The Youth, the Pioneers of Explaining and Safeguarding Islamic Identity

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Abstract

Youth, according to Oxford English dictionary is a young man, mostly “the period between childhood and adult age”. But on the part of the UN, Youth is finely comprehended as a time of progress from the reliance of adolescence to maturity’s autonomy. That is the reason, as a classification, youth is somewhat flexible when compared to other definite age-groups. However, age is the most straightforward approach to characterize this gathering, especially in connection to education and work, since ‘youth’ regularly alludes to an individual between the periods of leaving mandatory year of schooling, and securing their first position. For factual purposes, United Nations characterizes ‘youth’, as those people between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without preference to different definitions by the Member States. Muslim youth are to strive in Islam through various contributions such as their time, ability and wealth. They ought to likewise assume a significant responsibility to achieve positive change in the public, and should work with a target of making Islam pervasive over the various lifestyles. The young age is the phase of life when an individual is duty-bound to learn worthy and valuable knowledge of Islam, then beneficial worldly
knowledge and judiciously make use of this knowledge, time and ability given by Allah to enhance Islam and its perceptions.

Keywords: Youth; Muslim; Islamic Identity

1. Introduction

Youth, according to Oxford English dictionary is a young man, mostly "the period between childhood and adult age". But on the part of the UN, Youth is finely comprehended as a time of progress from the reliance of adolescence to maturity's autonomy. That is the reason, as a classification, youth is somewhat flexible when compared to other definite age-groups. However, age is the most straightforward approach to characterize this gathering, especially in connection to education and work, since 'youth' regularly alludes to an individual between the periods of leaving mandatory year of schooling and securing their first position. For factual purposes, United Nations characterizes 'youth', as those people between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without preference to different definitions by Member States. Previously, the then UN Secretary-General alluded to the present meaning of youth in 1981 in his description on International Youth Year to the General Assembly (Article 36/215, paragraph 8 of the addition) and embraced it in its following interpretations (Article 40/256, paragraph 19 of the addition).

Be that as it may, the Secretary-General in each of the reports possibly perceived that, except for the measurable meaning, the definition of the term 'youth' differs in various countries globally. At a point, the UN General Assembly by its resolve of 50 out of 81 in 1995 acknowledged in the World Program of Action for Youth up till 2000 and beyond that, the youth are
characterized as the age group between 15 and 24. However, youth is defined by UN Habitat (Youth Fund) as age group 15 to 32 while the African Youth Charter considered youth as age group 15 to 35. Although, the characterization of youth feasibly varies by environments, particularly through the variations in the demographic, fiscal, trade or industry, societal and traditional backgrounds (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)). The rest of this work has been presented as follows. Section 2 focuses on literature review. Analysis and Discussion are being presented in section 3 whilst conclusion and future work is covered in section 4.

2. Literature Review

Muslim Youth is important in upholding the banner of Islam, and they should stand irrespective of their circumstances as the pivotal of Islamic Identity. This can be largely expressed through the observance of the practices and customs of true religion of Islam by following the instructions of the Qur’an and Sunnah. But is not limited to this foundation alone, rather Muslim youth need to frequently strive to maintain good behavior, integrity, honesty, tolerance, self-discipline, and piety. Regarding this, a vivid illustration can be drawn from the Quran about the story of the virtuous youth who slept in the cave in the Surat Al Kahf (The Cave, Surah 18). Also, in the Quran they were known as the people of the cave, the story portrayed the impact of faith on devotees by comforting them with ultimate tranquility of the heart. These youths secluded themselves from the city as they find it difficult to live as a believer, and preferred to stay away from porous society and all forms of material treasures and desires by seeking refuge in a cave under the care of Allah (God).
Allah says: *Do you think that the people of the cave and the inscription were a wonder among Our signs? When those youths took refuge in the cave, they said: ‘Our Lord! Bestow on us Your grace, and provide for us right guidance in our affair.’ So We drew a veil over their ears in the cave, for a number of years, and then We awakened them so that We might mark out which of the two parties managed to calculate the time they had remained in that state (Al-Kahf 18: 9-12).

Equally, the summary of the entire story indicates that the individuals of the cave were young people, whose number isn’t referenced, and that they went to the cave to disconnect themselves from their locale since they trusted in God. Additionally, the story expressed that they were made to rest in the cave for various years, which is not elaborated in the verse before they were stirred from their long sleep. Afterward, the story outlined that the record that was going to be given to prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was every single bit of relevant information regarding the issue of the people of the cave, as Allah says:

“We will identify with you their story in all fact. They were youngsters who had faith in their Lord, so We increased them in guidance. We put fearlessness in their hearts, with the goal that they stood up and stated: Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. Never will we call upon any god other than Him. In the event that we did, we should indeed have uttered an enormity! These individuals of our own have taken for worship gods other than Him, without having the option to show any persuading verification regarding their convictions. Who does more wrong than he who invents a lie about God? Subsequently, since you have pulled
Principally from the story, we can deduce that those believing young men were guided by Allah, so as to have the option to deal with their undertakings with their locale. Alongside this expanded guidance, "We put self-assurance in their hearts" to make them strong in their frame of mind, strong in their belief in reality and pleased with the faith they had preferred.

