CHALLENGES FACING THE HUMANITARIAN ASPECT OF ISLAM

Marya Khalaf Salim Albzeirat [1]
Sami Khalaf Salim Albzeirat [2]
Malek Khalaf Albzeirat[3]
Nazih A. Bin-Abdun[4]

ABSTRACT

This study demonstrates the challenges that confront the true and humanitarian aspect of Islam. Hence, this study is significant due to the urgent and necessary need to illustrate the values that Islam is willing to spread them in the human communities. It is obvious that Islam has been exposed to several campaigns that aimed at misrepresenting the true image of values and principles that are advocated by Islam to be applied. In addition, there was an increase in the calls that associated Islam with terrorism and extremism in the previous years. In other words, the different types of media not only presented media programs that distorted the true reality of Islam but also neglected to introduce the ethical and true image of Islam. Consequently, the findings of the present study emphasize that the varied media types should be employed in revealing the humanitarian side of Islam and demonstrating that Islam cannot be linked with extremism and terrorism. Hence, the greatest challenge that is facing Islam at present lies in the absence of the perfect exploitation of the modern technology to present the true image of Islam.

Keywords : Social Media, Humanitarian Aspect of Islam, Terrorism, Ethics.

1.   Introduction

Throughout the different centuries of the human history, documenting the historical facts is greatly important (Weber, 2015). The significance of nations is associated with what they offer to the humanity that would help in the advance of the civilization in varied aspects, such as science, knowledge, values, morals, and human principles. The human achievements are often documented by means of books, poetry, and novels that are transmitted by the subsequent generations. Nowadays, nations are proud of the achievements they offered to the humans. For instance, some nations are proud of their previous scientists in the science branches, like medicine, engineering, math, etc., whereas other nations are proud of their current and advanced civilization. However, although the Islamic nation has offered to human communities a lot of contributions in the several aspects of sciences (Badi & Tajdin, 1995; Falagas, Zarkadoulia & Samonis, 2006, Sardar, 2015), in the current century, Islam is challenged with keeping this heritage of the human achievement. In other words, all the achievements and contributions that have been offered are vanishing due to the bad image of Islam that is presented through the different types of media as a religion of terrorism and extremism (Lyons, 2014; Alghamdi, 2015). This necessities exploring the current challenges that endanger the humanitarian image of Islam.

In order to achieve the goals of the current study, the second section will demonstrate the role of the media means in spreading cultures. In section three, the focus is on illustrating the close relationship between media and Islam. As for the fourth section, it reveals current issues of misrepresenting Islam, and in the fifth section, the most important findings are introduced.

2.   The Modern Media Means and Distorting Facts

In our current century, media play a great significant role in spreading the different cultures; human communication means between communities have increased due to having modern communication means, such as Facebook, Online newspapers, and YouTube (Jelenchick, Eickhoff, & Moreno, 2013; Halpern & Gibbs, 2.13; Fuchs, 2017). By means of these types of communication, the world has become able to get news quickly and immediately; the varied news media and the social media broadcast the events on air, and these platforms have become available for all people (Perse & Lambe, 2015). However, these platforms have been exploited to document the international events and misrepresent of what really happens. Hence, these types of communication have been used to fight Islam and distort the true reality of Islam by linking Islam with a lot of distressing events in the world. As a result, the role played by media is demonstrated through the following points:
- Media are means for broadcasting news and events and documenting them.
- Media are used for educational purposes and spread cultures among communities.
- Media are employed as a guideline to demonstrate the real events.
- Media guide the communities and present a future plan for the coming generations.
- Media are exploited negatively to evoke the conflict between people in the communities and mislead them.

Historically, it has been noticed that the role of media is not different in the present compared with the past; tribes and communities used to transmit news by means of poetry, books, and celebrating events. For example, events and identifying the cultural principles among Arab tribes were communicated through poetry held in Souq Okaz in Macca Mokarmh (Piet, 2016). Events and cultural aspects of the Roman community were communicated by means of the festivals and the cultural celebrations held on theatres (Kleiner, 2016). Conflicts and wars took place a lot inside the communities due to intentionally spreading false news or transmitting events that evoke tribal discrimination and lead communities to civil fight and conflicts. It is observed that

transmitting the events by means of the varied media types between the communities have two directions: a positive direction and a negative one. On the one hand, for the positive direction, the goal is to transmit knowledge and exchange cultures and humanitarian and ethical values between communities and establish basics that can help communication and co-living of different peoples. On the other hand, the negative direction implies that the goal is to create a kind of disorder and conflicts inside the communities, as well as employs media as a means to mislead people, misrepresent the reality, and spread hatred.

