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Freedom of Creed in America; Case of Islam

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Abstract

Since the discovery of America, religion and creed were the subject matter of people's lives in the United States of America. The problem of true freedom of religion and much more precisely freedom of creed is not completely guaranteed in reality. As a study field, it keeps attracting a large number of scholars as time goes by. Entitled "Freedom of Creed in America; Case of Islam", the work sheds light on the reality of the existence of freedom of creed in the US for all religions and precisely Islam and whether it is realized by the American government or not along the whole American history. This research seeks to determine whether America as a nation and as a government guarantees the right of freedom of creed and religion or not. The emphasis in this work is on "the existence of freedom of creed and religion" as the main strand that makes American people and Muslims free. The study is limited in a way, though it deals with the whole American religious history, the researcher has focused on the modern epoch which has a lot of dramatic changes, following the Descriptive-historical method, and since there is a lot of data to be gathered and represented for the reader the close suitable research type is going to be qualitative. Throughout the work we find some astonishing results about the major role of Islam in changing the States into a better nation, about the appearance and the increase of Islamophobia in the States, about the permanent discrimination in the States, and many more results.

Keywords

Creed: A formal statement of religious belief and a confession of faith.

Melting Pot: A place where a variety of races, cultures, or individuals assimilate into a cohesive whole.

9/11: September the eleventh; the date of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the US in 2001.

Islamophobia: unreasonable dislike or fear of, and prejudice against, Muslims or Islam

ISIS: Stands for Terrorist State in Iraq and Syria and is an extremist militant group that rules by Extremists law. In Arabic, the group is also known as Daesh.

Al-Qaida: a radical organization dedicated to the elimination of a Western presence in Arab countries and militantly opposed to Western foreign policy; founded by Osama bin Laden in 1988.

Resumé

Depuis la découverte de l'Amérique, la religion et la croyance ont été l'objet de la vie des gens aux États-Unis d'Amérique. Le problème de la vraie liberté de religion et beaucoup plus précisément la liberté de croyance n'est pas complètement garantie dans la réalité. En tant que champ d'étude, il garde l'attirer un grand nombre de chercheurs, comme le temps passe. Intitulé "La liberté de religion en Amérique ; cas de l'Islam", l'œuvre met en lumière la réalité de l'existence de la liberté de religion aux États-Unis pour toutes les religions et précisément l'Islam et s'est réalisé par le gouvernement américain ou non sur l'ensemble de l'histoire américaine. Cette recherche vise à déterminer si l'Amérique en tant que nation et en tant que gouvernement garantit le droit de la liberté de croyance et de religion ou non. L'accent mis dans ce travail est sur "l'existence de la liberté de croyance et de la religion" comme le principal volet qui rend les gens et les musulmans américains gratuitement. L'étude est limitée dans un sens, s'il traite de l'ensemble de l'histoire religieuse américaine, je me suis concentré sur l'époque moderne qui a beaucoup de changements spectaculaires, à la suite de la méthode historique et descriptive, et puisqu'il y a beaucoup de données à recueillir et représenté pour le lecteur le type de recherche approprié proche va être qualitatives. Tout au long de l'œuvre nous trouver quelques résultats étonnants sur le rôle majeur de l'Islam dans l'évolution des membres dans une meilleure nation, au sujet de l'aspect et l'augmentation de l'islamophobie dans les Etats, à propos de la discrimination permanente dans les Etats, et beaucoup plus de résultats.

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I thank her for her precious advice, suggestions, understanding, and encouragements.

Dedication

I dedicate this humble work to

My dear parents Miloud and Fatima and my wife Nora for their patience and steadfast support and patience.

My dear brothers and sisters; Bidro, Zik, Abdou, Sara, and Soufi who always encourage me in hard times by their precious advice and support as a perfect family.

The best gift from Allah my family members: Uncle Nacer, Ahmed, and the rest.

All my friends who help me and encourage me: My best friend Mouaadth, Aladin, Sofian, SK.....

All who helped to make this research possible.

Declaration

I hereby declare that the work I am going to present in this thesis, Freedom of Creed in the U.S; case of Islam, is of my own and to limits of my knowledge. It has never been submitted before to any other institution or university or degree and all sources that I have used and quoted from have been indicated by means of complete references. This work is to be carried out and completed at M'sila University, Algeria.

Bourezg Mohammed El Amin

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The variety and the number of Creeds and beliefs all over the world are so large that it is difficult to state a single definition for religion and creed. In societies of West, people usually mix up religion with Christianity. Yet, globally religion presents a much more complex picture. Domination of Christianity in America has no doubt about, but it does not mean that other religions such as Judaism or the most flourishing religion in the world 'Islam' is less important. (Ezzati 337).

For most people of the world, freedom is more valuable than anything, especially when it comes to religion matters. Freedom - the power to live as one would choose (Fairholm 297) - is one of the most important standards of human dignity. Contrary to what the majority of people may think, religious freedom is not simply worshipping or believing the way one chooses, though these are fundamental elements of it (An Introduction to Religious Freedom). Freedom of religion is actually rooted broader and more essential than most realized. At the most fundamental level, freedom of religion is the humanity right to reflect and express what one devotedly believes in, according to the principles of adhered faith and moral conscience. Actually, "freedom of conscience and soul" always related to freedom of religion - the liberty to develop and hold moral convictions and to act accordingly- (Ibid). So while religious freedom encircles the liberty of religious belief, it extends well beyond that as well, combining the freedom to speak freely in

public, to act, to live according to one's adhered faith, and to support one's own moral vision for society and life. The broadness of religious freedom and its relationship with freedom of conscience justify why religious freedom is a humanity matter, not only for certain people.

Despite that, American authorities claim the maintainability of freedom at all its levels, it is quite difficult to admit that, especially when talking about minorities most precisely "Muslims". To have a clear image about freedom of creed in the USA, precisely American Muslims, one must study and know about the history of this nation, which claims the assurance and maintenance of freedom of creed. Some previous studies tackled this sensitive subject before in different angles, the assistant professor of religious studies in the department of literature and philosophy at Georgia Southern University Finbar Curtis debated about the political and the ethical dimensions of secularism and the impact on Americans. The second study by Kalanges Kristine. J, a PhD candidate at Georgetown University, which was entitled the dilemma of religious freedom: A comparative analysis of religious liberty in Western and Islamic human rights instruments. First work lacked including minorities and focused on the mainstream of American majority concerns. The second study was wider in which it covered the entire western world religious freedom compared to Islamic states leaving a gap for the readers. This research is intending to fill that gap and trying to complete the whole picture from a different angle and new overview.

1. Statement of the Problem

When it comes to freedom of faith, of speech, of religion and creed, the United States of America is considered one of the first countries that guarantee one's freedom. However, American history shows a lot of contradictions and paradoxes about freedom of religion and individuals having their own independency concerning creed and practice. The case of Islam is the best example to clarify those contradictions and draw the whole angles of the big picture.

The stated problem in this study is whether freedom of creed in America, especially the case of Islam, really guaranteed by the American constitution, laws and, acts? Or, is it only a promotion that the American government tries to deceive the whole world with to secure the fluid of Immigrants? Therefore, securing and serving its flourishing economy, and guarantying its political interests and domination.

2. Research Questions

This work will try to answer the following questions:

- What is meant by creed and religious liberty?
- What are the different problems, controversies, and conflicts that are facing people especially Muslims, concerning freedom of religion?

- Do Constitutions, Amendments, Laws, and the different acts guarantee freedom of creed in America for Muslim citizens?
- Is freedom of creed really guaranteed in the United States?

