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Contextualizing Religious Pluralism: An Islamic Perspective

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Peaceful coexistence has been an extensive appreciated vision of humankind since times immemorial; but its relevance and scope in the modern world has increased manifolds. Mankind yearns for inner peace, normalcy in society and harmonious relations with others (religions, societies, cultures, nations, groups etc). Peaceful co-existence being the greatest concern of man, all religions attaches a great importance to it. The primary texts of Islam are replete with instructions and exhortations for such situations. The Qur'an accepts plurality as a natural phenomenon and is very explicit about racial and religious multiplicity. Values like tolerance, equality, justice and peaceful co-existence are rooted in Islam and Muslims need to assert and re-establish their role as Dai-ilal Islam in the contemporary world, which is essentially pluralistic in nature. In the modern world where the notion of Dhimmah (and consequently Jizya) is no more and the differences between Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb have become irrelevant, the emergence of the new concepts like nation state and citizenship, have forced Muslims to rethink their idea of faith-based identity. There is no worldwide caliphate now nor is the faith as the centre of identity of Muslim countries. Pluralism, as a response to all such differences, does not provide 'an official interpreter', but instead gives weight to diversity of viewpoints. Muslim scholars and intellectuals are facing the challenging phenomena of the apprehension between conformity and disagreement, collective narrative versus individual interpretations. Given all of this, what is the future is the major task in front of Muslim intelligentsia? This research paper is aimed at revisiting some of the principles drawn from Islamic Primary Texts (The Qur'an and the Hadith) relating to religious pluralism as a modern reality and intends to explore the concepts of peaceful coexistence, equality and justice envisaged by the Qur'an and implemented by the Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh). It also tries to explain the scope of application of these principles of the Qur'an and the Sunnah to the conditions of the present age.

Introduction

Diversity in the universe, in world around, in fauna and flora, and similarly in human culture and civilization, religious beliefs and political ideologies is not against the will of God. There is diversity among stars and planets differing in sizes and orbits but still they continue to move without colliding with each other and with astonishing predictable certainty (Al-Qur'an, 36:40).

But alas! The behavior of man is unpredictable. Similarly, the diversity among races and tribes certainty (Al-Qur'an, 49:13) or for that matter, sects are there, and going to stay, that should not deter us from humane behavior. All are sons of Adam (Al-

Qur'an, 04:01). Islam gives enough breathing space to people of other faiths and Muslims genuinely expect similar treatment from rulers in pluralistic societies.

Through the modern democratic and secular values, there is a theoretic provision for freedom of faith and expression but the implementation is deficient. This gulf between theory and practice among people and rulers needs to be bridged in gradually without conflict or confrontation. In given scenario of modern world, wisdom consists in learning to live with differences rather than seeking monopoly. That is in consonance with law of nature. Harmonious coexistence between adherents of different religious denominations does not run counter to religious sanctions in Islamic texts. Al-Qur'an the basic building block of Islam at a number of places refers to such situations with ample guidelines for Muslim behavior in life of the Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh).

Religious Pluralism

Religion is central to the existence of almost every society (Aslan, Adnan. 2011). Pluralism is defined as, "A state of society in which members of diverse ethnic, racial, religious, or social groups maintain and develop their traditional culture or special interest within the confines of a common civilization"(Webster's dictionary/pluralism). Religious pluralism is thus believed to be, 'an attitude or guiding principle regarding the multiplicity of religious belief systems co-existing in a society' (Kamali, Mohammad Hashim. 2009).

There is an acceptance and belief that only a single religion cannot held as the sole and exclusive foundation or source of truth, rather other religions also hold some truths and true values. This may considered as a form of toleration and indication of the promotion of some level of unity, co-operation, which improved an understanding between different religions or beliefs within a single religion. Religious pluralism as a shadow of ecumenism thus "enables a country made up of people of different faiths to exist without sectarian warfare or the persecution of religious minorities. Freedom of religion encompasses all religions acting within the law in a particular region. The cultural and religious pluralism has a long history and development that reaches from antiquity to contemporary trends in modern era.