The chaos caused by media at present are attributed to several reasons (Di Stefano, 2011; O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011; Shirky, 2011; Jin, Liu & Austin, 2014; Yu, 2016):-

- First, the media are controlled and exploited by officials in the communities.
- Second, the phenomenon of the directed media has become widespread that is supported by some agencies which adopt discrimination beliefs and motivations.
- Third, media are exploited in policy and international relations.
- Fourth, users of the social media communications as platforms lack professionalism and credibility.

3. Islam and Media

It is obvious that the relationship between Islam and the phenomenon of the positive media is an apparent one before the arrival of the Islamic religion, and some people may find a kind of contrast in this logic. That is to say, how are Islam and media associated before the call for the Islamic religion? This can be showed through the life of the Mohammad, peace be upon him. Hence, media types were as follows:

3.1 The Morals
The morals of the Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him, were considered as a media platform that lasted for 40 years before the appearance of the call for Islam. These morals which were known for all people had a role in strengthening the call for spreading Islam. The prophet's morals paved the way for launching and establishing the Islamic and humanitarian values and spreading them among people. Mohammad's honesty, peace be upon him, and people's realizing of the strong association between Mohammad, peace be upon him, and honesty easily made a lot of people accept Islam as a new religion. The Holy Qura'n has clarified the strong association of prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him, with the morals in (verse 4, Al-Qalam Surah) which described the prophet's morals as great ones.

3.2 Holy Books
The previous Holy Books preached the advent of the Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him. These heavenly Books paved the way for the Prophet Mohammad as mercy for the world. This good promise is clear in the Holy Qura'an as stated by Jesus, peace be upon him in (Verse 6, Surah As-Saff). Several verses of the Holy Qura'an refer that the previous nations know that Mohammad, peace be upon him, will be sent as a Prophet as stated in the Holy Qura'an in (Verse 157, Surah Al-A'raf), (Verses 196-197, Surah As-Shu'ara'), and (Verse 146, Surah Al-Baqarah). Several clear signals telling about the Prophet Mohammad were mentioned in the Torah of Judaism and the Old Testament of the Christian religion. These signals were as follows:
"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." (Old Testament, Deuteronomy, 18-19).

3.3 Poets
The Arabian Peninsula was a centre for poets, and poetry with its strong meanings was a means to demonstrate the noble morals of the tribes. ALMadinah Al-Muawrah and Makkah Al-Mukaramah were the destination for poets. For example, Hassan Bin Thabet was a poet who praised the morals of the Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him. In addition, the Prophet Mohammad asked him to dispraise Quraish (See Sahih Muslim 2490, Book 44, Hadith 225).
The Holy Qura'an has demonstrated the misleading role played by poetry in the lives of people. This is made clear in the Qura'anic verses (224-226, Surah As-Shu'ara). However, the verse (227, Surah As-Shu'ara) excluded the good poets from the misleading role played by poetry. Hence, poetry is a media device with two directions. One of these directions is misleading carried out by the bad people in the world, whereas the positivism is the other direction achieved by the good ones.

3.4 The Novel
Stories, that tell about the morals of the Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him, such as generosity, goodness, forgiveness, honesty, modesty, ..etc., and a lot of other ethical and noble characteristics, were transmitted to all tribes who visited Makkah for the purpose of trading. Consequently, All Arab tribes know that Mohammad, peace be upon him, has perfect, humanitarian and good morals. Hence, all these morals, poets, Holy Books, and novels were media devices that established a strong basis for the spread of the Islamic religion in the Arab countries, as well as all over the world.

