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CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL ISSUES AND QURA'N

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INTRODUCTION

The Holy Quran is the book of guidance revealed to the Last Prophet, Muhammad (PBUH), by Allah. This book is the greatest miracle in the world, an intellectual marvel that appeals to human minds to seriously contemplate the truths related to human life. This is because a fundamental characteristic of this book is that it repeatedly calls upon human intellect to benefit from clear arguments to understand the realities of life. The Holy Quran also has the honor of being a guide for all of humanity living on Earth, rather than being limited to a specific race or region. Similarly, the Quran is also honored as a guiding book for all fundamental issues related to human life. Therefore, the Holy Quran serves as a guiding book for human societal issues as well.

Muhammad (PBUH) not only explained the Quran through his words but also laid the foundation of an exemplary human society in practical form in light of the Quran. We can provide clear solutions to today's social issues based on the teachings of the Holy Quran. The following lines will outline societal issues with the guidance of the Quran.

1. CLASS STRUGGLE IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY:

A pressing issue in today's society is the struggle between various social classes. This struggle has escalated to a point where it has adopted a violent demeanor. In this struggle, religion, region, race, and standard of living are at the forefront, becoming fundamental elements in the battle of interests today. Such class struggles are ongoing in almost every part of the globe. Although this issue has existed since ancient times, perhaps there is little room for it in today's advanced human society, as modern man lives in an age of knowledge and awareness. Contemporary world has become a global village, often referred to as the Global World. In this Global World, a society free from such struggles has become a basic necessity for development. While it may be impossible to completely eliminate these conflicts, it is crucial to protect society from further destruction as a result of them.

The Holy Quran offers the solution to this issue by stating that the division of humans into different communities and groups is the will of Allah. However, this division is not meant to elevate some and belittle

others; it's simply for recognition so that the countless individuals in the world can get to know each other and recognize one another. In this regard, the Quran says:

"O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)."¹

This verse of the Quran highlights several issues and, first and foremost, it eradicates all forms of prejudice among humans by stating that all human beings are the offspring of the same parents, and no class is special based on region or race. In this verse, the very foundation of every type of prejudice is uprooted. A notion is presented that lays the groundwork for a global brotherhood among humans. Especially, it completely dismantles the foundation of all racial prejudice.

In this verse, the Quran identifies the characteristics of the best humans not based on racial or regional ties, but on their piety. If we understand this piety in a broader sense, it includes both devotion to God and love for humanity. The Holy Quran mandates sympathy, caring, mutual love, and brotherhood among humans as integral to piety.

Qura'nic teaching's forbids any kind of chaos. The Holy Quran contains many verses that prohibit all forms of discord, and not only forbids all kinds of biases, but also labels them as a great sin and ignorance. Today, in the light of the verses of the Holy Quran, there are solutions to many societal issues; in fact, we can say that the Holy Quran does not even allow such problems arising.

2. ECONOMIC ISSUES AND QURANIC TEACHINGS

No one can deny that the economy serves as the backbone of human society. A society cannot be imagined without an economy. The economy plays a fundamental role in human needs within society. However, it is also a reality that throughout human history, wealth has been the cause of conflict and strife among various classes and even nations, and this remains as a continuous process. The economic strength of one class in comparison to others has led to viewing others as inferior, which still continues. In contemporary developed human society, economic imbalance has become a significant issue, showing its effects from local communities to the global level. Once again, the human world is on the path of a capitalist system. Alongside this, countless individuals in society are suffering from unemployment and poverty. As a result of this poverty, people are getting involved in various kinds

¹*Al-quran, al-hujrat: 13*

of crimes, which have taken extremely dangerous forms that are difficult to elaborate on. We can say that in contemporary society, crimes have reached such a terrifying level that stopping them has become a challenge for everyone.

The verses of the Qur'an contain clear guidelines regarding the economy. The Qur'an provides complete guidance to all the problems related to the economy. The Qur'an, in relation to the economy and its problems, presents the concept of an economic system in which there is no spaceto, the economic and financial instability and it provides guidance regarding the proper use of wealth. The Quran gives the concept of a balanced economy, in which on the one hand every person has been given high opportunities for economic development, and no limit has been set for a person to his economic development, but on the other hand the rich class of the society has also been made responsible regarding the poor class, living in the society.

The Quran considers worldly life as a test. The Qur'an teaches man to take full advantage of material or financial resources, but it is necessary to adopt legitimate sources to obtain wealth. It also prevents them from being used for wrong purposes. The Qur'an describes the economic procedure in the following verse:

“What Allah has bestowed on His Messenger (and taken away) from the people of the townships,- belongs to Allah,- to His Messenger and to kindred and orphans, the needy and the wayfarer; In order that it may not (merely) make a circuit between the wealthy among you. So take what the Messenger assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you. And fear Allah; for Allah is strict in Punishment.”²

The verses of the Holy Quran contain clear guidelines regarding the economy. From the smallest to the greatest economic issues, the Holy Quran provides complete guidance and presents the concept of an economic system in relation to the economy and its associated issues, where all avenues that could lead to economic and financial instability are closed. The Holy Quran guides the correct use of wealth at various occasions. The Holy Quran provides the concept of a balanced economic system.

On one hand, every person has been given excellent opportunities for economic development, and according to this, there is no limit set for an individual to grow economically. However, on the other hand, the wealthy class in society has also been assigned responsibilities towards the poor and needy in society.

