Influence of Enlightenment on Muslim Thoughts

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Abstract
This article throws some light on the tenets of Age of Enlightenment and their effects on the creeds of Islam. Age of Enlightenment had fuelled with factual knowledge, autonomous human intellect, abolished stern beliefs and freedom of an individual at social, political, economic and private level. It gives brief description about fundamentals of Enlightenment and Islam; afterwards, it encompasses the comparative analysis between those fundamentals and the influence of enlightenment on aspects of Islam i.e. Faith, Worships, Ethics and Collective experience. A Muslim mind has swung between Traditional stern beliefs and Modern philosophies and yet could not find a place to exercise their full potential and duties. To pace with the modern world he has to give up his religious beliefs and vice versa.

Keywords
Enlightenment, Fundamentals, Islam, Comparative Analysis

1. Introduction
History can never die due to its live existence in mind and because of the practicality of present man. It moves forward by owing conflict in ideas and battlefield and triumph to decide the future of world. Conflicts of history are the best guide for the consciousness of present time and if stream of consciousness does not acknowledge the past then it repeats for the failure. History of mankind is full of ups and downs while the age of enlightenment is one of them and our present scenario is the product of conflicts which occurred during the age of enlightenment. The clash of Christianity and philosophy initiated during this age and with the advancement of time it changed the attitude of world towards religion, knowledge, ethics and societal structure. Firstly, in western society,
rationality got victorious and failure became the destiny of Christian religion. However, this consequence flourished the ideas of Secularism, Liberalism and Atheism in western societies and they altered their world view diametrically from religion. In the present time, west is engraving the history of the World due to its authority on power, so eventually their ideas extend all over the world and generate the atmosphere of conflict between rationality and other religions.

Islam is one of the leading monotheistic religion and its followers are found in approximately every part of the world and it has its own golden history which is also considered as the golden history of world but the conquer of Spain and the shifting of power in the hands of Christianity caused the decline of Muslims in knowledge, economy and power. After this decline, Islam was also encountered with enlightenment and did struggle to secure its way in the “new world” and this is the only religion which has not given mere victory in the court of enlightenment while in some aspects enlightenment saw triumph to amalgamate the views of traditional Islamic thoughts with modernity. This confusing state of Muslim mind is the artefact of enlightenment for Muslim society and it further spoils the way of progress for Muslims in the new world because holistically they were not being able to understand the compatibility of their religion with “new world”. Muslim mind could not acknowledge the demands of Islam and modern World at the same time because in philosophies and world view they are entirely mutually exclusive. So, ultimately those who acknowledge modern demands get flourished in materialistic world by compromising on some religious demands while those who acknowledge religious demand stay behind in worldly progress. Therefore, this has become the dilemma of the Muslim society and it creates bipolarity within Muslims and spoils the unity of Muslim nation in an entirely new and complicated way.

1.1. What is enlightenment?

Western civilization has arrived at the crest of scientific progress by traversing the passage of long and harsh dialectics of history. Dialectical phenomena of history led to the realm of late 17th to 19th century, which is considered as “The Enlightenment” or “Age of Reason”. “The Enlightenment was that period—conventionally the “long” eighteenth century in Europe, ca. 1685–ca. 1815—when the world was made modern.” (Withers, 2007, 01). During that age, there was an immense development in the field of philosophy, science and technology and all of these domains are basically related to the wide spectrum of intellect. So, this sort of progress is metaphorically used as “spreading light” and synonymously pronounced as Enlightenment. “Enlightenment, the metaphor of spreading light; refer to the kind of intellectual and cultural progress.” (Brown, 1999, 2001). The present status of west has found its roots in the age of enlightenment and further back the age of enlightenment was the product of controversy between scientific and religious authorities, both of which had different philosophies, pragmatic values and worldview (Brown, 1999, p. 2002). This controversy directed west to catch up the age of enlightenment and the triumph had approached the side of pure intellect. “The diminishing authority of the Church and the increasing authority of science.” (Russell, 1945, 491).

1.1.2. Fundamentals of Enlightenment

Every age, religion, civilization, culture and theory has some fundamentals, which fulfil the necessities of consciousness and pragmatic paradigm. Age of enlightenment played immense role
in the development of western civilization and that age carries some fundamentals that were at the back of progressive approach.

In former ages, mostly the answers to originary questions were deduced from religious creeds and metaphysical philosophies while at the age of enlightenment every paradigm of knowledge got freed from religious and metaphysical fundamentals (Russell, 1945, p. 491). So, the approach towards knowledge got a gigantic shift in the Enlightenment. Every religious faith lost its position for knowledge and truncated forms of knowledge got flourished, laying the foremost fundamental of Enlightenment (Withers, 2007, p. 02).

