

THE MUSLIM YOUTH AND THE CHALLENGES OF GLOBALIZATION

Adeyemo, Lateef Kayode

*International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization
International Islamic University Malaysia*

Abstract. Muslims today are faced with a plethora of problems or challenges. In fact, there are a lot of contradictions as the Ummah is divided against herself. The Muslim leaders are not helping matters as they have, in most cases, failed to give the necessary leadership and inspiration that today's youth needed in order to lead an Islamic life. The greatest of all the challenges facing the Muslim youth in the contemporary time is that of globalisation. It has to be stated here that neither Islam nor the Muslims are against the issue or the idea of globalisation as Islam itself is a global or universal religion and ideology. Hence, all people of all times and climes, colours and races, walks of life and status regardless of their gender could therefore be, and are indeed Muslims insofar as they subscribe or adhere to the teachings of Islam. However, the globalisation encapsulated in the teachings of Islam and its law, (Shari'ah) is based on mutual reciprocative benefits, mutual exhortation to goodness and avoidance of evil. In which case, all are equal before Allah, their Lord and creator to whom they are all going to return and give account of their stewardship. Besides, everybody regardless of his/her colour, race or caste, sex or status, nationality etc is equal before the Islamic law. *Unite (globalise) on goodness and God consciousness and do not unite (globalise) on sins and transgression (Q5:3.)* The challenges posed therefore, by the present form of globalisation is that of dominance of a culture over all other ones, a culture and or a way of life which is not only directly opposite that of Islam but equally antagonistic and quite unfriendly to it. Thus, attempt is made in this treatise to examine the challenges posed by globalisation to the Muslim youths who are essentially the leaders of tomorrow in the Muslim Ummah, her workforce, intelligentsia, planners and executors of her policies, to say the least, her hope. It also proffers or rather suggests ways and means by which the challenges could be overcome or at least faced squarely.

Definition of Terms

For the proper understanding of the issue at stake, it is deemed prudent to define certain terms used in this treatise. Thus, literary and technical or rather working definitions shall be given to the following terms: Islam, Muslim, Muslim Youth, Globalization and challenges. Attempt shall equally be made to look at Islamic worldview no matter how brief, in order to realise the challenges pose by the idea of globalization as conceived, delivered and nurtured in the West, not only to the Muslim youths alone but equally to Islam and the Muslims, if not humanity in general.

To start with, Islam is a derivative of an Arabic verbal noun (*Aslama*) meaning to surrender, to concur, to submit, to obey etc. It is equally a derivative of one of the attributes of Allah- *As- Salaam* meaning, the Lord of Peace. Islam is therefore, defined as a religion of peace and total submission to the will of Allah. It is an ideology and a comprehensive way of life which covers the whole gamut of human life in all its ramifications as it does not divide life into watertight compartments of spiritual and temporal or, in other words, religion and secular. According to Professor Muddathir Abdul Rahim (2005), "Islam is an Arabic word that literally, if basically, means submission or surrender (i.e. of oneself to God, Allah), but being derived from the root "s l m," it is also closely related to cognate terms that signifies peace, integrity, and wholesomeness, all of which are of central importance in the teachings of the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad". Hence, an adherent of Islam is called Muslim, that is, one who surrenders or submits himself wholeheartedly as well as whatever he has to the will of

Allah, without leaving anything behind to be given to Caesar. For Caesar and whatever he had, according to the teachings of Islam, belong to Allah to Whom he had eventually returned (Adeyemo, 2006 A:36). This is the crux of the matter as Muslims are to obey the laws of Allah rather than those based on human fancies and conjectures. The Qur'an speaks: 'We have given to you a law (a way of life), so follow it and do not follow the fancies of those who know not' (Q45:18). Commenting on the above verse Sayyid Qutb posit that: 'They are equipped with nothing but fancies and ignorance when they undertake the task which is no concern of theirs and does not properly belongs to them, their claim to one of the properties of Divinity is a great sin and a great evil'.

This same term, observed Hammudah Abdalati means peaceful. By this meaning, a Muslim is not only peaceful to and with himself but equally with and to his Lord and his fellowmen if only they could reciprocate his gesture.

