
Compatibility Between Democracy and Islam

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Abstract

The link between Islam and democracy is a strongly discussed issue. Usually, disputes are conveyed in a prescribed form. The results drawn from this discussion are determined by the definitions of "Islam" and "Democracy" used. It is feasible, depending on the terminology employed, to "prove" both positions: Are Democracy and Islam compatible? To avoid predetermined judgments, it is critical to recognize that "Islam" and "Democracy" are concepts with multiple definitions. In the 21st century, significant explanation of Islam exposed the direction for political goals in which Islam and Democracy are collectively nurturing. The primary sources such as interviews, and secondary sources like book, article, Journal and newspaper have been consulted in order to get insight of the study. The purpose of this research is to find the elements of compatible between Islam and Democracy. Here, I will address the Islamic political system, Democracy its scope and why we need democracy.

Keywords: Democracy; Compatibility; Accountability; Tolerance; Fundamental Rights; Islamic Political system Shura; Ijtihad; Ijma.

Introduction

The term democracy indicates a set of ideas, guidelines of Government structure, a process for government and a politico-legal culture. For several polities that ensure political equality and self – determination to other, it is a framework that enable the prances of level playing field t. Democracy is necessary because it grant the people to choose public servant. Election is a method by which the people to give vote to eligible political leaders. These selected leaders give supreme preference to public welfare. In this system no one is above the law enforcement and interpretation of law are applied equally to all citizens irrespective of rich or poor political or nonpolitical person (Khatab & Bouma, 2007). Islam is a major world religion that highlight belief in one God, and the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SAW as his final messenger. It is not a Doctrine but also a comprehensive way of life that guides human beings in all matters and aspect of life. Whether social, cultural, economic, or political. It presents a full-fledge and complete system to regulate the society based on equality and justice (Abdullah, 2002). Islam guides us in every matter of life; it is establishing any relation with democracy. Since the final decades of the 20th century, the question of the compatibility of Democracy and Islam has become a hotly debated and discussed

topic. Many scholars raised questions as there is no specific form of government in Islam then why we relate democracy to Islam. Is there any relation between Democracy and Islam. Is there Compatibility between Islam and Democracy. Is Democracy adopted its basic principles from Islam. To answer these questions, it is necessary to comprehensively analyze the Islamic political system and modern Democracy with their principles. Fundamental concepts of Islam. However, the notion of democracy is associated with established Islamic norms and concepts such as Shura (consultation), Ijma (consensus), and Adi (Islam & Islam, 2017). This paper is an attempt to find the relation between Democracy and Islam. Towards the end, we will be able to conclude whether Democracy and Islam are Compatible.

Why evolution of democracy is occurred?

The word democracy indicates a collection of ideas, rules and a government system, process for government and a politico-legal culture. It is a system that ensures political equality and self – rule to other (Perry, 2018). When dictatorships and military coup leaders use the veneer of democracy to gain popular support. Nonetheless, despite ongoing problems, democratic concepts continue to expand and flourish across the world (Davis, 2005). Democracy, which is derived from the Greek terms Demo or people, is defined simply. As a government in which the people exercise absolute authority through their elected representatives (Nwogu, 2015). Freedom and democracy are frequently used interchangeably, yet they are not comparable. Democracy is unquestionably a collection of ideas and principles concerning liberty, but it is also a set of practices and procedures developed over a long and often tortuous history. Democracy institutionalization societies must act as the ultimate protectors of their own freedom, forging their own path toward the goal outlined in the United Nations preamble. The Universal Declaration of Dignity and Equal and Inalienable Rights is made up of practices and procedures that have been developed over time (Badie *et al.*, 2011). The Greeks were the first representatives in history to establish states solely as communities of citizens, with administration and policymaking being the right and duty of these citizens. This is true for all Greek states, but the role of majority was the ultimate goal in their constitutional history. Any investigation into its origins must focus primarily on Athens since it was the only place where a consistent and original model of democratic governance could be established (Bobbio, 1989; Taj & Rehman, 2015). In the 18th century during American and French Revolution democracy started (Livesey, 2001). A subcontinental wave of democratization resulted in significant progress toward full liberal democracy for several states. Several South American military dictators embraced democracy in the late 1970s and early 1880s. Following the Cold War, the democratic tendency extended often to various African countries in the 1990s (Agüero, 1998).