Modern man of west chose the authority of science by departing the power of church from their lives. This departure defined the approach of modern man towards knowledge (Russell, 1945, p. 492). Only human reason or intellect secured the position to define the path for knowledge (Bristow, 2010, p. 01). Every paradigm of knowledge, except religious, was fed by rationality and even struggles had been made to amend the revealed religion into rational one for possible compatibility with time (Russell, 1945, p. 491). The subjective and objective truths were guided by human intellect. However, the need of an external guide got abolished with the second fundamental of enlightenment.

There is a great difference between the nature of revealed and rational knowledge. Revealed knowledge has maintained its literal text in each time but to fulfil the requirements of that specific time the interpretation of that text changes. Furthermore, no interpretation could challenge the authority of creeds and principles of private and social life, which had been upheld by the prophet of that specific religion. While, the quintessence of scientific knowledge is entirely different because every philosopher and scientist can reject the former theory and make his own to understand the nature of physical world (Russell, 1945, p. 491). So, at the time of enlightenment stern beliefs found no place in the paradigm of knowledge and in our discussion, this takes its place at the third fundamental of Enlightenment.

Freedom is one the most important notion for the time of enlightenment and this sort of freedom carried a very wide spectrum, which covers both the private and social life of man (Israel, 2010, p. 8-9). Moral values were formulated to secure the freedom of man at an extended level by the account of intellect (Bristow, 2010, p. 01). Man, was set free to take part in every aspect of life such as thinking independently, pursuing happiness on their own will and freedom in choosing their leader (Israel, 2010, p. 09). However, no one could impede an individual except state. This model of freedom saw acceptance by modern man of enlightenment and it acquired the position of fourth fundamental.

**1.2. What is Islam?**

The literal meaning of “Islam” in English language is “Peace” which is considered as one of the foremost aspect of Islamic teachings (Mishra, 2012, p. 01). It is monotheistic religions that denied the concept of many gods and even the different forms of one God, which has explicitly been practiced in Christianity (Faruqi, 1982, p. 18). The first stipulate of Islam is entire submission of man in front of their God by following the code of religion which was revealed on the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who was born in Mecca on April 20, AD 571 and angel Gabriel declared him as the last prophet of God at the age of forty (Mishra, 2012, p. 01). The message revealed on...
Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was also the last one from God for its human creature. Quran and Sunnah are the primary sources in Islamic tradition to know about the message of God and all authentic interpretations of Islam could be attained by confining the human intellect under the umbrella of these primary sources (Sarwar, 2004, p. 161). The follower of Islam is known as “Muslim”.

1.2.1. Fundamentals of Islam

The fundamentals of Islam are dealt under the scope of three central notions that are Tawhid, Risalah and Akhirah. However, every fundamental of Islam comes under the umbrella of three of these notions. A Muslim is strictly bound to believe in all fundamentals and no leniency has been offered by the code of Islam in fundamentals (Mishra, 2012, p. 49). On groundwork, it clears the worldview of Islam upon his followers and then gives them a motive to practice their religion (Islam) on Earth.

Tawhid merely belongs to Allah and no entity either natural or super natural can achieve this status. It is basically the oneness of Allah (God) and this oneness encompasses the whole universe from the time before the beginning of this universe till the eternity (Sarwar, 2004, p. 19). Allah is the creator and sustainer of everything and his authority does not rely on human experience (Hamidullah, 1998, 51).

The fundamental of predestination is the extension of Tawhid. General conception of predestination is the abolishment of free-will but Al-Qadr school of thought strongly denounces this and proposes a statement that Allah has the knowledge of everything related to past, present and future while intellect of man is bounded in spatial-temporal domain but the free-will of man cannot be challenged due to his authority of Khalifa (Agent of Allah on Earth) (Sarwar, 2004, p. 23). Man, has free will but on the contrary note it does not mean that Allah is bound to stay away from affairs of mankind. So, he has the power to interfere but man’s intellect is not proficient to understand his interference (Hamidullah, 1998, p. 47).

Risalah is the second broader term that covers the fundamentals of holy books, angels and prophets. All of these beliefs are interrelated and their acceptance is mandatory on a Muslim. Allah used one of the mediums of Angles for revealing the holy books on prophets.