Islamic Perspective on Nature and Purpose of Life

Revealed knowledge; as pointed to above is the only source to comprehend the unity in diversity of vast universe and the purpose of human life as well. Man being the central subject of divine address over the course of human history, received this knowledge through the medium of a series of prophets from Adam (AS) to Muhammad (Pbuh). This divine knowledge revealed earlier in form of templates, pamphlets, booklets, and books finally was concluded in the Qur'an with a divine assurance for its preservation. A Muslim by definition is someone who accepts the Qur'an as the literal word of God. One cannot be a Muslim without accepting that the Qur'an is a divine, revealed text.

Islam is in fact not a new religion, but a revised and enlarged edition of eternal Divine religion based on Unity of God *(Tawhid),* medium of Prophets *(Risalah)* and the concept of After-life *(Akhirah).* Islam shares these three fundamental beliefs with the other living Abrahamic faiths i.e. Judaism and Christianity (Al-Qur'an, 42:13).

The concept of *Tawhid* and *Aakhirah* (after life), are the essential components of Qur'anic teachings preached by all prophets, that resolve the basic dilemma of human intellect about universe and his own life. Whereas the acquired knowledge helps man understand the structure and function of different components of the vast universe, the major questions about the purpose of universe and human life remains unanswered. The Qur'an addresses human intellect from a higher plane with more clarity and absolute certainty. e.g.: the comparison of this life with hereafter, (Al-Qur'an, 87:16-17) and the certainty of death (Al-Qur'an, 03:185). The Qur'an demands man to make a comparative study of fleeting worldly life and permanent luxuries of hereafter, (*Duniya* and *Aakhirat),* heaven and hell, treatment to believer and nonbeliever and then make an intelligent choice for himself with complete freedom of will.

The Qur'an says, *"…..Had Allah willed, He would have made you one nation [united in religion]….."* (Al-Qur'an, 05:48) that is why, *"There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion….."* (Al-Qur'an, 02:256). But the divine plan and purpose of human life however needs to be propagated and explained to all; irrespective of the response; acceptance being no precondition or an objective to be achieved at all costs (Al-Qur'an, 26:03, 88:21-22). The obligation thus on every Muslim after the finality of Prophethood or *Khatam-i Nabuwwat* (Al-Qur'an, 03:144)*,* is therefore, to propagate the knowledge of *Tawhid* and *Aakhirah* to the remotest corner of the globe without compulsion, coercion or disturbing an individual's God given freedom of choice to accept or reject this faith. This whole life and environ in which man has been placed is a place of test or examination and not the place for reward or recompense; so forcing anyone to write the correct answer would

interfere with his freedom and defeat the very purpose of test or divine plan in Islamic perspective. So maintenance of social, religious and political freedom here is a must for man to express himself in either way and subsequently face the consequences of his choice and behavior in the afterlife (Al-Qur'an, 88:26). So the very idea of forcing someone into uniformity is against divine scheme of things. Allah the all knower is well aware of these differences among individuals and groups that are going to stay till the Day of Judgment. In fact, the secret in allowing dissimilarity is that Islam advocate faith based on inspection, contemplation, and then choice.

Freedom of Mankind

The teachings of Islam provide a clear insight about the human diversity and its significance, and encourages it as a sign of Allah's mercy and an identity for the men of wisdom. Therefore, in the Qur'an Almighty Allah states:

"And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colors." (Al-Qur'an, 30:22)

Thus, the Qur'an acknowledges the reality of differentiation and multiplicity within humanity. It gives the premonition that the diversity is part of the divine plan and recognizes the freedom of choice of mankind. The Qur'an is very explicit about racial and religious multiplicity, and accepts plurality as a natural phenomenon (Al-Qur'an, 10:99-100, 64:02). Those who are Muslims, are, therefore, told to proclaim (Al-Qur'an, 02:136). The Qur'an prohibits believers from using abusive language about other religions and faiths:

"Revile not, those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest they out of spite revile Allah in their ignorance. Thus have We made alluring to each People its own doings. In the end will they return to their Lord and He shall then tell them the truth of all that they did." (Al-Qur'an, 10:99)

This type of command used in many other places of the Qur'an to makes sure that not only the religious coexistence itself is respected but that the actions and beliefs of each religious community are protected. Hence, under the Muslim rule, non-Muslim subjects enjoyed such liberty that their educational institutions and their personal law courts were autonomous and free to take any decision. Naturally, such a freedom could work only when there is enough choice for man to choose his faith. This brings to light the freedom of religious belief.

