The Need for Resurgence of Islam: Historical and Contemporary Paradigms

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ABSTRACT

With the world into the new millennium there are over a billion followers of Islam making it the second largest religion in the world after Christianity. Muslims in today’s world are at a better position to view and practice their faith and culture than their ancestors in the beginning of last century when poverty, illiteracy and colonial rule hindered them to practice their faith and to prosper culturally and economically. Today most of the Islamic countries are free and their fortunes have changed remarkably both economically and socially in the recent past and the extent of change is comparable to the outstanding change in the lives of Muslims in the twenty-first century of its spread. Islam is growing rapidly owing to both high birth rate and missionary efforts. Islam is experiencing resurgence along with vigorous intellectual ferment and powerful movements for simplification and purification of the faith and its practice. The situation for Islam has been surveyed in different Islamic countries in this article and their ongoing efforts to maintain their Islamic identity are discussed. The results of these efforts are yet to be seen as the Muslim world has entered the 21st century. Four principles are fundamental to Islamic resurgence since the late 1970s and they are mentioned in the text. Some burning issues the solution to which will hasten Islamic resurgence are also quoted.

Key Words: Resurgence, Muslims, twenty-first century

Introduction: The theme of resurgence is inherent in Islam. Within a generation of the death of Muhammad there were already Muslims ready to challenge the Caliphate. And so it has continued down through fourteen hundred years. The reason is not hard to find. Islam claims to be a blueprint for political as well as individual morality. When a ruler is corrupt or unjust or simply unresponsive, opposition groups have repeatedly risen up against established authority in the name of Islam. Similarly, when Muslims are weak and dominated by outsiders the fault must lie with the rulers who are not truly Islamic.

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Return to the true message of Islam and Muslims will be free and strong again. (© 2002008, Independent Broadcasting Associates, Inc) The resurgence of traditional Islam is often debated as being a result of rampant nationalism accompanied by religious zealotry than real spiritual awakening. Resurgence has also been associated with self assertion of underprivileged classes in Muslim countries who resisted the modernization by their governments dominated mostly by elite class especially in first three decades after World War II.

The beneficial effects of westernization and globalization are available to elites but along their hazardous effects on family life and Islamic traditions and values. Iranian revolution is one such prominent example of outburst against elite class for its modernization policies. The movements leading to resurgence of traditional Islam in different Islamic countries were led by Muslim fundamentalists who along with their followers insisted that Islam instead of being a roadblock to progress is in fact an ideal framework for building a more just social and economic order than capitalism. Islam is also seen as a sure bulwark against the disrupting influences on family life and pride in ones land and culture. The economic development or deterioration as the case may be in different countries and a realization among the Muslim world to preserve its identity against modern globalization era has varied results in different Islamic countries and the stark contrast can be seen between Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, with a billion followers, Islam finds it second only to Christianity in number of active members among the religions of the world; these two together represent half the earth. The devastation of Buddhism and the traditional religions of China by Communist revolutions leave no doubt about that reality. Moreover, Muslims would have little hesitancy in viewing the position of their faith and of Islamic culture at the beginning of the twenty-first century as being far stronger than at the beginning of the last.
Resurgence of Islam: Interpretation of the west
As cited in the Major Religions By T. Patrick Burke:

“Since the seventeenth century, with the rise of science, the emergence of democracy, and the development of capitalist economy, western society, which once lagged behind the Muslim world, has leaped dramatically ahead of it”. (1).

By 1900, the Muslim world was notoriously in decline compared to Europe and America. It was sunk in poverty and technologically backward. Much of it was subject to humiliating European colonial rule: The Dutch controlled Indonesia; millions of Indian Muslims as well as Hindus lived under the British flag; France ruled vast reaches of Muslim North Africa. The only large sovereign Muslim states were the Ottoman (Turkish) and Persian empires, which sprawled over much of the Middle colonial rule to their long-suffering subjects; and moreover, despite nominal independence, subservient to Europe in many ways. Finally, Islam in 1900 was only beginning to get in touch intellectually and spiritually with the modern world.

