

## Understanding the Islamic States in the Post-Modern Era

**SAJAD RASOOL**

Lecturer in Political Science  
The University of Lakki Marwat, KP, PAKISTAN  
Email: [sajadrs1@gmail.com](mailto:sajadrs1@gmail.com)  
Tel: +923338483132

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### *Abstract*

*Nation states compelled Islamic world to evolve with the dynamic world and pursue the ideas and structures compatible with their universal Islam. Their perceptions regarding close collaboration within the Islamic world and outside its boundaries culminated in the establishment of OIC (Organization of Islamic Countries) and other regional organizations, representing their political contemplations and philosophies. This study is an investigation of the political modernization of Islamic world in the 21st century. It is comprised of two sections. The 1st part addresses the idea of the "state" as it has generally been grown in the Islamic world. The methodology is analytical and descriptive which includes a brief analysis of the Islamic countries. The second portion of this inquiry focuses on the unconventional progressive Islamic states, their incorporeal political structures, and their apparatus of day to day government, democratic, electoral procedures, and political gatherings, for the accomplishment of Islamic textures.*

**Keywords:** *Islam, Islamic State, Khalīfah, Ummah.*

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### **Introduction**

It is evident that the basic two sources of Islam (the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīths*) contain major aspects of governance and state administration and so the further details coming forth are left for the people to innovate and improvise according to the situation and needs. After the death of Prophet Muhammad (*Sallaho Alayhe Wasallam*) in 632 AD Muslim community faced a huge problem about who will be the successor (*khalīfah*) and what will be the method of selection? This was the beginning of the famous four Caliphate (*khulafāh-e- rāshidīn*) period. Muslim were new in the political field, but they learned and explored the glories never had anyone reached at that time. Their governance influenced the far and near kingdoms and their enormous progress in state craft, Science, Art and Literature influenced the intelligentsia and school of thoughts world widely.

Although Islam has the concept of collective moralities but on the political aspect it contains little information about how to form a government. Run state departments and manage different organizations. The *khalīfah* was considered more a religious leader than a political head. In political spheres, we see the most prominent piece of literature inherited from the period of Muhammad (*Sallaho Alayhe Wasallam*) is the document known as the charter of Madina, extended to the *Hijrah* period. The charter of Madina tells the believers about forming a universal community (*ummah*) which also included the Jews residing in Madina at that time and other tribes with the obligations that each tribe will be responsible for their own members conduct and the *ummah* has to act as a unit for social order and peace and security. With the advancement of the world and due to limited political knowledge in the Islamic scriptures Muslim community has to borrow many of the political ideas and systems from the other developing political cultures. Although the essence of every political system in all periods was based on the Islamic Law

(*sharī'ah*) embodied in the Qur'ān, and *sunnah*. The Islamic political culture also inspired from the traditions of Arabs and other countries political heritage which came under the flag of Muslim rule especially the Byzantine and Persian traditions. During the period of *khulafāh-e-rāshidīn* (632-661), Umayyad (661-750), *Abbāsīd* (749-1258) and Ottoman (1281-1992) dynasties the *sharī'ah* played a vital role in the formation and running of state affairs. It will be noteworthy to mention that Muslim were indeed state administrators, builders, better organizers and leaders in spheres of national army, governance and administrative arrangements which gave them a high footing over the European political and administrative ethos. But frankly speaking they became more dynasties than states in the later part of history as like the other monarchies and imperialist states of the medieval period. Subsequently the Western concept of state is more revolve around the state systems and structures emerged during the sixteenth to twentieth century relatively due to several factors like the Renaissance and the evolution of individualism and capitalism. It is obvious that we cannot find such genera of states in Islamic world in the pre-modern era, but it has much to describe about the politics, administration, rulers and ruled. These are the basis where we can find, what Islamic state looked like during its traditional period. If we cannot understand the concept of Western state without taking into account the models of liberty, law, individualism, communism we also cannot understand Islamic polity in isolation from its major concepts of *ummah*. Leadership (*imāmah*) and justice or fairness (*adl* or *'adālah*) (Ayubi, 2016).