3. Objectives of the Study

This work aims to define creed and religion, and investigate the origins of religious liberty in American history, and tries to tackle the circumstances that American religious people Muslims and non-Muslims live and face. In addition, it aims to discover and evaluate American Muslims real life conditions and the accuracy of American different agendas in protecting one's own religious freedom, especially in a government that claims secularism, and it aims also to distinguish America from the rest of the world; i.e. whether it maintains the true right of religious liberty or not.

4. Methodology

Studying freedom of creed in the U.S is quite difficult in some angles, but still a serious subject to deal with and clarify. This study will be based on descriptive-historical research so that the researcher is going to collect as much information as possible about the subject following the qualitative method, then represent it in a plain order and efficient manner. The qualitative method will have a

major influence on this work in extracting what is implemented in the American history about freedom of creeds.

5. Structure of the Study

This thesis paper will explore the theme in two chapters. The first chapter gives a general overview about creed and freedom mostly for all religions, whether Christianity, Judaism, or any other religion. The second chapter defines Islam and gives decent image about American Muslims, in addition to talk about freedom of their creed, whether there is a real freedom or not for this minority in the land of majority!

6. Significance of the Study

This study will be a significant endeavor in investigating and inspecting the true freedom of creed, especially in the case of Muslim community as a minority, and in studying its wider perspective. The main objective is to shed light on American Muslim community, and in one way or another on the rest of the other minorities precisely freedom of creed and the practice of their religious rituals. Furthermore, rather than only gathering and restating what has already been said about this sensitive subject, this thesis tends to provide the reader with total new points of view that are often neglected by other researchers and to come up with conclusion that will be more critical and more reliable.

CHAPTER ONE
CREED IN AMERICA

Introduction

America is considered the most diverged nation on planet concerning religion and creed (L. Cohen and L. Numbers). Various religions have flourished in the United States through down history. A majority of Americans reports that religion plays a very important role in their lives (“Religion in Everyday Life”). Back to earlier history of the first settlements of colonies and till now, people fought to gain their rights in practicing religion freely and having their own creeds. Most of people who left Europe, Africa, and even Asia fled to America to gain their freedom of creed in the way they believed to be correct. To understand freedom of creed in America, one must have an idea about the different freedoms that the U.S has, provides, and guarantees, and to see the changes that happened toward religion and freedom of creed through American history. Thus, this chapter provides the reader with a brief overview that explains religions, creed, and freedom of practicing.

1. Definition of Creed

The word Creed or “credo” in Latin is mainly related or identical to every faith that exists in every religion, According to Britannica the English Encyclopedia:

The terms “creed” and “confession of faith” are sometimes used interchangeably, but when distinguished “creed” refers to a brief

affirmation of faith employed in public worship or initiation rites, while “confession of faith” is generally used to refer to a longer, more detailed, and systematic doctrinal declaration. Both creeds and confessions of faith were historically called symbols, and the teachings they contain are termed articles of faith or, sometimes dogmas. (Lindbeck, par.1)

Since schools vary from one to another, an alternative definition of creed is as follow:

Creed is interpreted to mean “religious creed” or “religion”. It is defined as a professed system and confession of faith, including both beliefs and observations or worship. A belief in a God or gods, or a single supreme being or deity is not a requisite. (Ontario Human Rights 19)

Advocates of particular doctrines in various disciplines describe religion differently. Consistently, it has been contemplated all what certain individuals as communities adhere and believe in. Some modern scholars often see beliefs as an explanation for the ritual. Every religion shares certain views or beliefs regarding the nature of complete reality about the world, the natural, or the supernatural.

2. Types of Creed

There are so many different creeds in the United States of America, dominant and non-dominant, depending on the religion that is followed. Although Devine religions (Christianity, Judaism, and Islam) are obviously the most dominant and the widespread all around the country, other religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism exist either.

2.1. Christianity

The most dominant religion in the US by 76% is defined by Oxford dictionaries website as follows:

Christianity is today the world's most widespread religion, with more than a billion members, mainly divided between the Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Eastern Orthodox Churches. It originated among the Jewish followers of Jesus of Nazareth, who believed that he was the promised Messiah (or 'Christ'). Christian hopes to attain eternal life after death through faith in Jesus Christ and tries to live by his teachings as recorded in the New Testament.

The monotheistic religion or doctrine of Christianity came after Judaism to complete the missing part of spirituality in Judaism. Christianity is based mainly on the life and the teachings of the prophet Jesus that was founded in Palestine (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica). Christians believe that the words of God are included in

their book the Bible, and although some choose to take it, more literally than others do. It is mentioned according to Holy Scriptures, and Holly Quran that Jesus was given miracles by God to prove to his people, that he is a true messenger. Jesus had the ability to revive dead people by God's will, so he could heal them too, and predict what they were stocking in their houses from food and properties. Some conspirators claimed that he is a God himself, so they fooled people, and corrupted the holy scriptures of the Bible. The creation of the so-called Trinity is the biggest mistake that Christians trapped in, opposing to what Jesus tried to guide and teach. He ordered and taught people not to worship any deity but Allah (God), the same as all the prior prophets did. ("The Miracles of Jesus - The Religion of Islam")

2.2. Judaism

Judaism -1.9% of the US population- is an ancient religion with origins dating back nearly four thousand years, located in the near Eastern region of Canaan (which is now both the occupied and the freed Palestinian territories altogether). Judaism is the faith and the practices of the Israeli people. In the 1st century A.D Classical or rabbinic Judaism appeared (Neusner 38). Judaism is considered the foundation of the Abrahamic religions beyond the three, traces its heritage to the prophet Abraham and his descent and the covenant that was made to Allah (God). The essential primary figures of Israelite include the prophets Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Josef, David, Solomon, and Moses who spoke to Allah (God) and received

his law at Mountain of Sinai (Egypt). Just as it was articulated in Torah, Judaism is about the religious traditions and the ethical social laws (Christian 43), in addition to Torah there are other sacred texts for Jews including Talmud and Midrash the rabbinic legal and narrative interpretations of the Torah. The current sections of Judaism differ in their interpretations and applications of these religious texts.

There are four basic doctrines within Judaism at present time, which are Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist, respectively ranged from traditional to liberal, to religiously progressive in their application of Torah (Myss). The four movements are different but Jews seem to be unified following the roots of their religion and its similar pillars. They believe that they are holy people agreeing on common sets of sacred narratives, which claim their special relationship with God. Judaism emphasizes practice over belief like a body without a soul. Jews worship God in synagogues, which completely replaced the Second Temple after its destruction in 70 A.D. Jewish religious leaders are called rabbis, they supervise and manage the many rituals and ceremonies essential to Jewish religious practices. (Simpson 172)

2.3. Islam

Islam - 1.7% of US population - is the first growing and world's second largest religion after Christianity. Muslims around the whole world are more than one billion – approximately one-fifth of humanity - (DeSilver). Islam literally means

submission to Allah (God), and it derives from ‘Salam’ means peace. Therefore, a Muslim is one who completely accepts the uniqueness and sole of Allah’s worship and tries to spread peace everywhere. (Rane 11)

The Prophet Muhammad founded Islam in 610 A.D by Allah’s will. During his time, the whole world not only his region was polytheistic. His people were worshipping multiple gods in the form of idolatry. However, since first revelations the battle against polytheism of darkness and ignorance was announced.

The expansion of Islam was global and widespread. Muslims can be found everywhere, in Europe as well as in North and South America, but they are predominately found in the Middle East, Asia, and in Africa especially northern side. About 60% of Muslims are Asian. The regional breakdown of Muslims in the rest of the world is Arab world 22%, sub-Sahara African 12%, Eastern Europe 5%. The rest are scattered through the rest of the world (CDP Exam Study Guide).