A brief revisit to the early days of Islam reveals that in an environ of ideological vacuum the message of the Qur'an based on *Tawhid* and concept of *Akhirah* (Hereafter) was so powerful that none in *Hijaz* could resist the desire to enter the folds of Islam. This was equally complemented by the magnetic personality of Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) - A perfect model for humanity to be followed in all spheres of life and for all ages to come. These were the irresistible and tempting factors; otherwise, Islam provided enough breathing space to people of other faiths as evidence in practical examples in Prophets (Pbuh) life. Besides popular events like treaty of *Hudaibiyyah* and *Mithaq-e-Madina* the treatment of mercy and forgiveness to enemies after conquest of Makkah doesn't find a parallel in centuries of human history. Take for instance the example of Abu Sufyan, Ikramah, Sahl bin Amr the vowed and dreaded enemies of Islam who never bowed to the sword of warriors but it was the model behavior *(Khulq-i-Azeem)* of Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) that forced their pride to surrender as humble souls.

In another verse the Qur'an states: *"If it had been thy Lord's Will, they would all have believed,—all who are on earth! Wilt thou then compel mankind, against their will, to believe!"* (Al-Qur'an, 02:256). The textual inspection of these verses makes it clear that diversity is the will of Allah. It also makes a clarification that compulsion in the matters of faith is forbidden in Islam, which is also corroborated by another verse of the Qur'an, which states: *"There is no compulsion in religion….."* (Al-Qur'an, 22:40). A critical look at the texts of the verse of *Surah al-Ma'idah* (Al-Qur'an, 5:48) manifests that the purpose of the differentiation is to test a believers response and reaction that how he will behave with the precepts and teachings of Islam. Diversity of religions, nations and peoples is a test and the teachings of Islam require that we manage the differences and live a peaceful harmonious life in this world. Let us examine another Qur'anic verse:

"Had there not been God's repelling some people by others, certainly the monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which God's name is mentioned would have been demolished…..." (Al-Qur'an, 30:22)

This verse indicates that the Allah wills to protect monasteries, churches, synagogues and *Masajid* that establish pluralistic religious nature of Islam. One must not deduce from this discussion that according to Islam every religion is true, no, it is not like that.

However, the acceptability of religious pluralism in Islam remains a topic of active debate with the western scholars and Orientalists. The Qur'an, the most important building block of Islam, has however, laid down some principles recognizing the cultural pluralism which are exemplified in the verse:

"Another of His signs is the creation of the heavens and earth, and the diversity of your languages and colors" (Al-Qur'an, 14:04). This is a clear sign of diversity acknowledgment in the Qur'an. Adding to that, it is stated in another verse:

"And We did not send any Messenger except [speaking] in the language of his people to state clearly for them, and Allah sends astray whom He wills and guides whom He wills. And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise." (Al-Qur'an, 29:46)

This verse indicates that all Prophets and Messengers were sent to their people, to tell them about the fundamental concepts of Islam like, *Tawhid* and *Aakhirah* in their own language, which is also a clear indication of diversity both stated in the book and applied in real world through *Sunnah* of the Prophet of Islam (Pbuh). Giving a really effective emphasis on diversity in the eyes of the Creator, the Qur'an in verse below clearly shows the existence of pluralism in Islam as the core of human civilization in all times. In several *Surahs*, the Qur'an asks Muslims to remain steadfast with Islam, and not yield to the vain desires of non-believers. These verses have been interpreted to imply pluralism in religions. e.g.:

"And dispute not with the People of the Book......... Our Allah and your Allah is one; and it is to Him that we bow in Islam." (Al-Qur'an, 06:108)

Finally, when there is no common point, still Islam allows its followers to stay in peace with people of other faiths without indulging in confrontation or disputation (Al-Qur'an, 109:06). Not only this, but the Qur'an instructs Muslims to take cooperation from non-Muslims, or cooperative with them in matters of social interests or benefits; without taking into consideration their stand on matters of faith or their past animosity (Al-Qur'an, 05:02, 05:08).

This is further elaborated in example of *Hilf al-Fazul* in pre-prophetic period and the Prophet's (Pbuh) approval and willingness to participate in such an arrangement even in his later life (Al-Silsila-Tus-Sahiha). Again once, we read the history of establishment of Madina State; it was the first organized Muslim State that included participation of people of the book fully protecting their rights (Hamidullah, Muhammad. 1941).