What is democracy and its scope?

The term democracy has been derived from two Greek words, “Demo” and “Karatia”, Demos means the people and Karatia means power simply it means power of people (Nwogu, 2015). Many scholars define democracy Abraham Lincoln declared that “the government of the people, by the people and for the people”. According to Seely “A government in which everyone has a share” (Buccola, 2016). In the Merriam and Merriam (1964) that “a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them by directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free election” (Merriam & Merriam, 1964). According to Oxford English Dictionary (1989), “A system of government in which all the people of a state or policy elected their representatives to a parliament or a similar assembly”. According to Dicey (2013) that “It is a form of government in which the government body is a comparatively large fraction of the entire nation”. In Short democracy can be defined as: “Democracy is a system of government in which every adult citizen is equally free to express his view and desire. Government of people in which rules of majority. A government in which the

supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation. People enjoy various rights like right to vote to stand in election. Political rights to its citizens. Modern democracy cannot value only the voice of majority but it respects and sharing information with citizens, and this government is responsible for his activities to people” (Thakur, 2017).

Why do we need democracy?

The people need Democracy because it has many good qualities, Frist one is civil and political rights people enjoy political participation. In the ancient Greek city state political right were secured to a small function that consist of very limited number of population while slave and metics (resident aliens were deprived of right of citizenship. In this procedure no class has claimed of political Authority on permanent basis. Tenure of govt is fixed, after expiry of that period politicians has to go before public for getting fresh mandate (Baviskar & Malone, 2004; Curran, 2005). The representatives of people exercise political power and they are accountable before electorate. All the organ of government used their authority within the limitations imposed by constitution. All decision in a democratic system is taken on the basis of majority, commentating on the popular participation Aristotal remarked that when the people participate in deliberation and discussion better decisions can be arrived at as every citizen through his opinion renders his intellectual contribution. These decisions are the embodiment of collective wisdom. Independence of speech has been the foundation of contemporary democratic system formation, and the acceptance of this right allows for the expression of public opinion. Politics revolved around political parties and masses parties educate the masses and try to capture political powers within constitutional limits. The aspirations of the people can be realized effectively through political parties as they prepare a will net-knit programmed get the mandate from the people at election then they try to implement that programmed through political authority , hence will of people can be transformed into public polices through organized collective authority (Badie *et al.*, 2011). The individuals require democracy because it comes in two forms: direct democracy and indirect democracy. Direct democracy occurs when individuals directly voice their opinions on public issues. The people formulate and express their will in mass meetings, which they hold as frequently as necessary (Bealey & Johnson, 1999). It was advocate by Rousseau who had experienced it in this native Geneve and who perceived political system in term of small communities. Hence direct democracy has been must successful in small decentralized states (Dicey, 2013). When the people's will is developed and conveyed through a limited group of individuals elected as their lawmakers to enact laws and administer the nation, this is referred to as indirect or representatives' democracy (Bahmueller *et al.*, 2007).

Democracy is necessary because it allows the people to choose the members of government. Election is a process by which the people to give vote to eligible political leaders. These selected leaders give supreme preference to public welfare. In this system no one is above the law enforcement and interpretation of law are applied equally to all citizens irrespective of rich or poor political or nonpolitical persons (Deneulin, 2009). In a democratic society. Citizens can investigate the possibilities of peaceful self-fulfillment and the obligations of belonging to a community without the potentially heavy hand of the state or the requirement that they conform to the opinions of those with influence or authority, or the majority. We need democracy because it guarantees that the government functions properly since it is elected by the people, making it more responsible (Sen, 2011). Democracy is the bedrock of human liberty and economic success in many western countries.

