Social Justice, Islamic State and Muslim Countries

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Abstract. A content analysis of the Qur'an shows that it lays utmost importance on the realization of justice and conversely the eradication of injustice in society. A historical analysis found that social justice was prevalent in Mecca under the leadership of Prophet Muhammad and was also practiced during the period of the first four rightly guided caliphs (*Khulafa-e-rashidun*). Since then, the successive Muslim majority states have not taken the issue of social justice seriously. These states have failed in taking an active role in uplifting the ethical and moral standards of society. The documentary analysis of the existing 49 states in the Muslim world found majority of these states to have deviated from the real spirit of Islamic social justice falling within the category of "failed states."
Keywords: Islam, social justice, Islamic state, Muslim world, shari'ah

INTRODUCTION

Islam, as a way of life, is most emphatic on the realization of justice as a goal to be achieved and an ideal to be sought. The Qur'an categorically "commands justice and the doing of good" (*Al-Qur'an*, 16:90) and warns the believers not to allow "your rancour for a people to cause you to deal unjustly" (*Al-Qur'an*, 5:8). There are many verses in the Qur'an relating to justice. The word '*adl* meaning justice, occurs in 28 places; the equivalent word *qist* meaning balance, occurs 27 times; and the word *mizan* meaning scale and its derivatives occur 23 times. A word referring directly to carrying out justice, that is *qada* and its derivatives, occur in 52 places. The word *hukm* and its derivatives, meaning ordinances, commandments, judgments and decisions occur eighty-nine times. This commitment to justice is accentuated to the utmost when Allah (SWT) declares justice as the seal of His illustrious speech: "The word of your Lord does find its fulfillment in truth and in justice…." (*Al-Qur'an*, 6: 115). According to Imam Ibn al-Qayyim:

> Allah has sent down Prophets and revealed Books to establish justice, which is the fundamental and basic objective of the whole creation. Everything revealed by Allah

proves that the ultimate goal of revelation is the establishment of a just and balanced way of life. In whatever way the law may be made it must aim at establishing justice and fair play. (1977: 109)

This study analyses the nature of justice in Islam and the structure it prescribes for the realization of justice. Next, it looks at some of the attempts made in the past to achieve justice as conceptualized in the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAS). The third section is devoted to examining the status of social justice in the contemporary Muslim world. The concluding section summarizes the argument and its implications for the realization of justice in the Muslim world.

JUSTICE IN ISLAM

'Adl literally means to straighten and be upright, to move from an undesirable to a position that is desirable; it also means to equalize; and finally, it means balance and equilibrium. *'Adl* is the most important principle in Islam and Muslims are required to "stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even though it be against yourselves…" (*Al-Qur'an*, 4: 135). The Qur'an commands the believers to be just for, it says, "justice is next to piety" (*Al-Qur'an*, 5: 8). It also enjoins them to observe the law and obey those appointed "to judge among men with justice" (*Sad*, 38: 24). The prophets came with "the Book and the Balance (of Rights and Wrongs) that men may stand forth in justice" (*Al-Qur'an*, 57: 25). The Qur'an uses multiple words like *sunnat Allah* (the way or tradition of Allah), *mizan* (scale), *qist* and *'adl* (both meaning justice), to emphasize the significance of justice. *'Adl* in Islam has several dimensions. First, it has a Divine basis, rooted in morality, and guidance revealed by Allah (SWT). Therefore, the first principle of *'adl* is to relate to and recognize Allah (SWT) as the Creator, Cherisher and Sustainer of the universe. The second principle is related to the equality of human beings. Third, it requires social, political and cultural life to be based upon a set of moral values and principles. These moral values are not merely moral imperatives but they also form the basis of legal and political norms. Finally, justice is a process through which people redress injuries and grievances, establish rights and struggle for the removal of exploitation, oppression and injustice from society.

JUSTICE MEANS SOCIAL JUSTICE

Islam's approach to justice is comprehensive and all embracing, non-partisan and universal. As Sayyid Qutb explains:

> [It] embraces all sides of life and all aspects of activity. It is concerned alike with perception and conduct, with the heart and the conscience. The values with which this justice deals are not only economic values, nor are they merely material values in general; rather they are a mixture of moral and spiritual values together. (Qutb,1953: 45)

Social Justice means equality in law. It means that, in spite of outward differences, all human beings are equal. All are entitled to equal social status and equal rights. Social justice thus refers to the structure and policies of a society, and to its political, legal, economic and social institutions. The comprehensive nature of justice is shown as follows: "Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you that you may receive admonition" (Al-Qur'an, 16: 90).

