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The Contemporary Muslim Societies and Evolution of the Religious Extremism: A Critical Assessment

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Abstract

The Quranic concept of *Ukhuwah* (Universal Brotherhood) and *Islah* (Non-violent effort) seems to be non-existent in the Contemporary Muslim societies. The Muslims have been experiencing worst form of the religious extremism (*Tashaddud*) creating threat to their identity as well as confusing the Muslim governments in a mutilated religious fervor. The things worsened around 1995 in many Muslim societies including Central Asia, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Egypt mostly due to the literal understanding and interpretation of the text (*Zahir*), casual approach with regard to the involvement in the *Ulum* or by way of misappropriation of the context (*al-Tanazur*). The bypass of the *Islahi* approach, ignorance of the socio-cultural legacies and mismanagement of the universal Quranic teachings has been the causes troubling the Muslim societies worldwide. From 2002 onwards, the extremist thought evolved with such a great might that Muslim societies are yet to find out as how to deal with this situation. The western approach in this context is confusing, as they fix it as 'Jehadi onslaught' on the world, which resulted in the defamation of Islam and its humanistic values. The post 2010 scenario is altogether different, as the Muslim world has experienced a variety of changes, narratives and discourses in socio-political and religious context. The concept of Modernity (*Tajdid*) is not being confused with Westernization or the vulnerable religious extremism (*Tashaddud*). In the given context, the compassionate themes of the *Kulliyat Rasail Nur* by Bedduzaman Said Nursi (1876-1960) can play a significant role for better understanding of Islam and its concern for the promotion of the humanistic intrinsic values. This paper is an attempt to highlight the causes for the evolution of the extremist ideology, its critical assessment and Said Nursi's vision for the contemporary Muslim world.

Key words: *Zahiri*, *Tajdid*, Salafism, Multifaith society, *Tasahadud*, *Takfir*, Radicalism

Introduction

Since 1990, the Muslim societies have again been in the continuous process of transition as well as transformation. Due to certain socio-economic and political reasons, the religious discourse and its interpretation has been a crucial debate in the current circumstances. In the given scenario, the Muslim intellectuals are in a constant search of derivations (*Takhrij al-Ahkam al-Shara'i li dafa al-Harj wa al-Taklif*) and possibilities that could help in understanding the socio-religious phenomenon for transforming institutions in different aspects of the socio-economic and political life.¹

This process of reallocation has proved to be a 'fresh- breath' to the studies in Islam and researches in the contemporary phase of the Muslim societies.

The essence of the Islamic faith is puritan as well as compassionate. However, Islam in the twentieth century has been associated with critical aspects of the reformation, revolution and refutation (*Takfir*) of the groups existing within and accusing each other of promulgating *biddah* (Innovation).² The Political and intellectual movements responded to **International Journal of Research in Social Sciences** Vol. 9 Issue 1(1), January 2019, ISSN: 2249-2496 Impact Factor: 7.081 Journal Homepage: <http://www.ijmra.us>, Email: editorijmie@gmail.com Double-Blind Peer Reviewed Refereed Open Access International Journal - Included in the International Serial Directories Indexed & Listed at: Ulrich's Periodicals Directory ©, U.S.A., Open J-Gate as well as in Cabell's Directories of Publishing Opportunities, U.S.A