

How Long will a Muslim Revival Take?

-Syed Ubaidur Rahman

For long, many organizations have been trying to make many of us believe that the next decade will be the decade of the Muslim or the next century will be the century of Muslims. Is it going to be possible?

Are they capable of bringing the change the society needs even if they are given the government of those respective nations on platter?

Will merely change of a government in an insignificant country change the fate of Muslims and Islamize the world? Alas, this is not true and merely change of a government from a 'Muslim' to 'Islamist' will change nothing.

Muslims are on a long road to downward spiral and it is still going to take a long time, many decades, if not centuries before the slide stops. Muslims' century or Muslims' decade is merely a daydreaming and nothing more as of today.

The historic journeys of communities as big as Muslims or Christians don't take years or decades, they involve centuries and when it comes to the Muslim community, from being at the bottom of the bottom to its old glory, you need to do more than just dream and dream. The Christian dominance of the world began around twelfth century when the Crusaders attacked Arabia. After attacking the present day Syria, Palestine and Israel, the French, German, and English leaders realized they are simply no match to a community that is centuries ahead of them as far as knowledge and civilization is concerned. When it dawned upon them, they started sending their kids to Muslim universities in Andalusia, Granada, Baghdad and other Muslim centers of educations in north Africa and elsewhere too, before starting their own universities, many of which are great centers of learning till today. Then in the fourteenth century while German, French and English princes were trying to decipher as to how to control the church, they started building blocks of scientific and industrial revolution. In sixteenth century the industrial and economic revolution became so powerful that the church had to sidestep to remain relevant despite losing much of its power.

When, in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the industrially developed Christians started attacking Muslim power centers across the world, the agrarian economies of Muslims and their inferior armies proved no match to the invaders and wilted without giving much of a fight. Mogul Empire in India, so called Muslim caliphate of Turkey besides Muslim nations across the Arabian Peninsula and Northern Africa, all wilted and these 'great' nations couldn't put up even meaningful fights.

At one side of the spectrum were armies from industrially developed nations that came with unprecedented technological edge, and on the other side were nations that were solely agrarian with no industrial base and no modern warfare tech to support them. When Europe had built world class universities, churning out innovators and inventors, the Muslim world had not established even basic building blocks of modern education, let alone modern universities.

Many Islamist leaders have tried to sell a dream to the Muslims across the world that by merely embracing their thoughts and giving them power will change the scenario completely. Muslims' miseries will be over and a golden period will begin. They were claiming to change the fate of such a massive community as if they were in possession of Aladdin's lamp. But alas they were just dream merchants and nothing more.

Ibn Khaldun has written at length as to how Islam is not a set of miracles that will put you back to power without changing the basic dynamics. Muslims will have to match the technological and industrial development to be able to raise to the leadership level of the world. They will have to come out with new innovations and create new technologies that will put them ahead of others. Muslims will have to become leaders in knowledge to once again lead the world.

Thankfully, with knowledge moving at breakneck speed, there is a chance that things may start falling in place before long and Muslims may not have to remain in wilderness for five or six hundred years, that was the case of Christians. Nonetheless, for it, we will have to change our whole perception about knowledge and stop differentiating between religious and modern.

Knowledge is from God and we have to use every opportunity to harness it and taking it forward. As someone said, we have to stop the tradition of hifze mathematics and hifze science and instead create scientific temper among Muslim societies around the world.

These are long-term goals and involve meticulous planning for decades and centuries ahead. And dream merchants are not the sort of people who can think of such long-term planning and realization of goals.

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