The Quranic Perspective of Other Religions
The Qur'an not only declares, that each and every people have been provided with the divine guidance (Al-Qur'an, 13:07); but also insists on this essential message being one and the same in all cases, and makes no difference between the various prophets who bore it (Al-Qur'an, 02:136). But one must remember the general foundation, according to Islam is that all the Messengers came with same message, but their legislations vary.
Qur'an states:
"The same religion has He established for you as that which He enjoined on Noah—that which we have sent by inspiration to thee—and that which we enjoined on Abraham, Moses, and Jesus." (Al-Qur'an, 42:13)

This concept reveals and encourages the further development of special and intimate relations among Muslims, Jews, and Christians. The Qur'an has used the word '*Ahl al-Kitab*' (People of the Book) specifically for Jews and Christians. But the objective is to remind not only Jews and Christians but Muslims too that their religious heritage is shared and that their religious roots are similar. Surah al-Imran verses 64 thus states:
"O People of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you: That we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, Lords and patrons other than Allah." (Al-Qur'an, 03:64)

Religions other than AHL AL-KITAB
Islam uses the term '*Ahl al-Kitab*' or 'People of the Book' (Watt, W. M. 2008), and 'Book People' as an identification for those non-Muslims who live with Muslims in the same society, and testimonializes the Books and the Messengers upon whom they were revealed before the final Book and Prophet (Pbuh). There are also some people who are called as 'the people of protection' or 'protégés' (*Ahl al-Dhimmah* or *Dhimmis*), i.e. 'the people of the pledge, peace and security' (Yitik, Ali Ihsan. 2004).This term has a broad meaning than the People of the Books. Because, it includes all the religions and those which were known and recognized, as the Magians, Samaritans and Sabaians. But, whatever the religion or faith whether Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, or Jainism; all the previous messages now stand abrogated. Hence it is only the final Messenger (Pbuh) and the Message, which he (Pbuh) came with are to be followed, according to Islam. Nevertheless, adherents of all these faiths or religions qualify to share the platform of peaceful coexistence. Rather they too are to be included in it and tried to be understood and at the same time, they are to be made to understand the real message of Islam.

War Ethics

The Shariah based Islamic State not permit to wage a war against non-combatant non-Muslims who do not have any kind of hostilities to Islam and Muslims and who enforce or oppress Muslims to accept their faith or religion, or expel them from their lands, or who signed peace pacts, or those who live under the protection of the state (*Ahl al-Dhimmah* or *Dhimmis*). If any of these offenses occurs, then Muslims are permitted to defend themselves and protect their religion. But still there are some writers and speakers who quote the Qur'anic verses out of context and try to blame Islam for promoting violence and terrorism. They take a "text" and use it outside its "context" to libel Islam as an aggressive and tyrant religion. E.g. in Surah al-Baqarah (Al-Qur'an, 2:191). **T**he context of the verse clarifies that it gives the right of resistance to the Muslims against oppression, but in no way, does it promote aggression. Islam is the religion of peace and it enjoins peace even in war when the enemy is inclined to peace (Al-Qur'an, 08:61)**.**

To minimize hostilities, the Qur'an (Al-Qur'an, 09:06) ordered Muslims to grant place of safety to anyone who sought refuge, even an enemy. Asylum would be granted, according to the customs of chivalry; the person would be told the message of the Qur'an but would not be enforced to accept that message, rather, he or she would be guaranteed with safety regardless of his or her religion (Hathout, 2002).

The Challenges of Pluralism

Pluralism has to face so many challenges based on the different scenarios and situations. Mostly in the present world, there are mainly two types of challenges:

- Modern Theories: Democracy, Secularism, Socialism, globalization etc.
- Secular Laws vs. *Shariah* Laws.