In World Religions by Warren Mathews it is stated:

“The phenomenal spread of Islam is one of the most rapid expansions of a religion in the history of the world”. (2)

By the last quarter of the twentieth century situation changed dramatically. Rarely since the stunning spread of Islam in its first century have the fortunes of a religion changed so remarkably in a so short time. Now virtually all Muslim nations have attained independence. The old Ottoman and Persian empires are now Turkey (much diminished in size) and Iran. With the new names have come new regimes and far-reaching changes. Some Muslim countries have achieved great wealth, mostly from petroleum. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have reached levels of per capita income that are among the highest in the world. Islam is rowing rapidly, both through a high birthrate in many places and through missionary efforts. Emigration and the establishment of Islamic centers have given the religion a new visibility around the world. Islam is also experiencing vigorous intellectual ferment and powerful movements for simplification and
purification of the faith and its practice. Change is uneven, of course. The House of Islam includes not only some of the richest nations in the world, but also some of the poorest, such as Bangladesh. Some aspects of its resurgence have seemed, at least to outsiders, as more like rampant nationalism accompanied by religious zealotry than real spiritual awakening. But such matters are not always well judged by outsiders, and they require considerable perspective in time before their ultimate meaning can be discerned. However one assesses it, Islam seems in a period of religious ferment and renewal associated with nation-building and expanding confidence, perhaps comparable to the Protestant Reformation in the Christian world. As did the Protestant Reformation, the Islamic resurgence has produced much war and bigotry. Nonetheless, the Reformation helped wrench Europe into new stages of historical development. What Islam will generate remains to be seen?

Not infrequently, the resurgence of traditional Islam has been associated with the self-assertion of underprivileged classes in Muslim countries, whether rural peasants or urban masses. These resisted the Westernized elite who typically dominated the governments and economies of these countries in their early period of modern nationhood, especially during the first three decades after World War II. While those elites have often done much to promote nation-building and the development of modern (that is, Western-type) industry, transportation, education, and political institutions, these benefits have not always been readily available to those not of the elite class, whereas their disruptive effect on traditional village, family, and Islamic moral and spiritual values have been all too apparent. Moreover, the elites are commonly perceived as inwardly contemptuous of traditional values and unduly eager to cultivate the ways and friendships of non-Muslim Europeans and Americans. All of this has been exacerbated because economic globalization, touted by many such elites, is thought by many others to further threaten traditional life.

The political and social upsurge of traditional Islam that became so evident in the late 1970s, most conspicuously in the Iranian revolution of 1979, was the explosive outburst of long pent-up
hostility by nonelites against dominant class. Often led by fiery Muslim fundamentalist preachers and mystics, the dispossessed understandably seized upon and identified with pure Islam to inspire them and give shape to what they stood for and stood against. Islam was their faith and culture, the true life-soul of a land that was truly theirs. They insisted that Islam, far from being an awkward roadblock to modernization, is as good (indeed better) an ideological framework for building a more just social and economic order than is Western socialism or capitalism, and at the same time it was seen as a sure bulwark against the corroding influences (chiefly from the West) that traditionalists saw threatening family life and pride in one’s land and culture.