The above Qur'anic verse (16:90) refers to three virtues and three vices. The leading virtues noted in the verse are all social since they encourage justice (*'adl*), beneficence (*ihsan*) and generosity to others (*ita i zil qurba*). Implied here are the elements of human equality, mutual responsibility and social obligation. Equality is expected since, as stated in the Qur'an, "We created you from a single (pair) of male and a female and we made you races and tribes, that you might know one another" (*Al-Qur'an*, 49: 13) and also because "the believers are but a single brotherhood" (*Al-Qur'an*, 21: 92). Mutual responsibility is clearly enjoined: "Help one another in innocence and piety, but do not help one another in crime and hostility" (*Al-Qur'an*, 5: 3). Prophet Muhammad (SAS) considered every believer to be a watchman and held every one of them responsible for his ward. In terms of social obligation, people are required not to behave in a manner detrimental to other's interest. As such, any act prejudicial to the basic interest of humanity must be considered un-Islamic. The Qur'an juxtaposes *ihsan* with '*adl* and thus opens up the scope of justice to considerations of equity and fairness. Law regulates Justice; *ihsan* is not restrained by conformity to formal rules. *Ihsan* consist of forgiveness and returning good for evil, doing a good turn or being generous to those who may have neither claimed nor demanded justice. Social justice can never be achieved without this compassionate approach to life and its philosophy.

As a technical term, social justice (*al-adalah al-ijtima'iyyah*) is often erroneously been equated with economic justice. Social justice, according to Qutb (1953: 45), "is a comprehensive human justice and not merely an economic justice". It subsumes economic justice, but the two are not identical. Social justice is much wider in scope than economic justice. The latter is concerned only with the equitable distribution of wealth in society. Economic justice is, however, an essential component of social justice. Economic justice would require every individual to take part in the utilization and management of economic resources. "When the prayer is finished, then disperse through the land and seek the bounty of Allah" (*Al-Qur'an*, 12: 16). Prophet's wife Aishah reported that the Prophet (SAW) said "Whoever cultivates land which is not the property of anyone has a better title to it" (Bukhari, 41: 5). There must prevail as well equality of opportunities for all in respect of earning. The earning, however, must be lawful. Earning of money through speculative activities, cartel or monopoly business are unlawful. Monopoly is condemned in Islam because it puts wealth out of circulation and deprives the owner and the community of its better and efficient use (*Al-Qur'an*, 9: 34). In fact, hoarding encourages inefficient allocation of resources; disturbs the price system and hurts the poor consumers. The concentration of vast riches in the hands of few individuals to the neglect of the vast majority of poor people, even though they may have acquired them by lawful means, is considered harmful because it distorts the balanced growth and can affect the social and economic equilibrium in the society. Equitable distribution of income is therefore enjoined so that, as the Qur'an points out, "wealth does not circulate only among the rich" (*Al-Qur'an*, 59: 7).

Justice in the Qur'an is considered a trust (*amanah*) that Allah (SWT) has conferred on humankind. Thus, the Qur'an enjoins: "Allah does command you to render back your Trust to those to whom they are due; and when you judge between man and man, that you judge with justice" (*Al-Qur'an*, 4: 58). According to al-Razi (1978: 353), Justice is one of the most important of all trusts (*amanat*) accorded to mankind. Justice, however, is also intertwined with the parallel concept of *khilafah*, that is, the right to rule, or the vicegerency of man on earth; "O Daud, We did indeed make you a vicegerent on earth: so judge you between men in truth and justice" (*Al-Qur'an*, 38: 26). Since both justice and *khilafah* partake of *amanah*, it follows that the Qur'anic vision of justice extends to politics. Political justice implies the recognition of the sovereignty of Allah (SWT)

which when translated into reality means taking all possible actions to stop exploitation and oppression of the individual and the community at both national and international levels. It is the responsibility of those in authority to treat all men equal since "mankind is but one community" (*Al-Qur'an*, 2: 213) and to follow the principle of equality before law in theory and practice. Equality here implies rule of law in an Islamic state. This in turn requires the rulers to respect the rights of the individual and the latter to obey the rulers so long as they are within the limits of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Political justice, in short, means a government based on law that respects the Qur'anic values of *shura* (decision-making by consultation), *hurriyyah* (freedom), *musawah* (equality) and *'adl* (justice).