Youth literarily means- according to *Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary of Contemporary English*- the period of being young, especially the period between being a child and being fully grown or young men and women considered as a group. To economists, a youth is a person who is still in his productive years. So, to some of them anybody between the age of 15 and 45 and by others 60 is considered to be in his youthful years. This account for why in most countries around the world mandatory retirement from active public service is put between age 60 and 65. For the purpose of this work, a youth is defined as a person still in his formative years, undergoing character modelling and personality development. He is thus influenced for good or bad, by whatever transpires in and around his environment since he learns through observation and experience.

From the above definition therefore, a Muslim youth is a young adherent of Islam, one who submits or surrenders himself wholeheartedly to the will of Allah still in the process of integration into Islam and the society. Hence, he is unlike every other youth owing to his outlook or perception of life. This shall become clearer when we take a cursory look at the Islamic worldview in the succeeding paragraphs. Allah says: "We relate to thee their story in truth: they were youths who believe in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance."(Q18:13). It is therefore faith that makes difference between a Muslim youth and others.

Globalization means different things to different people of different callings. The Encarta Encyclopaedia defines globalization as a concept that encapsulates the growth of connections between people on a planetary scale. It involves the reduction of barriers to trans- world contacts. Through it, people become more able- physically, legally, culturally and psychologically – to engage with each other in "one world".

To Professor Muddathir 'Abd al- Rahim (2001), 'it may be briefly described as all those processes- technological, economic and financial, as well as political, social and cultural- in consequence of which space ship earth and all its inhabitants have recently been transformed, with hitherto unprecedented speed, into what is, in effect, a single relatively distanceless and borderless planetary village".

This concept, to many people in the third world countries is nothing short of neo-colonialisation. A situation whereby the weaker nations are exploited by the stronger ones or rather a parasitic kind of association in which a party gain to the detriment of the other.

Challenge on the other hand linguistically means to invite someone to compete against one in a fight, match and or such other contests, or an invitation to compete in a fight, match or similar contests. However, for the purpose of this work, challenge/s is/are the negative or rather the demerits of globalization that Muslim youth need to struggle against or cope with in order to remain Muslims and thereby maintain a balanced personality in a globalised world which is quite unfriendly to religion and religious practitioners.

Islamic Worldview, Muslim Youth and Globalization

Since Islam is a way of life as complete and comprehensive as we have observed, it must necessarily has its own philosophy of life or rather worldview. For no doubt, it is, its worldview that determines the form and configuration of the kind of life its adherents are leading. This is what equally gives them their ideology as well as their identity by means of which they are distinct from other

people. Islamic worldview is based on four major principles. These are: *At- Tawheed, Ar-Risalah/An-Nubuwwah, Al- Khilafah/ Al- Ubudiyah and Al- Ihsan* .

At-Tawheed

This is the first cardinal principle of Islamic worldview. *Tawheed* means to unify, to make one, to make unique etc. It technically refers to holistic monotheistic thought of Islam or rather Islamic concept of God.

Islam teaches that Allah is the First without beginning and the Last without end; as everything or rather anything that has beginning will definitely has an end. It teaches further that the existence of Allah as well as His unity is neither controvertible nor compromisable. Since there cannot be a design without a designer, the Heaven and the Earth with their perfect harmony could neither have evolved by themselves nor by a “Big Bang” as we are made to understand. The truth about the universe uphold by Islam is that, Allah is its architect, creator, and cherisher. He created them not in vain but as a manifestation of His Power and Majesty for a purpose He assigned to each of its constituent parts. They, no doubt, constitute a significant pointer to His Existence, Essence and Unity (Adeyemo, 2006 B:65).

Asserts Dr. Khalifah Abdul Hakim (1951),

The Qur’an says that God is the cause of all causes, and the ultimate cause of all existence. He is the being as the foundation of all becoming; He is the stable reality which creates and supports all changes; “He is the beginning and He is the End; He is the Outer Appearance and He is the Inner Reality.(Q57:3)

It is the unity of the creator that manifested itself in the cosmos hence the universe and not a multi-verse, the harmony and not chaos. Indeed, it affords man the opportunity to study and know the laws governing the nature or the nature of things. Hence, his ability to manipulate them in order to suit his purpose or needs. This could not have been possible if Allah Had not make them subservient to him.

Allah says:

We Have honoured the sons of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of Our creation (Q17:70).