What is Concept of Government in Islam

Islam is an Arabic term meaning submission, surrender, and complete allegiance to Allah. The literal definition of the term is peace, which represents the most important part of the Islamic religion. A person may only obtain real tranquillity of heart and mind by obeying one God, who is Omnipotent, Omnipotent, and the sustainer of the cosmos. Such a life in accordance with Allah's will can bring about peace and harmony among the members of society. Islam embodies the code of life provided by God the Creator for the guiding of humanity. It is a religion that purely guides every aspect of humanity and the universe. The fundamental Islamic notion is founded on Tauheed and the belief that Hazrat Muhammad PBUH is the last Prophet sent by God as a message to lead and educate humans the correct way. Various conceptions in the Islamic tradition serve as a constructive basis for articulating a democracy in Islam or Islamic democracy; in other words, the Islamic heritage has specific ideas that are reasonably useful in comprehending Islamic perceptions of democracy. Democracy in Islam does not imply that it is a Quranic or Sunnah-based concept (Parry, 1945). It indicates that the Islamic legacy comprises key concepts, beliefs, and principles that serve as the foundation for Islam's view of democracy. Meanwhile, Allah guards and preserves the entire Holy Book, known as the Quran. The Islamic political system is based on the notion of Touhid and attempts to manifest itself in the form of popular vicegerency, which operates through a Shura mechanism and is backed by the values of equality, rule of law, human rights protection, ruler accountability, and political transparency (Khurshid, 2000). Touhid is the defining doctrine of Islam. It affirms total monotheistic, recognizing Allah's unity and uniqueness as the creator and sustainer of the cosmos (Taliaferro, 2017). It is the core premise of Islam, which states that Allah alone possesses total sovereignty. Al Farooqi presents Touhid as the core of religious experience; Islam is compacted in these fewest lines. La Ilaha Illa Allah - Allah is the only God. Risalah, or the ministry of the Divine Messenger (Rasul), is the second key concept. It signifies that following Touhid, every Muslim must recognize Prophet Mohammad (SAW) as the final Messenger and observe His Uswah al Hasanah, or Ideal Conduct and Sunnah. The Prophet (SAW) is a role model for believers, who study his Sunnah and learn how to apply its precepts and practices in their own lives. The whole life of Prophet (SAW) demonstrates a seriousness, responsibility, and sensitivity to which no aspect may be overlooked (Minhaj-ul-Quran International, 2006). It is the outcome of our Prophet (SAW) teaching knowledge alongside the Holy Quran to his society, *"Allah showed great kindness to the believers when He sent a Messenger to them from among themselves to recite His Signs to them, purify them and teach them the Book and Wisdom, even though before that they were misguided"* (Surah Al Imran;164) Khilafah determines both actual status of person in Islam and forms socio-political arrangement of the society. Similarly, *"Allah has promised to those among you who believe and act rightly, that He will surely make them Successors Khalifas in the earth as He made Successors from among those who were before them and that He will surely establish for them their religion, which He has chosen for them and that He will surely grant them security and peace in place of their fear"* (Khurshid, 2000). In the Islamic political system Shura (consultation has been made obligatory for the rulers to conduct the affairs through mutual consultation. In the Quran, Allah says; *"And those who have responded to their Lord (in submission to Him and have established Salah, and whose affairs are settled with mutual consultation between them, and who spend out of what We have given to them"*(Kathir, 2015). Even the Prophet received direct guidance from the Allah Almighty. Allah says; *"Consult them in the affairs then when you have to take a decision put the trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust On Him"* (Taufiqurrohman, 2021). Sura is not only understood as the root of democratic principles in Islam, but also as an alternate way to describe democracy in the Islamic setting. Shura refers to an act, an idea, a social approach, and a political institution that are important to Islamic democracy. The consensus is sometimes justified by a Hadith statement. *"Many people will never agree in an error— constitute one of the sources of Islamic Jurisprudence"*

(Safi, 1991). It is another critical operational idea in democracy. Shura and Ijma form the foundation of Islamic democracy; on this foundation, Ijma may serve as both the legitimacy and the method of Islamic democracy (New World Encyclopedia, 2025). Ijtihad is another practical notion with significant implications for the connection between Islam and democracy. Ijtihad is a technical word in Islamic law that refers to the process of making a legal conclusion by an independent interpretation of legal sources such as the Quran and the Sunnah. Ijtihad allows individuals of all ages to apply heavenly counsel to current concerns. In the context of the modern world, it might be called for fundamental change, as represented in the words of Altaf Gauhar; “*In Islam, power flows out of a framework of the Quran and from no other source. It is for Muslim scholars to initiate universal ijtihad at all levels. The faith is fresh; it is the Muslim mind that is befogged. The principles of Islam are dynamic; it is our approach that has become static. Let there be a fundamental rethinking to open avenues of exploration, innovation and creatively*” (Wagner, 2013).