As for the first category, it is an acknowledged fact that theories like Marxism, Communism, and Socialism etc. are either dying their own death or at least losing their support and grounds even in their own strongholds. However if the concepts of democracy and secularism if analyzed scientifically, we can trace their roots in the very Islamic principles enshrined in the pages of the primary Islamic texts i.e. Qur'an and Hadith. The very spirit of Islam is in fact democratic in nature. The Qur'an for example declares piety as the sole criteria of superiority (Al-Qur'an, 04:01, 34:37, 40:40, 49:13). The same spirit is reiterated in the Prophet's (Pbuh) last sermon when he categorically denied any preference to any white over black or Arab over non-Arab and vice versa. Similarly, the teachings of justice and equality in the Qur'an and exemplified in *Sunnah* of the Prophet (Pbuh) exhibit the secular approach and form the basis of modern day UNO and Human Rights Organizations. This shows that values like democracy and secularism though not ideal from the Islamic point of view; are not incompatible with Islam in pluralistic societies. Taken in right perspective these can prove to be useful and fruitful if the Islamic objectives are recast after prioritization.

As regard the discrepancy of Secular and *Shariah* laws, a fair analysis of the problems prevalent in pluralistic societies shows that these are not in fact purely religious in nature but sociopolitical and legal or administrative (Al-Qur'an, 05:02). Even the apparently religious problems don't emanate from religious scriptures but the religious cultures and the body of legal literatures. In modern Islamic countries, religious pluralism has become a contested issue. In most of the countries where Muslims are in minority they are faced with problems of freedom to practice their faith, build *Masjids* (places of worship), formulate and adopt or apply their own laws and even persecution in rare cases. On the other hand, there are medieval laws banning preaching of other faiths within Muslim lands or free practice of other religions. Similarly, some scholars opine that in an Islamic *Shariah* based state non-Muslim minority groups are not allowed by the *Shariah* law to enjoy religious freedoms, but this argument has been broadly rejected. It is an undeniable historical fact that the main corpus of Islamic *Fiqh* was created and compiled during the period of Muslim dominance*.* That is why we find words like *Dhimis* and *Jizya* and minor details about non-Muslims living in Muslim lands but hardly a mention of contrary situation. As such it was unthinkable for rulers as well as scholars to foresee or envisage an era of abolished caliphate, rise of nation states, coming up of pluralistic societies or a situation of subordination for Muslims. But Allah is never ignorant or unaware (Al-Qur'an, 02:255). The Qur'an, primarily a book of guidance, contains principles and guideline for all situations and all times to come.

In the modern world where the notion of *Dhimmah* (and consequently *Jizya*) is no more and the differences between *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb* have become irrelevant, the emergence of the new concepts like nation state and citizenship, have forced Muslims to rethink their idea of faith-based identity. There is no worldwide caliphate now nor is the faith as the centre of identity of Muslim countries (Aslan, Adnan. 2011). The present world of pluralistic societies with democracy, secularism, globalization and modern ways of communication qualifies better to be named *Dar al-Dawah.* In contrast to jurists and legal experts, Almighty Allah who is all encompassing, seer and knower of past as well as future events, however, had completed His will and revealed the last book of guidance for humanity for all times to come. Therefore, it must definitely offer us clear

guidance on the present state of affairs. Therefore, Muslims should have instead of rejection of realities, taken to primary sources to seek guidance for all such situations. The situation became worse as the contemporary Muslims tried to face the challenge with tools suited for an era of Muslim dominance rather. Had they looked to the Qur'an and *Sunnah* of the Prophet (Pbuh), the scholars would have found a treasure of ample guiding principles in the Qur'an and bright examples of prophetic behavior in situations involving people of different faiths.

Approaches of Pluralsim

Taking Pluralism is a modern reality different religions and groups within religions have adopted different approaches to minimize the points of divergence and to avail the opportunities of growth. The occurrence of religious multiplicity is one of the mostly discussed questions with which today's religious thought is faced. The existence of communities in which people of different religious traditions live together and the expansion of social relationships and communication at the threshold of the third millennium are among the reasons for paying attention to this vital issue.

Approach of Aryan Religions on pluralism

Almost all Indian or Aryan religions hold a view that 'All Religions are true' or these are different ways of reaching to ultimate reality. In Jainism, the principle of relative pluralism that is also known as the *Anekantavada*, is one of the basic principles of Jainism. In this view, the truth or the reality is not encircled in a single reality rather it is perceived differently from different points of view. On the other hand, the Sikh Gurus (religious leaders) have supported the view that proponents of all faiths. They believe that by doing good and virtuous deeds and by remembering the Lord, can certainly help to achieve salvation. The Buddhism remaining silent on concept of God and noncommittal on other religions stresses on non-violence and social service as a tool for its relevance and propagation. Similarly, the Bahaism in modern times is building on concepts of religious freedom, altruism and peace (Hick, John. 2005).