He also says:

It is Allah Who hath created the heavens and the earth and sendeth down rain from the skies, and with it bringeth out fruits wherewith to feed you; it is He Who hath made the ship subject to you, that you may sail through the sea by His command; and the rivers (also) hath He made subject to you. And He made subject to you the sun and the moon, both diligently pursuing their courses; and the night and the day hath He (also) made subject to you. And He giveth you of that ye ask for. But if ye count the favours of Allah, never will ye be able to number them (Q14:32-4).

It is Allah Who has subjected the sea to you, that ships may sail through it by His command, that ye may seek of His Bounty, and that ye may be grateful. And He has subjected to you, as from Him, all that is in the heavens and on earth: behold, in that are Signs indeed for those who reflect (Q45:12 &13).

Do ye not see that Allah has subjected to your use all things in the heavens and on the earth, and has made His bounties flow to you in exceeding measure, (both) seen and unseen? (Q31:20).

O ye assembly of Jinn and Men! If it be ye can pass beyond the zone of Heavens and the earth, pass ye! Not without My authority shall ye be able to pass! (Q55:33).

Khurshid Ahmad had summed it up in a very succinct manner in the following points:

- a) True existence is that of Allah alone; Man and the entire creation exist only because Allah wills them to exist,

- b) As there cannot be two sources of creation, as Allah alone is the creator, everything comes from Him and goes back to Him; hence the entire creation including Man is the manifestation of Allah's Power and Glory, and hence of His Qualities and Attributes.
- c) The relation between Man and Allah is that of a servant and a Master. As man owes his existence to Allah, to worship anything else is to commit the gravest sin.
- d) The above three aspects of Faith in Allah are realised by Man only when he responds to the Message of Allah and this is possible when he believes in Muhammad (S.A.W.) as the Messenger of Allah.
- e) As a Messenger, he is the last and the greatest, about whom all the early Messengers have predicted and who thus completes the process of revelation.
- f) He is therefore the perfect Ideal for Mankind, the perfect servant of Allah and hence the most complete and the ideally balanced manifestation of the attributes of Allah.
- g) To believe in him is to believe in all other Prophets
- h) To believe in him is also to believe that the Qur'an contains all the revelations sent to Mankind through him, that these revelations provide guidance to us and that we should worship Allah by following these revelations according to the method prescribed for us by Muhammad (S.A.W.) and hence in accordance with his sayings and practice, known as Hadith and Sunnah.
- i) To believe in him is also to believe in the carriers of this message, the angels, who are described in the Qur'an as functionaries

Suffice to add that Allah alone creates, gives and takes life, enriches and straitens provisions, enthrones and dethrones, and changes situations and circumstances as He wills.

Since no man petitioned Allah for him to be created nor even have a fore knowledge of his creation or that of existence, it goes therefore, that he should be guided as to his mission on the surface of the earth. Thus, Allah Has continued from the earliest time of human existence to be sending down guidance (*al- hidayyah*) to him in order to intimate him with his purpose on earth as it would not augur well for him to be left alone to go (grope) in darkness, hence the scriptures that were sent to him for his guidance as "Manual of Life. (Adeyemo, A:25)"

Thus, laws governing his life could only be formulated or enacted by Allah alone. And since there is no other deity besides Him, his *Ibadah* (Devotional Worship) could only be for Him alone who created and honoured him as His *Khalifah*. It should be noted here that *Ibadah* is not limited to prayers (*As-Salat*), Charity (*Az- Zakat*), Fasting (*As- Siyam/ As- Sawm*), Pilgrimage (*Al- Hajj*) etc alone but rather encompasses everything a believer could do to please his Lord and Creator: by way of obedience and righteous deeds.

The Qur'an teaches that obedience of a Muslim is due to Allah, His Apostle and those of the constituted authority so long as they command what is good and forbid what is evil. However, if they swerve from this ideal, obedience is not due to them. For obedience is not due to a creature who commands disobedience to the Creator- Allah (S.W.T.). Allah says:

O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger,
 And those charged with authority among you
 If you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to
 Allah and His Messenger, if ye believe in Allah and the
 Last Day: that is the best and the most suitable for final determination (Q4:59).
 We have given to you a law (a way of life) so follow it, and do not follow
 The fancies of those who know not (Q45:18).