3. Religious Liberty

For those who are seeking freedom of creed and religion, America seems to be that religious asylum. More Many religious groups currently exist in the country. The remainder from the New Age movements focuses on a worldview. In the new millennium, lifestyle continues to benefit the relaxation of social divisions all over the world. Christian movement and its opponents have slowed, with a renewed interest in cooperation and ecumenism among many of those movements. America

is no doubt considered as a melting pot, the largely Protestant and the rest of Christian population now have a direct contact with the rest of the world with its different religions and multiple ethnic groups such as Muslim colleagues, Buddhist neighborhoods, and Jewish business owners. (Walch 31)

In First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, every American citizen is free to practice his or her own religion, or no religion at all (atheism). The first founders of the country - who were of different religious backgrounds themselves (Christians, Jews, and atheists) – chose and followed the possible ways to keep the government out of religion business, and that was the best way to protect religious liberty according to their thinking, that idea led to creating a secular government later on. Therefore, church and state were effectively separated by First Amendment. This necessary freedom is the main reason why the United States has managed to avoid many religious conflicts that have torn so many other nations apart before.

The Establishment Clause of the First Amendment prohibits promoting religion by government or encouraging it in any sort of way. Therefore, there is no official religion of the United States; however, the Christianity domination is clearly shown (Paulson et al.). This means that the government has nothing to do with religions sponsoring or any kind of interference. Despite all government claims, many school programs keep violating the Establishment Clause, and the taxpayers' money goes to schools that promote religion and that is paradoxical.

The Establishment Clause of the First Amendment gives the right of being free to exercise religion or not at all. The government has not the right to penalize anyone because of his religious beliefs or interferes as long as he or she does not violate the law.

In 1971, *Lemon v. Kurtzman* – Declaration whether a practice or policy is constitutional if it passes the three rules. Used for any religion-related law– (Benz) the Supreme Court created three tests for determining whether a particular government act or policy unconstitutionally promotes religion or not. The Lemon test follows strategic conditions to prevent government from being unconstitutional, these conditions are:

- a) Having no religious purpose.
- b) No promoting nor favoring any sort of religious beliefs.
- c) Not overly, involve the government with religion (intervention). (Mawdsley)

It is obvious that the government runs public schools. Therefore, First Amendment must be obeyed. This means while teaching process about religion in history, literature, and philosophy religious beliefs or practices are banned to be promoted in School curriculum. Since the government does not run private and parochial schools, the First Amendment does not apply to them. In addition, students have the right to avoid some school activities when they touch their religious

identity or cause them displeased situations. Many Americans embraced Multiculturalism, and institutions formally promoted it.

Elementary and secondary schools have adopted curricula to foster understanding of cultural diversity by exposing students to the customs and faiths of racial and ethnic groups. Government agencies advocate tolerance for diversity by sponsoring Hispanic and Asian American/Pacific Islander heritage weeks. The United States Post Office has introduced stamps depicting prominent Americans from diverse backgrounds. (Owen 03)

First Amendment is violated when performing prayers, reading Holy Scriptures and devotionals in loud speaking at school, because they promote religion. This is true even if the prayer is not of any particular religion. Even moments of silence might be considered as unconstitutional, depending on the main reason behind it.

Graduation prayers were decided to be unconstitutional by the year of 1992 by the Supreme Court Lee V. Weisman. Graduation prayers would give other people of different faiths the sense of being outsiders or intruders besides being forced to attend it and perform it. Who leads the prayer is not important - a minister, a priest, a rabbi, or an imam - some kids would feel abandoned or eventually excluded. The graduation ceremony is still a school-sponsored event whether a student or group of students lead the prayer. Despite everything, students still have some alternative solutions such as making private prayer celebrations and that would help many

schools, except that the school cannot sponsor it nor held it on its grounds. Student, parent or church groups can organize it. (Mawdsley)

In the USA, every citizen has certain fundamental freedoms. One of the most important freedoms is freedom of religion. These are permanent rights, and it cannot be taken even by "majority rule" including others who have different faiths or no religion at all. They would still feel excluded from their own graduation exercises. Worse than that, feelings of racism and superiority will rise between some particular religious groups or even individuals.

Students from different religious beliefs have the right to pray whenever they want to; it is their fundamental freedom right as long as they do not disrupt school instructions or other educational activities. Any violation of religious practices such as forcing individuals to perform prayers or prevent them from it, could cause the school to be suited and school responsible will be punished by the law. (Clinton 1081)

Christmas celebrations, Hanukkah dreidels or Easter Eggs are generally permissible. People of many different backgrounds enjoy it and has no problem concern it, because through time these Celebrations have become secular occasions. Nevertheless, Nativity pageant, which is full of religious meaning, could be considered unconstitutional (Carper and Hunt 386). For example, when students organize Bible clubs three conditions has to be taken into consideration:

- a) School officials cannot organize or run the club; otherwise, it would be outlaw intervention.
- b) Activities must be scheduled out of school hours (non-official hours).
- c) School facilities must be available for all different students groups in an equal managing. Therefore, for example, Bible clubs should not be the only group allowed access to the school property but it should be for all kind of clubs. The organized distribution of Bibles or any other holy books during the school day is unconstitutional, even if teachers are not the ones actually handing out the Bibles. That is because the school building or grounds, unfortunately are still being used to spread religious doctrines, when students are supposed and required to be there for learning purposes.(ACLU, par.10)

That is what religious freedom is all about - you are free to worship as you choose - even if that means not at all. The founding fathers of ancient American government believed in that and tried as much as possible to realize it for every citizen of the nation.

3.1 Freedom of Speech

Freedom of speech is the key factor for all rights of freedom. Humans in general intend to think, to speak, then to do. Speaking is necessary to do what is important to gain ones his or her freedom and to demand the principal rights. For present government:

The people shall not be deprived or abridged of their right, to speak, to write, or to publish their sentiments; and the freedom of the press, as one of the great bulwarks of liberty, shall be inviolable. (Annals of Congress 434)

In the United States Constitution, freedom of speech was legislated clearly in 1st and 14th Amendment, to express opinions and ideas free of government restrictions or interference. Content and reliability is the main base for it. In *Schenk V. USA 1919*, Oliver Wendell Homes. Jr stated a modern legal test of the legitimacy of proposed restrictions on freedom of speech and declared that, a restriction is legitimate only if the speech in question poses a clear and present danger. Oliver explained it furthermore, by a risk or threat to safety or to other public interests that are serious and inevitable. Many cases involving freedom of speech and press have also concerned immorality, and prior restraint. (“Britannica, Freedom of Speech”).

First Amendment guarantees and protects freedom of speech within its sections like press, associations, assemblies, and petitions, including all what it is referred to as freedom of expression. The Supreme Court has written that this freedom is the matrix, the indispensable condition of nearly every other form of freedom. Without it, right to vote for example, and other fundamental rights would decline and die, and as a result, chaos will emerge. (Stephens and Scheb 124)

In the constitutional hierarchy, during times of national stress such as war abroad or national social major changes, freedom of expression of the US nation and the commitment to it has been tested repeatedly. People have been censored, fined, and even jailed trying to exercise their right of First Amendment. As a result, anti-government movements were super active and always bothered the rulers and the government leaders concerning criticism and manifestations. Those with unpopular political ideas have always endured the most of government repression. During WWI, a person could be jailed just for giving out anti-war declare or announcement. (“Freedom of Expression”)

Freedom had been always expensive in time and sacrifices. It took nearly 200 years to establish firm constitutional limits on the government's power to punish "seditious" and "subversive" speech. Many people suffered along the way, for example labor leader Eugene V. Debs, who was sentenced to 10 years in prison just for telling a rally of peaceful workers to realize that, they were "fit for something better than slavery and cannon fodder". Alternatively, in 1969 in Sidney Street, he was jailed again for burning an American flag on a Harlem street corner to protest the shooting of the civil rights figure James Meredith. (Ibid)

Free speech rights need constant protection and vigilant supervision and control. There is always new cases and old ones return. Is burning or ruining national flags a crime? What about government or private censorship of particular

works that deals essentially with sensitive issues like religion or sexuality? Should government control Internet? In answering these questions, the history and the core values of the First Amendment in the American constitution should be the guide.