**Thomas W. Simons in his book Islam in Globalizing World has written:**

“Some of the Islamist groups turned to community action rather than politics on behalf of faith. More and more of them decided that what was more important was to affirm Islamic cultural identity rather than seizing or destroying power e.g. Tablighi jamaat in Pakistan and Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine. For them locus of struggle shifted from political arena to the family, the community, the school, the hospital.”(3)

Four principles have been fundamental to the Islamic resurgence since the late 1970s:

1. The Shari’ah, or systematized code of Islamic law based on the Quran and the traditions, must be fundamental law of the state.
2. To ensure that state policies and actions are consistent with the Shari’ah, Muslim teachers and scholars should have an important role in government, thus achieving what in the West would be called a union of church and state – a theocracy.
3. Wealth must be fairly distributed in accordance with Islamic ideals of Justice and brotherhood.
4. Outside (non-Muslim) influences in society must be resisted, and the lifestyle of the people should conform to Islam rules and values, as in matters of dress, family life, education, and the role of women.
These developments have had varying results around the world. To illustrate, two countries are considered that are in stark contrast – Saudi Arabia and Turkey. Then a brief review of the situation in some other countries around the world is given.

Saudi Arabia is an Islamic theocracy. This nation incorporates the land where the faith began and contains its holy cities of Mecca ad Medina. Yet Saudi Arabia, convulsed by new wealth and inevitable social change, is striving to become both a modern and a conservative Muslim state at the same time, while resisting the incursions of the Western military since the 1991 Gulf War and the globalizing economic forces of the West. Some hold that this involves at best a precarious balancing of global political and economic forces that are not controlled. Islam remains the primary cohesive ideology in the kingdom, the source of legitimacy for the monarchy, and the pervasive system for moral guidance and spirituality. The nature of the Islamic society Saudi Arabia wishes to have in the future, however, was one of the important and passionately debated issues in the kingdom in the early 1990s. Where this all will lead remains to be seen? On the other hand, Turkey was given over to secularization. Turkey lies to the North of the Arab world. It is the homeland of the Turks, the non-Arab race whose sultan long ruled most of the Arabic-speaking peoples in the days of the Ottoman Empire and who fostered Islam wherever he ruled. By the nineteenth century this sprawling imperial state was slipping from the sultan’s grasp. Turkey was the “Sick Man of Europe.”

Despite of reforms, culminating in the “Young Turks” coup d’état of 1908, conditions only seemed to worsen in the empire’s internal and external position. But after World War I, Turkey lost its empire and set off in a radically new direction under the iron rule of Kemal Ataturk (1881-1938). The sultans of the Ottoman Emire had claimed the ancient titled of Caliph of Islam, but Ataturk sought to establish a Westernized and militantly secular law in place of the Shari’ah, abolished the caliphate and Sufi orders, and forbade religious grab outside places of worship. Secularization dealt with matters large and small; Sunday was made the weekly holiday instead of Friday, and the wearing of the fez, a hat traditionally associated with old Turkey
and with Islam, was outlawed. The substitution of the Roman alphabet for the Arabic in the writing of Turkish further detached the nation from the world of Islam and aligned it with the West.

Ataturk’s style of wholesale secularization and Westernization as a solution for the problems of Muslim lands was initially embraced by the many in the Islamic world. Ataturk, regarded as the “Father of modern Turkey,” was a hero to some. The fathers of several other major Muslim countries, such as Pakistan and Indonesia (which gained independence or underwent transformation in mid-century), paid him the tribute of emulation. They too made no pretense of being orthodox believers. While appealing to the general ideal of Islamic nationhood, they favored “progress” at whatever cost to the particulars of the tradition. However, after Ataturk’s death, the deislamicization program in Turkey was gradually relaxed, and the continuing support of the religion by the peasantry showed the persisting strength of faith. In 2002 an Islamicist government gained tenuous political power. But as of this writing the two sides, with their two visions of Turkey as it hopefully prepares to join the European Union, maintain what appears to be a workable balance although not without strain at times.

