

## ISLAM - THE FUTURE CIVILIZATION OF MANKIND: CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

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### ABSTRACT

*Ongoing bloodsheds and conflicts witnessed by most of today's world's population despite their racial, social, cultural, political, and religious differences, on the one hand, and the developments in sciences, industry, infrastructure, arts and especially in information technology, on the other, are believed to be the real challenges encountered by contemporary people and especially the Muslims. What are the causes of these challenges? Do they have intellectual, economic, political or social dimension? How to respond to them? Who is responsible for the cause of these challenges – man or God? Islam with its sources of knowledge – Qur'an and Sunnah, claims to provide for Muslims and humanity as a whole the proper measures to respond to contemporary challenges. Definitely, Islam offers to humanity an enduring and authentic civilization with a transcendental nature that promotes holistic justice, peaceful coexistence, mutual respect and better understanding. The thrust of this study is on four main contemporary challenges witnessed especially by Muslims, i.e., the intellectual, economic, political and social and how to respond to them. The main objectives of this study are to exhibit the role of Islamic civilization in responding to contemporary challenges and to show its unique paradigm shift in shaping the future civilization of mankind. The descriptive and analytical methods will be employed in the entire study. The author of this paper strongly believes that this study will contribute to the revival of Muslims' understanding of Islamic civilization and its application to their day-to-day individual, familial, communal, and social aspects of life. Besides, it will add a new asset of knowledge to the existing knowledge and will be a reference for young students, intellectuals, scholars, leaders, governors, and researchers.*

Key words: Islam, Islamic civilization, challenges, knowledge, intellectualism.

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### Introduction

The contemporary civilization that dominates most of peoples' thoughts and actions as well as their individual, familial, communal, social, national, economic, political, cultural, and religious aspects of life, is a product of man's reasoning that developed through a period of five to six hundred years within the premises of scientific evolution, inventions and discoveries. It is a human-oriented civilization, which indicates modern Western civilization rooted in Greek rationalism, Roman law, and Christendom (the interference of divine), (Aydın-Düzgüt, 2012, p. 132) and rejects any civilization with a divine or supernatural orientation. Even though religion has contributed a lot to the development of Western civilization, the West has marginalized and considered it as every individual's private affairs. The real problem with Western civilization is not the scientific ideology based on inductive methodology – observation and experiment.<sup>1</sup> Rather, it is the theoretical ideology (liberal or social, communist or capitalist) referring to philosophical ideology that controls people's viewpoint to religion and life, to their fellows and universe, to knowledge and values, as well as metaphysical and moral philosophies with its various schools (al-Qaradawi, 1998, Chap. 1, pp. 4-5).

The scientific tradition on which contemporary dominating Western civilization stands covers the periods between 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries that brought tremendous changes and innovations in the European intellectualism and especially in education, politics, economics, industry and technology. It marked the beginning of the scientific enquiry, where the exploration to non-Western/non-European world and the establishment of natural and geological sciences, did take place. The scientific inventions, like telescope, steam train, printing press, rail ways, etc., created better opportunities for the people (Davidson, 2012, pp. 1-3). So, Western scientific revolution did not stop in the West. Rather, it went out to the world and especially the Muslim world.

The material oriented ideology of Western civilization (a civilization without a soul or spirituality), which was introduced to the Muslim world through colonization in the last two hundred years has indeed presented for Muslims a real intellectual, political, economic and social challenge. On the other hand, Muslims, according to history, have been praised for almost 13<sup>th</sup> centuries for their excellent intellectualism, leadership, development and sustainability, justice and tolerance, friendliness and peaceful coexistence. However, they lost their might gradually after their homes were colonized by the Westerners, who applied to the Muslim world their famous motto "divide and rule," by dividing it into fifty-seven nations. The colonization of the Muslim

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<sup>1</sup> The scientific ideology dealing with observation and experiment is not rejected by Islam. It is the theoretical ideology of the West that Islam does not accept.

world allowed the interference of outside powers from the West especially European countries to occupy the Muslim world entirely. Therefore, Muslims have been witnessing since colonization many changes and challenges at home and abroad:

From the beginning of the nineteenth century onward, the heartlands of Islam were no longer wholly controlled by the rulers of Islam. They were under direct or indirect influence or, more frequently, control from outside, from different parts of Europe, or, as they saw it, Christendom. It was only then that the previously unknown name “Europe” began to be used in the Muslim Middle East—a change of terminology more than of connotation. The dominant forces in the lands of the Muslims were now outside forces. What shaped their lives was foreign actions and decisions. What gave them choices was foreign rivalries. The political game that they could play—the only one that was open to them—was to try to profit from the rivalries between the outside powers, to try to use them against one another. We see that again and again in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth and even into the beginning of the twenty-first century. We see, for example, in the First World War, the Second World War, and the Cold War how Middle Eastern leaders played this game with varying degrees of success (Lewis, 2007, pp. 2-3).

The abovementioned statement gives a clear picture about the situation of the Muslim world in the course of three continuously centuries, 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. Western dominance on the Muslim world has been of different faces. It started with colonization during modernism and was followed by Globalization introduced during the post-modernism period until contemporary times. Although Globalization is not a new term or phenomenon, yet it does present a great challenge to all people and especially Muslims. Western Globalization has controlled and influenced all contemporary key aspects of people’s life, like, intellectual, economic, political and social. Certainly, the Western super-powers – USA, UK and other European countries in the name of democracy and human rights managed by globalization have shown to the world especially the Muslim World their real face and intention. The ongoing unrest and bloodshed in Muslim countries, like Palestine, Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Burma, and so on, show that the West does not bother about the life of Muslims. Rather, their concern is to get control of the existing raw materials and riches in these countries. If they really wanted to install democracy as they claim, they could do it easily avoiding the bloodshed and conflicts. It is the shared interest between them and their Muslim allies, who govern the Muslim World, which does not make the installment of what they call it “democracy,” reality. Indeed, this is the worst of challenges faced by Muslims, which has affected their intellectual, economic, political and social aspects.

The purpose of this study is to remind contemporary Muslims especially the intellectuals, politicians, economists, and social activists, as well as the lay Muslims not to admire and follow blindly the miracles of Western civilization instead they have to admire and follow the miracles of Islamic civilization, which is designed by God and not human. Otherwise, Muslims will continue to witness even in the 21<sup>st</sup> millennium challenges resulted from the intellectual-economic-political-social disorder prevailing almost all contemporary Muslim nations. Certainly, today’s nations and especially Muslim homelands have been challenged by contemporary ongoing intellectual, economic, political and social changes and transformations caused by globalization. To respond to these challenges, this study will *first* present the challenges as they are and then, respond to them in the perspective of Islamic civilization and its sources, *Qur’an* and *Sunnah*. This paper will discuss four major issues dealing with: (1) intellectual challenges, (2) economic challenges, (3) political challenges, and (4) social challenges. The responses towards these challenges will be examined in light of Islamic civilization via Islamization process highlighting the contributions of Muslim intellectuals, scholars, and leaders. Certainly, the findings of this study will benefit especially the contemporary Muslim youth and humanity at large. Descriptive and analytical methods as well as critical method if it is necessary will be employed in the entire study.