JUSTICE: AN OBLIGATION OF RULERS

It should be evident from the cited references from the Qur'an and the Prophetic sayings, that it is obligatory upon every Muslim to uphold justice in every walk of life. The *fuqaha* (jurisprudents) and *ulama* (religious scholars) are unanimous that administration of justice, i.e., enforcing good and suppressing evil, is one of the fundamental functions of an Islamic state. Thus, the Qur'an categorically states: "Those (Muslim rulers) who, if we give them power in the land, enjoin prayer, to pay the zakah and enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil" (*Al-Qur'an*, 22: 41). Administration of justice is a devotional act. According to Sarakhsi (1982: 59), "it is one of the best acts of devotion" and "one of the most important after belief in Allah." The second Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khattab considered *qada* (justice, judiciary) a "firm obligation" for every ruler. The *fuqaha* are of the opinion that *qada* is a collective obligation, a *wajib* or *fard 'ala al-kifayah.*[1] *Fard* or *wajib* means an obligation and *kifayah* means that if few competent persons fulfill the obligation, it is considered sufficient for its fulfillment. The rest of the Muslims who do not discharge it are exonerated from it. Though the responsibility of doing the needful devolves on the community in the first instance; the state has the ultimate responsibility of getting them done. According to al-Shatibi (1341: 168), "(…) Allah has entrusted the fulfilment of the common needs of mankind to the society as a whole. That is the *raison d'etre* of the state in society."

There is yet another argument obliging the state to perform functions related to social justice. The Qur'anic verse (4:58) characterizes Justice as

one of the most important of all trusts (*amanats*). *Amanat* is a wider concept that includes government, giving testimony, taking care of orphans or of *waqf* property (charitable trust) and so on. This verse was addressed to the *ulu al-amr* (those in authority) enjoining the *amanah* of establishing a just government. It is therefore obligatory for the government to implement justice. It is *wajib ala al-'ayn* on the ruler to appoint a *qadi* since he is overly loaded with other state functions and since he is unable to settle all suits by himself. Thus, Islam emphasizes that the economic, political and social order of Muslims' life be based on justice and calls upon those who are in authority to augment and promote the cause of justice in their administrative and executive spheres.

OBLIGATIONS OF AN ISLAMIC STATE

Allah has demanded justice but has not specified the route that leads to it, or the means by which it can be obtained; nor has He declared invalid any particular means or methods than can lead to justice. All means, procedures and methods that facilitate, refine and advance the cause of justice, and do not violate the *shari'ah* are valid (al-Qardawi, 1991: 177). An Islamic state has a purpose. Broadly stated, it is to establish a good society with justice, peace and security, where life flows in accordance with what Allah has willed for humanity. The functions of an Islamic state for the realization of social justice can be classified into three: Shari'ah based, *ijtihad*-based and *shura*-based.

Functions assigned by Shari'ah are clearly specified in the Qur'an and Sunnah. These functions relate to the permanent human situation and not to changing social conditions. These functions include: defence, law and order, legal justice, need fulfillment, da'wah i.e., communicating the message of Allah to humankind, enjoining right conduct and forbidding wrong (*al-amr bi al-maruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*), and civil administration.[2] Maintenance of internal security by enforcing law and order, dispensation of justice and civil administration are the *sine qua non* of organized living. They are necessary for eliminating *fasad* (corruption) and establishing a just order. As noted by al-Mawardi, "the imamate is established to replace prophecy in the defence of the faith and the administration of the world" (Rosenthal, 1968: 28). Defence, need fulfilment, communication of the message of Allah, and enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong are duties explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an and emphasized in the traditions of the Prophet

(peace be upon him). Jurists regard them as socially obligatory duties. *Da'wah* or communicating the message of Islam is unique to an Islamic state. *Da'wah* is a collective responsibility of the Muslim peoples, which their state (or states) has to perform on their behalf, side by side with other non-governmental efforts that might be possible. An Islamic state does so, first by setting an example and adhering to Islamic principles in the conduct of government and in its relations with the outside world. Secondly, it can use the media to explain the faith and practice of Islam. An Islamic state should naturally coordinate with other Islamic states in organizing *da'wah* activities. Enjoining the right conduct and forbidding misconduct is a wide category. It includes market regulation, supervision of the common man's behavior in public places and enforcing Islamic practices in general. Early jurists have dealt with the subject under the title of *al-Hisbah*, often writing separate treatises on the subject. Need fulfillment covers food, water, clothing, shelter, education and transport. These activities taken together would take a large share of public expenditure in an Islamic state.

