Advancing Peace, Inclusiveness, and Co-existence through Religious Based CVE Narratives: A Case Study of the Amman Message (2004), Marrakesh Declaration (2016) and Paigham-e-Pakistan (2018)

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Abstract

The study will proceed with description of a CVE narrative and its importance. It will be followed by discussion on the significance of Religious based Peace building. The third part of the will discuss the need for contesting the ideology of hate that is promoted by extremists. It will state that the powerful wave of extremist and terrorist discourse needs to be contested with more powerful, authentic and carefully prepared Islamic worldview. The forth part of the study consists upon discussion on narrative of peace that have been emerged in Muslim Societies post 9/11. This section highlights the Amman Message (2004), Marrakesh Declaration (2016, and Paigham-e-Pakistan (2018). The discussion not only evaluate the background and framework of these narratives but also makes discourse analysis of the contents of these documents. The impacts of these narratives on countering violent extremist in Muslims societies is also part of this study. The way forward will be suggested in the conclusion. A variety of the comparative research methods from classical Islamic research methodology and contemporary socio legal methods have been used to complete various component of this study. The Western ideas of peace and conflict resolution have been explored through social sciences methods such as descriptive methods, historical methods, and philosophical methods. The legal aspects of social, economic or political problem have been dealt through socio legal

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methods. Pure legal methods are used to explain, discover, examine, analyze and present in a systematic way the concepts, doctrines, and theories of conflict resolution and peace building in domestic and international legislation.

1- Concept and Importance of National Narrative

Throughout history, different nations ruled the world on the basis of various achievements. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the industrial revolution enabled the European nations to dominate the world. In the last century, achievements in digitalization became important. However, the twenty-first century is the century of narratives. Narratives reflect the achievements of a country or a nation. Due to the invention and extensive use of social media platforms, narratives have gained more importance. Nations are now not only developing their narratives but also propagating them to protect their strategic interests and advance peace and peaceful coexistence in their societies.

According to Alex Schmidt, a narrative is a "coherent system of interrelated and sequentially organized stories that share a common rhetorical desire to resolve a conflict by establishing audience expectations according to the known trajectories of its literary and rhetorical form."[3] Not all conflicts are resolved, but the desire to do so drives the trajectory of the story form, much as a goal drives a course of action. Narratives are related to the resolution of conflict. There is a useful structural relationship among three types of accounts: stories, narratives, and master narratives. Narratives and stories are important because without them language is just a sequence of sounds. Human ability to make language meaningful is the work of storytelling, an ability that allows us to recognize and make meaningful patterns of words, phrases, and inflections; to make and recognize common story forms and archetypes; and to be responsive to those patterns when they are communicated to us in fragments through various narratives. The narratives are divided into various types and kinds such as master narrative, Meta narrative, ethical narrative, and sectarian narrative.

2- Significance of Religious based Peace building

Religions have developed doctrines, dogmas, teachings and laws that offer commitments to the values that are critical for peace building.

3- Alex P. Schmidt, *Al-Qaeda's 'Single Narrative' and Attempts to Develop Counter-Narratives: The State of Knowledge* (The Hague: International Center for Counter Terrorism (ICCT), 2014), 3.

The presence of these religious based values such as empathy, openness for others, love and respect for strangers, destruction of uncontrolled ego, protection of rights, virtues of forgiveness, display of humility and repentance and the realization of errors is a big source of national integration, tranquility and stability. The promotion of these values is also serving as the methodology of peace, reconciliation, reconstruction and conflict resolution. Faith based ways for peace building in the religious communities depends on the narrative that is adopted by a particular community in a particular timeline. The adopted narrative not only describes the primary language that is essential for realization of that community's potential for peace building but it also discloses the depth and length of its experience. This narrative also indicates the moral authorizations for resilience against injustice which resulted into the creation of the conflict. It suggests normative symbols of the religious traditions related to peace and duty of human being towards. Moreover, it is to be noted that religious guidelines developed on peace and conflict resolution offer more appeal to the faithful than universal declarations. They encourage communities to work for promotion of peace in accordance with the guidelines.