The right of freedom of speech is naturally the basic component of freedom of expression. The right to freedom of speech prevents the government from interfering or constraining individuals to express themselves freely. The government is required to provide justifications to the Supreme Court, when it attempts to regulate and interfere in speech contents, and that eventually would touch the fundamental right of free speech. The Supreme Court has also recognized that the government may prohibit some speech that may cause a breach of the peace or cause violence. (“First Amendment”)

Despite the misunderstanding of people and the mix that they have about freedom of press, right to freedom of press guaranteed by the first amendment is not very different from the right to freedom of speech. Individuals are allowed to express themselves through publication and distribution thanks to the right of freedom of speech. Members of the media do not have any special rights or privileges compared to citizens in general.

People are allowed to gather for peaceful and lawful purposes like manifestations, thanks to the right of assembly. In addition to the latter, the right to associate and belief are included with it. The right to freedom of association is

included in the First, Fifth, and the Fourteenth Amendments, thanks to the recognition of the Supreme Court. However, government has the right to prohibit associating groups who have illegal activities and outlaw engagements. The government may not generally compel individuals to express themselves, hold certain beliefs, or belong to particular associations or groups.

The right to petition the government for a redress of complaints and objections guarantees people the right to ask the government to provide relief for a wrong governmental action. It is related within the right of assembly, in which people are allowed to join and seek change from the government. (“First Amendment”)

Individual freedom - the Bill of Rights guarantees all the rights of Americans - is the least common type of freedom. Very few governments adopt the Laissez Faire strategy and let their citizens to have their complete freedom as long as no one is hurt or is against the general law. Realization of full democracy gives the true existence of individual freedom, which is rare in most of the world's nations. Dictatorship is a nightmare for minorities, in most governments around the world, the ruler or president as one person is capable of taking away individuals rights by preventing them from complaining or becoming rich and even strong etc. They must remain completely under the control and at the mercy of the ruler/governing class,

whose power is exercised by deciding what is legal and what is not and finding that most things are illegal.

The previous three freedoms that were mentioned before are so unique and seem hard to be unified in one nation, accomplishment that is almost unparalleled in human history. The founding fathers worked so hard to create a government that can survive and be able to protect the state, offer fair representation before the law and equal participation in the government, and give its citizens complete personal liberty. The latter is especially important; in fact, Americans believe national and political freedom cannot really exist without individual freedom. (Croly 461)

4. American Constitution and religion

The US constitution defines the basic rights of citizens and their relationship with the different organs of government. In the opening words of the First Amendment and Article VI of the constitution, the guiding principles, which support religious liberty are clearly indicated. The mentioned principles have become the basis standard for all Americans from different religious backgrounds and the atheists to protect their rights as citizens. (Haynes 17)

It is indicated in the sixth Article of the Constitution that there is no requirement for religious test to be qualified to join any office or to obtain public trust in the country. Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of

religion, or prohibiting the free exercise according to First Amendment's Religious Liberty clauses (Haynes 17). They ensure that religious belief or nonbelief remains voluntary, free from governmental interference. The clauses apply equally to actions of both state and local governments, because the Supreme Court has ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment's dictum that states are not to deprive any person of liberty makes the First Amendment applicable to the states. When we look at the description of the constitution, we can see basic keywords that need to be explained such as:

a. Disestablishment

Disestablishment means that neither a state nor the federal government can establish a particular religion or religion in general. Furthermore, government support of any kind of any religion is not allowed and completely prohibited. This does not mean that the government can be against religions. The government must maintain permits of religious exercise but deny any sort of sponsorship. The Establishment Ban Clause serves to prevent both religious control over government like dark ages in Europe, and political control over religion (Ibid).

b. Free Exercise Significance

Every citizen has the right to free exercise, hold, practice, and change beliefs according to the dictates of the adhered faith and his own conscience. The

Free Exercise clause prohibits governmental interference with religious belief and, within certain limits, religious practice (Walenta).

4.1. The Difference between Belief and Practice

The Supreme Court interprets free exercise as follows; individuals may do anything they want, except that there are some cases in which state interferes or limits the practices that flow from these beliefs. Traditionally, the Court questions the government if the government interferes with religious conducts. Even then, the government has to demonstrate that it has no alternative means of achieving its interest that would be less restrictive of religious conduct (Haynes 17).

4.2. Liberty of Religion

Number of religious, political, and economic factors in the eighteenth-century America were the main reason behind prohibiting religious establishment on the federal level by the framers of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Underlying all of these factors, the major challenge was to establish a nation without dominating faith or class superiority, especially for a nation composed of multiplicity of faiths and unlimited creeds.

Critical changes in fundamental ideas about religious freedom had occurred in the period between 1776 the independence year and 1791 the passage of the First Amendment. Prior to the Declaration of Independence, George Mason formulated

the Virginia Declaration of Rights, which was adopted by its leaders later on. The first draft of the Declaration argued mainly for the toleration of exercising religion, which was missing at that time. This language was clearly reflecting the writings of John Locke and many Enlightenment leaders. (Haynes 17)

Although toleration was a great step forward, James Madison was not completely convinced and did not think it went far enough. Madison, and as the same as the rest of the founding fathers, he was deeply influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment. He has succeeded in convincing others that toleration is not enough and it should be changed to free exercise of religion. For Madison, religious liberty was a natural sacred right of every citizen, unbreakable and untouchable even by the state or the established church. In 1791, the free exercise of religion, which was proclaimed in the Virginia Declaration became a part of the First Amendment, guaranteeing all Americans freedom of conscience. (Ibid)

4.3. From Establishment to Separation

Virginia Colony was the starting place that came with the largest influence that led to the battle for disestablishment, where the Anglican Church was the established faith. James Madison played an essential role in the adoption of Thomas Jefferson's Bill in 1786 for the Establishment of religious freedom in the Virginia legislature.

Both Madison and Jefferson agreed on the denial of state support for any religion in particular or in general and argued to be wrong, because compelling citizens to support through taxes a faith that they do not follow violates their natural right to religious liberty.

4.4 The Great Awakening and the Struggle for Disestablishment

Baptists, Quakers, and other dissenting faiths of Anglican Virginia aided Madison and Jefferson in the struggle for disestablishment. New forms of religious expressions and beliefs influenced the development of religious liberty throughout the colonies; the so-called Great Awakening or simply the religious revivals of the eighteenth century produced these new forms.

The evangelical fervor of the Awakening cut across denominational lines and undercut support for the privileges of the established church. Many as a matter of free choice and churches saw religion as places of self-government. Many as harmful to the cause of religion now saw the alliance of church and state. In Virginia this climate of dissent and the leadership of such religious leaders as John Leland, a Baptist provided the crucial support Madison needed to win the battle for religious liberty in Virginia.