Ijtihad based functions have become necessary for realizing the objectives of shari'ah in view of the changed social and economic conditions of society. This category is quite flexible and includes the following: protection of the environment, supply of necessary public goods other than those included in the first list, scientific research, capital formation and economic development, subsidies for priority private activities, and expenditure necessitated by stabilization policies. Scientific research, economic development and stabilization policy have become necessary to build a strong and viable economy in modern times. These functions are necessary according to the unanimous precept of the Islamic Jurists who argue that "whatever is necessary for discharging a duty is itself a duty." These duties are derived from the objectives of Shari'ah. They can also be supported by arguments based on public interest (*masalih*).

Shura-based functions assigned to the state may include any function which the people at any time might want an Islamic state to perform. They may decide, for instance, to make electricity as a public sector industry or to bar the public sector from it. Local considerations relating to resources, costs, etc., may prompt a decision in one way or the other. The important thing is to ensure that the decision is based upon consultation and thus it is taken in public interest. The decisive factor involved in the people's decision is *maslahah*, its protection and *mafsadah*, its prevention.

A MODEL *KHILAFAH*

The principles and elements of social justice discussed above were implemented during the caliphate of 'Umar Ibn Khattab who took the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAS) and basic Qur'anic principles and synthesized them into a convincing socio-economic program. The second caliph, 'Umar was nominated by the incumbent, Abu Bakr, in consultation with the leaders of the Ummah and was then referred to the general public, which in contemporary political terms is called a referendum, for confirmation in 13 AH/634 CE. In other words, 'Umar was elected through a two-stage process: (1) consultation, nomination and selection by the representatives of the Ummah (*al-bay'ah al'khassah*), and (2) subsequent confirmation by the public through general acclamation or *bay'ah al-'ammah*.

The Islamic state that 'Umar ruled was one where equality extended to everyone, even the caliph himself. 'Umar believed that no one, no matter how important, should live in a way that would distinguish him from the rest of the people. He lived a simple life and detached himself from any of the worldly luxuries. He could often be found sleeping on the bare floor of the mosque. At times, he would be found among his people, helping the poor or delivering water and other goods to the widows (Ya'qub, 1969: 387). He would go to great lengths to ensure that everyone was content with his rule. Sometimes, he would even wander the streets at night as an anonymous passerby, where he would get the chance to meet and talk to people, making sure that they were satisfied (Nu'mani, 1957: 229−340).

'Umar would expect no less from the governors and officials of the *khilafah*. His officers were not permitted to ride Turkish horses, eat sifted flour, wear expensive clothing, or keep a doorman at their homes (Ya'qub, 1969: 66). 'Umar separated the judicial, executive, financial, civil and military branches of administration. The State was divided into eight provinces and placed each under a Governor. At the time of Governor's appointment, an inventory of all his possessions was conducted. In case of any discrepancy between his earnings and his possessions or his overall financial position, he was required to explain his position under the charges. If found wanting, the unexplained possessions would be confiscated (al-Baladhuri, 1969: 219). Officers were often dismissed if they showed any outward signs of pride or wealth, which might distinguish them from the ordinary people. Once, after a battle in 16 AH, 'Umar saw Muhallim, a

corpulent Bedouin leader dressed in magnificent regalia with sashes, necklaces, and the like. 'Umar asked him to take everything off in public (al-Tabari, 1989: 2454). Admittedly, 'Umar's actions are not based on any specific laws in the Qur'an or the Hadith, but they were certainly in keeping with the spirit of the Qur'an and its command to establish justice. To modern sensitivities, these restrictions might seem contrary to individual freedom. In some cases, though, the good of the community takes precedence over the individual. Infusing the state with the ideals of egalitarianism and justice would not have been possible unless government officials set the best of examples. 'Umar was the first *khalifah* to fix salary for judges and made their offices distinct from those of executive departments. All the provincial governors and high officers assembled every year in Makkah on the occasion of the pilgrimage where an extensive briefing was done on how to conduct state affairs. Complaints against the governors were laid and grievances redressed. The state administrators were highly paid so that they may not be tempted to bribery and corruption.