Muhammad Gill in Reinterpretation of Islam in Turkey says:

“The country is still struggling to find equilibrium between Islam and secularism. The current effort is to find this equilibrium if possible. The reinterpretation of Hadith has now been undertaken by the Government to modernize the Turkish society. This project is underway”.(4)

It is important to recognize, however, that it was against the policies of “progressive” secular leaders, such as Ataturk and those who followed his lead, to which the Islamic fundamentalist reaction in the late 1970s and 1980s was largely directed. This resulted in the resurgence of Islam and, in some places, considerable conflict. The movement often labeled Arab Socialism, represented in several countries by the Ba’ath Party, seeks to combine Arab nationalism (aimed at eventual unification of the Arab peoples into one nation) with Qur’anic concern for justice and fair distribution of goods expressed through modern forms of governmental social activism. But
progress in this direction has been uneven and its implementation diverse in character. In Iraq, for example, Saddam Hussain rose to power through the Ba’ath Party to become president in 1979. Initially he sought reform, but at the cost of brutal totalitarianism. Iraq’s military aggression, first against Iran and then against Kuwait (ostensibly to work toward “nationalizing” the Arab World), ended in defeat, the latter aggression having resulted in the 1991 Gulf War in defense of Kuwait by a coalition of thirty-two nations led by the United States. The consequence was to further divide, rather than unite, the Arab World, especially because of the much-resented ongoing Western military presence in the region since the 1991 Gulf War. Then came the Gulf War of 2003, which, in some experts’ views, has further destabilized the region by, among other things, inflaming old rivalries between Sunni and Shi’ite Muslims and, in other experts’ views, has created the potential for a democratic Arab state.

**Graham E. Fuller States in Islamist Politics in Iraq After Saddam Hussain:**

“Islamism, as a basic feature of Muslim and especially Arab politics, is destined to play a major role in the future of Iraqi politics, now liberated from the Saddam Hussein strait-jacket. While Iraq has had a long secular tradition, the Baath regime has created immense resentments within Iraqi society that will seek expression. More important, in the wake of the brutal and corrupt Baath regime, a huge moral and ideological vacuum has emerged in Iraq, and Islam is tailor-made to provide a new moral compass to the people”.(5)

*Quoted in World Religions today by the Writer about the condition of Egypt is:*

“Hassan al Banna, a school teacher, established a Muslim brotherhood in Egypt in 1928. He combined traditional Islamic educational backgrounds with modern western thoughts.”(6)

In Libya, Mummar al-Qaddafi has ruled since 1970. Qaddafi has conjoined ideological socialism with strong nationalism and support of Islam to the extent that, in 1994, Qaddafi declared that the
Shari’ah would become the law of the land, rather than the preexisting secular law, and local government there is now in the hands of imams.

In neighboring Tunisia, on the other hand, the government, while nominally socialist and Muslim, has taken a far more moderate stance. Indeed, it has pioneered finding ways to adapt Islamic usages to modern conditions. Still, these efforts have led to a resurgent Islamic fundamentalist reaction in that country the outcome of which is yet to be seen.

After independence, Algeria was on a course in the tradition of its French colonial rulers, holding to the idea of a secular state and fostering socialist reforms. However, in the 1990s, Algeria was rent by civil war between a fundamentalist Islamic political movement, the “Islamic Salvation Front,” which hopes to create a theocracy there based on Islamic tradition, and the military-backed secularists. The conflict has been bloody and gruesome. While today the full-scale civil war has abated, battles continue, largely in rural areas. And in June 2001, a large-scaled demonstration in Algiers turned violent, proving that the conflict shows little sign of peaceful resolution in the near future. Tensions remain strong there.

Michael Molly in Experiencing the World Religions describes about one of the most historic revolutions of history:

“To the East of the Arab world, Iran presents the most dramatic example of Islamic resurgence. For decades Iran seemed to be moving inexorably toward westernization. All this ended in 1979 under the leadership of the Ayatollah Khomeini, the Shah Muhammad Pahlavi was toppled in 1979 and an Islamic republic was established, in which the Shari’ah was proclaimed to be normative and clergy like Khomeini took a decisive role.”(7)

The resplendent monarchy had lost popular support to a large extent because of its “Westernizing” tendencies. In its place came the classic evolutionary scenario of ecstatic mobs, reprisals, serious economic and social disruption, and the emerging outlines of a state more egalitarian, more isolationist, and more founded on Islamic law than what had gone before. Enforcement of traditional values was
effected with much religious fervor. However, more recently, moderate reformers have gained considerable political power.

