

Relations between the Western Civilization and the World of Islam

Western civilization history is 2500 years old; the new techno-scientific civilization, which appeared after the Renaissance, has been developing since the eighteenth century. For the past three centuries, the relation between the modern world of the West with other parts of the world has not been an interactive one; rather Western science, technology and culture have been directing the lives of all people worldwide, but the world of Islam has a distinct and thought provoking relation with modernity and the modern world, which needs further investigation. Before modernity epoch, regardless of Muslims' interest in Greek philosophy and sciences, the world of Islam had more influence in the European science and culture, but as of the eighteenth century, the relation has reversed.

The interaction of cultures is among the most significant historical phenomena and the starting point for major events. A glance at the influence of the West in Islamic world reveals numerous issues and challenges in it. Initially, it was difficult for Muslims to adopt Western principles of civilization. As a result, they failed to absorb Western science and technology to address their political military and subsistence needs. Such an attitude and interpretation resulted in adopting certain elements of the Western civilization rather than the fundamental principles. Such a difficult relation continued for a long time so much so that some experts on international relations and strategy have placed Islam against the West and have tried to justify their attitude under the umbrella term of the clash of civilizations. The present situation in the world, however, does not reflect the clash of civilizations but a despairing and dark horizon for the future.

If the modern world loses hope to the future, the non Western world, that has had scientific-technological interest, will be hopeless and wandering. Presently, the major outcome of the unsteady balance of the Western and Islamic worlds is the advent of a fundamentalism that has nothing to do with the truth of Islam, and is subordinate to and the result of failure in westernization. This relation may be balanced neither by the West nor the Islamic world. Evidently, the problem will not be resolved by condemning each other. Both the West and the world of Islam have no option but to refer to their origin to find out that the issue of the West has nothing to do with Islam and that Islam is not a violent religion nor is it against basic human rights and freedoms. Both sides should know that enmity and violence leads to nowhere.

To adjust this relation, thinkers and scholars have a major duty and should invite politicians to take sensible and responsible decisions. It is not hard to realize that one cannot eradicate the wickedness and obscenity through war, hostility and massacre. We should meditate and refer to the essence and of religion and wisdom and think about the expediency of truth that guaranties the expediency of man not the trivial and limited affairs.