'Umar reorganized the system of revenue administration on a sound basis. He established the *Bait al-mal* or public treasury in which incomes from various sources were deposited and to which the entire public was entitled for stipends on a graduated scale. The sources of revenue were *kharaj*, *jizyah*, *zakah*, *'ushr*, and *ghanimah* or war booty. The officers responsible for the revenue collection were directly appointed by the *khalifah* and were directly responsible to him.

Since the *bait al-mal* was to benefit all the members of the society, 'Umar conducted the first census recorded in history for distribution of the state-revenue. A register of beneficiaries was maintained on the basis of closeness in relation to the Prophet (SAS) and piety. Syedah 'Aishah headed the list with 12,000 dirhams per annum. The old and the injured who stopped working became the responsibility of the state and were given allowances to meet their minimum needs (Ya'qub, 1969: 85). These benefits were extended to the disabled *dhimmis*. Abandoned babies were also taken care of. One hundred dirhams per year were spent on each orphan's development (Baladhuri, 1969: 452). 'Umar would go to great lengths to make sure that no one in his *khilafah* went hungry. Occasionally, he would distribute stipends among the people with his own hands. During the great famine of 18 AH, 'Umar ensured that those in need of food, regardless of social position, received food coupons with which they could obtain wheat and flour (Nu'mani, 1957: 223−6). Virtu-

ally no one lived under the poverty line. 'Umar did this by first determining the poverty threshold. He then ordered that twenty-five kilogram of flour be baked. This amount of flour fed thirty men. From this, he arrived at the conclusion that fifty kilograms would be sufficient to feed a man for a month. Hence, he ensured that the poor received a food ration of fifty kilos of flour each month (Nu'mani, 1957: 223). The poor and disabled were guaranteed a cash stipend as well.

Justice and equality were ideals that 'Umar and his deputies upheld in every facet of life. With all the money that was pouring into the treasury during 'Umar's time, one would expect that it would be used to build magnificent and ornate buildings. Yet the caliph was very careful to maintain the simplicity of government buildings (Nu'mani, 1957: 90). He was extremely careful in spending public money and avoided extravagance and unnecessary luxuries. Utilities, infrastructure or resources were under the custody of the government as opposed to individual ownership. *Awqaf* or charitable trusts were used to provide services to the community at large. 'Umar once bought a piece of land from the Banu Harithah and converted it into a charitable trust rather than keeping it for his personal use. The profit and produce from the land went towards benefiting the poor, slaves, and travelers (Nu'mani, 1957: 339). *Awqaf* serve to transfer wealth from the individual or the few to a social collective ownership (Iqbal, 1986: 183).

'Umar believed in the principle of equality for all. In distributing the spoils of war, the caliph abolished all distinctions based on wealth, privilege, or position. Instead, he distributed the stipends based on service in the path of God. And while this was certainly subjective, some of the criteria that were looked upon included one's performance in battle and one's overall service to the community (Ya'qub, 1969: 456). Uthamah Ibn Zayd, for example, son of a slave, received a greater sum than 'Abdullah, 'Umar's son (Nu'mani, 1957: 205).

Another illustration of equality is provided by Amr ibn al-Aas, who was the then governor of Egypt. He arranged a horse race in which his son also participated. However, his son's horse lost to a young, native Copt. The son, Muhammed ibn Amr, was enraged and lashed the Copt boy with a whip, saying, "Take that! That will teach you to beat the son of a nobleman!" The Copt came to Medina and complained to the Caliph, 'Umar, who took it upon himself to institute an inquiry. When he found that the Copt had been beaten unjustly, he immediately sent an emissary to Egypt

to summon the governor and his son before him. When they arrived, he handed the Copt a whip to flog the son, just as he himself had been flogged earlier. In the presence of the governor, the Copt started whipping his son, stopping only when he was satisfied that the punishment had been severe enough. Then the Caliph addressed himself to the governor: "O Amr, since when have you enslaved people who were born free?"