**Religion and Politics in Iran by Greg Bruno states:**

“The reelection in 2001 of Mohammad Khatami, a reformer who has ledged to “deepen democracy” in Iran, as president in a landslide victory has provided strong mandate in this direction. As Ahmadinejad's foray into Islam suggests, the balance of religious and political power in Iran is fluid.” (8)

Nevertheless, the animosity between the reformer and the fundamentalist clerics remains high and the latter’s institutional power continues to thwart liberalizing reforms, such as open elections, freedom of the press, due process in the court system, and curtailing of the work of the “morals police” over which the current Ayatollah retains considerable control.

**Warren Mathews in World Religions Quotes:**

“But in 1979, the Shari’ah also became law under pressure of the Islamic resurgence. Much of the work on the constitution was inspired by Abul Ala Moududi.” (9) Prayer rooms were set up in factories and cinemas, and radio and television programs were censored to free them of anything obnoxious to Muslim faith and morals – a pattern similar to what is found elsewhere.

**Politics and Religions in the Modern World by George Moyser states:**

“In the Republic of India, religion has played an important role in the political evolution .Hindu reform movements, while regionally based and disruptive of hindu muslim harmony nevertheless prepared the way for national self-consciousness”. (10)

The 10 percent Muslim minority, influenced by the spirit and literature of the resurgence, has become more assertive. This has perpetuated tensions and riots between Muslims and the Hindu majority, in connection with the Ayodhya temple/mosque controversy.
Nowhere, however, was the resurgence of strict, traditionalist Islam more pronounced than in Afghanistan, which borders Pakistan to the South and Iran to the West. Afghanistan’s location at one end of the famous Khyber Pass (gate-way to India through what is now Pakistan), it was invaded in the nineteenth century by the British and in the twentieth century by the soviets. Between invasions, internal struggles for power left the country’s people with economically poor and insecure lives, while at the same time those in power promoted secularization and Western-style developments. With such a history, perhaps it is no surprise that, after the nineteen-year war with the Soviet Union ended with the Soviet withdrawal in 1989 and the several years of civil war that followed, a promise of peace and stability, and a return to Islamic fundamentals, was welcomed by the majority of the people.

Thus came the rise of the Taliban (“students of Islamic studies”), a fundamentalist Islamic sect, which eventually controlled approximately 90 percent of the country. Soon after gaining power, the Taliban introduced repressive policies based on narrow interpretations of Islamic law, even from the perspective of those in other Islamic nations. Under Taliban rule, contact with the world outside of Afghanistan was severely curtailed. Television and the Internet were banned, travel was limited, and, in general, censorship reigned. Taliban policies were especially severe for women and minorities. Under them, women were prohibited by law from obtaining an education, working for pay, driving a car, even leaving their home without approved male escorts. And when they were permitted to leave the home, they were required to be covered from head to toe in hijab so that no one could gaze upon them. Hindus were required to wear yellow identity patches. Violations of such requirements received the severest of penalties, including execution. Although American Muslims, as well as other Muslims around the world, condemned the Taliban, decrying the Taliban’s policies as contrary to the Qur’an, there was considerable support for the Taliban elsewhere, for example in Pakistan.

Taliban of Afghanistan especially came to world attention in March 2001, when the Taliban ordered and accomplished the
destruction of two famous Buddha statues located in Bamian, which had stood since the third century c.e., when they were carved into the side of a mountain during the region’s pre-Islamic past. The larger of the two statues is believed to have been the world’s tallest standing Buddha statue (181 feet tall; the smaller statue, 110 feet tall), and both were considered to be important world artistic treasurers.