Sufistic or Mystic Approach

Whereas *Ulama* and Muslim scholars form the backbone of Islam and their contributions to the cause of Islam cannot be undermined; *Sufis* played very important role in propagation of the true faith. They represented the humane behavior as a reflection of prophetic character to attract people of other faiths or those in search of reality. However, some excesses in *Sufi* praxis and institutionalizing mysticism in Islam, away from the essential practices of *Shariah* widened the gulf between realization of Allah or gnosis and the obligatory duties devoid of essential soul of *Ibadah* leaving it an arid field.

The human service professionals, again like mystics, have always throughout history of the humankind dealt with problems of pluralism without bias and the relevance of a pluralistic stend in modern times is even more relevant. Maulana Azad has time and again for Muslims, reiterated his formula of *Baqai Anfa* (being useful to society) as a panacea for *Ummah* to regain its central role in world history (Azad, Maulana. 2007). The formula is even more relevant today than the yester years.

The Qur'anic Approach

The Qur'an stresses on the concept of all people as children of Adam and Eve (Al-Qur'an, 04:01). All people stand as equal with each other before Him. The very ideals of Islam based as they are on the worship of One God (Al-Qur'an, 04:48, 04:116). Islam as enshrined in the Qur'an describes the chronology of major religions of the world as a historical process of monotheistic religion taking different shapes but never prescribes or approves polytheism, altruism or concept of different paths to one reality. However, Islam gives clear guidelines to value the rights of fellow human beings and all the religious communities. It rejects racism, which is a hurdle to coexistence, it accepts diversity of faiths, it is for the fulfillment of peace, and it respects freedom of mankind, and similarly respects the freedom of religious belief. Islam does not reject the existence of other religions rather recognize them and at the same time promotes harmony amongst the adherents of these varied religious traditions. This also sets and assigns the basic role for Muslims to stand within the mankind, and for the prosperity of humanity.

Opportunities in Pluralism

The Qur'an argues for Divine understanding in human diversity of culture, language, and tribes. The purpose in this diversity is for both the sexes to assist each other in a life of righteousness and vie with one another in the performance of good deeds. The Qur'an stresses acceptance of other faiths, as a fact, this being an important Islamic principle. Acceptance here necessarily means that people should be not coerced into following a particular religion. This is entirely in consonance with Islam. The Qur'an insists 'There shall be no compulsion in religion' (Al-Qur'an, 02:256). The aim of Islam is to assimilate such diversity into unity through the sacred principles of the Qur'an; it explains the reason and purpose for such ethnic and religious diversity. The Qur'an accepts plurality as a natural phenomenon.

The Qur'an demolished the age-old structure of social superiority by asserting common origin of all human beings. It recognizes piety as the sole basis of nobility and superiority. Undoubtedly, this concept develops in man an optimistic attitude towards life by inspiring him to attain superiority through noble deeds. Further, there are historical evidences on Muslims as subject (subordinates) and live with coexistence, while continuing with their *Dawah* work. The Qur'an is very concerned with bringing an end to tribal, ethnic, and religious feuds and with promoting peaceful coexistence. So true is this that some Muslims believe the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the US Bill of Rights were influenced by the Qur'an (Shafiq, Muhammad., Abu-Nimer, 2011). It is certainly a fact that many political and economic policies of west are disadvantageous to the collective good of Muslims; but in reality, this has nothing to do with any antagonism towards Islam.