The successful battle for disestablishment in Virginia is a vital chapter in the story of religious liberty in America. By the time of the ratification of the First Amendment in 1791, all of the other Anglican establishments except in Maryland

were ended. The Congregational establishments of New England lasted longer. Not until 1818 in Connecticut and 1833 in Massachusetts, the state constitutions amended to complete disestablishment. (Schnur, Zuckerman, and Ansell 9)

Conclusion

As a conclusion, Freedom of Creed in the U.S nation took decades to seem unclearly realized, almost practiced by the people and the government itself. It went through several difficult stages that caused a lot of conflicts, crises, and even sacrifices, for many creeds and beliefs, which seem almost impossible to be melt in one pot. Religious liberty has been constitutionally protecting the American rights on documents for over 200 years, and that was one of main reasons behind founding this country. First founders called religious freedom as first freedom; they did not just because it is in the first two clauses of the First Amendment, but because they knew that if you lose your religious freedom, you will lose all of your freedoms. Moreover, when freedom is lost, America is lost. Religious liberty is considered the first freedom of American individuals. (Clinton 1083)

CHAPTER TWO

ISLAM IN AMERICA

Chapter Two: Islam in America

Introduction

Historians and religious experts such as Conrad Hackett, Micheal Lipka and many others acknowledge that since the first revelation of Allah (God) on the prophet Mohammed (pbuh), Islam was adhered and spread rapidly almost in the entire world. In America, Islam arrived within the first exploration of the new land, it was not a newborn religion there, but a religion with roots the same as Christianity, or Judaism was. It is the third practiced religion in America which came to the continent with slavery waves in about 16th century, when Spanish owners brought with them a Muslim slave called Estevanico, who fled during a shipwreck toward southern America where he carried on his life practicing and spreading Islam. (Manseau 2015)

1. Definition of Islam

“Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam. And those who were given the Scripture did not differ except after knowledge had come to them - out of jealous animosity between themselves. And whoever disbelieves in the verses of Allah, then indeed, Allah is swift in [taking] account” (Sahih International, “Surah Al-Imran”, 19)

Islam is not a newborn religion, but it is the revival of the same message of Allah (God) and his truth, that revealed through all his prophets to Humanity. Islam

is a mixture of religion and lifestyle, adhered by fifth of the world's population. Muslims of the world follow a religion of peace, and contrary to what most of media especially western picture them as terrorists and extremists, the majority have nothing to do with that and continue to spread peace.

Muslims represent one billion of the world's population - from the southern Philippines to Nigeria - and keep in growing through time, unified by their common Islamic faith, leaving their different races , nationalities, and cultural backgrounds behind. About 18% live in the Arab world; Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim community; parts of Asia and most of Africa are also Muslims, while minorities can be found in the ex-Soviet Union countries, North and South America, and the rest of Europe countries. (DeSilver and Masci)

Muslims ought to believe in Allah as the One, Unique, and Incomparable God of the worlds, in his holly books, in his prophets, and his Angels, in addition to God's complete authority over human destiny and in life after death and in the Day of Judgment. After believing, Muslims have to practice their religion which consists of five pillars starting with uttering the Shahada; "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his messenger", performing prayer five times a day, giving Zakat regular charity, and fasting Ramadhan, in addition to performing Haj pilgrimage to Mecca when they capable of ("BBC - Religions - Islam: Five Pillars Of Islam"). Muslims believe in a chain of prophets starting with Adam and including Noah,

Abraham, Ismael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon, Elias, and Jesus, peace be upon them all. However, God's final and eternal message was revealed to the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) through the angel Gabriel. (Khan 59)

The literary meaning of the Arabic word Islam derives from peace. In the religious meaning, Islam is the complete submission to the will of Allah (God). Allah is the Arabic name for God, which is used by Arab Muslims and Christians alike. The three religions Islam, Christianity, and Judaism share the same descendent Mohammed prophet of Islam from the elder son Ismael, and Moses prophet of Judaism and Jesus prophet of Christianity from the younger son Isaac, and all go back to the prophet and patriarch Abraham.

The prophet Abraham built the Kaaba in the city of Mecca. All Muslims turn to Kaaba when they perform their prayers. Allah (God) commanded Abraham and Ismael to build the Kaaba before four thousand years ago, and it is considered a sacred place of worship. Many people believe that the Kaaba situation and its stones was the same original where Adam built it before. Allah (God) ordered Abraham to call all humanity to visit this place as he said in holly Quran "And proclaim to the people the Hajj [pilgrimage]; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every distant pass." (Sahih International, "Surah Al-Haj", 27), and when pilgrims go there today they say 'At Thy service, O Lord', in response to Abraham's calls. (Abudaih 30)

The prophet Mohammed (pbuh) was born in Mecca from the tribe of Quraysh in the year 570 A.D, at a time when Christianity was not yet fully established in Europe. His grandfather then his uncle raised him, since his father died before his birth, and his mother shortly died after. As he grew up, he became known for his truthfulness, generosity and sincerity. The historians describe him as peaceful and meditative. (Kathir and Fareed)

Mohammed (pbuh) was of a deeply religious nature; therefore, he disgusted all the ignorance signs that was in his society back then. Mohammed (pbuh) was meditating frequently in the Cave of Hira near the top of Jabal al-Nur (Mountain of Light) near Mecca. The first revelation of Allah (God) on Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) was at the age of 40, when the Angel Gabriel descended to him, and continued for twenty-three years teaching and revealing the words of Allah (God) Quran to him.

As soon as he began to preach the truth and ask people to follow the right path of Islamic faith. Mohammed (pbuh) and his small group of Muslim followers suffered bitter oppression, which grew so fierce that Allah (God) ordered Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) and the rest of the Muslims to emigrate from Mecca To Medina (Yathrib) about 420 km in the year 622 A.D. This event called Hijra (migration) marked as the beginning of the Muslim calendar. (Ibid)

The Prophet and the rest of Muslims were able to return to Mecca after they were strengthened enough. Despite their strength and domination, they forgave their enemies and established Islam permanently in the city. Before the death of the Prophet at the age of 63, Islam was widespread in almost the Arabian Peninsula then later to the rest of the world, mainly from Spain to China. The plain Simple doctrine of Islam was the main reason behind the rapid and peaceful spread around the entire world. Islam calls for faith in only One God worthy of worship. It also repeatedly teaches humans to use their powers of intelligence and observation.

The Prophet said, “Seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim man and woman” (Sunan Ibn Majah, 224); therefore, and because of the huge interest in following the commands and the steps of the Prophet by first generations of Muslims few decades later, great civilizations and universities arose and flourished. Muslims at that time were advanced in comparison to the rest of the world almost in every sciences fields, such as medicine, mathematics, physics, astronomy etc. Algebra, the Arabic numerals, and the concept of the zero, and so many sciences were transmitted to dark medieval Europe then later on to America from Islam. Muslims sophisticated instruments facilitated the European voyages of discovery, including the astrolabe, the quadrant and good navigational maps. (Richards and Omidvar 324)

2. Islamic Arrival to America

Although some evidences show, that Muslims arrival to America was in the 15th century within Columbus' ships, the original historical documents indicate that Muslims came in as slaves from Africa in the 17th century, and that is more than 400 years (Yazbeck Haddad 22). Studies shows that more than quarter of the enslaved Africans whom were brought to America were Muslims. Moriscos (Muslims of Portugal and Spain) also came to the Spanish colonies, including many areas of what is today the United States. Although Slaves had no freedom even for life needs, they could practice their faith in secret and pass it to the next generations. There are several autobiographies of Muslim slaves, which survived from this period, including some by individuals who were involved in the Abolitionist movement, and were Union soldiers during the Civil War. (Curtis 19)

The mid-19th century was significant period where the Muslims immigrants came in huge waves to America. From the late of 19th century until the 1920s, Arab immigrants came from Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Palestine to the United States of America, these immigrants were mostly from Christian faiths; however, there were Muslims between them preferred to settle down in the Midwest. According to the Pluralism Project, the first mosque structure built in the United States for the purpose of serving a Muslim community was in Ross, North Dakota in 1929 and the

oldest surviving mosque is in Cedar Rapids, Iowa (1934). ("Early American Mosques")

After the First and the Second World Wars great migration of blacks from South to North of the country made African-Americans begun to rediscover their Islamic roots. Starting from twentieth century and until time present, the blacks' restoration for their Islamic roots is growing bigger. In today's America, African-American Muslims represent the third of the black citizens.

