

Contending For Islam Document Analysis

Posted on October 24, 2019

What Western influences and ideas can the Muslim world safely integrate within their societies, and what are the limits to that compatibility, if any?

A Western secular culture that came with Western imperialism was confronted by Muslims in different ways. Within the Muslim world, there have been controversial debates and movements that disputed the implications and integration of Islamic ideals into modern political and social life.

Document 24:1

Kemal Ataturk challenged Ottomans and argued his case for changing some Islamic practices held by traditionalists and conservatives (Ataturk, 1929).

Ataturk disagreed with leaders who wished to retain and revive the Caliphate and rule the Muslim world through a single power center. The debate discussed different ideas and used the fez hat as an example to suggest that with time, old traditions must also change.

Ataturk's view revolved around the fact that Islam and modernity can still coexist; however, some aspects of Islam should become private and not interfere in public life, and Islamic piety must not be enforced through state regulations.

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According to the Muslim World, many of Egypt's problems that arose after British rule and led to the penetration and adoption of Western values can be addressed by a return to key Islamic principles, which can be integrated with modern life (al-Banna, 1970).

Hassan al Banna presented reforms that covered the relationship between the Individuals and the state. Islamic laws should guide the judiciary as well as military strategy. Alcohol and gambling were to be banned, and Islamic conduct and education were to be promoted, rejecting customs foreign to Islam. Zakat tax would be used to support welfare schemes.

The reforms presented reflected the [Muslim Brotherhood's](#) vision for a good society in the modern era that balances aspects of modern life with Islamic laws.

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Benazir Bhutto presents a liberal argument in favor of Islam by analyzing scripture and citing examples (Bhutto, 1998).

Bhutto suggests that there is not one interpretation of Islam, and there could be a progressive interpretation that could be different from the “Mullah” ultra-conservative version. Everyone is free to interpret the Quran in his own way since Islam does not have a clergy. Scripture and the life of Islam’s revered figures show Islam stood for equality in issues such as divorce, business, politics, and leadership.

According to Benazir, the progressive liberal understanding of Islam differs from the regressive ideas of some conservatives and is compatible with modernity.

Islam and Democracy: Is Modernization a Barrier?

Islam’s compatibility with democracy has been interpreted differently by people with varied political visions, but there have been important debates that have led to the idea that democracy and Islam have compatibility (Voll, 2007).

With the advance of Western secular ideals, many Muslim thinkers rejected democracy as they saw its ideas, such as the sovereignty of the people, to be incompatible with Islam’s fundamental principle of God’s sovereignty, but later on, many modern, conservative and liberal thinkers conceded to the idea that Islamic principles are conducive to modern democracy.

Nearly all the suggested arguments center on the fact that it is important that Islam be maintained as the foundation for whatever programs are advocated.

The Islamic World Doesn’t Need a Reformation

The author argues that the Islamic world does not need Martin Luther to reform it; instead, it needs someone like John Locke, who can devise religion-friendly arguments to frame a model for Muslim Enlightenment (Akyol, 2017).

The transformation of the Muslim world in many ways mirrors the Christian world, but because it has no central authority, it can be interpreted progressively using enlightenment ideas as examples instead of completely reforming it. A number of competing ideologies and counter-ideologies exist within the Muslim world, but what works best is not a Western model that shuns religion but a more inclusive model revolving around ideas of the Islamic Enlightenment.

Those who wish to see a Muslim world being more free, tolerant, and open should not copy the

Protestant Reformation model but seek to modernize by borrowing ideas from Western Enlightenment.

Thesis Statement

The West brought out a number of achievements in terms of human progress. A consistent theme in the sources is its acknowledgment, however, the Islamic tradition with its glorious history and civilization contradicts many aspects to parts of Western culture. Islamic modernism and a progressive vision of Islam can be compatible with some core aspects of modernity, enlightenment, and democracy but diverge from it in other aspects. It is obvious that a total transfer of the Western model cannot work in Islamic countries.

References

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