Sayyid Qutb posit that, *They are equipped with nothing but fancies and ignorance when they undertake the task which is no concern of theirs and does not properly belongs to them, their claim to one of the properties of Divinity is a great sin and a great evil.* (This Religion, p28)

Tawheed is a revolutionary concept and it constitutes the essence and the pivot upon which stands the edifice of Islamic Worldview and its teachings. It means, as we have observed earlier, that there is only One Supreme Lord of the universe. He is Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Omniscient and the Sustainer of the whole worlds of which man is inclusive. Allah asks:

Say “See ye?- if your stream be some morning lost (in the underground earth), Who then can supply you with clear- flowing water? (Q67:30).

Do they then seek after a judgement of (the Days of) Ignorance? But who, for a people whose faith is assured, can give better judgement than Allah? (5: 50).

Asserts Khurshid Ahmad, ‘How can one observe the inexhaustible creativity of nature, its purposefulness, its preservation of that which is morally useful and destruction of that which is socially injurious, and yet fail to draw the conclusion that behind nature there is an All-Pervading Mind of whose incessant creative activity the processes of nature are but an outward manifestation? The stars scattered through the almost infinite space, the vast panorama of nature with its charm and beauty, the planned waxing and waning of the moon, the astonishing harmony of the seasons- all points towards one fact: there is a God, the Creator, the Governor, we witness a superb, flawless plan in the universe- can it be without a planner? We see great enchanting beauty and harmony in its working- can they be without a creator? We observe wonderful design in nature- can it be without a Designer....?’

O people! Adore your Guardian Lord, Who created you and those who came before you, that ye may become righteous. Who has made the earth your couch and the heavens your canopy; and send down rain from the heaven; and brought forth therewith fruits for your sustenance; then set not up rivals unto Allah when ye know the truth (Q2:21&22).

How can ye reject the faith in Allah?-Seeing that ye were without life, and He gave you life; then will He cause you to die, and will again bring you to life; and again to Him will ye return (Q2:28).

Ar- Risalah / An- Nubuwah

Ar- Risalah signifies the Divine Guidance or Message sent by Allah to man in order to realise the purpose of his creation. ***An- Nubuwah*** on the other hand refers to the vehicle through which it is conveyed to humanity- that is Prophethood. This becomes necessary as we have rightly observed in the foregoing discussions as a result of the fact that man is ignorant of his coming to the surface of the earth and since he was created to serve a purpose for which he is going to be held responsible, the need therefore arise that he should be properly guided to have correct understanding (*fahm/ fiqh*) of the purpose for which he had been created. No wonder therefore, that Allah had been sending revelation (Guidance) through His angels to the chosen ones amongst men (that is, the Prophets and Messengers).

We said: ‘Get ye down all from here: and if, as sure, there comes to you Guidance from Me, whosoever follows My guidance, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve (Q2:38).’

This no doubt, pre-supposes that men are to emulate the Messengers that were sent for their success here and salvation in the hereafter. This becomes necessary in view of the observation we made earlier, that man is ignorant of the purpose of his creation.

Allah makes it clear that there is no single nation to which a prophet had not been sent and that before a nation would be destroyed or punished, an Apostle would have been sent to forewarn them. The scripture sent by Allah to mankind via these Messengers could therefore be likened to the Manual (Users’ Guide) bought along with items in the market, particularly electronic and related goods. Thus, failure to read, digest, comprehend and apply its content will rob the buyer of the valuable service or utility of such item. In the same vain, it behoves man to equally read, not only read but commit to memory as much as he can thereof, digest, comprehend and imbibe the teachings of the scripture sent by Allah for his proper guidance. For just as he (man) stands in need of food and water for his physical development and growth, he equally stands in need of *al-hidayyah* (Divine Guidance of Allah) for his spiritual development and growth as well. This is indeed contrary to the objectives of globalisation and thus a challenge to the Muslim youth. No wonder, this is referred to as Spiritual Diet. This is borne out of the fact that man is composed of Matter and Spirit and so the two components should be nurtured together. However, if one or both is or are neglected, it is going to be pernicious for man as society or even life becomes unworthy of living.

This is why neither materialism (contemporary globalisation) nor unbridled asceticism (celibacy and monasticism) is unacceptable to Islam. It rather maintains a golden mean course between these two opposing extremes.