#### **Intellectual Challenges:**

Contemporary Muslim intellectuals have witnessed intellectual challenges posed to them in different ways and especially by the contemporary Western implementation of Globalization as a universal asset for the promotion of its cultural values. Intellectual challenges were borne as a result of the *implementation of Western way of thinking* in the heart of Muslim world – *the system of education*, which has created a dilemma for many Muslim intellectuals and scholars in the last two hundred years. The gradual changing of education system in the Muslim world by the Westerners caused several intellectual challenges, which created dilemmas and confusions for Muslims at home and abroad – *the division between Religious Sciences and Human Sciences, the difference between quantity based education and quality based education, and the reading of Islamic heritage from the Western perspective*.

***Division between Religious Sciences and Human Sciences (Challenge):*** This phenomenon has posed a real challenge not only for Muslim intellectuals, but for intellectuals of other world religions. Muslim world was colonized as early as 14<sup>th</sup> century by the Westerners, who gradually colonized not only their lands and homes but their minds too. The once exemplary Muslim intellectualism was challenged and replaced by the Western intellectualism introduced gradually through the system of education with a human (reasoning) oriented dimension instead of divine (revelation) oriented dimension. Educational system in the Muslim World was replaced during Western colonization with:

‘modern’ Western-type education...marked by the promotion of the language of the colonial powers (such as English, French or Dutch), limited enrolment of a select number of locals at European schools, and dual nature of the colonial school system...the promotion of secularism, secular education was introduced where it aimed principally at the development of the rational life of every individual, premised on a form of reality that is restricted to sensual experience, scientific procedure or processes of logic...Islamic education was sidelined, relegated to private education and left to the management of Muslim organizations and individuals (Tan, 2014, p. 5).

Division between religion and science happened as a result of the secularization process and material development. Western secular intellectuals blamed religion (at the beginning Christianity only) and its authorities for the backwardness in their intellectual-socio-economic-political developments. Religion was rejected stage by stage by engaging man's faculty of reasoning, which according to them, was controlled and even nullified by religion. Since man is a rational being, he is able to do things by himself, and thus, he does not need the interference of Divine – God, or any spiritual being promoted by religion. Material development depends on man and his reasoning and not religion. Therefore, empirical work can be understood and studied with the help of human reasoning only. This kind of thinking formed the perception especially following the Second World War of an apparent conflict between science and religion (Ilyas (ed.), 2002, p. vii), which later on caused their division. Since then, science and the scientific approaches became the determining factors to judge between right and wrong and not revelation.<sup>2</sup>

The Western intellectualism with its scientific aspects signifies “new values – many of them associated with the Renaissance and Reformation – diffused through Europe and changed the ways in which people acted and the perspectives by which they viewed themselves and the world” (Campbell, 2011, p. 1). It was Enlightenment that brought real changes to Western civilization and its affairs concerning the relationship between religion and science. The scientific revolution caused “the shift from the contemplative mode to the utilitarian one...Practical science becomes very important...the authority of great men...Aristotle and Ptolemy, begins to be questioned, and eventually crumble. Book after book describes the scientific revolution and names great Western astronomers, or physicists, or mathematicians, such as Roger Bacon (1220–1292), Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727), Leibniz (1646–1716),” (Attar, 2007, p. 3) and others. The Western intellectualism propagated a partial worldview and civilization dealing with the seen aspects of human life and marginalizing as well as rejecting everything dealing with unseen -divine – revelation. Certainly, the West with the rejection of religion:

...has progressed tremendously, both technologically and scientifically...This very progress fostered the illusion in the hearts of man. They forgot that religion in itself was not the force that held them back, but their own interpretation which, since the Middle Ages in Europe, had obstructed their progress...the West... they recognize that the absence of spiritual values is the main reason behind the anxiety, confusion, madness, suicide, many other psychological and nervous disorders, and the feeling of perplexity and illusion among youth, all of which constitute a threat to the security, peace and welfare of humanity, despite all the material progress achieved during the last two centuries (Qutb, 1978, p. 314).

Western intellectualism restricted its scope to the study of empirical world only with the assistance of scientific tests and experiments as well as human experience. People's freedom to reason was considered to be the main factor behind the development of Western intellectualism, which is very crucial and fundamental to Western civilization. Facts claimed by religious intellectuals as true ones, were not accepted by science as such unless they suited scientific measurements. In this scientific movement, Western scholars and intellectuals studied religion from a humanistic perspective assisted by human sciences, like, *archeology, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, psychology, phenomenology, and later on epistemology*. Darwin's theory of evolution was employed by all of them as an alternative to revelation. For instance, Friedrich Max Müller, a German scholar, who in his published lectures with the title “*Introduction to the Science of Religion (1873)*,” took the initiative to study religion scientifically by looking at religion not as the theologians did but to examine religion comparatively identifying similarities and differences (Pals, 2006, pp. 3-4).

The new scientific paradigm strengthened the Western world compared to the Muslim world, where the ongoing scientific inventions in the West were considered even by *Shaikh al-Islam* as Taboo or the work of evil. Muslim intellectuals were quarreling with each other and instead of pleasing their God they were pleasing their governors. This made the Muslim world to weaken and loose its intellectual, economic, and political powers slowly until the fall of Ottoman Caliphate, which resulted to a complete westernization/secularization of the Muslim nations. The Western system of education introduced in the Muslim world in the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century was meant to show the supremacy of Western intellectualism, materialism, culture, and values:

By the first half of the twentieth century, the West already had colonized more than two-third of the Muslim world: from Kano to Karachi, Cairo to Kuala Lumpur, and Dakar to Jakarta... also witnessed the collapse of Ottoman Empire [Caliphate] and the more complete de-Islamization of the European states system...the cultural Westernization of the Muslim world included the replacement of Islamic and Qur'anic schools with Western-style schools; the increasing use of European languages in major Muslim countries; and the growing impact of Western media upon the distribution of news, information, and entertainment, ranging from magazines, cinema, television, and video to the new universe of computers. Homogenization was responding to the forces of hegemonization (Mazrui, 1998, p. 10).

As it is mentioned in the above statement, the change of educational system from the *Qur'anic* oriented to the secular oriented motivated most of the Muslim intellectuals especially the God fearing ones to search for a solution. Thus, the second half of the twentieth century served for Muslim intellectuals at home and abroad as a quest for solution to respond to this challenge. This

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<sup>2</sup> This new approach was attacking especially revealed religions, i.e., Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, which were based on revelation, i.e., Torah, Bible, and Qur'an. Indeed, this presented an intellectual challenge for the scholars and followers of these three religions. This is the time when intellectuals of these three religions were started to cooperate together against deism of the secularism. It worth to mention here the call of a Muslim intellectual and thinker of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – Said Nursi, who called upon especially Christians to join the Muslims against the destructive weapons of Western secularism.

first challenge created another challenge for Muslim intellectuals concerning *the difference between quantity based education and quality based education*.

**Difference between Quantity based Education and Quality based Education (Challenge):** Indeed, this is another challenge witnessed in the past and present especially by Muslim intellectuals. Muslims, who were blinded by their ignorance and material ambition, embraced westernization process happily with the hope that they might get prosperity, fame and better position in their communities and world at large. If the population of all Muslim countries concerning *quantity* as a challenge is to be compared with the non-Muslim population of the globe it will present shocking data revealing the lowest literacy rate for the Muslim sector. On the other hand, the challenge of *quality* is reflected by the general condition of social retardation and backwardness of Muslim countries compared to the non-Muslim countries (Saad, 1986, p. 77).