Compatibility between Democracy and Islam

Democracy and Islam have many points which are Compatible which each other's. Several scholars, Muslim and non-Muslim have recently written extensively on Islam, elaborating its basic principles and message. In the South Asian Subcontinent, we would like to make particular reference to the works of Sir Syed Ameer Ali, Sir Mohammad Iqbal, Dr Mohammad Fazlur Rahman, Mohammad Asad, Justice Tanzilur Rahman, H.K. Sherwani and others. We shall also refer to western scholars such as H.A. R. Gibb, F. Schuon, A. J. Arberry, Petter. J. Awan, J. Piscatori, E. Gellner, John. L. Esposito, Leonar Binder and others. The mentioned scholars are some of the scholars who support the Compatibility of Democracy with Islam and proved it by their scholarly writings (Parray, 2011). When Islam is perceived as a monolithic religion, it comes into conflict with modern democracy. In a similar spirit, when Representative government is designed to be uncontested, it becomes incompatible with Islam. The truth is that neither Islam nor democracy are monolithic or unchallenged in terms of meaning and interpretation. Fundamental Islamic concepts such as Tawhid (monotheism), Khilafah (vicegerence), and Akhirah (hereafter) do not inherently contradict democracy. The notion of democracy is associated with established Islamic norms and concepts such as Shura, Ijma, and Adl. The Western Democracy is based on the belief in the importance of people and their role in the operation of government machinery. Its pledges include particular core human rights such as freedom of expression, opinion, assembly, association, mobility, religion, and protection against arbitrary arrest and incarceration. Traditionally, all democratic values were derived from the first Islamic kingdom of Madina. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) created the first Muslim kingdom, which was safeguarded by his four right-guided disciples. The first Islamic State's democratic goals included the election of the head of state, the Shura, the provision of equal justice to all people, and the promotion of individual and national welfare. Professor Aatur Rahman Miazi, at Dhaka on 15th May, 2014, “in an Islamic polity the ruler cannot be a dictator. We learn from the life examples of the Prophet (SAW, AND HIS companion that the rulers are accountable to the ruled. A ruler is a Khadem (service provider of the masses to them according to Islamic Philosophy”. Muhammad Abu Yusaf, at Dhaka on 7th August, 2014, holds that “although in the Islamic system of governance, power is centralized and the head of the state and government holds plenty of power, his power is to check and balanced by the idea of accountability to Allah first and the accountability to the people second. The sense of accountability to Allah and the people makes the rulers more Democratic in an Islamic administration than in Western democracy itself” (Islam & Islam, 2017). Islam can pass another moral test of democracy by claiming that all decisions in the Islamic state are made in accordance with the will of the people. This condition is met by the principles of Shura and Ijma, which are derived from both "Quran" and "Sunnah". Prophet Muhammad (SAW) did not build a theocratic

state because he was ordered to consult those around him on crucial subjects. The notion of equivalent in Islam is consistent with Western democracy; Islamic equality implies that all individuals are equal, regardless of belief, class, creed, nationality, or political position (Hakim, 1998). If the Democracy means the election of a head of state for a fixed-term after completion of tenure new election is to be organizes the same and gives all individuals equal chance of participation majority can select and remove the head of the state this is also compatible with democracy (Shah, 1987).

Conclusion

Democracy means “rule by the people”, it is a form of govt which supports extensive involvement of citizens in government. Democracy gives all rights to people like freedom, movements association, equality, speech, criticism etc. In Democratic system majority can select and remove the head of the state. Islam is not a religion, it is complete code of life, it guides entire humanity in all aspect of life including, social, cultural, religious economic and political. Islamic political system also gives rights to people like democracy. Democracy and Islam have many points which are compatible with each other.

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