Allah says:

But his Lord chose him (for His Grace): He turned to him and gave him guidance. He said: “Get ye down, both of you- all together, from the Garden, with enmity one to another: but if, as is sure, there comes to you Guidance from Me, whosoever follows My Guidance, will not lose his way, nor fall into misery. But whoever turns away from My Message, verily for him is a life narrowed down, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement. He will say: O my Lord! Why hast Thou raised me up blind, while I had sight (before)? (Allah) will say: Thus didst thou, when Our Signs came unto thee, you disregard them: so wilt thou, this day, be disregarded (Q20:123-126).”

It behoves therefore, that man, in taking care of the sum total of his affairs, should follow the prescriptions of Allah (his Lord) as contained in the Glorious Qur’an. This follows from the fact that, although man is endowed with intellect which enables him to participate in the knowing of things and gives him an edge or a degree over and above every other creature of God, yet his knowledge and indeed himself is limited to time and space. Thus, the need for him to follow and depend on God’s injunctions (his creator and cherisher), Who is Omniscient in His essence.

Al- Khilafah / Al-Ubudiyyah

Khilafah literally means vicegerence or vicegerency, viceroyship, representation, e.t.c. In Islamic parlance, it refers to the position of honour conferred on man by Allah amongst the comity of His creatures. Man by this token, apart from being the acme of Allah’s handiwork, is the king and the overseer of the universe, a position he is holding in trust for Allah- to Whom belongs the hegemony of the whole universe of which he is just a part. His position therefore, in the scheme of things, is that of trust (*amanah*), nay, of responsibilities. For every opportunity a man has there is always an attendant responsibility. He therefore has certain duties to his Lord, to himself, his family, neighbours, and the larger society as a whole as well as the environment. So, just like a plenipotentiary is rewarded for his laudable achievements or recalled by his country for trial over his misdeed and or ineptitude conducts, in the same vain is man going to be recalled for reward and or punishment as the case may be. This accounts for why man is going to be resurrected after death.

So, his life here is transient and ephemeral. It is a field of cultivation for the eternal one, that is, life hereafter. Man therefore, is a representative and most importantly the servant of Allah over which he is going to be held accountable. He is to enjoy his right of vicegerency but not to abuse it. He is the creation of highest honour who could still be reduce to the lowest of the low should he fails in the aforementioned responsibilities. There is no right without responsibility/ duty. Man is subordinate to Allah and thus expected to carry out His will.

‘By the Fig and the Olive, and the Mount of Sinai, and this City of security, We have indeed created man in the best of moulds, then do We abase him (to be) the lowest of the low- except such as believe and do righteous deeds; for they shall have a reward unfailing. Then what can, after this, contradict thee, as to the Judgement (to come)? Is Allah not the Wisest of Judges’ (Q95:1-8).

However, God does not make man a robot as he is endowed with intellect and ability to discriminate between good and bad, right and wrong, that is the will power and freedom to make choice- that of doing the Will of Allah or jettison it. It is therefore clear, that man is at liberty to make or mar his life. He is going to make his life as he would secure peace and prosperity here and eternal bliss in the hereafter if he lives his life according to the dictates of Allah as contained in the Qur’an. He mars his life if turns out to be disobedient and ungrateful to Allah and thereby follows the footsteps of Satan so that by and large life becomes unworthy of living and eternal damnation becomes his lots.

“But those will prosper who purify themselves (Q87:14).”

These are the principles of Islamic worldview to which every devout Muslim must subscribe, understand and reflect in his life by way of acting by it. He is therefore, responsible to Allah over Allah’s right, rights and duties to himself, relatives and neighbours, as well as the larger society (social

responsibilities). This is the practical demonstration of his faith in Allah and his sincere devotion to Him. Islam teaches that, man should, in a bid to proffer solutions to his multifaceted problems avoid unnecessary compartmentalization of life into spiritual and temporal (religious and secular).

Say: Verily! My prayers, my sacrifice, my living and my dying are all for Allah- the Lord of the Worlds, He has no partner; this is what I am commanded and I am foremost of those who surrender themselves to Allah (Q6:162-164).

Rather, all the problems should be taken into consideration as a compact whole without giving undue preference to anyone above the others as such unnecessary water tight compartment are bound to have their accompanying woes. Thus, his psychological, sociological, political, moral and religious problems should be simultaneously taken into consideration. Man is theomorphic and not *homoeconomicus*. This is another bone of contention as globalisation in vogue is all about material, no moral no spiritual.