A *Hadith* of the Prophet (Pbuh) predicts that, "close to the doomsday the message of Islam will enter every hut or mansion" (Musnad Aḥmad). This in fact has been made possible in the modern world, truly speaking only with the help of west. The pre-conditions for *Idkhal-i-Kalmiah* include a system of global communication, complete religious freedom, unbounded resources, free enquiry into knowledge including religious, and all these factors are now a reality –thanks to the west. It has thus produced all the means and resources essential to the successful carrying out of Islamic *Dawah,* all over the world. Muslims should therefore bring to an end of dichotomous thinking in terms of *Darul Islam* and *Darul Harb* keeping in mind the possibility of a *Darul Dawah.* The Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) is the best model and representation for humanity as mentioned in the Qur'an and exemplified in his personal treatment of people with differing faiths. In his last Sermon, the Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) admonished his followers: "Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you" (Saeed, Abdullah. 2018). He (Pbuh) describes the ideal Muslim as thus:
"A Muslim is one from whose hand and tongue people are safe. A believer is one from whom people know that their wealth and lives are safe." (Jam-e al-Tirmidhi)

Conclusion
The diversity in the universe, nature and mankind is in consonance with will of God. Thus, multiplicity in the universe in human cultures, civilizations and religious beliefs and political ideologies is not against the will of God or God forbid! He is aware of the modern developments. He is all knowing and nothing is hidden from Him, and Religion is complete in all respects (Al-Qur'an, 05:03). Similarly, the multiplicity of colors languages and the division of mankind into different races, and tribes, nations and regions is again among signs of the artistry of Almighty and not the superiority of one over the other. Allah the all knower is well aware of all these differences that are going to stay until the Day of Judgment. Al-Qur'an, the final version of divine message for humanity, mentions the religious pluralism at number of places, and the life of Prophet (Pbuh) a practical model of the Qur'anic teachings is sufficient to guide anyone who seeks guidance on any issue relating to difficulties in adjusting to people of other faiths, cultural identities or political ideologies by making smaller compromises with co-travelers and moving on a bigger/longer mission. The only thing required is to make a difference between cause of Islam and the interest of a particular group of Muslims and prioritize the list of jobs at hand. The best thing about pluralism is the opportunity to spearhead the cause of Islamic *Dawah* the foremost duty of Muslims after *Khatam-e Nabuwwat.* But alas! We rather either took to celebration of the concept with proud or engaged ourselves with slogans like *Tahaffuz-e Khatam-e Nabuwwat*, taking a course with much media attention and far easier than the struggle involved in *Dawah work*. Plurality demands an effective and powerful weapon for *Dawah*-more of actions than sermons.

As evidenced in last sermon the only assigned job for Muslims is to convey the concept of *Tawhid* and *Aakhirah* to the remotest corner of world, lest anybody claim ignorance of this divine message on the day of final judgment. If *Dawah* is taken as the foremost priority and of course, it should be, then all other issues facing Muslim *Ummah* will look trivial and transitory; taking this world as *Lahw-o Lahb* and *Aakhirah* as *Kherun wa Abqa.* Seen in this perspective all the modern scientific and technological advancements particularly in field of communication; Muslims should take both pluralism and Information & Communication Technology as divine blessings to perform a superior *Jihad* with the word of God, which was otherwise impossible with our feeble bodies, fading enthusiasm and worldly interests (Al-Qur'an, 30:07).

Muslims are the custodians of the divine message that they have to deliver to the world nations as a Divine trust. It is possible only in a peaceful environment and creation of such a peaceful atmosphere is primarily the responsibility of a *Da'i* group. In so doing they will have to stop "*Othering*" their fellow citizens and treat them as *Maduu* (Customers of Truth) and not as enemies. Living in peace with other communities doesn't mean to divorce core Islamic values but seek common grounds for joint ventures looking for more and more points of contact in the interest of *Dawah* work.

Instead of reestablishing a Muslim *Khilafah* or political empire, Muslims should strive for spreading the word of God to the remotest corner of the globe, which is ordained by Allah and predicted by the Prophet of Islam (Pbuh). Therefore, the adoption of *Dawah* work must be most important responsibility and the diversion of all strength for Muslims. There are still opportunities and chances for Muslims are still they are in a position to establish a '*Dawah* Empire' despite having political losses.

The earlier Muslim scholars did their best to solve their contemporary problems and most of their formulations are still relevant. However, the modern developments like democracy secularism, globalization and scientific developments demand some soul searching by contemporary Muslims. They are required to meet this challenge wisely and squarely but at the same time, remaining confidently grounded in the primary Islamic texts. The Qur'an being a book of universal and eternal guidance with an authentic proof of perfection from none other than the creator Himself; is comprehensive enough to answer all questions until the Day of Judgment. The only flexibility required is to reinterpret the Qur'anic principles taking into consideration the spirit of the Qur'an and the spirit of Sunnah model before us.

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