In fact, Western civilization with its intellectualism regardless of the interest and focus has provided for humanity many good values, like scientific studies, discoveries, information technology, and infrastructure, especially for the Westerners, which have improved and eased their life. This phenomenon has from the very beginning initiated the mass migration of Muslim intellectuals to the West, like USA and European countries, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Muslim intellectuals achieved in the foreign lands what they could not get at home and they contributed a lot to the achievements of the developed countries especially in the West. The mass migration of Muslim intellectuals, who were the cream of their communities, to the West led to complete destruction of the Muslim world and its educational system. Most of the Muslim intellectuals, who migrated to the West for educational purposes, settled there and created a new career in their life. They created two groups of Muslims. The *first group*<sup>3</sup> involved all those Muslims who changed completely their life style and their worldview. They oppressed Islamic civilization and defended Western civilization. The *second group*<sup>4</sup> comprehended all those Muslim intellectuals who maintained a close relationship with their previous identity as well as with their homelands with the hope that one day they would return home peacefully and live according to Islam.

Furthermore, the history of Western civilization shows that the Western scientific progress and development have provided for its people better system of education focusing on *quality* rather than *quantity*. The West also provided better facilities even presently compared to the majority of Muslim countries. Muslims especially the intellectual elite would benefit from the advanced educational facilities of the West unless if they compromised with their leading masters to promote secular oriented education instead of Islamic oriented education. Most of contemporary Muslim societies are still witnessing the same challenge that they faced at the beginning of Western imperialism in the Muslim world 200 hundred years ago. The only countries that somehow have benefitted after their first independence from their Western masters are Malaysia, some of countries in the Arab world, and Turkey. Most of other Muslim countries, like Pakistan, Egypt, Algeria, Somalia, Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc., even though they are rich in natural resources, they do not enjoy the same privilege like other countries in the Muslim world. Most of the cream and talented Muslim intellectuals of these Muslim countries, who did not get the privilege or chance to develop and practice their talent and knowledge at home because of the influence of leading elite, where priority is given to their children regardless of whether they have talent, skills, and ability or not, have chosen migration as a response to this challenge. Undeveloped, under-developing and developing Muslims countries in the last hundred years and in the current century have lost and are losing many talented Muslim intellectuals, who are forced to leave their homes and migrate to the West and especially USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, European countries, where they find better opportunities for themselves and their families.

**The Reading of Islamic Heritage from the Western Perspective (Challenge):** Another contemporary challenge faced by all Muslim intellectuals is their reading of Islamic heritage from the Western perspective. The Western imperialism imposed on the Muslim world during colonization had a great impact on all aspects of Muslim's life and especially in education aspect. It influenced them directly and indirectly to the level that most of Muslims especially those with higher education saw and still see Islamic heritage and its civilization through the prism of Western scholarship. Some Muslim intellectuals in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century attempted to provide vast literature from the Islamic perspective. However, the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century found Muslim world and especially Muslim intellectuals in a complete dilemma.

The colonizers left behind in the Muslim countries elite holding key positions in governmental administration and especially in the educational system. They promoted the so-called modern education in Muslim countries, which was reading Islamic heritage from the Western perspective. Besides, they were not only indifferent and lazy but in fact very hostile to Islam and its

<sup>3</sup> In this group are included all Muslim intellectuals who have a secular mind-set and look at Islam from that perspective. They usually talk about Human rights looking at it not from Islamic perspective but from the Western Perspective. They are very liberal in the sense that they have developed and presented to others a distorted Islamic way of life. For instance, Basam Tibi (a Muslim scholar) who in his article prefers Western Globalization compared to Islamic civilization. Other might be Abdullah Naim, Aminah Wadud, Irshad Manji, and so on. They are considered the voice of Islam and Muslim intellectualism in the West. But, they have been rejected by Muslims.

<sup>4</sup> This group involves all Muslim intellectuals who regardless of Western imperialism have dared to stand and defend Islam by providing solution especially in education, politics, economics as well as society. It worth to mention here the contribution of our great scholars, like Said Nursi, Said Qutb, Muhammad Gazali, Abu Ala Maududi, Ismail Faruqi, Fazlu Rahman, Husain Nasr, al-Attas, = Ramadan Butti, Wahabu Zuhali, AbduHamid AbuSulayman, and so on. They provided vast literature on Islamization of Human Knowledge showing the way how to integrate between Islamic education and the existing secular education. These scholars and those who followed them managed to provide an Islamic platform to counter back the Western imperialism in all aspects of a Muslim's life. There were established many educational institutions promoting their founding ideas from the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century until 21<sup>st</sup> century.

civilization. Although, the hybrid system education installed in the Muslim countries produced a generation possessing neither spiritual nor moral strength, nor real ability to deal with the reality (Qureshi, 1978, pp. 244-245). In fact, contemporary Muslims still follow the Western paradigm in most of their educational activities. For instance, the grading and marking system, ranking of universities, design of teaching modules, English as medium of instruction, priority of human sciences compared to Islamic sciences, career orientation versus moral orientation, and other tools of measurements, are still imposed on the Muslim world even though they have gotten their independence. The key performance for academics and administrative intellectuals in most of educational institutions in the Muslims world has been evaluated based on a scale provided by the Western system of measurement. Besides, Islamic oriented sciences in most of Islamic international schools and universities are considered as secondary (Alawi, 2010, p. 59), and Western oriented sciences are considered as priority. Certainly, this has destroyed the Muslim youth, which is the future of Muslim *Ummah*. This follows exactly the Western model, which has a partial nature and gives priority to career and material welfare, or productivity. Islamic model of education has been forgotten by Muslims. It is just mentioned verbally in Friday sermons or in weekly and monthly or yearly meetings by Muslim representatives.

Muslims have forgotten their rich heritage, which has been piled up in their libraries and book stores. In fact, Muslim heritage has been discussed and examined by Western intellectuals within the last hundred years commencing with orientalist studies until to the contemporary orientalism. In the name of scientific research, Western secular intellectuals studied Islamic heritage of the classical times and produced a new scholarship, which presented the same Islamic heritage stripped off from its spirituality. Of course, they are interested in the secular understanding of reality and not in the Islamic perspective as a whole. They did that by referring to well-known Muslim writings of the past, which were supported by contemporary Muslim secular intellectuals, who were a product of the West. AbdulHamid A. AbuSulayman (2011), a prominent contemporary living Muslim thinker and intellectual, has addressed this phenomenon as follow:

Muslim intellectuals' fascination with the scientific and material achievements of the Western model has caused them to adopt a Western mentality and its underlying worldview. Instead, Muslim thought patterns should be reformed through the critical study and examination of Muslim tradition. Such a study could address the reasons for the decline of Islamic thought, social structure, and cultural standing. Muslim intellectuals should overcome their blind infatuation with Western ways, and adopt objectivity and constructive criticism to view their own history and culture (AbuSulayman, 2011, p. 3).

Interestingly, the message stated above corresponds with the situation of many contemporary Muslim intellectuals, who indeed have become barriers and not bridges for the development of Muslim *Ummah*. They have inclined themselves and their way of thinking to the Western perspective of education by surrounding to it as if it was transcendental and not human. Their ignorance about Islamic tenets and its civilization has paralyzed their brains and intellect leading them to complete indifference as well as laziness resulting to their inability to think and be creative. In fact, contemporary experience reveals that most of contemporary young Muslim intellectuals and university students (the only hope of Muslim *Ummah*) do not make use of their intellect and creative abilities at all as everything is presented to them within seconds by the press of one button (internet is used as the only source of their knowledge and they have lost their interest in visiting libraries).