Finally, 'Umar took care to base his administration on *shura*. In modern terminology, he established a democratic system along Islamic lines. Given the peculiar conditions of the age, the principles of democracy could not be developed in all its aspects, the prerequisites essential to a democratic form of government were brought into being. There were two consultative bodies, one was a general assembly which was convened by making a general announcement and the other was a kind of a select committee to look into special problems. 'Umar was very serious about the proper maintenance of *majlis al-shura* and made it an indispensable part of his administration. He firmly declared that no decision was to be taken without consultation. Being a temporal and spiritual head of the *khilafah*, he maintained the principles of election of the Caliph, and at the time of his death, he appointed a council of six members charged with the responsibility of electing his successor.

In sum, the achievements of the *khilafah* under 'Umar were extraordinary on all fronts, in all fields. In modern terminology, 'Umar's *khilafah* can be characterized as:

> An elected republican constitutional government based on the rule of law (political democracy and shari'ah nomocracy); socio-economic egalitarianism (social and economic democracy); and the altruistic Shari'ah binding personality of the ruling elites (ethical democracy). (Hussaini, 1971; 138)

Muslims in every age look to 'Umar for inspiration and norms to realize social justice.

CONTEMPORARY MUSLIM SOCIETIES

As of 2012, there are over 1.6 billion Muslims in the world, constituting one fifth of humankind. Seventy-four percent of this number lives as a majority in forty-nine countries, while twenty-three or a fifth of the world's Muslim population lives in non-Muslim majority developing countries mostly in Africa and Asia. The remaining three percent or about 42 million lives in the developed countries of Europe and North

America (The Pew Forum, 2011: 155). The Muslims inhabit strategic locations in the regions of the world. They are very rich in natural and mineral resources. The Middle East is a stupendous source of strategic power, and one of the greatest material prizes in world history. It is, according to President Eisenhower, the most "strategically important area in the world" (Chomsky, 1994: 190). Yet the Muslim world is at the bottom level in terms of socio-economic and political development indicators which are considered essential for the promotion of social justice. The Muslim World is characterized as follows:

a. Human Rights and Democracy. The Muslim world is characterized by what some Westerners call the "democracy deficit." Many of these countries are governed by monarchs, others by military juntas, and still others by authoritarian one party regime; only a few can be considered democratic. The 2012 Freedom House Report rated only two Muslim majority countries as free; twenty as partly free; and twenty-seven as not free (Freedom House, 2012). None of the 16 majority-Arab Muslim countries has a democratically elected government. Traditional monarchs and authoritarian rulers govern most of these countries.[3] Most of these Muslim despots and dictators have been enjoying the Western support because of their "moderate" and "pro-West" policies.

b. Elections. Muslim states are aptly termed new states as formerly they were colonial territories. The colonial period left an institutional and ideological legacy. Within these nation-states, the prime concern of the ruling elites has been to perpetuate and exploit the inherited liberal democratic principles and institutions, i.e. the election system, the media and the three arms of government (Gauhar, 1978: 303). Elections in the Muslim world, however, have been notorious for the way in which the dominant political forces have suppressed opposition parties, coerced the masses and workers into voting for the approved candidates, used goon squads to harass political rallies, and miscounted ballots or conveniently lost entire ballot boxes in hostile precincts. For instance, 58.8 percent of elections held from 1998 to 2008 in all the Muslim majority countries were neither free nor fair (Baharuddin, 2012: 246). About 37.7 percent cases were found to be somewhat encouraging, being "free but unfair" has witnessed gradual erosion in credibility. The 2013 Freedom House preliminary report finds that while few important Muslim countries such as Egypt and Libya have moved a notch up the ladder of electoral credibility, others including Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Turkey, and most

tragically, Mali that for long was a model of electoral probity in the Muslim world, suffered declines (Freedom House, 2013). On numerous occasions, the army has stepped in to nullify elections after the vote showed an unacceptable party or candidate on the verge of winning.

c. Industrialization. Almost all the Muslim countries have adopted industrialization as their firmly entrenched goal with a capacity for self-sustained growth as a major characteristic. Yet, no Muslim country is truly industrial. Practically, none of the forty-nine Muslim countries is sufficiently industrialized to be classified as developed. Out of this, 16 Muslim majority countries belong to the least developed countries in the world. The average industrial labor force in the Muslim world is about 20 percent with the Muslim majority states of Africa contributing a meagre 10 percent (United Nations Development Program, 2011: 126-130). The situation in the Muslim world described by Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, in 2002, remains unchanged:

> There is not a single Muslim country that can be classified as developed. A number are very wealthy, being well endowed with natural resources. But almost all are lagging behind in modern knowledge, technological skills and in many instances effective government. In fact, in quite a few countries a state of near-anarchy prevails. By no criteria can any of these be classified as developed (…). (Al-Roubaie, 2002: 54)

The development strategy aimed at economic growth and material prosperity has resulted in the rising incidence of urban crime, prostitution, corruption, misuse of power and other aspects of decadence in general. They are equally the product of technical and professional education, which ignores moral and spiritual values. The situation is worsened by the harassment of the media, which invades their private lives, accelerating the process of standardization and escalating the consumerist fever in their societies. In the meantime, the pleasure sector has become very powerful leading to the increase in social problems such as high divorce and crime rates. These ills have been termed the "malaise of modernity" (Taylor, 1991).

d. Poverty. The 49 Muslim majority countries have populations of about 1.6 billion. Africa alone contains about 199 million Muslims. There are 258 million in the Arab states. Another 727 million Muslims live in central and east Asia. They are moderately urbanized, have relatively high rate of inflation, low rate of economic growth, low life expectancy and a very high level of adult illiteracy. Within the

international system of economic stratification, the majority of the Muslim population is located in the low income and poorer countries. The 2011 United Nations' Human Development Report places three of the most populous Muslim countries - Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nigeria – among those with the lowest human development indicators (United Nations Development Program, 2011: 126−30). Out of the ten countries with the highest GDP, only three countries, Qatar, Kuwait and Brunei, are among the Muslim majority countries (The Pew Forum, 2011: 55−6).

e. Technology. In terms of the Global Innovation Index, none of the forty-nine Muslim majority countries is among the top thirty leading countries in the world.[4] Of the thirty-three Muslim countries surveyed, Malaysia comes top at number thirty-two, followed by Qatar as thirty-three. These are the countries that are making significant efforts in the area of advancing technology and innovative ideas in the twenty-first century. At the bottom of the index lie three other Muslim countries. These are Yemen, which is ranked at hundred and thirty-ninth, Niger ranked at hundred and fortieth, and Sudan that came last at hundred and forty-first (Global Innovation Index, 2012: xviii). A few of these Muslim countries, such as Malaysia, are highly integrated in the global economy. Altogether, the exports of the world's 49 Muslim countries amount to about 5.8 percent of the world total. However, Malaysia, with a mere 2.8 percent of the Muslim world's population, accounts for 25 percent of its exports. Excluding Malaysia's contribution to that total, the Muslim world share of the global trade stands at about 4.6 percent. Muslim countries' export share of GDP is also very modest especially when compared to the countries of East Asia or Latin America.

f. Education. Expenditure on education in the Muslim world lags far behind. It represents an average of less than 4 percent of total gross national product per annum. The educational system in most Muslim countries is not adequately planned to improve quality of labour and meet national and global requirements. This should be very clear from the 2012 World University Rankings. None of the universities from the forty-nine Muslim majority countries was listed among the top 200 (Times High Education, 2013). In terms of adult literacy rate, Muslim world represents countries with extremely varying percentage. For instance, Tajikistan has the highest adult literacy rate of 99.7 percent for fifteen years and above. Uzbekistan closely follows with 99.3 percent. Majority of the Muslim countries have an adult literacy rate of approximately around 67 percent.

Burkina Faso with just 21.8 percent, Afghanistan with 28.1 percent and Niger with 28.7 percent are the three countries with the lowest literacy rate in the world (CIA World Fact Book, 2013).

g. Social Values. To say that the Muslim world suffers from a merciless attack on its collective psyche is to repeat the obvious. A new youth-based consumerist culture spearheads this assault on the Muslims (Ahmad and Donnan, 1994: 1−20). The younger generation enjoys loud music on their iTunes, use iPads and other electronic gadgets, eat McDonald burgers and wear T-shirts, jeans and tennis shoes. A survey of Facebook users shows two of the largest Muslim countries among the top ten users in the world. These are Turkey at number six and Indonesia at number four. The case of Turkey is most alarming. Nearly half of its population uses the Facebook and 62 percent of this figure falls within the age bracket of 18−34 years (Facebook Statistics, 2013). This generation of youth knows the face of major international athletes, Hollywood and Bollywood celebrities and rock musicians better than it does its neighbors. Because it places importance on material goods over spiritual excellence, many see this society as valueless. Concerned Muslims see these changes as threats to their traditions and religion. Clearly, then the Muslim world, even after half a century of independence, has not been able to serve humanity in anyway except for wandering with begging bowls and are frequently cited for corruption and for default in paying the interests on loans. They have, in most cases, deviated from the real spirit of Islamic social justice and are generally speaking within the category of "failed states."