4. Islam and the Distorting Media Attacks

Since the beginning of the current century, media contributed to communicate a bad image of Islam that links Islam with terrorism. People's lack of knowledge of the real identity of Islam has helped in the fast spread of the different perspectives that made Islam under the accusation. In addition, the media delivered the traditional image of Islam that focuses on the superficial side rather than validating the accusations that Islam spreads terrorism and extremism.
Media in the last previous years classified Islam depending on the doctrines of different organizations which probably do not belong to Islam absolutely except the media production that claims to be Islamic, but in fact, it is far away from Islam and does not represent Islam. These include:

- The focus in the video production that adopts terrifying activities is on the clothes which belong originally to the Arab and Islamic countries.
- People who adopt the terrifying actions have the traditional characteristics of Muslims' faces and those who adopt the extremism creed, whereby they have long beards, shaved moustaches, and carry Siwak.
- The focus is on the expression of Allah Akber while executing the terrifying tasks and this is made clear in several videos that adopted terrifying actions in different places of the world.
- The focus in the video production is on having backgrounds that contain statements referring to Islam and have a strong relationship with the Islamic dogma.
- The focus is on the Khatib's Islamic style of delivering a sermon which includes Islamic expressions and verses from the Holy Qura'an that call for Jihad.

Several organizations that do not belong to the real Islam have succeeded in their claim that they represent Islam and the Islamic regimes. These organizations have exploited media and the misleading campaigns on Islam in order to become very popular and international organizations under a very extremist Islamic creed that calls for killing and humiliating, among these organizations: Al-Qaeda appeared on media adopting the jihad dogma in the 1990s, but it showed a contrasting reality to Islam due to executing military operations against civilians and the innocent people. Hence, media broadcasted these threatening and operations which distorted the reality of Islam.

Da'esh known as ISIS occurred five years ago and adopted a lot of terrifying operations in the word, targeting the innocent people and the civilians in Belad As-Sham, Iraq, Jordan, and other countries in the world. However, the distorted reality of Islam was established through videos and media publications devoid of moral values which true Islam calls to adopt them.

Due to these misleading campaigns against Islam, Muslims have faced several problems, including:

- The refusal of other communities to accept Muslims to live among them.
- The forced migration that is faced by the Muslims due to the conflicts that took place in the Islamic countries.
- The spread of chaos and the civil conflicts in the Islamic communities.
- A weak economic power due to the disorder and instability of the Islamic countries.
- An increase in the unemployment, poverty, and illiteracy in the instable countries due to sedition and chaos.

5.   Discussion

This study shows that Islam has been subjected to misleading attacks through the different types of media. This challenge that faced Islam resulted in misrepresenting the ethical side of Islam. This in its turn has affected the Islamic countries negatively, weakened their economy, and decreased the investments projects and the industrial power in the Islamic world. In order to overcome these challenges in the Islamic world, there should be an emphasis on several aspects. First, Islamic media platforms should be established to demonstrate the brightening side of Islam and its humanitarian role. Second, the focus is on refuting and criticizing the terrorist groups which claim to belong to Islam and demonstrating that they are not related to Islam. Third, the focus should be on spreading tolerance and Islamic coexistence among Muslims and between Muslims and other people. Fourth, terrorist groups must not be addressed as Islamic. Fifth, there should be an emphasis on true Islamic education that is built on the Holy Qura'an, Sunnah, and the Prophet Mohammad's life that is full of good morals. Sixth, the emphasis should be on enhancing the industrial power in the Islamic countries and guide the generations towards knowledge and education that contribute to the advance of the communities. Seventh, the Islamic morals and ethics should be practiced in all domains of humanity, such as educational jobs and medcial professions, and make these practices the basics to spread the reality of Islam. Finally, the outer forms should not be the rule that is followed to classify the Islamic personality since Islam is an integral part that involves worship and ethical practices when dealing with others. In brief, Islam cannot be associated with terrorism; Islam and terrorism are two parallel lines that move in opposite directions.

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Marya Khalaf Salim Albzeirat [1]
[1]*Faculty of Arts and Science, University of Northern Border (NBU) Rafha, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*

Sami Khalaf Salim Albzeirat [2]
[2]*Faculty Of Shariah And Law,*
University Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) Nilai, Malaysia

Malek Khalaf Albzeirat[3]
[3]*School of Manufacturing Engineering,*
University Malaysia Perlis (Unimap), Kampus Alam Pauh Putra, 02600 Arau, Perlis, Malaysia

Nazih A. Bin-Abdun[4]
[4]*School of Mechatronic Engineering, University Malaysia Perlis (Unimap),*
Kampus Tetap Pauh Putra, 02600 Arau, Perlis, Malaysia