Kristin Mendoza in Islam and Islamism in Afghanistan Narrates:

“Needless to say, Afghanistan and its Taliban leadership had become a source of concern for many around the world. Its growing influence, particularly among fundamentalists in Pakistan, did not bode well for stability in the region or, as has become evident, the rest of the world. This was all the more apparent because the Taliban hardened militant Islamic groups and their leaders, including Osama bin Laden, the wealthy Muslim militant, who had been linked to the World Trade Center bombing in 1993 and the United States Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. Then the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington, also masterminded by Bin Ladin, resulted in the destruction of the World Trade Center ad significant damage to the Pentagon. The United States responded with military action in Afghanistan against bin Laden and the Taliban and is now supporting the new government there in the tenuous rebuilding of the nation. As Afghanistan is now faced with the monumental task of rebuilding a state and legal system, Islamists are attempting to influence the reconstruction”(11)

In Malaysia, there has been a delicate racial balance that has held that nation together. Malaysia is 50 percent Malay Muslim, 35 percent Chinese, and 15 percent Hindu and others. Since independence from Britain, its government has been controlled by a wealthy, sophisticated urban class of Malays who have held their Muslim faith in moderation and maintained good relations with the Chinese, who dominate the economy. But a fundamentalist movement, with its own militant political party inspired by zealous preachers, has arisen, among the poorer resentment of both Chinese and worldly urban Malays, and its calls for a rigorously Islamic state on the puritanical model of others we have already discussed. This would of course, provoke strong opposition from the larger Chinese minority, who are
not Muslim at all and have no desire to live under such a regime but whose economic life is bound up with Malaysia.

On the other hand, Islam in Indonesia came late to the vast island nation and sat lightly on top of a spiritual culture still deeply permeated by the Hindu and Buddhist influences that preceded it and above all by an indigenous bent toward spiritualism and shamanism. It was the mystical, Sufi side of Islam, most congenial to the Indonesia temper that won clearest support at first. Here too, however, a strict Muslim party ad movement has been gaining support, and some have begun to challenge the secular state. Muslims now make up 87 percent of the population, a large majority of who believe that Islamic values should dominate society. At the same time, many hold to democratic rule, eschew the idea of an “Islamic state,” as such, ad embrace the possibilities of economic globalization. It will be of much interest to the world to see how the religious climate in Indonesia, the world’s fourth most populous nation, develops.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, six traditionally Muslim republics in that union declared full independence. They have been beset by many problems, however, and it is not yet clear what form Islam will take in them and how much influence it will have.

Islam has been part of a turbulent history in the southeastern European region known as the Balkans, which included largely Muslim Albania, half Muslim Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia (including the province of Kosovo, with its large Muslim ethnic Albanian population), and other states with smaller Muslim minorities. Violence there has been fueled by religious conflict, which dates back many centuries, and more recently resulted in the “ethnic cleansing” of Muslims by Serbian forces in the region. Although the region remains largely calm, resentments stemming from recent conflict continue to fuel tensions.

David Westerlund in his Book Islam outside the Arab world says:

“But Bosnia is a society where Islam will play an important role in future although it is common remark that Bosnians are
European Muslims who do not have much in common with Islamic Fundamentalists”.(12)

Elsewhere in Europe, the population of Muslims has grown considerably since World War II as a result of immigration.

**Malice Ruthven quotes in Islam in the World:**

“As many as one third of the Muslims living as minorities in the non Muslim countries Islam is becoming increasingly homogenized”.(13)

Turks work in German factories, Pakistanis have settled in England, and Algerians have come to France in great numbers, reversing former lines of European expansion. Muslims also maintain a presence in Greece and Bulgaria. All of this, together with a greatly increased business and diplomatic presence from Islamic countries, has dotted Western Europe with mosques and Islamic centers, even though Muslims do not represent more than a small minority there.