Contemporary Muslim intellectuals will never change and adjust their perception and the perception of others towards Islamic civilization unless they stop themselves from the reading of Islamic heritage from the Western perspective. They have to show the superiority of Islamic civilization as a civilization built on the premises of transcendental characteristics. Therefore, they must "always strive to discover and rediscover the truth embodied in *revelation* or imbedded in *creation*, in the natural and historical world" (Safi, 1998, p. 115).

### **Economic Challenges**

The tremendous material development that has taken place in the West from renaissance until contemporary times has left behind many parts of the world and especially the Muslim world. The contemporary **economic challenges** faced by the world as well as the Muslim world are caused from the global financial crisis. This crisis was caused by **the fuel crisis**, which then led to **food crisis**. The developing and undeveloped Muslim countries were affected badly by these crises. In fact, this ongoing financial crisis was caused by the greed and interest of the governing elite of the developing Muslim countries who serves very well the masters especially in USA (America), UK (London), and Europe. Another factor that led to this financial crisis is the currency in which most of oil trade takes place – USA dollar (Muzaffar, 2011, Chap. 4, pp. 70-72), which became very weak compared to EURO currency. The whole world has been affected by this crisis as the economy of the world is centralized and controlled by superpowers – USA. Although Muslim countries are the biggest oil producers, yet their product is controlled by USA and European allies.

The roots of economic challenges and crisis posed by the contemporary Muslim world go back to the colonization period, when the West introduced to the Muslim world a new system of economy and finance based on capitalism. That system was very controversial with the existing system of economy – Islamic economy. Besides, Muslims were not aware of the capitalist financial system as:

Muslim societies, generally, have no feudal experience in their history of civilization and therefore lacked some of the economic forces and institutions which created the capitalistic accumulation in West Europe and motivated industrial revolution, marketization of technology and complexization of the market structure...colonial powers exported their productions as well as this market structures to Muslim societies. The economic development of capitalistic societies was created by an economic class which is absent in Muslims societies...the bureaucratic elite in the Muslim societies attempted to create a prototype and

economic class of Muslim bourgeoisie...they were unable to develop positivistic ethics in their economic relations. For many of them being a member of higher economic class meant merely to adopt a life-style of consumerism (Davutoglu, 1994, pp. 90-91).

As it is mentioned above, the economic system introduced to the Muslim world was not compatible with the existing Islamic economic system. Muslims found it very difficult to adapt themselves to the Western economic system as they were not familiar with it. Those Muslims especially the elite who studied in the West did not get the right picture of the capitalist system of economy. They were in great dilemma, because they were not able to maintain the traditional Islamic economy as well as to create a new system of economy borrowed from the West. Of course it was the agenda of the colonizers to create a new generation of Muslims with confused mind-set that does not benefit his/her own community as well as he/she does not harm his/her masters. In addition, "on the economic...the policy follows the same procedure: to destroy the existing armature and to prevent its reconstitution by all means...in Algeria, social and charitable institutions functioning at the time of French occupation were made to disappear in one way or another" (Anees, 1987, pp. 62-63).

The economic challenges faced by contemporary Muslim societies have been borne by the globalized way of economy and centralized trade market, which became very obvious after the fall of communism 1990. The birth of global economy has been expressed in the following statement:

The age of globalization is an age of upheaval, or more accurately of reversal, that condones the domination of economics and financial markets over all other areas of human activity. Globalization is first and foremost economic, rather than political, cultural, or technological. It has become impossible to formulate a serious critique of the world order, the policies of the industrialized nations, or the decisions of the G8 without referring to a minute study of the neoliberal economic system, the institutions that sustain it (the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank), the formidable power of a handful of multinationals, and the functioning of the banks and financial markets (Ramadan, 2004, p. 174).

The global market introduced by the West does not bring any kind of benefit to the Muslim masses. Rather it brings a lot of profit to the Muslim elite, who is controlling and ruling the masses. It also brings a lot of profit to the elite of superpowers, USA, UK and other developed European countries. Therefore, the economic system with its global nature "is interconnected, volatile, speculative, and subject to rumors, panic, and manias" (Siddiqui, 1998, p. 55). It will benefit only the elite and the ruling politicians who control most of financial institutions. The Western economy is not a fair economic system as it does not provide equality among the nations as well as people or individuals. For instance, when there is "an economic crisis...international financial institutions...IMF impose conditionalities... manipulating interest rates and re-evaluating local currencies, which may or may not be in long-term interests of the borrowing countries. Instead of restoring confidence in the local currency, such policies may have an opposite effect" (Siddiqui, 1998, p. 55).

The Western financial system introduced to the Muslim world during the era of colonization is without a soul as it is motivated by eagerness and thirst towards material aspect of life only and how to become rich and wealthy regardless of the means. When Muslims looked at the achievements of the West they thought that they were following Islamic system of finance and all forbidden acts in business transaction were nullified. Yes it is true, but the West had a different approach towards good and bad, praiseworthy and blameworthy, lawful and unlawful, and so on. For instance, all businesses in the West had and have interest – *Riba*, which is completely forbidden in Islam.

The West considers itself as civilized and with the help of technology has reached the pick of its material development. Its economic system based on capitalism, which has gone recently global, has failed to provide the basic requirements for the majority of world population in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The one who benefits most from this global market is the elite – the ruling group of people that gets from day to day richer and richer as it controls the financial system. In today's civilized world there are many rich people who do not know what to do with their wealth. Previously the world did not have billionaires as it has today. What is required by contemporary financial system to help people and especially Muslims to eliminate poverty, to fulfill all the basic needs of individuals, to give every individual an opportunity to earn his/her income honestly, and to provide equal distribution of wealth (Chapra, 2003, pp. 1-8). The only civilization that can satisfy completely people's material and spiritual needs is the civilization promoted by Islam and not the Western civilization, which is based on premises without real application. Therefore, most of contemporary Muslim countries do not practice the Islamic system of economics. Rather, they follow the Western secular economic system, which is a hybrid of feudalism, capitalism and socialism (Chapra, 2003, p. 9).

The globalized market has created other challenges for Muslims at home and abroad. Today's Western economy has been advertised and has reached every corner of the world with the help of information technology. All economic transactions are done online, which is a paperless transaction. Commodities are bought and sold with the help of credit cards, which avoids the use of cash. Indeed, this presents a great challenge for Muslims as the risk is there and the possibility of *RIBA* – interest will be there. To make the life of Muslims easy, many contemporary Muslim intellectuals have contributed a lot especially in the field of *FIQH* (Islamic Jurisprudence) looking at these issue from *MAQASID AL-SHARI'AH* (Purpose of the Islamic Law) perspective. This will be discussed further in the section dealing with responses.

### Political Challenges

Political challenges witnessed by most of Muslim countries in the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century were formed during the colonization process of the Muslim world. The West studied the Islamic heritage and a vast literature was presented by classical orientalists, who provided a distorted picture of Islam and its civilization. The Westerners had both the pen and the paper, and they since the

beginning found it very easy to install in the Muslim world – secular oriented political system – with the help of their Muslim allies who were produced by them. Thus, Muslim *Ummah*, which was divided into many nations, had to follow a political system based on “secular laws that were supported by foreign state apparatuses, modes of administration, law and social institutions” (Tan, 2014, p. 4.). The secularization process of Muslim countries and their political system created a gap between ruling elite and the Muslim masses. This process has been mentioned in the following statement:

“The actual dichotomy in the Muslim World between a secular ruling elite and Muslim masses makes the political power always a minority ruling the majority, a majority that is generally, obedient...the minority wants to rule the Majority, given the dictatorial type of the actual Muslim era.” To control the majority the ruling minority “allies itself with the middle class...forms the State apparatus—force of security, political parties, mass media, legal and social institutions,” in order to control the rebellious Muslim masses (Hanafi, 2000, p. 80).