He is never an ordinary beast so that his needs are only food, shelter and sexual gratification and or clothing alone. He needs all these basic necessities of life and cannot neglect them. He possesses the physical body, yet all his problem could not be solved via physical sciences. Man is equally psychological as he has feelings, emotions, desires, like and dislikes, yet psychology alone could not provide clue to his multi-dimensional problems. He is social as he lives together with other fellow humans, and equally interacts with the environment, and cannot afford to do otherwise; yet it will be misleading to think that solution could be proffered to his avalanche of problems a la sociology alone. In fact, the resultant effects would be more pernicious than the problems it is aimed at solving, for this is indeed a case of wrong diagnosis which would eventually result into wrong medication.

But seek, with the (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on thee, the home of the Hereafter nor forget thy portion in this world. But do thou good as Allah has been good to thee, and seek not occasion for mischief in the land for Allah loves not those who do mischief (Q28:77).

Alexis Carrel puts it in a rather subtle way: *Economists would realise that human beings think, feel and suffer, that they should be given other things than work, food and leisure; that they have spiritual as well as physiological needs. And, also that the causes of economic and financial crises may be moral and intellectual. We should no longer be obliged to accept the barbarous condition of life in great cities, the tyranny of factories and offices, the sacrifice of moral dignity to economic interest, of mind to money, as benefactions conferred upon us by modern civilization. We should reject mechanical inventions that hinder human development. Economics would no longer appear as the ultimate reason for everything. It is obvious that the liberation of man from the materialistic creed would transform most of the aspect of existence. Therefore, modern society will oppose with all its might this progress in our conception.*

Al- Ihsan / Righteousness

Al- Ihsan in the literary sense means righteousness. The technical meaning given to it by Islam could be deduced from the Hadith of the Prophet when he was answering a poser from Jubril (A.S.). According to the Prophet, it is to worship Allah as if though one is seeing Him for if one cannot see Him; He sees one. It is therefore a mind set that leads to a habit. A mind set that God is not only ever present but equally watchful. This would bring into effect sincerity of purpose, a situation whereby actions are taken only to please Allah alone. This, according to Islam is the peak of righteousness.

It therefore means sincere devotion to Allah by way of worship, obedience, being dutiful to oneself- particularly taking care of the soul, being dutiful to ones relations, neighbours, the larger society and even the living and non- living things in the environment.

Allah says: Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and the liberality to the kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition (Q16:90).

Let me state here no matter how brief, that out of one thousand and one sins that a man may commit, it is only one that affects Allah directly, thus the only unpardonable sin, yet the other ones

affect fellow creatures- humans and non- humans. Hence faith and righteousness are the twain ticket to paradise (*Al- Jannah*). To Islam and the Muslims, mankind is a single family of God, with a single parentage of Adam and Eve. Hence, everybody is a brother or a sister to a Muslim either in faith or in humanity.

According to the foregoing discussion, all men are equal before their Lord to whom they are all responsible individually and collectively. Hence Islam places a high premium on cooperation, equality, justice and benevolence as well as sincerity for the attainment of *falah (bliss)* both individually and collectively for this is the ultimate desire of every Muslim.

We can therefore, conclude by saying that, since man is not the architect of his life, there is need for him therefore, to adopt a way of life suitable for his nature. This, his nature (*fitra*) is assigned to him by One who created him. Guidance on this has been sent to him and in following it lies his success here and in the hereafter. Hence, if he jettisons it and follows his desires, whims and caprices and globalises on sins, oppression and mischief life becomes miserable not only for him but for all other things around him.

Allah says: But his Lord chose him for His Grace: He turned to him, and gave him guidance. He said get down, both of you- all together, from the garden, with enmity one to another: but if, as is sure, there comes to you guidance from Me, whosoever follows My guidance, will not lose his way, nor fall into misery. But whosoever turns away from the message, verily for him is a life narrowed down, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of judgment. He will say: O my Lord! Why hast thou raised me up blind, while I had sight (before)? (Allah) will say: Thus didst thou, when Our signs came unto thee, you disregarded them: so wilt thou, this day, be disregarded (Q20:123-126).

Observed the late H.A.R. Gibb, “within the Western world Islam still maintains the balance between exaggerated opposites. Opposed equally to the anarchy of European nationalism and the regimentation of Russian communism, it has not yet succumbed to that obsession with the economic side of life which is characteristics of present- day Europe and present- day Russia alike. Its social ethic has been admirably summed up by Professor Massignon: Islam has the merit of standing for a very equalitarian conception of the contribution of each citizen by the tithe to the resources of the community; it is hostile to unrestricted exchange, to banking capital, to state loans, to indirect taxes on objects of prime necessity, but it holds to the rights of the father and the husband, to private property, and to commercial capital...”