## The Concept of State in Islam

If we study the Western political thoughts its starts with the city states in ancient Greek society, followed by the Romans who contributed to the international law and constitution as well, but after that there is a huge gape of several hundred years to reach the modern state system. There is little in the Western literature about the contribution of Muslims towards the political life and state institutions. Somehow, we can find a little about in the West about the establishment of city state at Makkah afore Islam and Madina which was established by the Prophet Muhammad (*Sallaho Alayhe Wasallam*). The concept of state in Islam is the institution which work for the better life of people not in this world only but also do such arrangements which leads to salvation in the world here after. According to (Qur'ān 3:110)

*"You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah. If only the People of the Scripture had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are believers, but most of them are defiantly disobedient"*.

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ ۗ وَلَوْ ءَامَنَ أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ ۚ مِمَّنْهُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثُرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ۝

It means that the primary function of not only the state but the whole *ummah* is to direct herself and others to the right path --- the path of God and to forbid from the wrong. At the same time an important query about the state sovereignty needs to be addressed. Who or where is the supreme power of the state lies in an Islamic state? If we study the western concept of sovereignty, we will find it in a body or in an institution but here is what Islam differ from this concept of human absolutism. In Muslim polity, this matter remained always a matter of concern and discussion and all Islamic jurists and writers are agreed upon the principle that the ultimate power of ruling and judging belongs to Allah almighty. The ruler or king use the sovereignty of God according to his will (*sharī'ah*) in Islamic State.

*"And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority." (Qur'ān 1:30)*

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً ۗ

Although the *khulafāh* will rule, but will rule according to the injunction of Qur'ān, and *Sunnah* (*sharī'ah*), and will be accountable not only to the people but to the Allah Almighty too on the Day of Judgment. This

authority of *khulafāh* confers no special power or permit or privileges to him, he is more responsible and bound to the common people because he has been given the greatest trust by the God.

“Say, “O Allah, Owner of Sovereignty, You give sovereignty to whom You will and You take sovereignty away from whom You will” (Qur’ān 3:26).

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَلِكُ الْمَلِكِ تُؤْتِي الْمَلِكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمَلِكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ

On the question of Islamic law some of the religious scholars believe that they have some special privileges regarding their view on Islamic principles, in fact in Islamic traditions a religious scholar can express his opinion freely but the legitimacy of his pinion depends upon the acceptance of other jurists and by the *ummah* as a whole under the rule of unanimity or consensus (*Ijmā*). Furthermore, Islam gave the process of mutual consultation (*Shurā*) to interpret the divine guidance and endorse the supremacy of God (Ghazi, 2016). According to Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani the *khulafāh* to Allah was Prophet Muhammad (*Sallaho Alayhe Wasallam*) only, after him the Muslim ruler is the *khulafāh* to Prophet (Usmani, 2010). He quotes the words of first *khulafāh Abu-Bakar (Razyallah Anho)* (Jamaah n.d., 57).

لست خليفة الله ولكني خليفة رسول الله ﷺ

So, the authority *khulafāh* has received from the messenger of Allah and he will rule in accordance with the teaching of Qur’ān, and *Sunnah*.

Taqi Usmani continue his dialogue and says that Islam has given the broad rules and devised the broader areas in political spheres and the minor details like the separation of powers, type of government, legislature structure etc. are left for the *ummah* to maintain pace with the changing situations and to evolve with the time shift (Usmani, 2010). He quotes in his book the statement of famous Muslim historian Ibn-e-Khaldun regarding the state arrangements by explaining that there are three types of state or government, one where the ruler is selfish and a dictator, and use the powers for self-interest and aggrandizement, the second one is where everyone live a rational and worldly life based on reason and the third one is, where people live their life in accordance with *shari’ah* in order to live a good life on earth and so a better one after life (Ibn-e-Khaldun, p. 189) and that is the Islamic type of polity.