Huge number of Muslims with different backgrounds migrated to America right after passing the Immigration and Nationality Act in the year of 1965 (Powell 297). Highly skilled professionals entered to America after the changes and the facilitations that occurred to immigration laws. The Middle East and South Asian countries such as India, Pakistan and Bangladesh were the great parts from where Muslims came from during this period.

3. American Muslim Community and Integration

Muslims of almost every ethnicity, country and school of thought live today in America. They have remarkable demographic growth, though they are considered as new immigrants. The American Muslim community is diverse in descent; one third is African-American, besides being another one from South Asian, approximately Arab descent, and the rest from the entire world such as Latino or

Indian descent. About half of actual American Muslim population was born in the U.S, a percentage that continues to grow as young individuals start having families, and the immigration rates to decrease. According to Pew Research Center website:

Like others, most Muslims who choose to migrate to America arrive seeking economic opportunity and democratic freedom. The best studies available characterize American Muslims today as largely middle-class and an integral part of American society.
 (“Muslim Americans”).

The Integration of American Muslims is clear in the day life occupations, as doctors, nurses, attorneys, academics, athletes, and taxi drivers. Approximately one percent of the U.S. population are Muslims, but that does not mean that they are not effective or famous among the rest of Americans, who can name several famous American Muslims. Names like Muhammad Ali, Malcolm X, Shaquille O’Neal, Michael Tyson, Dr. Oz and Rima Fakhri are part of the popular consciousness. Important famous figures like Farooq Kathwari the chief executive officer of Ethan Allen the furniture company, Malik M. Hasan a pioneer in the field of health maintenance organization, and Safi Qureshey a leader in PC component manufacturing are all American Muslims. (Beverley)

3.1 Muslims' Contributions to the Nation of America

Anti-Muslim sentiment as reaction to Islamophobia in the United States has been growing in the last decade and half (W. Ernst 98). The main reason behind Islamophobia and the Anti-Muslim sentiment in America was the tragedy of the 9/11 of 2001. In the years since, Americans wrongfully blamed All Muslims without exception for what happen by ignorant extremists who act misleadingly in the Name of Islam. Muslims played a critical role in building and enhancing the American Nation, and they will continue to do so in the future.

3.1.1 Advancing Architecture

The Bangladeshi-American Fazlur Rahma Khan, who was known as the Einstein of structural engineering has changed the way that America looks thanks to his contributions. Khan enhanced the American cities landscape by changing the structural system of the skyscrapers building; he was able to create new generation of skyscrapers with less amount of unnecessary steel. Khan's innovation of the framed tube structure was impressive, as result; many skyscrapers were built adopting his smart architectural designs such as, the Twin Towers in Manhattan, New York City, the John Hancock tower, or the Sears tower in Chicago. The Sears Tower, which was built by the year 1973, at 108 floors and height of 442m. The innovations of Khan has improved the skyscrapers building mechanisms, and left his

handprint on the world of skyscrapers architecture eternal, despite his death in 1982. Other contributions of Khan were his service as an engineer in the America's Bank Center in Milwaukee, and the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado, in addition to Hubert Humphrey Metro in Minneapolis. (Jeffries)

3.1.2 Being Part of Politics

Hillary Clinton's right hand and the chief of staff at State Department Huma Abedin is considered one of the most powerful Muslim women in the United States. The 39 years old political staffer was the vice chairwoman of Clinton's 2016 campaign for president. Moreover, as usual for most American Muslims, in 2012 Huma was accused from five Republican Congress members that she had family connections with foreign extremist organization, claims that were disproved and dismissed (Ross). In addition to Huma Abdin, Keith Ellison is very famous figure in the American politics. The U.S Representative for Minnesota's 5th District since 2007 gained himself a seat in the Democratic Labor Party, Ellison was the first Muslim to be elected to U.S Congress side by side to Andre Carson. (Ibid)

3.1.3 Advancing Medicine

In the year 1963, Ayub Ommaya the Pakistani born neurosurgeon showed America the important Muslim role in developing and enhancing the country's different areas including Medicine. Dr. Ommaya invented an intraventricular

catheter system, which facilitates doctors' jobs during surgeries while delivering drugs. That means a soft, plastic, dome-shaped device placed under the scalp. His invention is used now to help providing chemotherapy directly to the site of brain tumor. Dr. Ommaya and by focusing on traumatic brain injuries, he developed the first coma score for classification of traumatic brain and cultivated the US National Center for injury prevention and control. (Baker)

3.1.4 Sports Champions

President Barack Obama declared after the San Bernardino shootings “Muslim Americans are our friends and our neighbors, our coworkers, our sports heroes. And yes, they are our men and women in uniform who are willing to die in defense of our country,” he said, speaking from the Oval Office. “We have to remember that.” (Obama, 2016). He was certainly talking about superstars like the American superstar boxing history ever Mohammed Ali, The Boxing genius who won many awards along his successful life and gained a seat in the Hall of Fame for Boxing Sport. Michael Tyson, who set the record as the youngest boxer to win the WBC, WBA and IBF heavyweight titles at the age of 20. In the Basketball field, Shaquille O’Neal and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar are perhaps the greatest NBA stars after Michael Jordan of course, Muslim sports heroes made America one of the most nations to gain first classes in world competitions, and still do until time present. (Borchers)

3.1.5 Standing against Discrimination

When slavery ended in America, many crowds of Black Americans moved to the cities looking for better houses, better jobs, and better life environment, but contrary to what they expected, they faced racist policies made their dreams nightmares forcing them to live in poor miserable slams. In the 1950s and 1960s, many African Americans influenced by the speeches of the brilliant spokesperson for the Nation of Islam Malcolm Little or Malcolm X, who was born in 1925. He said once “I do not even call it violence when it is in self-defense, I call it intelligence”, Malcolm X and contrary to the civil rights activist Dr. Martin Luther King, who called for peaceful civil disobedience. He rejected all sorts of racism and inequality by all means, including abandoning his slave name, giving public speeches about Blacks rights and even alluding for violence. (Jeffries)

3.1.6 Noble Prize in Science

Dr. Ahmed Zewail (1946-2016) was the first Egyptian-born scientist to win the Noble Prize for Chemistry in 1999. He was a pioneer working on the observation of rapid molecular transformations. Dr. Zewail worked at very important scientific positions, such as professor of chemistry and physics at California Institute of Technology, and as director of the Physical Biology Center, he also joined President Barack Obama’s Presidential Council of Advisers on Science and Technology in

2011. When he joined the Presidential Council of Advisers on Science and Technology, Not only the scientific contributions of this Muslim man gained him the huge respect of people and the honoring of the White House, but also his humanistic efforts looking for peace in the Middle East. Postage stamps have been issued to honor his contributions to science and humanity. ("Ahmed Zewail - Facts")

4. American Muslims and the Melting Pot

Working on making communities better ones is a civil duty for all American citizens including Muslims. Best examples for American Muslims are the Representative Keith Ellison, the first American Muslim to be elected to the U.S. Congress Rep André Carson, and Mohammed Hameed Uddin Mayor of Teaneck, New Jersey until 2014. American Muslims served the nation and sacrificed for it the same as the other citizens, Salman Hamdani was a Muslim hero on 9/11 disaster, who died while helping others, another Muslim hero was Kareem Rashad Sultan Khan who died while serving in Iraq, Bronze Star and Purple Heart was announced in his name for his memorial sacrifice.