The secularization process of the Muslim world brought with it many other deadly weapons of mass destruction. The most dangerous one of all was the idea of “nationalism,” a deadly disease with a continuous affect, which created a real mess-up for the Muslims. Western type of nationalism was introduced to the Muslims in the eighteenth century at the time when the Ottoman Caliphate and the Iranian Empire became aware of the swift industrial and technological development of the West. Besides, Muslim countries started to admire and follow Western modernity. Therefore, reforms for new development were introduced:

at the end of the nineteenth century, known as Tanzimat reforms in the Ottoman Empire and the *Islahat* reforms in Iran, prepared the ground for the nationalist and constitutionalist movements and the complete disruption of the region...sending students to Western countries to draw inspiration from the philosophical and revolutionary thinkers of the time...these students were responsible for the first struggles against the ruling classes. Some of them were persuaded that religion was the main obstacle to development and recommended reforms in this sphere. Faith in the almighty power of God, in the supremacy of the spirit and in the brotherhood of believers were replaced by the ideals of sovereignty of the State, supremacy of the nation, transcendence of popular will, and the equality of citizens (Behnam, 2002, pp. 180-181).

Nationalism was a gift given to Muslims by their masters, who ruled them for decades and continue to rule them until today. The socio-political climate of colonized Muslim countries was influenced by Western values as a result of Western upper hand in their governmental administration of the Muslim world. The Western way of political leadership influenced the thoughts of some Muslim political leaders and intellectuals, who moved away from the Islamic brotherhood and unity by embracing and implementing the divisive Western ideology of nationalism. The acceptance of Western nationalism divided of Muslim World into independent nation-states as well as the division of life into two aspects, **religious life** meant to be private and individual and **secular life** meant to be public governing all activities including politics (Kausar, 2005, pp. xiv-xv). Although contemporary nationalism was introduced by the West, yet its real application is seen in the Muslim world in all aspects of a Muslim's life. Certainly, Muslims even in the twenty first century judge each other based on Western nationalism, which has a partial nature – seen/earthly/empirical and not based on the Islamic nationalism – Ummatism, which comprehends all aspects of people's life – seen and unseen, physical and metaphysical, and soul and body.

Nationalism continues to dominate in the Muslim world and has become a sacred value and even mentioned in the constitution of every Muslim nation-state, which governs the life of Muslims not based on their shared faith in Islam, but in their divided territories. There have been heard voices of great God-fearing Muslim thinkers and scholars for unity. But, most of Muslim political leaders have rejected it and jailed as well as executed those who claimed that. Of course, contemporary existing Muslim politicians will reject the idea on the Unity of Muslim *Ummah*. They do allow Muslims to dream and talk about it but the forbid its application. Why do they do that? They do it as they do not want to step down from their positions and they will face a great material deficit. Besides, they do not govern the Muslim countries. Rather, they own these countries. The Westerners will be very happy if this situation continues in the Muslim world. They fear Muslims if they follow Islam. But they do not fear them if they abuse Islamic civilization. Thus, Muslims do not pose any challenge to the Western civilization. It is Islam and its civilization that poses real challenges to them. The colonial nationalism, which has been left behind in the Muslim world, has created a serious problem as far as political legitimacy is concerned. The lack of this legitimacy makes Muslim countries dependent on their masters. Ahmet Davutoglu, a prominent Muslim intellectual and politician, has observed:

Today, many Muslim countries in the Middle East do not possess the real and natural prerequisites to become a legitimate and stable political unity in the sense of natural geographical territories; a common historical background as a political entity; a common set of cultural characteristics of language, religion or ethnic origin in which to differentiate them from neighboring countries. Rather, they reflect the spheres of influence of the colonial powers and the separation of economic and human resources in Muslim societies which guarantee the dependency of these individual countries to the global economic neo-colonial mechanism (Davutoglu, 1994, pp. 92-93).

The above statement has been stated three years after the collapse of communism and its allies. This is the time that most of Muslim intellectuals and especially political leaders became very naïve and thought that the West will give them full support to manage and develop their countries as well as provide for them full political support and military power. Although they supported the Westerners to destroy those ideologies with soul and body, yet the West was not happy with them. Therefore, a real campaign was undertaken by the Western powers in the name of democracy to destroy the Muslim world and defame or replace Islam with new Western ideologies.

History shows that *the collapse of communism and socialism in 1990-1991* did not bring any benefit to Muslims and their political system. But it made most of the people (Muslims and non-Muslims) to realize the importance and role of religion in their life, and therefore, a campaign on the coming back of religion was initiated. At this time, Western politicians and intellectuals to counter back this initiative on the revival of religion and especially Islam and its civilization, presented to the world other political ideologies with universal dimension in a renewed form, like *globalization, human rights, multi-culturalism, consumerism, pluralism, unity of religions, gender rights*, and so on. These ideologies were taken by many and especially Muslims as contemporary challenges with a political nature.

The 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001's incident when the twin towers in USA were destroyed and nearly the lives of three thousand innocent people were taken away, *presented another contemporary challenge for Muslims*. This event led to the calls to "reform Islam," which were not made only by intellectuals and scholars but they were joined by many politicians, journalists, actors, media stars as well as self-proclaimed experts on Islam (Allawi, 2009, Chap. 5, p. 110). Besides, Muslims, their religion and Islamic civilization have been branded with the worst terms, i.e., *terrorism, terrorists, barbarism, killers, uncivilized, unhuman*, and so on. This incident created a gap between Islam, Muslims and others. The anti-Islamic sentiments were more publicly pronounced by people and the media especially in the West after this incident (Ahsan, 2006, p. 107).

Another incident, which happened after 11 September, was the *drawing cartoons on Prophet Muhammad* (p.b.u.h.). It was the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* that on October 2005 published cartoons of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), which according to Muslims is a blasphemy. Indeed, these cartoons were very offensive, blasphemous, racist and Islamophobic in nature (Simon Weaver, 2010, p. 676). Muslims responded to this incident through peaceful demonstrations and protests and many Muslim leaders requested from the Danish government to take the right action against this newspaper. The famous French magazine – *Charlie-Hebdo*, followed the footsteps of Danish magazine by publishing in 2006 Prophet's cartoons again and again. This added more fuel to the fire, which was created by the Danish magazine previously.<sup>5</sup> As a result of the continuous provocation by *Charlie-Hebdo* magazine towards the publication of Prophet's cartoons, in January 2015, mass killings took place in the quarters of this magazine.