CONCLUSION

Islam as a civilization has contributed immensely to human development in all fields. One of the major contributions of Islam lies in its perception of human which cannot be explained merely in terms of economic justice. Islamic conception of justice embraces all sides of life and all aspects of freedom. It deals with mental, physical, material, moral and spiritual values in general. The one single objective of Islamic social justice is the total betterment of humankind; its basic emphasis is on action, not merely on contemplation.

An analysis of the assumptions and characteristics of Islamic social justice indicates that the role of the state in Islamic society must be active in

nature, in shari'ah-based, *ijtihad*-based and *shura*-based spheres. This tripartite classification of state's function is meant for systematic discussion and does not imply a separate identity of different roles. In Islam, all human efforts, moral, social, economic or political, are mutually supportive of each other and integrated within the framework of the value system of Islam.

The Islamic state under the Khulafa-e-rashidun, particularly during the regin of Umar, took an active role in uplifting the ethical and moral standards of the society. It allocated appropriate funds for the Islamic socialization through education; formulated policies for the dissemination of Islamic teachings concerning brotherhood, equal treatment of all individuals in society and rule of law without any discrimination. It implemented a social policy package which provided equal opportunities and also increased the ability of the poor to make effective use of the opportunities. It provided institutional arrangements for consultants' council, constructive criticism, independent judiciary and the like to achieve the Qur'anic directives.

Looking at the contemporary Muslim states, it is evident that they have deviated from the real spirit of Islamic social justice and are in a state of confusion, to say the least. They are found to be deficient on almost all indicators that exemplify as well as help promote social justice. The Qur'an has never assured success for those who deviate from the path of truth and justice and become oppressors. However, the Qur'an holds out the promise of reward for one's deeds. It also informs the believers that a complete record is constantly being made of human actions and they will be held accountable on the judgment day.

This concept of accountability alerts man to the necessity of being extremely punctilious in his dealings with others. He then sees how essential it is to be just to everyone, if he is to save his own self. He avoids wronging to others so that he may not be punished by God. In the absence of any concept of accountability, social justice would figure in the life of a person as a need felt by others, not by oneself. But once it is recognized that there is such a thing as accountability, social justice becomes a prime necessity for everyone, including oneself.

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[1] *Wajib ala al-kifayah* has been defined as "one whose fulfilment in itself is demanded of the *mukallifun* collectively disregarding the agent, such as response to greeting, performance of jihad and funeral prayer." This is different from *wajib ala-al-ayn* (individual obligation) that is defined as "one whose fulfilment is demanded of each and every *mukallif* individually, such as prayer and fasting, doing good to parents and joining ties with relatives." Muhammad al-Khudari, *Usul al-Fiqh*. Cairo: Matba'at al-Istiqamah, 1938. 39.

[2] Some of these heads of expenditure listed above are among the eight heads of expenditure on which zakat revenue is to be spent, as laid down in the Qur'an. "The alms are only for the poor and the needy, and those who collect them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and to free the captives and the debtors and for the cause of Allah, and (for) the wayfarers; a duty imposed by Allah. Allah is Knower, Wise" (*At-Taubah*, 9: 60).

[3] It is interesting to note that even the two countries adjudged to be free by the Freedom House Report, have flawed democracies. As for those countries that are either partly free or not free at all, their regimes ranged from those that are hybrid in nature or out-rightly authoritarian. This covers both that are structurally secular and those that claimed to be Islamic.

[4] The Global Innovation Index uses seven indicators to determine the level of a country's progress in the area of technological innovation as a measure of its general economic well-being. These are stability of its institutions, human capital and research, infrastructure, market sophistication, business sophistication, knowledge and technological outputs, and creative outputs. See "Global Innovation Index Rankings 2012: Stronger Innovation Linkages for Global Growth." <http://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/ freepublications/en/economics/gii/gii_2012.pdf>