3. Analysis and Discussion

Islamic identity is fashioned upon the mechanisms that constitute the Muslim's attitude and distinguish our sensitivities concerning our self, our god, humankind, faunas, floras, and generally the cosmos. These portions empower Muslims to respond to the most major life inquiries that overwhelm the humankind disposition over the years. Responding to queries such as, what is the origin of human?, what is the purpose of life?, and where shall we return to after our passing?, these questions make the Muslim to always ponder on how ephemeral is the current world and the limitedness of life. As prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) says that the life of this world is like an ocean, the little drop that we can see from putting our finger and removing it from an ocean is the summary of this life compare to the hereafter, as prophet Muhammad says: "The life of this world compared to the Hereafter is as if one of you were to put his finger in the ocean and take it out again then compare the water that remains on his finger to the water that remains in the ocean".

In addition, it likewise opens the mind of humankind to new purviews of
yearning which rise above past human natural life. However, the answer to the life inquiries comfort the hearts of those who are ill, the penniless, the individuals who were isolated from their friends and family by death and the misfortunate among other people who endure in this world as they are guaranteed that this life isn't the end and that it is just a portal after which an endless life occurs (Dar al-Iftaa Al-Missriyyah, 2019).

Generally, the Muslim’s view of life should originate from faith in one God who is the most tolerant, the most humane, all transcendent, all meeting, all observing, with extreme capacity, equity and endless knowledge. Muslims accept that God made individuals out of adoration and made them worship, love and serve Him. As he says: “And I did not create the Jinn and mankind except to worship Me...” (Quran, 51:56). Muslims accept that God didn’t make the world futile and that He didn’t leave us stranded yet in a condition of steady sustenance and fortune. He sent us direction through prophets and envoys alongside heavenly books to edify us about ourselves, our Lord and the universe.

Muslim youth are to strife in Islam through various contributions such as their time, ability and wealth. They ought to likewise assume a significant responsibility to achieve positive change in the public, and should work with a target of making Islam pervasive over the various lifestyles. The young age is the phase of life when an individual is duty-bound to learn worthy and valuable knowledge of Islam, then beneficial worldly knowledge and judiciously make use of this knowledge, time and ability given by Allah to enhance Islam and its perceptions (The Young Muslim Digest, 2019).

The unique and beneficial time of life is youth. Young age is the most significant phase of Muslims life as it is the phase that individual makes
valuable decisions of life. The decision might be correct or incorrect. It is a period that the adolescent will have numerous deviancies and unnecessary interruptions like listening to music, chasing young ladies, smoking cigarettes, drinking liquor, playing games, viewing pornography and so forth. At this age, Muslim youth cannot engage in all these vices, as youth in Islam are considered as the guardians of Islamic identity who need to assume a significant responsibility of choosing the correct path with the goal of having fruitful dealings in this world and the great beyond. Youth can just accomplish this by educating the world to comprehend Islam as an exhaustive religion with standards, laws, and answers for cutting edge issues in each field of life - divine, behavior, social, governance, legal, education, in financial matters, and much more (Nawaz, 2016). As Allah (swt) has stated, "We have ignored nothing in the Book... " [Al-Anaam: 38]

What's more, with this youth should likewise devise pride in maintaining the Islamic identity by conveying to the mankind and universe that Islam is a religion that promotes equity, thriving, strength, technological progression, philanthropy, security of the civil rights of ladies and religious subgroups, greatness in the scholarly community, and five-star education and good health services structures. Islam is particular about the youthful period of young Muslims as it admonishes them to follow the right path and make use of this valuable period for the purpose of benefitting themselves and the entire humankind in general. To this effect, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) says seven sorts of individuals will be shielded under the shade of God on the Day of Judgment. They include:

- An equitable ruler
• A youngster who passed his childhood in the devotion and service to God
• A person whose heart is connected to the mosque
• Two individuals who love each other for God sake
• A man who is called to sin yet rejects, and say 'I fear God'
• One who spends his philanthropy quietly, without making an exhibition, and
• One who recalls God in isolation so his eyes flood with tears.
(Riyadh-us-Saliheen, Hadith 376).