Since 11 September 2001 until today the Muslim world has experienced the worst times of its existence as a result of the *political changes*. In the name of Western democracy and especially American democracy to fight terrorists and terrorism, many political leaders in Muslim countries, like Iraq (Saddam Hussein), Tunis (Zine El Abidine Ben Ali), Egypt (Hosni Mubarak), Libya (Muammar Gaddafi), etc., have been killed, punished, jailed, and reinstalled. Indeed, this is a *polite invasion* of the Muslim world by the Western imperialism in the twenty first century. However, the condition of Muslims has not been solved with all these changes especially in the political dimension. The Western imperialism in the name of democracy did not install democratically elected Muslim leaders by the masses. Rather, they installed Muslim leaders with secular orientation instead of Islamic orientation. For instance, the case of Egypt, when Mohamed Morsi became Egypt's first democratically elected president in June 2012, succeeding Hosni Mubarak. He served in that position until July 2013, when he was toppled by Egypt's armed forces. Morsi, beside his removal from the presidential post, he was also sentenced to death in June (*The Guardian*, 2016). The same kind of USA democracy has been installed in Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosova, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya. In fact, Muslims hoped to get a better political system compared to the previous dictatorship regime. However, the experience shows that the installed leadership in the occupied Muslim territories by the USA soldiers and NATO does not serve Muslims at all. Rather, it serves their masters and the rights of Muslims are not granted by their so-called Muslim leaders installed through the so-called USA democracy.

Furthermore, today Muslims have been humiliated, oppressed and butchered even in their homelands. For instance, since March 2011 until now Muslims in Syria have been butchered, women and young girls being raped, killed, and millions of them have been displaced through mass migration to the Western lands and this deprives them for enjoying equal rights at their homeland (*Arab Spring*, 2016). Besides, in the name of human rights and change, Islamophobia is increasing from day-to-day within the Muslim world as well as in the Western countries.

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<sup>5</sup> Claire Visier mentions that in March 2006 concerning Prophet Muhammad cartoon controversy in Denmark, P. Val (Charlie-Hebdo' editor) organized and co-signed with 11 people, among them Taslima Nasreen and Salman Rushdie, a **manifest**, "Together facing the new totalitarianism, Islamism - Ensemble contre le nouveau totalitarisme, l'islamisme" first published in Charlie Hebdo, 1/03/2006): "After having overcome Fascism, Nazism, and Stalinism, the world now faces a new totalitarian global threat: Islamism. We, writers, journalists, intellectuals, call for resistance to religious totalitarianism and for the promotion of freedom, equal opportunity and secular values for all. The recent events, which occurred after the publication of drawings of Muhammad in European newspapers, have revealed the necessity of the struggle for these universal values ... in the ideological field... a global struggle that confronts democrats and theocrats ... Islamism is nurtured by fears and frustrations ... a reactionary ideology which kills equality, freedom and secularism wherever it is present. Its success can only lead to a world of domination: man's domination over woman, the Islamists' domination over all the others. To counter this, we must assure universal rights to oppressed or discriminated people... We plead for the universality of freedom of expression, so that a critical spirit may be exercised on all continents, against all abuses and all dogmas ... our century should be one of Enlightenment, not of obscurantism." Claire Visier, "French Studies - A Brief History: Charlie Hebdo," *Newsletter*, Istanbul Bilgi University, European Institute, 2015-2016, pp. 13-14.



Certainly, as it is mentioned above, the fall of communism and 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 incident worsened the relationship between Muslims and the West – USA and European countries and created many challenges for both parties. The USA military invasion on the Muslims world took a new direction with the motto – fighting terrorism and installing democracy and peace. This new mechanism of USA and its allies did not help to fight terrorism instead it destroyed and continue to destroy the Muslim countries one after another. For instance, recently on Friday evening, 15 July 2016, and on Saturday morning 16 July 2016, there was an attempt to overthrow the Turkish democratic elected government by a military coup. However, the president of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the members of his government managed to control the situation with the support from the masses (*Military coup ... Turkey*, 2016). Indeed, this is considered as another political challenge that has a great impact on the Muslim *Ummah*.

Good political leadership plays a crucial role in the management and sustainability of Muslim *Ummah* and human community as a whole. The current political system in the Muslim world does not resemble the Islamic governance. The Muslim governors do not consider their role as the vicegerents of Allah (s.w.t.), who are entrusted with a great responsibility and test.

### Social Challenges

Social challenges are caused by the advance of Western technology and especially social media to Muslims at their home and abroad. The separation between the two realms of reality – soul and body, physical and metaphysical (possessed by the Western Christian society in its classical times) by the secularization process introduced in the West through scientific revolution, led to the decay of what was meant to be moral and ethical in the religious sense. This phenomenon has taken place gradually:

the social consequence of secular democracy and its basic principles is the removal of any foundation for stable morals in society...within secular democracies what is good today can become evil tomorrow, with the mottos, “Anything goes,” and, “One man’s meat is another man’s poison,” being the guiding maxims underlying justice, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness (Philips, 2006, p. 29).

Muslim societies are witnessing real social problems created by the ongoing conflicts that have been initiated by political interest. The contemporary social tensions and conflicts between Muslims and non-Muslims have been formed as a result of internal and external factors. Among *internal factors* that have caused social crisis in the most of Muslim countries that are under-development and undeveloped are: (1) widespread of poverty, (2) high rate of joblessness, (3) limited freedom of expression and politics, (4) weak welfare and infrastructure, (5) division into classes – elite and masses or rich and poor, (6) limited opportunities in trade and business, (7) inequity in education upbringing of children, (8) wide spread of nationalism and racism, (9) social sciences vs. religious sciences (Tiliouine & Estes, 2016, p. 70).

*External factors* that created social challenges for Muslim societies have their roots in the Western colonization and globalization, which introduced with the help of technology many new cultural and social values that were not compatible to the Muslims and their religion. Thus, Western secular materialism has created for Muslim society the following challenges: (1) Science vs. religion, (2) violence, (3) same gender marriage, (4) homosexuality, (5) pornography, (6) alcoholism (7) drug abuse, (8) crimes. When Muslims are posed to these challenges, their life becomes a meaningless exercise in futility (al-Mahdi, 2004, p. 3). For instance, Muslims are exposed in their own country to places where alcohol is sold and consumed.

In some Muslim countries *haram* (forbidden) commodities for sale are put in restricted areas in market places with a notice on in. What is meant to be forbidden for Muslims, it is not so for non-Muslims, who reside in the same community with Muslims. Indeed, this is a great challenge for Muslims, who have to be aware of it. Places where alcohol is consumed are of a public and private nature. Restaurants where forbidden commodities are consumed by non-Muslims are forbidden for Muslims. However, there are night clubs in some Muslim countries that are visited by Muslims especially the youth. Therefore, religious officers are assigned with a responsibility to control these places and if Muslims are found there they have to be punished. For example, Muslims in Malaysia because of the multi-religious and multi-cultural community are exposed to forbidden commodities. To make the life of Muslims easy the Malaysian Muslim Government has established many religious organizations and bodies to control the affairs of Muslims, like JAIS (Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor/Office of Islam (Religious Affairs) Selangor), PERKIM (Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia/Muslim Welfare Organisation Malaysia), and so on.

Other than alcohol, Muslims in some Muslim countries are exposed to prostitution, which has created many family problems. Besides gambling is another forbidden asset for the Muslims. They are not allowed to visit these places. If they do so they will be punished if they are caught in this world and if they are not caught they will be punished by Allah (s.w.t.) in the day of Judgement if they do not repent. If they repent and do not repeat it again, Allah (s.w.t.) will forgive and bless them

*The internal and external factors* have affected the Muslims individually and collectively. The Muslim family institution has been poisoned by the social media especially TV and Internet. Muslim parents have provided for their children gadgets through which they can get exposed to the viral information spread by Internet. Information technology is a good source of information at the same time it provides provocative and dangerous information, which are forbidden for Muslims by their religion. Most of Muslim parents are not able to control their children as both parents are engaged with their careers in order to provide for their families. This has come as a result of expensive commodities and high standard of living. Thus, the negligence of what is prior by Muslim parents – family, made even Muslims all over the world as well as in Muslims countries to face “social problems like rape, incest, sexual harassment at the working place, increased divorce rate, drug addiction among youth and such other problems” (Kausar, 2005, p. vii).