Mosques plays an essential role in the involvement of American Muslims with the rest of American society and the engagement in the civic support for American democratic values.

Mosques help Muslims integrate into U.S. society, and in fact have a very productive role in bridging the differences between Muslims

and non-Muslims in the United States. This is a finding in social science that is consistent with decades of research on other religious groups such as Jews, Protestants and Catholics where church attendance and religiosity has been proven to result in higher civic engagement and support for core values of the American political system. Likewise, mosques are institutions that should be encouraged to function as centers of social and political integration in America. (“Muslim and American Public Survey”)

American Muslims are part of the Community in all its aspects with its different ages, they can be found in the scouts, schools, universities and institutes. They engage normally in the different clubs and associations such as Kiwanis clubs or Rotary, they are veterans of wars and volunteers in community centers.

Institutions of American Muslims can be found in all over the United States just the same as all other religious communities. The Islamic Society of North America or ISNA is the best example of the remarkable established groups in the U.S; it is about 300 mosques and Islamic centers situated in Indiana, other organizations as an example are the Council on American-Islamic Relations, the Council for the Advancement of Muslim Professionals, and the American Islamic Association and many more.

Participating in American political life is something normal for American Muslims just the same like for other religious groups. American Muslims are not different they are Democrats, Republicans, Libertarians, conservatives and liberals. In the United States of America, the religion Islam has no agenda or political platform in any kind the same as other religions. Islamic organizations and their leaders always denounced violence, Terror, and extremism repeatedly, whenever tragic accidents happen inside or outside the country.

American Muslims took many statements and actions to condemn and stand against terrorism. The vast majority of American Muslims agree and absolutely follow the fatwa of the Fiqh Council of North America: “Islam strictly condemns religious extremism and the use of violence against innocent lives. There is no justification in Islam for extremism or terrorism.”(Khan) The Fiqh Council of North America’s statement affirms the following Islamic principles:

- a) Islam absolutely forbids all acts of terrorism; it is haram (forbidden) destroying and taking people’s lives and properties, under any circumstances or through any form or way.
- b) In Islam, cooperation with any act of terrorism or prohibited violence by any means is completely haram (forbidden).

- c) Islam makes its followers better civilians, therefore it is a religious duty of all Muslims to well treat and protect the lives of other civilians and maintain security. (Khan)

The concern about extremism and terror committed in the name of Islam amongst American Muslims is deeply high like most other Americans, and even more. Over the past decade, many crimes and domestic terrorism have been uncovered thanks to American Muslims collaboration, and that is a strong prove of the real integration of American Muslims into their American society besides previous reliable data, which reinforce that.

5. Challenges facing American Muslims

The growing number of Muslims around the world at time present left no regional boundaries for the religion of Islam; it exists now in every single part of the different continents including America. The major reasons of its spread are religious scholars and Quran teachers. The lines below will discuss the major problems Muslims of United State face concerning their free practice of Islamic creed.

5.1 The Post 9/11 Period and Media

Despite all what Muslims had experienced from discrimination to oppression and racism through American history, the most difficult period that Muslims suffered and still suffering the most is Post 9/11 period. The image and life

of Muslims changed in the U.S right after the 9/11 incident. Since then the Muslim nationals of US have never been able to feel or live the same. The main problem Muslims face in US is the blame after the big disaster that happened and the label of ‘terrorist’ most likely every day. The western media is playing a biased role in all the proceedings, and portrays all Muslims as terrorists, because of that it has become difficult for Muslims to live their life with freedom in the US. Moreover, the argument put forward by Muslims in this regard is that not all Muslims can be blamed for the actions of one inferior group. It would be the same as calling all Germans as Nazis, or all Italians as Fascists. Furthermore, all chaos that was caused by different parts of the political agendas is quite much more propagandas of nature than a truth or clear image itself. (Kidwai 67)

Since the disaster of the terrorist attacks of 9/11 Islamic faith, Muslims generally and American precisely, and anyone of the Middle East descent was labeled as terrorist, and sentiments of hatred and fearful negative views against them extremely arose. Faulty Heuristics would take the major blame by the expert psychologists; instead of gathering information to make fair judgments, prejudices and mistaken conclusions about some particular people or race were fatal and always ruins their lives. In this case: if someone is Muslim, he or she is most likely a terrorist, that is what is most likely happening in every ordinary life of an American Muslim. The worst part about the negative image Americans often put on their American Muslims citizens and the rest of the Islamic world is the fact that many of

them are uninformed, or misinformed, about their beliefs and practices and how those differ from that of few extremist groups.

The hateful views of Islamic extremist groups such as al-Qaida, Taliban, and ISIS are based on a misinterpretation of the Islamic concept of Jihad and the entire religion as whole. The Arabic word Jihad literally means holy war in general, but in its deepest meaning it is better translated as resisting or surviving. Actually, Jihad in its broader meaning is the way of humans struggling for control themselves against sin and personal weakness (Yazbeck Haddad 211). Jihad in its military meaning is the last solution to protect faith from others, if a peaceful alternative is not possible and that is rare to happen. (“Islamic Supreme Council in America”) Muslim law also prohibits the assault of innocent peoples, suicide, or violence directed at any public place like a street, office building, or restaurant. The Islamic Supreme Council of America states:

Many political and religious groups have hijacked the concept of jihad over the ages in a bid to justify various forms of violence. In most cases, Islamic splinter groups invoked jihad to fight against the established Islamic order. Scholars say this misuse of jihad contradicts Islam. (Kabbani and Hendricks)

In other words, the so-called Muslim terrorist groups actually are not true Muslims, because they do not correctly interpret jihad and other Muslim laws, and completely misunderstood the religion of Islam as a whole.

Overall, Muslims are just like those of any other religion. They are doing the best they can to live faithful, moral, and productive lives. There are obviously more aspects of the Islamic faith and culture that are not covered, but at time present, it is much known and clear for people of the basic practices, beliefs, and misconceptions about what Muslims believe. It is a choice for Americans to either continue or end the hatred toward Muslims and their peaceful religion in Post 9/11.

The Muslims current portrayal in society is a result of media's representation for them as terrorists without exception or reconsideration that fake representation and negative influence led the American Muslims to suffer a lot by other citizens and the government as well. Media rushed directly to frighten people during Post 9/11 creating paranoia amongst American society. Media apparently focused on frightening people more than covering 9/11 with all its real angles. There was over exaggeration concerning Terrorism and Al-Qaida and their capabilities, for the sake of benefits only like attracting viewers and selling more newspapers etc. During the 9/11, media was harsh in what they published. It succeeded in scaring and angering the American citizens just to get much larger audience. (Kidwai 65).

5.2 Islamophobia and Discrimination

According to the educational Website Bridge that defines Islamophobia, the new word and phenomena as:

Islamophobia is prejudice towards or discrimination against Muslims due to their religion, or perceived religious, national, or ethnic identity associated with Islam. Like anti-Semitism, racism, and homophobia, Islamophobia describes mentalities and actions that demean an entire class of people. Jews, African-Americans, and other populations throughout history have faced prejudice and discrimination. Islamophobia is simply another reincarnation of this unfortunate trend of bigotry. (“What is Islamophobia?”)