Every prophet has received revelation because it is the guide from Allah for the mankind but the knowledge of all prophets and their scriptures is not in the confines of human mind due to the limitations of recorded history while it is the demand of Islam just to believe that Allah has blessed every nation with a messenger (Mishra, 2012, p. 58). There are only four accurate names of scriptures that have been recorded in Islamic code -Tawrat, Zabur, Injil and Quran (Mishra, 2012, p. 61).

Angels, made by Nur (divine light), are a special creation of Allah that are entirely subservient of Allah and placed on different positions for different responsibilities (Mishra, 2012, p. 55). Man, does not know how many angels are in the universe and cannot even sense any of them except the prophet (who experienced the presence of angels when they brought the messages/commands/warning from Allah) and that too by Allah’s will but the belief on all of them is the demand of fundamentals of Islam. Some of the names of prominent angels, written in Islamic code, are Jibrail, Mikail, Izrail and Israfil etc.
A man chosen by *Allah* to spread his message with his mankind for guidance is known as prophet (Sarwar, 2004, p. 26). *Allah* revealed guidance by three different ways: by the medium of Angel, by conversation behind the cloth and by directly putting ideas in the heart of prophet. There was a long chain of prophets from *Adam* to *Muhammad* (PBUH) and according to Islamic code one lac and twenty-four thousand prophets have been chosen by *Allah* on the wide history of Earth and belief on all prophets is considered as the fundamental of Islam (Sarwar, 2004, p. 27). *Muhammad* (PBUH) is the prophet of Islam and last prophet from *Allah* for mankind (Williams, 2008, p. 28).

*Akhirah* is the third notion, which encompasses the fundamental of The Day of Judgment and life after death. The time period of *Akhirah* will begin after the abolishment of this World by *Allah*s will. At the Day of Judgment *Allah* will set a court solely for every individual and will ask about their life which is spent on Earth and if that life is lived according to the teachings of *Allah* then man will be rewarded *Jannah* (Paradise) and otherwise *Jahanum* (Hell) would be for those who disobeys *Allah’s* message (Mishra, 2012, p. 62). *Jannah* is the ultimate success of man while *Jahanum* is the ultimate failure. The life of *Akhirah* would be eternal and no man will escape that state without the will of *Allah* (Mishra, 2012, p. 63).

### 2. Comparative analysis of fundamentals of Enlightenment and Islam

Muslim mind constitutes the conscious of *Allah* (Tawhid) to cope up the answers of originary questions while modern mind fulfills this stipulation with theories that are a product of human intellect (Nasr, 2010, p. 161 & 178). The belief of *Tawhid* comprises the holistic view for Muslim mind while scientific knowledge is truncated in itself towards life. The concept of predestination in Islam and *Allah’s* power to interfere in the affairs of universe finds no room in scientific paradigm. Conversely, Muslim mind does not acknowledge any scientific study, which depicts contradiction with *Tawhid*. In Islamic fundamental, *Allah* is the only creator of universe but scientific knowledge has many theories about creation and no modern scientist takes into account an external entity behind the creation process.

In modern civilization, pilot seat of knowledge has been occupied purely by human intellect and it encompasses natural and social sciences. Moreover, natural sciences put their efforts to the discovery of universe while human is the basic subject of social sciences (Asad, 1934, p. 30). In Islamic civilization, *Quran* and *Sunnah*, which are both related to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), are the primary sources of knowledge and human intellect starts its journey under the shadow of both (Iqbal, 2007, p. 40). Science also provides moral values for human being after processing them through scientific method and ensures their utility for this world whereas Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) maintained basic moral values for human of every time and age while their mode of utilization may change with time after the consensus of Muslim Scholars. Furthermore, the purpose of practice of scientific morals is to sustain the comfort of human being in this world while in Islam the basic motive is to obey the teachings of Prophet Muhammad and for spiritual progress, which would be helpful on the Day of Judgment.

Stern beliefs do not integrate in the modern mind because for the modern man it is an obstacle and constructs boundaries around the way of progressive knowledge. Moreover, stern beliefs make sense of real or final knowledge which is contradictory with the fundamental of science because no scientific fact or theory can claim its practicality to be everlasting while it is the foremost obligation of Muslims to believe on every word of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) whether it is
understandable for human mind or beyond the faculty of human intellect (Plantiga, 2007, p. 01). Scientific knowledge does not trace out the affairs of Akhirah whereas many sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are presented on this subject and it is considered as a stern belief for Muslim mind.