## Dimensions of the Islamic States in the Modern Era

The beginning of the nineteenth century proved to be a turning point in the thoughts and ideas of Muslims related to structure and purpose of Islamic polity. The ties of Muslim world with the West gradually paved the ways for this transformation and generated feeling of anger and revolt. They started questioning their government concerning their status and role in the state affairs and objected over the presence of West in the Islamic domain which became the biggest ignition for the Muslim revivalist movements in the nineteenth century as compare to pre-nineteenth century awakening movements. The arrival of West on the political and cultural prospect of Muslim world alerted the Muslim society either to adopt the Western ways or to move back to their fundamentals (Brown, 2000). In the context of this rivalry, Muslim scholars divided into two groups the pro-western and the fundamentalists. The pro-western group represented by the elites educated in West having its influence in the urban masses wanted a lesser role of religion in the spheres of public life for the purpose to attain what Europe had, while the fundamentalists wanted to overcome the role of Europe and the resurrection of Islamic ideology, the Pan-Islamism (Black, 2004). Karen Armstrong views that the influence of the modernization on the Muslim world was evident from their struggle to get to the progress the West had already acquired and so several of them saw the answer in the form of secularism. On the other side, the European imperialist designs deeply affected many of the Muslims minds and worked at a catalyst for the thoughts of several prominent Muslim thinkers whose principal concern was the resurrection of Islamic ideology and removal of the Western influence from the Muslim society (Armstrong, 1993). The modernist believed that many of the Islamic principles are very

much in contact with the Western liberal ideas but the fundamentalist never accepted these ideas as they were very much convinced about that the reconciliation between the West and East is nearly impossible and the progress lies only in the ideology of Pan-Islamism (Mandeville, 2001). So, the instinct of an *ummah* in Muslim society was driven by the consistent degeneration of Islamic realm and socio-political and economical desperation of Western Colonial regimes. Naveed S. Sheikh defined this Islamic internationalism in the Post-colonial structure, a logical reflection for the creation of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) (Sheikh, 2003).

Despite all of this, Muslim *ummah* saw different phases in the early modern era, of secularism and Islamic revivalism. The *Khilafat* Movement in Sub-continent followed by the deposition of Ottoman Empire and introduction of *Kemalism* in Turkey, which turned the face of Muslim rule from *Khilafat* towards secularism. Kemal Atatürk introduced several reforms which greatly minimized the religious factor in the country political affairs. Iran has also adopted European model of modern secular state by separating religion from the state body politics during 1925 in the rule of King Raza Shah. Both have reduced the influence of religious scholars significantly and embraced the separation principle during all their reforms. Along with the secular movements the twentieth century also witnessed several Islamic revivalist movement, for instance Egypt, where both traditional and liberal setups failed to coup with the changing international challenges, Hasa Al-Banna an Egyptian school teacher founded a political party in 1928 named Muslim Brotherhood (إخوان المسلمون) with explicit Islamic ideology, provided a plat form for Egyptian youth with the goal to transform the Egyptian political designs to an Islamic state. In the mid of twentieth century another relevant event happened, the birth of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in 1947, a country which has the privilege of being the second state after Madina created on the name of Islam. Similarly, the contemporary Islamist movement later became a political party “*Jamat Islami*” also came into being under the leadership of Abu l-A'la' Maududi.

Maududi and Al-Banna inspired other two religious intellectuals Sayyed Qutab an Egyptian and the Iranian Ayatullah Ruhulla Khomeini. Sayyed Qutb and Maududi believed the system who is not based upon the laws of Islam are similar to the period of ignorance (زمانه جايليم) confronted by Prophet (*Sallaho Alayhe Wasallam*), they along with Khomeini thought Muslims to go back to their basics and rebuild the state Prophet (*Sallaho Alayhe Wasallam*) had formed in Madina (Khomeini, 1981). In 1977, General Zia Ul Haq imposed military dictatorship in Pakistan and attempted to establish an Islamic Social order through a system “*Nizam-e-Islami*” (Weiss, 1986) but eventually it was Iran who revolutionized her political system to revive the Islamic polity under the guardianship of Ayatullah Ruhulla Khomeini.