“The current generation is also modernizing and acculturating to Timothy M savage in Europe and Islam: crescent waxing cultures clashing says: aspects of contemporary European society at a faster rate than the first waves of Muslim immigrants did. Younger Muslims are adopting attributes of the European societies in which they were born and raised, such as language; socialization through schooling; and, in many cases, some of the secular perspectives of the country in which they reside”.(14)

**World Religions Today states:**

“Now majority of the Islamic organizations work within the system, a minority of radical extremist insist that Muslim rulers are anti Islamic and that violence and revolution are the only way to liberate society and impose an Islamic way of life”.(15)

**Douglas Pratt in the Challenges of Islam quotes:**
“The issues of western perceptions of Islam are a constant topic of concern in the 21st century both for Muslims and non-Muslims alike. It has come to the forefront in the dramatic and global sense ever since the terrorist attacks 9/11. The matter of how Islam and Muslims are perceived by west and western media will require sustained work if there is to any significant change for the better”. (16)

Discussion: The resurgence of traditional Islam is often debated as being a result of rampant nationalism accompanied by religious zealotry than real spiritual awakening. Resurgence has also been associated with self assertion of underprivileged classes in Muslim countries who resisted the modernization by their governments dominated mostly by elite class especially in first three decades after World War II. The beneficial effects of westernization and globalization are available to elites but along their hazardous effects on family life and Islamic traditions and values. Iranian revolution is one such prominent example of outburst against elite class for its modernization policies. The movements leading to resurgence of traditional Islam in different Islamic countries were led by Muslim fundamentalists who along with their followers insisted that Islam instead of being a roadblock to progress is in fact an ideal framework for building a more just social and economic order than capitalism. Islam is also seen as a sure bulwark against the disrupting influences on family life and pride in ones land and culture.

Considering the fact that Islam, compared to many other religions on earth, is a young faith, all of the above is nothing but good news and happy news. It is worth notice that Judaism and Christianity are both older than Islam. The Buddhist calendar goes back thousands of years. Islam has been here for less than 1400 years. It has accomplished much more than the older faiths. Take human development, for example. Consider embryology, one of the basic medical sciences, and go to the holy Koran where you will find a concise explanation of the stages of development of the human embryo. Take astronomy and go to the holy Koran and find scientific explanations of the universe, orbits of stars and planets and moons and their prescribed destinations. These are just examples of only two branches of science; you can take any other and seek reference for it in
the holy Koran. Yet, until as late as the 18th century, Islam was
dormant for about ten centuries. Its resurgence is credited to the fact
that its own character is compatible with advancements and
development in human societies. Its resurgence also stems from the
fact that there has been a great awakening of the Islamic societies to
the oppression of old and now new colonialism imposed on many
Islamic countries.

Today Islam, in its many manifestations, despite the present
movements of fundamentalism in different Islamic countries is full of
vigor and faith. Its strong Qur’anic traditions and egalitarian values,
variously interpreted, find much appeal all around the world. For
many, Islam is understood as standing for righteousness against the
secularizing and materialistic tendencies of the West. Every society
and tradition is experiencing major transformation and challenges as
the world enters into the new millennium. Islamic countries likewise
are also at a crossroad both in the sovereignty of their Islamic identity
and economics. The extent of Islamic life in the 21st century in Islamic
countries will depend mainly on the content of the education of the
coming generations and on the extent of Islamic teachings in the
education process in Islamic countries. The economic developments in
the future and the financial stability will also play a key role to curb
the resurgence of fundamentalist Islam in various countries. Above all
Muslim countries need to rise up to the challenge of promoting new
and positive image of Islam globally by understanding and utilizing
the power of media.

Dr. G. Rauf Roshan in his lecture (visiting scholar program in
USA) emphasizes on some burning issues the solution to which will
hasten Islamic resurgence.