It is clear from the foregoing paragraphs the enormosity of challenges a Muslim is likely to face in this modern globalised world.

Indices of globalisation

There are several indices of globalisation; the most important of them all is the media. Mass media is any means by which millions of audience or spectator (people) are reached and communicated. The means are categorised into two basic forms: electronic and print media. With the revolution that has taken place in information and communication technology, networking has removed the geographical barriers between individuals and nations so that the objective of globalisation are easily realised. While electronic media are in form of radio, television, telephone, telex, telefax, computer etc. and can be audio or video or the combination of the two, the print media on the other hand can take the form of a book, magazine, journal, newspaper, encyclopaedia, monograph etc.

Mass media is a very powerful tool and it is just like a double edged sharp sword which could be used for either positive or negative purpose depending on its operators and proprietor. It plays a critical role in influencing and shaping our perception of other peoples, places, ideas and things and even the world we live in. While it is often used for propaganda by government to project her image and popularise her agenda, it is equally used to educate, inform and misinform and sometimes deformed, entertain and sometimes brainwash unsuspecting audience. Hence, the need for the masses, particularly the youth to have media education or awareness in order to assist them to develop a critical mind towards what they see and or hear via the media.

“And when an ingrate comes to you with spurious information; do verify.... (Q49:6).”

Muslims and their religion today suffer a lot of media onslaught of the powerful western world. This situation is closely connected to the fact that after the collapse of the Communist USSR in the 1980's the Muslims as well as their religion are the only avowed enemy, 'threat to global peace' and their countries, the product of western imperialism are declared to be evil axis and sometimes rouge states. Hence, they are more often than not vilified by the media whether at home or abroad and portrayed as fundamentalists, radicals, militants, barbaric, backward, uncivilised and anti-western. This is one of the challenges of globalisation to Muslims. It is a calculated attempt to dissociate people from Islam particularly the youth since only Muslims and their religion is considered as obstacles to the realisation of the objectives of the neo- imperialism called globalisation.

Crises of Ideology and Identity

Muslims, particularly the youth are these days, in serious crises, crises of identity and ideology. In some cases they are left with two alternatives, either to choose between God or gold. Their religion is the most misunderstood and hence the most vilified. The Ummah lacks coherence and proper integration as it is divided into nation states and therefore against itself. It also lacks competent leadership, its youths lack qualitative educative and its subjects are the poorest, hungry and naked in spite of all the vast resource- human and material at her disposal. All these are the consequences of combined forces of internal decline and external interferences and scheming which is resurfacing this day in form of globalization. The onus is therefore on the youth to reverse this ugly situation and rescue the Ummah. The challenges are enormous. There is need for proper understanding of the glorious past as well as how we arrived at the present state so as to discern the way forward. One of the respected former Prime Minister of Britain W. E. Gladstone said one day in the parliament as he was brandishing a copy of Glorious Qur'an: 'As long as this Book remains, Europe would never be able to control the East. On the contrary, Europeans should never feel save in their home land.' An imperialist priest by the name of Simeon once comments: 'Islamic unity sustains the hopes of the brown people; and gives them the courage to refuse European domination over them'. Lawrence Brown writes: 'The real danger lies in the regimen of Islam, its capacity to expand and dominate and in its vitality. It is the only stone wall that European colonizers will face'. He continues: 'If Muslims unite under one hegemony, they would be a real curse to the world. (Abdus Sabour Marzouq, Conquest Through Ideas: Ends and Means)'

Material/ Spiritual Conflict

Globalisation is based on materialism at least for the players. It encourages self centeredness, exploitation of the weak by the stronger. It facilitates inequality at social, individual and global level. The major victim of all these are the weaker nations, the group to which a vast majority of Muslim nations belong. Thanks to globalisation and technology that facilitates it, for we are able to fly in the air like birds, ride in speedy luxury cars, live in sky scrappers, communicate with people around the world, however, it has failed to guarantee peace at least to all of humanity. There is pollution all over the places: spiritual, air, water, environmental, and so forth. Man shall not live only on bread and cake alone. There is something that guarantees innermost tranquillity, only religion of Islam can provide this.