Furthermore, Muslim societies are faced even with a greater social challenge that is their *social identity*. Since 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2001, Muslims have been insulted and branded as terrorists. Media representatives especially in the West have distorted the

image of Islam and Muslims. This made most of the non-Muslim fellows to dislike and even hate Muslims and Islam. Many Muslims have been abused even killed because of their religious identity – Islam. This is discrimination done by contemporary civilized people towards their own human fellows. In the case of Muslims, human rights do not work.

### Responses In The Perspective Of Islam And Its Civilization:

The abovementioned long discussion on contemporary intellectual, economic, political, and social challenges faced by Muslims requires a sound response. An attempt to respond to these challenges will be done in light of Islamic teachings and its civilization based on *Qur'an* and Prophetic *Sunnah* and the contributions of Muslim scholars focusing especially on *Islamization and integration of human oriented knowledge that introduces a holistic model of intellectualism*.

This study considers of a great importance that before responding to the abovementioned challenges an accurate answer should be given *first* to the following questions: Why are Muslims oppressed in the contemporary world even in their homelands? What went wrong with their intellectuals and scholars - *Ulama* as well as their leaders/governors and societies? How did this happen and who has to be blamed a Muslim (leaders and followers) or non-Muslim (leaders and followers)?

*Firstly, it is an obvious fact that most of contemporary Muslims are oppressed even in their own homelands.* Muslims know it very well that by accepting Islam as their way of life they get the privilege of being the vicegerents of Allah (s.w.t.) on earth. Therefore, they have to uphold certain important responsibilities and duties towards God, themselves, their community, other human fellows, animals and environment. However, the reality shows that many contemporary Muslims among intellectuals, politicians and masses, have neglected these responsibilities. They have also misinterpreted and abused the texts of *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* creating for others a misunderstood picture of Islam and its civilization. They have gone astray as they do not practice Islamic code of ethics in their day-to-day life. When people previously went astray Allah (s.w.t.) sent another messenger with a message. But this cannot be applied to contemporary times as according to Islam the Divine Revelation sent from Allah (s.w.t.) to mankind through His Messengers and Prophets, was terminated and sealed with the last Divine Message, the *Qur'an* and the last Prophecy of Muhammad (p.b.u.h.).

Allah addresses in *Qur'an*: (المائدة: 3) (...الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا...) “This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.”<sup>6</sup> (al-Ma'idah: 3). *Qur'an* also declares *Din al-Islam* as the same way of life introduced by all previous God's messages and messengers with the same mission: (النحل: 36) (وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ...) “For We assuredly sent amongst every People a messenger, (with the Command), ‘*Serve Allah, and eschew Evil*’.” (al-Nahl: 36). Furthermore, the Islam of Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is universal, comprehensive and final, which will last until the end of the world. Thus, Muslims have to revive their understanding of Islam in both of its ways, theory and practice. *Qur'an* says: (الأحزاب: 40) (مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِن رَّسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا) “Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets: and Allah has full knowledge of all things.” (al-'Ahzab: 40) (وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ) (الأنبياء: 107) “We sent thee not, but as a Mercy for all creatures.” (al-Anbiya': 107). (سبا: 28) (وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ) (سبا: 28) “We have not sent thee but as a universal (Messenger) to men, giving them glad tidings, and warning them (against sin), but most men understand not.” (Saba': 28)

*Secondly, many contemporary Muslim intellectuals, scholars, politicians, and social activists trusted with authority by the Muslim community have not presented Islam and its civilization rightly.* Rather, they have served their own interest and the interest of their allies, and this act of theirs has defamed Islam and Muslims. In fact, *Din al-Islam* is not meant to be only for the Arabs or Muslims, or the Muslim elite. Rather, it is God's way of life to be followed by all people, regardless of their race, color, language, location, time, space, and it denotes a complete submission and obedience to Allah, the Creator of the seen and the unseen without compulsion. The whole universe and everything in it, the sun, the moon, all heavenly bodies, air, water, heat, stones, trees and animals, are called “Muslim” (Mawdudi, 1980, Chap. 1, p. 18). Moreover, Islam claims that Islamic civilization is the only civilization that satisfies and accommodates the interest of mankind pertaining to both aspects of their life as a whole, *al-Dunya* (the earthly life) and *al-Akhirah* (the everlasting life). They do not have to spread mischief in world and follow the footsteps of evildoers. Rather, they have to do good to other fellows regardless of their race, language, religious or culture identity, nationality, color, as the Almighty, Allah (s.w.t.) has done good to them. Allah (s.w.t.) says: (وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ) (وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ) “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 (occasions for) mischief in the land: for Allah loves not those who do mischief.” (al-Qasas: 77)

Islam also declares that all people who are aware of Islam and do not embrace it after they have been convinced and do not live and act righteously in line with its worldview and civilization, will never achieve success in their earthly and hereafter aspects of life. Rather, they will be in a great loss: (العصر: 3-1) (وَإِنِ الْإِنْسَانُ لَفِي خُسْرٍ \* إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصُوا بِالحَقِّ وَتَوَّصُوا بِالصُّبْرِ) (العصر: 3-1) “By (the Token of) Time (through the ages), Verily Man is in loss, Except such as have Faith, and do righteous deeds, and (join together) in the mutual teaching of Truth, and of Patience and Constancy. (al-'Asr: 1-3)

<sup>6</sup> 'Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*, (Maryland: Amana Corporation, 1989). The author of this paper will refer to the abovementioned reference concerning the translated version of *Qur'an* in the rest of *Qur'anic* verses mentioned in the entire project.

*Lastly, those to be blamed are Muslims themselves and not anyone else.* As a matter of fact, when Muslims understood and lived in line with the teachings of Islam, the Islamic civilization was present in all aspects of their life. The moment that they started to abandon and neglect Islam and its tenets, the Islamic civilization started gradually to hide itself from the Muslim community, and was replaced with Muslim civilization that served the interest of certain Muslim groups, countries or nations instead of Muslim *Ummah* and mankind. Contemporary Muslim civilization reflects the misinterpretation of Islamic teachings and sources especially by some ignorant Muslim intellectuals, scholars, governors, and politicians, who incline themselves to one aspect of life – *al-Dunya* (the earthly life) or *al-Akhirah* (the everlasting life). Muslims have to praise their Creator, Allah (s.w.t.) for guiding them to the Straight Path of *Din al-Islam* as their way of life. In addition, Islam presented to humanity and especially Muslims a civilization with a transcendental nature that will last as long as Islam. Islamic civilization is designed by Allah (s.w.t.) with a beneficial purpose and a great interest for all mankind. However, those who embrace Islam as their way of life and live according to Islamic civilization and worldview will get the pleasure of their Creator and achieve the real happiness in their earthly and hereafter aspects of life.

