

The roots of Islamic reawakening in the twentieth century are often traced in the Muslim response to the western colonialism in Asia and Africa. While it may be one contributory factor in the case of a few Muslim countries, a global Islamic reassertion, we notice as a phenomenon even in countries, which were not colonized by the western imperialists. This calls for search of more important reasons other than the often-repeated reactionary thesis. The interpretation of Islamic reawakening as a reaction to the European colonialism though, recognizes Islamic reawakening as historical reality, at the same time marginalizes the existence of Islamic reawakening in its own rights.

A serious study of the Islamic sources, the Qur'an and the sunnah will show that Islam as the way of life and a total system has an innate tendency to activate and reinvigorate from within, the process of Islamic re-assertion. The dynamic principle responsible for these phenomena is mentioned in the prophetic hadith as *ijtihad* (systematic and innovative thinking). Whenever the Muslim ummah faced periods of depression, and decline it was with the help of *ijtihad* or sometimes *jihad* that a new life in the ummah was infused. Indeed Nineteenth Century was a period of political, economic, and intellectual decline in the ummah. Nevertheless, we cannot think of a century in which at least a few towering Islamic personalities did not emerge to lead the ummah out of its temporary crisis with the help of *ijtihad*.

The crisis the ummah faced in the 20th century was encountered in a profound manner by the great exegete Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi (1903-1979). He pioneered a movement *ijtihad* at the level of thought and institution building and offered an ideological alternative to the modern world. Aware of the impact of ideological challenges of the Capitalist, Marxist and Fascists ideologies of the 19th century Europe, Sayyid Maududi encountered the challenge at three different levels. First one was at the level of ideology. The capitalists and Marxist ideologies, claim to have ultimate answer to the man's economic, social and political problems. The rise of Europe as a political power was also interpreted as its ideological supremacy on the other systems. Nevertheless the capitalist and the Marxists ideologies within the Twentieth Century saw this failure in realizing their utopian heaven on earth. First important contribution of Sayyid Maududi relates with his articulation of the Islamic vision of a society, economy, and state. While offering a critique of the European ideologies Sayyid Maududi, also offered at a positive level an alternative Islamic ideological framework. Meeting the challenges of modernity, perhaps no other Muslim intellectual in the 19th and 20th century offered such elaborate ideas on political, economic and social dimensions of Islam as we find in the writings of Sayyid Maududi.

Sayyid Maududi apparently holds the views that western ideologies can only be defeated at an intellectual level. This is why with a deep understanding and first hand knowledge of the Capitalists, Socialists and Fascists ideologies, he highlighted Islamic system of thought in his remarkable works entitled *Sud* (usury or interest), *Islamic civilization its genesis and principles*, *Tafhimat*, *al-Jihad fi allslam* and *Tanqihat*. While understanding the applied aspects of Islamic political, economics and social system, he offers a critical evaluation of the Capitalists and Socialists Ideologies.

In order to introduce and elaborate on the basic Qur'anic concepts he produced a monumental exegesis of Qur'an entitled *Tafhimul Qur'an* while further elaboration was done on certain basic Qur'anic themes in his books *Four Basic Terms of the Qur'an* and *Islamic Ibadat par aik Tehqiqi Nazr*. The purpose of his *Tafseer of the Qur'an* is not to go in academic and historical discussions but to use historical background and contextual analysis for discovering relevance of the Qur'anic instructions with contemporary situation.

The ideological contribution made by Sayyid Maududi appears to be one of the major factors behind the global Islamic reawakening. While he produced his work essentially in Urdu his ideas were translated into Arabic, Persian, Turkish, English, French and German languages within first two decades of his establishing the movement for Islamic revival in the Pakistan sub-continent. By late 1950s he was already an internationally known spokesman for Islam as the ideology of future. It was due to his clarity of thought and systematic approach in presenting Islamic system that young intellectuals in Sudan, Iran, Middle East with their given situations.