² Al-quran,al-hashr:7

As it is already mentioned that according to the Quran, the world is a place of test, and in this test, it is particularly based on wealth and. The Quran teaches humans to make full use of material or financial resources, but it also stipulates that one must acquire wealth through legitimate means and prevents its use for wrongful purposes. In the above verse of the Quran, guidance is provided for making full use of economic resources. The guidance outlined in this verse can be summarized in the following points:

(a) The Quran states a fundamental principle regarding wealth: it should circulate rather than be concentrated in one place. By allowing wealth to circulate, more opportunities for benefit arise instead of it being hoarded in one spot. This fundamental principle regarding the economy has also been acknowledged in contemporary world. In this regard, economists have noted that an increase in wealth lead to more opportunities for everyone, we can say that it is considered as an established fact in the economic process. Economists have also guided towards maximizing opportunities for the circulation of wealth.

(b) Despite acknowledging this fundamental principle of the Holy Quran, a major cause of imbalance in the economy is the misuse of its resources. The Holy Quran, while outlining the principle of wealth circulation, directs that the best use of wealth should be for the welfare of a person and society as well. The fundamental role of social welfare is to support financially those classes within it who are economically weak and have fallen into hardship. The verse mentions the needy, relatives, orphans, and temporarily helpless individuals. Under this principle, the Holy Quran opposes all forms of capitalism. It instructs the wealthy to allocate a specific amount for the underprivileged sections of society.

(c) This verse also stipulates regarding wealth that in economic matters, people should fear God, as individuals are accountable before Allah in all transactions, and the greatest responsibility will pertain to wealth. The Holy Quran provides clear regulations regarding trade, transactions, and the distribution of inheritance, demonstrating that it offers comprehensive guidance on wealth and closes the doors to all forms of chaos. The Holy Quran establishes the necessity of wealth for humans in accordance with human nature, while also guiding the system of the economy through clear instructions. Keeping these teachings of the Holy Quran, concerning the economy, in mind, can prevent all forms of chaos and maximize the benefits from financial resources. As a result of these instructions, both the wealthy and economically disadvantaged classes of society can benefit.

3. SOCIAL VALUES AND THE HOLY QURAN

It cannot be denied that the foundation of a social system lies in the values that every person in society respects. These values are interconnected with every aspect of human life in society. Today, however, these values are in decline, resulting in several challenges for society. In this post-modern era, while the standard of living has

improved, maintaining social values has become a challenge. The yardsticks of good and evil are changing, and the system of households, which are the basic units of society, has also been affected. In society, people are adopting different lifestyles in the name of conservatism and on the other hand in the name of Enlightenment. There is a struggle within this society filled with diverse opinions.

The enlightened class considers it essential to break the old traditions and as well as values and to be free from many old customs in order to progress, but on the other hand, this very enlightened section has failed to curb the rising crime rates. On the other side, the conservative section believes it is necessary to protect traditional values for society, but this section, even in the age of information technology, allow many of the old customs on the name of values which are not even approved by any of the genuine religious sources. To build a value based modern society, we should differentiate between the faith and unhuman acts. What we mean by conservatism here is one that regards reason as taboo in every matter. There is a need for a conceptual society that is rooted in knowledge and values as well.

Quran guides us towards the balanced approach regarding the society, we know that Quran rejects every aspect of blind faith, but at the same time it rejects the conception of considering values as an old tradition. Quranic point of view is clear in this regard and that is to be realistic one, Quran mentioned a human as a model being and insists him to use his intellect to judge the things. Human beings are equipped with social sense and without this sense there is no concept of moral human being, there is need to follow the moderate social approach of the Quran.

The Quran emphasizes the importance of basic societal values, but alongside these values, it also guides humans to make themselves enlightening of knowledge and awareness. The Holy Quran warns against any blind imitation for society and, in contrast, urges society to evaluate everything in the light of knowledge and awareness. The Quran promotes a realistic attitude rather than conservatism; however, it doesn't leave room for any shortcomings regarding ethics and manners. The Holy Quran instructs to continue the process of purification within society, as stated:

"Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones to attain felicity.³"

³ *Al-quran, a'l-imran: 104*

In the above-mentioned verse, the concept of society is explained in the following points:

1. It is essential for society to always have a group that distinguishes between good and evil, guiding people towards “ma'roof” (known good actions) and preventing them from “munkar” (evil).
2. “ma'roof” refers to any good action or behavior that is naturally understood as good by every human, while “munkar” refers to actions that human nature perceives as bad. The Quran does not talk about the customs of any specific region or nation but instead addresses values that humanity naturally recognizes as correct. Similarly, the Quran prohibits every form of evil that human nature considers wrong.
3. According to the Quran, goodness and excellent morals are part of human nature, so ignoring them under the pretext of conservatism can prove extremely harmful to society. Likewise, labeling something that is bad as enlightened in light of human nature is nothing but ignorance.

Overall, reviewing contemporary social issues in light of the Quran reveals that although the roots of current social problems can be traced back to ancient times, modern means have exacerbated them, leading humans to indulge in excess. The Quran presents a vision of life that appeals to human nature, upon which a righteous human society can be built. Clear solutions exist regarding contemporary social and economic problems. The Quran provides ample guidance for all kinds of issues, including social and economic problems, through which a harmonious human society can be constructed.

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