic talent or piety is not the name of any race, complexion or caste which cannot be obtained by one's own labor, but an eligibility for which anyone may qualify. If Papalism is to be equated with labour for qualifying, there is hardly any department of life which may not be described as Papism. The qualifications required of the state president, ministers, candidates for election, judges, lawyers, university professors, would be no more than Papalism. If these may not be looked upon as Papism, why should the qualifications required for

interpreting the Quran and Sunnah, for acquisition of knowledge and piety be so equated?

Anyone who has studied Brahmanism and the institution of Papalism will appreciate how different the Ulema of Islam are from both.

Brahmanism and Papalism are names of two groups or institutions based on race, complexion and caste. No outsider can become a member of either, no matter how great his abilities may be. Addicts and pirates have been elected as popes but they have not been from outside Italy. On the other hand, an 'alim is one who does not have to belong to any particular country or race. In the fourteen centuries of Muslim history, Ulema have been of a variety of complexions and arisen in every race. Even slaves have become Ulema and have been recognized as leaders. Their distinguishing feature has been knowledge and piety, never family or other status.

2. The religion of which the pope claims to be an exponent, is silent over many of life's problems, so that his verdict holds sway and cannot be challenged by anyone of his faith. He is not an interpreter of any law, but is himself the law. To the contrary, the Quran and Sunnah are all-comprehensive, their commands and principles thoroughly preserved. Should an 'alim say or do anything contrary to them, the other Ulema are always there to censure him.

3- In Papalism, the right to make laws and interpret religion is vested, ultimately, in the pope. He is the shepherd of the flock and successor to the founder of the church, but the word 'alim is not the name of an individual, of the head of an order, but describes one who has acquired knowledge of religion according to well-defined principles. That is why an 'alim possesses no authority to impose his opinion on the Ummah.

Such being the differences, it is absurd to equate the Ulema with the popes.

Modernists also declare that no monopoly of the Quran and Sunnah may be vested in anyone, and the right to interpret them cannot be reserved for the Ulema. Such repetition can be only that of propagandists. This is like a lay man who has never seen the door of a medical college but criticizes qualified doctors and surgeons for holding a monopoly for curing diseases, and demands that he should also be permitted to practice medicine. Or some unintelligent person, on the basis of being a citizen, demands a contract for building canals, bridges and dams and finds fault that contracts are given to qualified engineers.

No one in his right mind would speak such words. But he who possesses a balanced mind and is able to feel the flutter of his heart, can be told that although he is a citizen and has the right to high positions, it takes considerable time and labour to qualify for them. The education for them must be obtained from those already educated. After the required labour and time have been invested may one aspire to those positions.

If similar qualifications are demanded for the delicate task of interpreting the Quran, how may it be described as a monopoly? Are the Quran and Sunnah subjects for which no education and ability are required? Are the Quran and Sunnah such orphan subjects that any person whatever may lay claim to for interpreting and explaining them even though one may not have devoted a few short months to them?

Our modernists rage morning and evening asking why the Ulema are qualified to interpret the Quran and Sunnah? They do not take the trouble to inquire into the pains that the Ulema have taken, the sufferings they have gone through, having been for two hundred years the target of British outrages, even going without their normal daily bread, bearing all manner of want with patience, and hearing taunts and invectives. It was after all this that they came to acquire the knowledge which they now possess. Keeping awake long hours of the night and sacrificing comfort and necessities they have sought to keep knowledge alive. That being so, why should one complain if the Prophet gives them the right to interpret his religion and the whole body of the Ummah has implicit faith in them?

The modernist's longing for the interpretation of the Quran and Sunnah is, indeed, laudable, but first he

must go through the labour and pain required, learn its etiquette, and should anyone then deny him the right to explain and comment, the objection will be justifiable.

But as things are at present: a poet says:

"Why should he who fears for his life,

pass through the alley of the beloved?"

In these circumstances, how can this nation of Muslims which, despite its many weaknesses, is still Muslim in its outlook, hand over its Books to the modernists? The monthly "Fikr-o-Nazar", projecting Dr. Fazl-urRehman's views, writes: "In Islam the Ummah has been making laws (collectively), and it should have the right to do so today." Does the doctor, by the phrase mean that every single individual of the millions upon millions do the law-making? Or that the Ummah should have the right to select such of the trusted ones from amongst its members possess the ability to interpret the Quran and Sunnah? Ultimately, the Ummah will have to depend on the work of the chosen ones. Surely the most devout of the partisans of democracy will not concede that every single one of the electorate may be allowed to take the administration and government into his own hands. Every department is assigned to those who are qualified for the job. Those who are not qualified do not clamour that they have been deprived of their rights in democracy.

Now consider who it is that is trusted by the hundred million of this country to interpret the Quran and Sunnah. Do they refer to the Islamic Research Institute and similar other modernist institutes or to those 'reactionary' Ulema who, according to the modernists, have come to possess their democratic rights by seizure? The Muslim electorate, without any coercion or pressure, refer, in matters connected with the Quran and Sunnah, to the ulema sitting on sack-cloth mattresses, and it is by the ulema that their conscience is satisfied. This is an indisputable fact. Is democracy trampled upon by giving the ulema the right of interpretation of the Quran and sunnah or giving the modernists full liberty to do with the Quran and sunnah as they please, tamper with them and distort them at will?

The greatest objection the modernists have is in respect of the word 'piety'. According to them piety, like 'knowledge', is not necessary for interpreting the Quran and sunnah. We do not know why they fear this word. They say: "The condition about ahl-e-taqwa, 'people of piety', is one that every a'alim can use to refute another a'alim's verdict against one's own, because the criterion of taqwa differs from a'alim to a'alim " [Fikr-o-Nazar, Nov. 67; p. 326]

We can only say that rising above personal fears this point too should be objectively reflected upon. The electorate that modernists clamour should be given the right of free vote and law-making, should also be given the right to decide which individual possesses the character of Taqwa.

The collective conscience of Muslims is never wrong. Their language is Allah's trumpet. The interpretation and commentary of the Quran and Sunnah should be assigned to one who is trusted by the masses for his 'piety'. Let it be clearly understood that Taqwa (piety) is not a word of dubious and unspecified connotation, definable by every individual to suit his own convenience. In Islam, taqwa is a legal term on which depend a countless number of Shariah commands. Implied are deeds according to the Divine commands, abstaining from the greater sins, avoiding the lesser fujoor in short:

This means that he who keeps away from the apparent sins is, by this definition, a muttaki, man of piety. For this reason it is no problem at all for the masses to determine piety.

We appeal to the modernists that they renounce their slogan mongering and propaganda \_ in matters connected with sacred knowledge and thought. For the moment, they do no good to the country or the community, solve no problem and impress no serious minded intelligent man or woman. It is possible to drown the voice of truth for a brief time, but the clamour affects only the hearing, not I; the heart. A time comes when the shouting turns to hoarseness and the tongue dries up. Then the glorious voice of truth rises with all its power, settling down in the ` - hearts for ever.