They articulated an old *Shia* idea about the rule i.e. the authority of Islamic law jurist في ولاية فقهي in the absence of Al-Mahdi the *Shia* twelfth Imam. Similarly, the Iranian constitution given the supreme authority in the hands of Supreme Leader a religious figure to unify the temporal and spiritual authority once again (Momen, 1985). Following the Iranian mode Sudan also attempted to form an Islamic polity. Jordan also got inspiration from the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. In Morocco and Indonesian, the Islamist parties came to political powers in 1997 and 2004 respectively, while in Afghanistan after the down fall of USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republic) and collapse of the President Najeebullah socialist government in the last decade of twentieth century Taliban came to power with the ideology of formation a socio-political system completely based on Islamic principles.

Turkey also allowed the Islamist party “Party of Justice and Development” headed by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan which is in power till now, cultivating Islamist structures and better relations with the Western countries. In all the above situations, the Islamist school of thoughts mobilized voters and worked for the Islamic polity in their respective state. There been seen two major trends in these movements, from one aspect they were pragmatic and participated in the political affairs through participation in election while from the other aspect several are trying to capture state powers through revolution and redicalist movements like ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) and TTP (Tehrik-e-Taliban).

### **Islamic States in Modern Globalized Worlds**

Resettlement of Muslims from the Middle East and South Asia quickened after World War II and in the long run brought substantial Muslim groups to the United States, Canada, and the nations of Western Europe. While Islam was getting to be politicized in the Islamic world, Western Muslims considered how they could live and groom their religion in a non-Muslim setting and whether cooperation in Western culture and political life was conceivable. These issues provoked the arrangement of various Muslim religious and social associations in the West in the 1980s and 90s, including the Islamic Society of North America, the Union of Islamic Organizations in France, and the European Council for Fatwa and Research. These gatherings endeavored to give direction to Muslims who wished to protect their Islamic character while adding to the political and social existence of their supportive countries. During the 1<sup>st</sup> decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Muslims in West were still not completely incorporated into their social orders, and numerous endured different types of discriminative behaviors.

Numerous likewise held connections with their nations through continuous travel and modern communicative instruments like the Internet. Modern Muslim Migrants had the chance to reclassify Islamic practices and convictions contrary to their societies and grandparents, whose understandings they considered excessively narrow or not sufficiently close to the universal Islam. Later on, the attacks of 9/11 changed the whole scenario and made the surface for Islam and Muslims too hard. America blamed Afghanistan for the attacks and started a worldwide campaign against the Muslim society as warned by Samuel P. Huntington in his "*Clash of Civilization*". In the interim, such conflicts as the banning of the veil in schools in France and the production of cartoons caricatures in Denmark personifying the Islamic faith turned out to a worldwide hostility, changing scholarly and political arguments amongst Islam and different religions. These developments lead to war in Afghanistan and Iraq. Similarly, the Libya and Syria turmoil, Egypt and Turkey military design also alerted the Muslim community that the Islamic ideology is in danger and that West will support every movement aimed secularism and against Islamic ideology (Britannica, 2016).

Later on, the emergence of Migrants world widely and especially in Middle East from Libya and Syria realized the world the miseries of Muslim society and European countries are now giving them asylum on their lands which has provided a better opportunity to the Muslims to amalgamate in the Western society and eradicate the Islamophobia from the West mind.

### **Conclusion**

Different researchers have contended that Islamist political developments rose in response to the disappointment of state-drove modernization and to general financial issues, for example, poverty and youth unemployment. However, Islamist developments are not constrained to poor nations or to some deprived groups, but individuals who participate are from a very thoughtful background embodied with secular ideologies. Specifically, these movements are ordinarily driven by young fellows and ladies who are effective experts with school or college degrees. General access to teachings and the accessibility of printed Islamic writing likewise gave these youngsters a chance to manufacture their own particular elucidations of political designs in Islam. Muslims could now consider the Qur'an and the Sunnah without the intervention of the *ulama*, who spoke to a more regulated elucidation of Islam.

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