“1). Islam is not well understood by the West:

Whose fault is this? Is the West at fault for not understanding
our sacred religion? At least this is what we are led to believe by those
who could have played a positive role in introducing Islam to the West
but did not, or those who have misrepresented Islam. Unfortunately,
there are groups of Muslims who, by their actions, foster this theory.
Some call these zealots, some call them extremists, some call them
fanatics and, in Afghanistan, they are called the purist Taleban. Taleban, good Muslims at heart, rose from the ashes of war in post Jihad era in Afghanistan. Again unfortunately, it is the tactics of the Taleban that is used as a weapon by the enemies of Islam not so much against the Taleban but against our sacred religion. It is time for the Muslims to let the world know that what goes on in Afghanistan is unique and pertains to that country alone.

2). Some Western media equate Islamic struggle with terrorism:
   The great prophet of Islam (PBUH) used to prohibit soldiers from killing women and children. He once listed murder as the second of the major sins. According to Islamic teachings, Muslims are even encouraged to be kind to animals and are forbidden to hurt them. It is, therefore, apparent that it is our duty to tell the world that Muslims follow a religion of peace, mercy, and forgiveness and that the vast majority has nothing to do with the violent events some have associated with Muslims. But, there is another aspect to this story.

3) The need to unite:
   Islam is a monotheistic religion. Muslims believe in the one and only God, Allah (SWT) The prophet of all Muslims is one. They all believe in the Koran as the word of God. It is one of the miracles of the Koran that it has remained, throughout the years, intact from additions and subtractions or any changes that have been applied to the books of other monotheistic religions, as referred to in one of Hassan Gardezi's works on Jihadi Islam. He says that all religio-political movements and parties claim to be working for Islam butt he multiplicity of these movements does not help bring unity among Muslims of only one nation—Pakistan and the similar moves elsewhere in the world. It would be a grand task for the Islamic intellectuals and leaders of the Islamic World to guide the Muslim nations to follow the path of unity.

4) Extremism:
   Extremism is being used as a weapon against Islam. Is this an issue only in the Islamic religion? Are there not extremists in other religions? How about Jewish extremism for one example? Is the world media treating all these extremists' tendencies in the same manner or are they biased when they discuss Islam? And what is extremism?
Does Islam provide for it? I think not. I think Islam is a tolerant religion. Traditionally Islam has stressed education more than war. It stresses correction more than punishment. Islamic governments have worked well in Egypt, in Turkey, in Syria, in Indonesia and many other non-extremist Muslim countries”.

It is the high time for the people from the Muslim Ummah who have legitimate power, expertise and financial resources should invest in the field of internet and communication technology (ICT). Their media advisors, writers and journalists can play a better role to project the true face of Islam and its teachings.

This discussion is concluded with a beautiful poem about love by the well-known Islamic scholar Maulawi Jalaluddin Balkhi, (Translation by Nader Khalili.) If your beloved has the life of fire, step in now and burn along In a night full of suffering and darkness, be a candle spreading light 'till dawn Stop this useless argument and disharmony; show your sweetness and accord Even if you feel torn to pieces, sew yourself new clothes Your body and soul will surely feel the joy when you simply go along Learn this lesson from lute, tambourine and trumpet, learn the harmony of musicians If one is playing a wrong note even among twenty, others will stray out of tune Don't say what is the use of me alone being peaceful when everyone is fighting You're not one you're a thousand, just light your lantern Since one live flame is better than a thousand dead souls.

So for the resurgence of Islam every Muslim should be like a live candle. Our holy book advises us to seek knowledge wherever it may be. We are required by our religion to win over our adversaries with our best manners and characteristics. Islam is a tolerant religion. It provides for human dignity and for embracing of knowledge by all human beings without discrimination on the basis of gender, color of skin, ethnic origin or language affiliation. Who is to tell the world about this? Logically the responsibility falls on the shoulders of Islamic organizations working in the west because they know the ways of the West. We need to appreciate the great technological advances for the promotion of our cause. As Muslims we must serve as examples of honesty, tolerance and love.
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