Time Consciousness, Management and Accountability

Muslim youth should be aware that time is life and the most precious asset they have, once it passes it cannot be reversed. Hence, whoever is wasting time is wasting his life. So, they should avoid wasting time playing irrelevant games on the net, visiting or surfing soul polluting site. The facilities should be used meritoriously and time should be managed properly. A situation whereby one is carried away and fails to pray at the right time is undesirable. As leaders of tomorrow, Muslim youths should equip themselves for the task or the challenges ahead. They should remember that as Muslims they are accountable to Allah over the use of their time. They should have a roster or time table for their daily activities and try to follow it as diligently as possible. They should be thinkers, I means thinking that is guided by Islam. This is necessary in view of the fact that those who fail to think today are going to sink tomorrow. They should equally try to acquire as much as they could of functional knowledge, for

ignorance is but a noble disease, indeed, death ere death; while it helps other religions to grow it kills Islam and the Muslims. Muslim youth could not therefore afford to be ignoramuses.

The Problem

It is observed by Paul Hirst and Grahams Thompson, that, 'it is widely asserted that we live in an era in which the greater part of social life is determined by global process, in which national cultures, national economies and national borders are dissolving'.

If the observation is true, globalisation therefore, could be seen as an encroachment by the powerful nations and interference into the local/internal affairs of the weaker ones. It also constitutes a kind of acculturation, westernization or even Americanization as globalisation is considered by some to be an extension or super imposition of America hegemony over the rest of the world.

Observes Makmur, 'if in reality the notion of sovereignty and global justice remain a luxury for the third world countries as shown in the case of the US Military attack on Iraq, is it right to say that the UN symbolising multilateral institution is no longer relevant to developing countries?'

The questions raised by these scholars are genuine and borne out of sincere motives, it therefore calls for a sober reflection.

Islam is a way of life, a culture, an ideology, politics etc based on a world view, a weltchaung different from that of the West, hence the problem of cultural infiltration, clash of interest and as some would want us believe, clash of civilization.

W. E. Gladstone (one of the Britain's memorable Prime Minister), once said in the parliament as he brandished a copy of the Holy Qur'an: "as long as this book remains, Europe would never be able to control the East. On the contrary Europeans should never feel safe in their own home land". This is what the press and some scholars refer to as Islamphobia. Attempt to dominate and subjugate the rest of humanity by others has always been there, it has only assume '*a soft form*'.

Also Simeon, an imperialist Priest once made the following comments: "Islamic unity sustains the hope of the brown people and gives them the courage to refuse European domination over them"

Consider also the statement made by Lawrence Brown: - "The real danger lies in the religion of Islam, its capacity to expand and dominate and its vitality. It is the only stone wall that European Colonisers will face". He continued, "If Muslims unite under one hegemony, they would be a real curse to the world".

The underlined clause is an expression of prejudiced, blind hatred and blatant lie against Islam and the Muslims. This impression is erased by yet another western scholar by the name of Lord Curson, who says: "The waves of Christian proselytes beat in vain against the solid and indestructible stone wall of Islam. It is a global system and an autarchy which affects and controls all aspects of life for its adherents. It agrees with the climate and customs prevalent in countries upon which Islam wield its iron sway. Its followers yield enthralled by its iron grip over their lives.'

In his original and now classic account of globalisation, George Modelski concluded that, 'one striking feature of the process of globalisation has been the quality of arrogance and violence that fuelled it.'

Observed Parker G., 'the rise of the west' depended on the exercise of force, upon the fact that the military balance between the Europeans and their adversaries overseas was steadily tilting in favour of the former... the key to the westerner's success in creating the first truly global empires between 1500 and 1750 depended upon precisely those improvements in the ability to wage war which have been termed the military revolution.' All the accounts given above have shown, what are the intents behind the neo-colonisation masquerading itself as globalisation? Since, we are just beginning to see its effects or impacts; the youth need to be prepared intellectually, spiritually, psychologically and morally for the challenges.

Conclusion

Allah will not change the condition of a people unless they strive to change the condition of their soul. The situation in the Muslim 'Ummah leaves so many things to be desired. There is therefore, the need to go back to the drawing board to see where things have gone wrong. The process of righting this wrong is a Herculean one and this is the challenges before the Muslim youth.

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