Man, became self-autonomous after accepting the fundamentals of age of enlightenment therefore freedom became the requirement for survival of this sort of self. Modern man is power and economy oriented in theoretical and pragmatic paradigm so he emancipated every possible idea and moral obligation that creates hindrance to his materialistic goals (Asad, 1934, p. 29). So, this is the conception of freedom, which spread abruptly at the age of enlightenment. Furthermore, new human rights were devised by human intellect to serve materialistic approach. A Muslim is free to act but within the boundaries of Shariah (Islamic Code) and those acts that are deviated from Shariah is considered as sin (Ansari, 2001, p. 102). Muslim mind maintains the consciousness of Allah before doing any deed and their actions are basically motivated by the best reward of Akhirah.

3. Influence of enlightenment on Islamic thought

Islam has four major aspects that cover the entire Muslim life: faith, worships, ethics and collective experience. These all are interrelated to some extent but each of them is peculiar at its point and sets up its own demand from Muslim. So, for analysis it is important to discuss each aspect separately to secure the discussion from ambiguity.

3.1. Enlightenment and faith

Consciousness of Muslim accepts creeds or meta-narrative of Islam without any suspicion. However, faith has major relation with mind without judging or verification rather the acceptance in totality is required without rational sanction. When creeds of Islam encountered enlightenment attitude of mere rationality it eventually spoiled the belief system of Islam because mere rational mind cannot comprehend metaphysical realities and ultimately it raises the rate of atheism in Muslim society (Whitaker, 2015, p. 01).

3.2. Enlightenment and worships

Worship is an act of obligation exclusively to depict love for Allah and spiritual progress for Muslim. It is a way of connection between Allah and human spirit while minds of enlightenment do not acknowledge any sort of external and internal entity that is not understandable by the assistance of rationality. So, to make the compatibility of worships with present time it has become essential to deduce the materialistic approach or scientific justification of worships like prayer is an excellent exercise, fasting is good for health and pilgrimage depicts Muslim unity. All these approaches are true to some extent but ultimately it changes the attitude and motive of a believer towards worship. Therefore, the essence of worships loses with running time and it turns out to be a causal act for modern Muslim mind. Enlightenment and ethics. Ethics refer to a code of conduct, which differentiates between good and bad, right and wrong behavior of human being and it directs a person on how to deal with others. The life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the source of Islamic code of ethics and the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) traces back to fourteen and half hundred years ago,. Liberalism is one of the facets of enlightenment, stands up for individual
freedom and provides “new” ethics by keeping in view the materialistic progress (Asad, 1934, p. 32). The first demand of individual freedom is the abolishment of authority of any external guider such as God, because man is capable and knows absolutely about their good and bad. So, in the sight of liberalism, Islamic code of ethics is old fashioned and for primitive society today, it has no practicality in the sense of materialistic progress. Muslims have explicitly transformed their attitude and accepted liberal ethics because in the present time it is commonly proven that following the footsteps of Prophet one cannot attain the materialistic progress wholly (Asad, 1934, p. 63).

3.3. Enlightenment and collective experience
An experience that influences, links and is shared with every member of society is collective experience. State ideology and economic systems are the foremost approaches that affect every member of the society. Religion has no business in state affairs is the ideology of secularism, which emerged from the mission of enlightenment and it directly invaded the Islamic ideology of Khilafat. Moreover, many Islamic states have become secularized after the acceptance of secularization in major parts of the World (Ahmar, 2014, p. 128). Banking system is totally interest based and it is functioning in almost every country on the face of this Earth while according to Islamic teachings no Muslim is allowed to practice interest in the economical dealings but at present time every Muslim is directly or indirectly influenced by banking system. Systematic sector of banking is established to sustain the economy of the country and plays a vital role in materialistic progress and this progress is the subject matter of Enlightenment.

4. CONCLUSION
Is it possible for a religious person to give up on the demands of religion and fulfil the demands of modern world? History has played its vital role in making universe a place for pondering minds to wander and flourish by using intellect and acquires knowledge for better understanding of world and their phenomena’s. But then, European renaissance has mould the attitude of intellect and now it has been using as a weapon against religious beliefs, worships, ethics and collective experience and furthermore serving the philosophy of materialism.

The situation is very critical for Muslims because they have their own revealed and traditional world view but it is not compatible with contemporary modern consciousness because modern world has a “scale” of empirical science to ensure the validity of idea. However, revealed world view could not validate on these grounds because of their distinct nature. So, the Muslim minds are tangled between the paradox of Modern world and Islamic tradition and it urgently need an intellectual work to articulate the actual nature, limits, practices and differences of both modern and Islamic views.

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