The recent years has witnessed a vast anti-Islam movement in the Western world, developed into physical harassments by people, Quran burning, and even murder! In addition to unfair treatment and profiling by the government. In the past three decades, prejudice and discrimination increased toward Muslims, this dilemma faced by total ignorance from authorities and societies. Experts discusses the new phenomenon that seems to have no name, all time without having reliable solutions. Anti-Semitism, racism, and homophobia found a name and reaction beyond the experts and the society, whereas biases against Islam and Muslims seem to have no

solution yet, the formulation of the previous words was a critical step in communicating with public especially by youth, thus finding solution for it.

The ability of young Muslims to find the peace of mind and space to engage issues related to their identities and contributions to their nation. Depending on the ability of the larger society to respond to the movement of politicians that are determined to exclude Islam and Muslims from the larger discussion. Groups of young people in the West have always shown their dissatisfaction with elements of greater society by divesting from or disowning the broader public or rejecting how the broader public sees its collective self. (The Impact of 9/11 on Muslim American Young People 2) Unqualified writers increased the production and development of many websites, they abusively share misinformation to create webs of distortion in the media, the halls of Congress, and on the Internet.

A core element of addressing issues of the radicalization of young Western Muslims is to begin to take the issue of Islamophobia seriously. Part of taking it seriously is the need to understand the various aspects and actors of the American Islamophobe movement that shape public conversations about Islam and Muslims. One should work with a rule; the more negative the image of Islam is in the public media the more fertile the soil will be for the radicalization of Muslim youth throughout the country. Young people react to perceived threats upon their identity by amplifying the most noticeable anti-social elements, as symbols of their

independence and chosen identity. In addition, under such circumstances, if society is not well educated in constructive responses guided by a competent Muslim American community, the results can be devastating.

Generally, it is agreed that Islamophobia is sourced in two primary phenomena, one is the overwhelming ignorance of Western society of other non-traditional perspectives, and second is an organized orchestra of hate against Western Muslims and the Islam as whole. Noting that most anti-Muslim/Islam rhetoric that we see hangs hidden, comfortably poised between both attitudes is must.

Prejudice and discrimination as result of racism against Muslims is not a new phenomenon in the Western World. However, addressing Islamophobia in time present is very needed more than ever. Because of the bias of Western media and the lack of true picture coverage against Muslims, many citizens are unaware of the high and all-time attacks on Muslim businesses, homes, and mosques (Asadullah 21). In the United States, most Americans and the world heard about the shooting deaths of the three Muslim college students in Chapel Hill, but the five shootings of Muslims that followed received intentionally little to no national media attention. (Pérez-Peña)

5.3 Predominance of Christian Culture

Islam is the third largest religion in US after Christianity and Judaism. Therefore, there is a strong hold of Christianity on the cultural holidays of the country, since it is on the top of the hierarchy. In Muslim world, the religion is separate from the culture, although religion has an influence over it, but culture is something different.

On the other hand, in US, which claims to be a secular country, but ironically a vast majority of vacations prevalent in the country are Christian holidays, such as Christmas and thanksgiving. Therefore, due to religious nature of these holidays, a Muslim is unable to relate with these and finds it difficult to be a part of the US culture. Moreover, if he or she does try to socialize and fit in with the predominant Christian culture, it comes at the cost of eliminating their Islamic beliefs and system.

Muslims who live in Muslim countries can easily manage offering prayers during their work timings, as the offices usually allow prayer breaks. However, in West and in U.S, Muslims find it difficult to find time to perform prayer, as the offices are not understanding of the fact that there is some prayers time and it is obligatory for Muslims to perform them. Thus due to the lack of understanding of Islamic practices, the offices in West make it hard for Muslims to have fair prayers time regularly. (Sacirbey)

Muslims strive hard to practice their values, an evident example of which is the availing of online Quran tutoring service to get Quran education for their kids, so that at least they know the basics of their religion.

Conclusion

Despite all what America as a great nation has reached and achieved, still be there a lot of contradictions and imperfections. As a result, groups, minorities, and communities as whole such as Muslims are still suffering in a country, that claims guarantying and protecting humans' rights and offers the best living environment compared to the rest of the world. In addition to all the claims that people of America are highly privileged, and are considered to have complete freedom compared to the rest of the people on earth! People came from all over the world, settled, and worked in America, served and still serving the nation that seems to be unconvinced with what those good Muslim citizens are offering and doing. Superiority, Racism, Ignorance, Propagandas, and Islamophobia, all these challenges and circumstances are making the notion of freedom of creed in America much more complicated than it seems, leaving the American Muslim community struggling to find total freedom in a land that is supposed to be their soil, home, and eventually their country.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Conclusion

Throughout American history, people of many faiths have come to these shores seeking freedom of creeds and religious liberty. Despite periodic outbreaks of nativism, anti-Semitism, and other forms of religious intolerance, America has been home to history's boldest and most controversial topic concerning religious liberty. Faith communities have thrived in this land without threatening the rights and freedoms of citizens of other religions or no religion at all, and who mainly migrated searching for freedom in first place.

More than 200 years after the ratification of the First Amendment, Americans still hold fast to the principles of religious freedom. Today commitments to religious freedom are tested once again for American Muslims and their institutions. Increasingly American Muslims come under attack by those who raise unfounded fears and create confusion about Muslims (Islamophobia), even in some cases they use violent extremism of a faction as an opportunity to demonize an entire faith.

Despite the strict laws, and acts that American government legislate and apply, many religious groups nowadays especially Muslims suffer and live discrimination permanently. Islamophobia, racism, and segregation all these concepts violate what the American constitution stand for and preserve. After the September

11 terrorist attacks, Islamophobia has increased in the US, fueled by ignorance and the faulty belief that all Muslims are extremists and terrorists. Muslims, especially those who could be identified as such by their dress or practices, were frequent victims of assaults and attacks, mosques were vandalized, and Muslims were generally made to feel unwelcome (Lichtblau). The number of these incidents decreased over the following years, but many people still harbor general suspicion of Muslims and the Muslim faith.

Is there freedom of creed, and religion in America? Actually, it is really a hard question to answer. Living a life with no limitations or restrictions to your freedom of practice, no matter what religion you adhere is what religious liberty all about, of course as long as it doesn't contradict the law and disturb other citizens. America has the biggest number of associations of human rights, freedom protectors, and religious agendas, however no matter how far America as nation has reached human rights protection and guarantee, how far it has developed laws and legislations to make no difference between its citizens, the campaign against discrimination seems to be always on in this country. Although people there are doing their best to realize the First Amendment of the American constitution, it could be found that even a literate class of American society can act ignorantly being racists. The best example of Ignorance is what happened last year to Muslim teen Ahmed Mohammed the 9th grade student, who created a homemade clock,

showed it to his teachers and was arrested, because they thought the homemade clock was a bomb (Fantz, Almasly and Stapleton). This incident is the best example of Islamophobia, and what Muslims are experiencing in everyday life.

It is important to urge all Americans and the world of goodwill to join combating ignorance and fear with knowledge and compassion. Religious freedom cannot be sustained by laws and courts alone - as important as they are-. Full religious freedom depends on the courage and commitment of ordinary citizens to stand up for the rights of their fellow citizens.

The author of this paper hopes that he has succeeded in a way or another in shedding the light on Freedom of Creed in American; case of Islam, though there might be certainly others who may have better insight and provide eloquent analysis.

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