3.1. Social media usage and its effect on Muslim Youths Islamic Identity

Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Reddit, WhatsApp, Viber, Duo, WeChat, YouTube, Flicker, Google+, Skype, MySpace, Pinterest, blogs and so on has took an essential collective operational variations of people’s life and made the entire world as a common global community, as it has been used to broadcast bulletin, exchange photographs, make voice and video calls, share opinions and observations, as well as reacting to live matters with folks from far and near. Likewise, social relationship media is an avenue that enables youth to take part in communications that gives them self-sufficiency over their content, without any additional issues with quickness of perception. Also, the frequent utilization of social network particularly mobile media devices, empowers potential publics to be engaged with any associations and organizations in a rightful and appropriate manner (Robert, 2013).

Furthermore, social media as a public planetary came with a lot of advantages as well as several disadvantages, especially to the youngsters who are Muslim. So, to this effect Muslim Youth is encouraged to
participate in the positive values of social networks. Hence, Islam is not against social media but offers guidance on the good usage of the platform, as it urges Muslim youths to utilize social media platforms to promote and educate the general public on the beauty of the religion of Islam. In addition, youth as a future pioneer of Islamic identity has a big role to play in shaping the atmosphere of social media through training and teachings of Islamic morals and values to both the children and young adults who constitute the majority of the users. Similarly, Islam admonished the youths to shun away from using the medium to engage in non-permissible activities like cyber-bullying, sexual misconduct, molestations, and harassments, spinning, trolling, luring and grooming young people to nefarious and evil acts.

Moreover, a study conducted by Shehuet al. (2017) prescribed a broad assessment of youngster’s usage of social media through parental, guardians and teachers’ control of internet activities in both schools and homes. Also, young Muslims should additionally look for good information on Islamic and worldly knowledge and effectively employ the changes in technology as well as the progress in science for positive usage in society. On the other hand, Islam maintains that the activities of youths on social media should be solely used to safeguard their and others confidentiality, stimulate reverence, humbleness, truthfulness, and politeness because social webs have recently turn out to be an information resource through which malicious actions and statements are spread in the World.

Specifically, the negative effect of social media on life and religion-related issues pose major intimidations, terrorizations and
endangerments to Islam and the Muslim populace, the recent example was seen in the Facebook live streaming of March 15th Christchurch massacre of Muslims on Friday congregational prayer in New Zealand by a lone terrorist. As a result, Muslim youths should use social media incidence to enshrine positive purposes for the goodness of Islam and mankind as whole, as Allah (SWT)says in the Holy Qur'an in Surah Al Imran that, "And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful".

3.2. Muslim Youths Awareness of the World Muslim Issues

It is prerogative on the Muslim youths to be awakened to the issues happening around the world to the global Muslim community, especially those who are facing persecutions and oppression from tyrannical regime, while some Muslim ancestral home was occupied unlawfully. For that reason, youth as a pioneer of Islamic identity should be courageously enthused to defend Islam by raising their voice for their fellow Muslims in Palestine, Kashmir, Myanmar, Syria and all over the world where Muslim Ummah are being denied their basic human rights and facing attacks and cruelties through effective dialogues, discussions, write-ups in print media and social networks, talks on both audio and visual media organisations, blogs and nonviolent protest, as well as diplomatic resolutions with United Nations and responsible government of various countries.

Globally, according to Dabashi (2018) Muslims are being victimized, ill-treated and massacred and stated that the basis for the Muslims persecutions in the western world was entrenched in the remarkable abhorrence of Islam. He iterated that the detestation extended to a wide-
ranging magnitude which occurred in racially prejudiced, intolerant, and Islamophobia. Although, he pinpointed the despicable killings of Muslims by Muslims, but not as conspicuous as western carnage, and he rather shows that it is the United States and Europe that mainly accountable for the provision of armory to the Middle East countries who used them on killing innocent people. Additionally, Muslims residing in western countries are naturally worried at the increase in hurtful language, bodily brutality, and assaults on assets perpetrated towards Muslims, mostly in reactions to noticeable Islamic identity. Moreover, openly detestable promotion of trepidation and victimization towards Muslims in the United States by notable political leaders resulted in racist and snobby and chauvinist’s attacks on Muslims universally.

4. Conclusion and Future Work
Muslim Youth as a whole ought to recollect that whatever we possessed today is just bequeathed to us by Allah and all cannot be gotten except with His permission because He owns us and everything in this universe and beyond, consequently we ought to painstakingly take care and spend all in the path of Allah with the sole goal of satisfying Him. The Muslim youth are the future Islamic pioneers, so it is significant for the young to comprehend Islam in the correct viewpoint by picking up the right information of Islam from the Qur’an and the valid Sunnah and comprehend the genuine reason for a presence on this planet. Again, the Muslim youth are considered as the “Guardians” and “Custodians” of future Islamic identity because they are chockfull with dynamism and desire, as prophet Muhammad says: the “dwellers of the paradise will be
youth...". May Allah (SWT) assist the Muslim youth to wholeheartedly practice and uphold the true Islam at all times. The future research will focus on expanding this research through analyzing related concepts in view of the available literature in this area.

References

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