The Islamization platform was initiated by Muslim intellectuals, who hoped for a better future of Muslim *Ummah* and humanity at large. Certainly, Islam claims that Islamic Civilization has Divine and Transcendental Nature and as such it requires sincere and pure intention by every human being and especially by every Muslim intellectual in his/her task for the acquisition of knowledge and its application to his/her day-to-day life. Indeed, Western civilization and any other civilization of the past, present and future has not and will not present any challenge to the civilization of Islam. Rather, it is the Islamic civilization that poses a great challenge to both misguided Muslim and non-Muslim intellectuals, politicians, leaders, students and searchers of the TRUTH, who follow man-made civilizations and systems instead of Divine Civilization designed by the Creator, the Almighty Allah (s.w.t.) and conveyed to people through previous revelations (Torah, Zabur, Injil) and the last/final revelation – *Qur'an*.

Furthermore, dedicated Muslim intellectuals in light of Islamization paradigm claimed that contemporary situation of mankind and especially Muslim intellectuals will change only if they follow the civilization of Islam and its unique characteristics, which are the very features of Islam: (1) *Tawhid* – the Oneness of Allah (s.w.t.), which is the bedrock of Islamic way of life “gives Islamic civilization its identity, which binds all its constituents together and thus makes of them an integral, organic body which we call civilization” (al-Faruqi, 1992, Chap. 2, p. 17). (2) *'Alamiyyah* – universal characteristic that calls for the unity of mankind as all people in Islam regardless of their differences are created by Allah (s.w.t.) and are the progeny of one pair of parents, Adam and Eve. (3) *Ta'dudiyyah* – pluralistic dimension that makes Muslims to coexist easily with the followers of other civilizations. (4) *Tawazun* – balanced feature that balances between the material and spiritual, physical and metaphysical, earthly and hereafter aspects of people's life. (5) *'Abadiyyun* – eternal feature that transcends time and space as long as Islam and it will be preserved by Allah (s.w.t.).<sup>7</sup> Islamic civilization, according to these features proves itself to be *the future civilization of mankind* as it is not meant to be a civilization for a particular group of people, time or space. Rather, it is a civilization that suits itself to all times and space until the end of the world.

Islamization process has become very active in the last forty years in some parts of the Muslim world. Muslim intellectuals through this reformation movement managed to create awareness for themselves and Muslim communities that Western civilization cannot replace Islamic Civilization, as the former is human oriented and the latter is Divine oriented. Muslim intellectuals should not read and write the Islamic heritage and civilization from the perspective of Western intellectualism. Rather, they have to read, write and understand Islamic civilization in light of its sources, *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* and the contribution of Muslim intellectuals and scholars. Indeed, human intellectualism supported by revelation and interpreted by sound reason serves as a key foundation in the promotion of an enduring civilization, which features do accommodate the needs and demands of the whole mankind regardless of time and space.

Islamization process was initiated and applied by Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) and his immediate companions, who with the Will of Allah (s.w.t.) promoted and applied balanced intellectualism comprehending the knowledge of both aspects of people's life, the seen and the unseen, the physical and the metaphysical. They had to achieve only one single interest just to please their Creator. In this sense, Islamic civilization in its early stage planted the first and everlasting seeds, which serve as a torch for both Muslim and non-Muslim intellectuals regardless of their profession and expertise until the end of time.

The history of Muslim intellectualism shows that many Muslim scholars and intellectuals as well as political leaders or merchants who were motivated by *Qur'anic* and Prophetic approaches towards Islamic intellectualism and leadership produced great works and master pieces in different disciplines comprehending the revelation and reason. For instance, the great Imams, Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Malik, Imam Shafi'i, and Imam Hanbali, left behind a great and enduring legacy, which has been used by many Muslims and non-Muslims as sole references while discussing issues pertaining to Islamic tenets and their application to different aspect of one's life.

Another important and motivating example is the development of unmatched Scientific scholarship by the Andalusian Muslim scholars and scientists, who presented a clear framework for the later scientific developments in both, the Muslim and Western worlds. Andalusia with its multi-religious society, where Muslim intellectuals lived side by side with Jewish and Christian intellectuals, provided a friendly environment for the flourishing of exemplary intellectualism that produced various disciplines and sciences dealing with the study of both, the metaphysical and empirical worlds. Muslim intellectuals excelled in their

<sup>7</sup> The features of Islamic civilization do not differ from the characteristics of Islam. For more information please refer to: Sayyid Qutb, *The Islamic Concept and its Characteristics*, Mohammed Moinuddin Siddiqui (Trans.), (USA: The American Trust Publications, 1991).

interpretation and application of Islamic civilization and its characteristics by leaving behind a rich legacy in different fields, like *Tafsir* (Qur'anic exegesis), *Hadith* (Prophetic sayings), *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence or doctrine), *Usul al-Din* (Fundamentals of religion - Islam), *al-'Ulam al-Insaniyyah* (Human Sciences), *al-Falsafah* (philosophy), *'Ilm al-Falak* (Astronomy), *'Ilm al-Tib* (Medicine), *'Ilm al-Ma'adin* (Minerology), *'Ilm al-'Imarah* (Architecture), *Muqaranah al-Adyan* (Comparative religion), and so on. Indeed, Muslim intellectualism that flourished in the past contributed a lot to the development and sustainability of the Muslim *Ummah* and humanity at large. It presented unavoidable challenges for other existing civilizations up to the eighteenth century with the scientific developments in the Western world, which paved the way for the construction of a new intellectualism by Western intellectuals.

Islamization project in the last three decades was thought by many Muslim intellectuals to be the only solution that will assist the Muslim world to come out from its current situation. Therefore, many of them wrote on Islamization as well as established educational institutions in order to reflect their thoughts. Those Muslim scholars, who worked very hard to save the Muslim *Ummah* from the colonizers, were Said Nursi, Abu Ala Maududi, Sayyid Qutb, Jamaluddin al-Afgani, Muhamamd Abduh, Rashid Rida. They presented their ideas about Islamization by looking at the very heart of Islamic civilization and its sources where they interpreted the sources showing to Muslims and non-Muslims that the problem is not with Islam and its civilization. Rather, the only problem is with human beings and especially Muslims who have not understood Islam properly.

Other scholars followed the footsteps of the above mentioned Muslim scholars and further developed ideas and thoughts about Islamization in light of Islamic civilization. The pioneers of later development on Islamization were: Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, Syed Naquib al-Attas, and Husain Nasr. They developed a new platform for the Islamization of human knowledge and established Islamic oriented educational institutions where their ideas and thoughts were applied. The Islamization of Human knowledge that was coined by these Muslim intellectuals denotes a long process which depends on a well-planned strategy in order to achieve specific goals as dictated by Islamic civilization (Safi, 1996, p. 7).

It can be summarized based on the above discussion, that Islamic Civilization is conveyed based on the Islamization process of all aspects of human life, which stands for the Islamization of human intellect and his/her activities for the sole purpose of achieving total obedience to Allah (s.w.t.).

### Conclusion

This study concludes that the intellectual-economic-political-social contemporary challenges faced by the Muslim world can be eliminated only if the Muslims will revive their understanding about Islam and its civilization. This can be achieved through the process of Islamization undertaken by every Muslim individual through the integration of both thoughts and actions. Certainly, such integration can be promoted only by a civilization that has a Transcendental Nature and is based on Divine Revelation, and that civilization is only Islamic Civilization. Therefore, this study claims that Islamic Civilization is the only existing and living civilization that provides the best solution to the current ongoing global issues as well as it provides transcendental paradigm for the future of humanity until the end of this world.

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