The second major contribution made by him was launching of a movement for *Ishah* in the sub-continent Pakistan. With an humble beginning in 1941 the movement soon spread all over the sub continent and was able to attract mostly educated class among its membership. The primary objective of the movement was transformation of the individual through social action program leading to a change in the institutions of society economy and state. He developed an integrative approach for this institutional change in society. Unlike the traditional approach of self-purification, acquiring spirituality, or causing a popular movement for change the *Ishah* movement founded by him focused on an comprehensive change in society. This indeed included political program. Nevertheless the political program was not its one and only objective. It was a part of the total social change for which ideological roots were provided through a deep study of the Qur'an and the sunnah. It is remarkable that no other Muslim intellectual in the 20th century was able to articulate Islamic political system as pragmatically as was done by him. His books *Islamic State*, *Islamic law and Constitution*, *Khilafat-o-Mulukiat*, *How to establish an Islamic State*, and many other articles he wrote on applied aspects of Islamic political system provide an evidence to this observation. While people like Iqbal, Afghani, and Khomeni did talk about the need of Muslim political unity, or obligation of Muslims to establish political authority. None of them was able to provide a blue print for Islamic political change. Sayyid Maududi on the other hand was able to outline step by step process for social and political change leading to a just social order.

Another remarkable contribution of Sayyid Maududi is the development of a climate in the movement of *Jamat-e-Islami*, in which the personal charisma of the leader was practically marginalised while talent of critical thinking in the

membership was elevated. Through his writings and institutional development of a movement of islah he removed from minds of his followers. The reverence and intellectual infallibility of the leadership, which is normal in the movements, found by towering personalities. This aspect also lead to marginalization of any tendency for extremism or fundamentalism within the movement and in its auxiliaries developed under influence of his thought.

It is rather unfortunate that people who have never taken time to study the thought, the person and the movement of Sayyid Maududi draw a haste judgement that his call for ijthad based on the Islamic sources namely the Qur'an and the sunnah lead to what has been termed fundamentalism by several Christian scholars. The term fundamentalism has great relevance with the Christian theology. Particularly in the early 20th century Christian thought the movement of literalism and going back to Bible for the personal salvation of the individual, lead to extremism and a dogmatic attitude among its followers. On the other hand, it has no relevance with a system of thought in which the call to go back to the Qur'an and the sunnah requires rational exercise of ifthad, in solving contemporary problems. This process can best be interpreted as a dynamic systematic approach in meeting the challenges of modernity thus cannot be interpreted as "fundamentalism."

Sayyid Maududi pioneers through his intellectual and institutional contribution a movement for ijthad in economic, political and social sectors. It is unfair to brand his ideas and the movement, due to his call to go back to the Qur'an and the sunnah certain others groups, as fundamentalist. These groups when they call for going back to Qur'an and the sunnah often mean observing strictly the ways of doing things by the salaf. The movements which call for formal conformity with the way of the living of the salaf may lead to a fossilization of thought, while movement which calls for islah and ijthad lead to progress, development and modernity.

Islam essentially is a movement of social change and realization of social justice for the whole of mankind. It is not a backward looking movement. Qur'an and the sunnah provide guiding light for the structuring of future through the system of shariah, Islamic thought, and Islamic state. Therefore, movements for islah and ijthad due to their concern for future role of Islam, substantially, cannot be categorized as backward looking or fundamentalist. The intellectual and institutional contribution of Sayyid Maududi in the Islamic thought, is sometimes compared with the contribution made by some secular scholars in the European intellectual tradition such as Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. However, Maududi was not a person who confined his ideas to one discipline. He covered a larger spectrum of knowledge than any one of the above scholars, who did play a remarkable role in shaping the mind of modern Europe. Sayyid Maududi's contribution to the global Islamic reawakening is yet to be properly evaluated and understood in the light of the emergence of movements of re-assertion in North America, Europe, Africa and Asia.

The task calls for an institute to be devoted to the study of his and two hundred works translated in on twenty-eight languages. The most appropriate time for founding of such an institute may be the beginning of the new century when we also complete one hundred years of his birth in September 2003.

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