3- Need to Contest the Terrorist Ideology through a Faith based Narratives

In Muslim societies extremists tried to build their discourse on the religious tradition of Islam through radicalizing its teachings to achieving their motives. They took material for their ideology from the Holy Scriptures and the early history of Islam and transformed its key elements for their ideological purposes through destructive interpretations.[4] With re-appropriation of the holy texts, they built their worldview for justifying their extremist and violent actions and generated appeal for recruiting activists to carry out their unlawful activities. Along with that, the use of Islamic slogans also gave them a degree of invulnerability, through which they portrayed any attack on them as an attack on Islam itself. For the purpose of exploitation in the name of religion, their ideological leaders carry out eclectic patchwork of elements from sacred sources.[5] They also

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4- Zeyno Baran, "Countering Ideological Support for Terrorism in Europe: Muslim Brotherhood and Hizb ut-Tahrir – Allies or Enemies?", *Connections* 5, No. 3 (Winter 2006), p. 10.

5- David Cook, "The Role of Islam as a Motivating Factor in Osama bin Laden's Appeal within the Muslim World", in David G. Kamien, *The McGraw-Hill Homeland Security Handbook* (New York: McGraw-Hill 2006), pp. 37-51; Sudhanshu Sarangi and David Canter, "The Rhetorical Foundations of Militant Jihad", in David Canter (Ed.), *The Faces of Terrorism: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (Chi Chester: Wiley-Blackwell 2009), p. 35.

use the ancient art of rhetoric as an instrument besides the myths and religious symbolism.[6] In accordance with philosophy of Aristotle, they use intertwined techniques of rhetoric such as (a) *logos* (using rational argumentation) (b) *ethos* (creating a trustworthy, authentic image) and (c) *pathos* (manipulating the emotions of the addressed audience).

The terrorist ideology revolves around a single narrative through which they blame foreign powers for all the failures of Muslims. Thus, terrorist outfits have merged several grievances that exist in Muslim societies into a consolidated body of arguments. This 'single narrative' is rooted in the political reaction to the failure of Muslim governments to serve their nations. This narrative is also used for energetic propagation through advancing literal, conservative and reactionary interpretations of Islamic tradition.[7] This single narrative employs a framework of explanations and provides its followers with emotionally satisfying portrayals. This framework is also used to offer them a sense of identity and give meaning to their lives.[8] The glimpses of this narrative can be found in the ideological writings and propaganda statements of these groups. Many of their written and verbal statements are either religious explanations to motivate and instruct Muslims or propagandist speeches to demoralize their enemies and inciting Muslims to react against them.[9]

This powerful wave of extremist and terrorist discourse needs to be contested with more powerful, authentic and carefully prepared Islamic worldview. Such a Reconstructionist effort must be rooted in the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). The life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Mecca, his migration to Medina, introduction of Meesaq-e-Medina as social contract and constitution, treaty of Hudaybiyyah, and dispatch of envoys and ambassadors to various rulers of the world are some examples of how the Prophet adopted various approaches for the reconstruction of first Islamic society. All these approaches should be used in the articulation of a narrative for an inclusive society in Pakistan. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) demanded doing justice and good to kith and kin. He forbad all shameful deeds, injustice and rebellion.

6- Bouchra Oualla, "Strategies of Argumentation in the Propaganda of Jihad: The Analysis of a Jihadi YouTube Video", pp. 121-140, in Rüdiger Lohlker (Ed.), *Jihadism: Online Discourses and Representation* (Vienna: University Press, 2013), pp. 123-124.

7- Paul Thomas, *Responding to the Threat of Violent Extremism: Failing to Prevent* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012), p. 136.

8- A.P. Schmidt, "The Importance of Countering al Qaeda's 'Single Narrative'", in E.J.A.M. Kassel (Ed.), *Countering Violent Extremist Narratives* (The Hague: National Coordinator for Counterterrorism, 2010), p. 47.

9- Raymond Ibrahim, *The al Qaeda Reader* (2007), pp. xii, 2 and 5-6.

Equal status of the women and the rights of the underprivileged groups were reflected and protected through the conduct of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). All these elements need to be inculcated in our efforts towards inclusiveness.

Unfortunately for last three centuries Muslims have been experiencing decline which adversely affected their societies. Muslims need reason and argument to make sense of the Islamic passion. To overcome this serious situation various Muslim scholars proposed to revisit Islamic traditions. Reformist and revisionist Muslim thinkers consider the sociological, economic and political transformations that have occurred in Muslim societies. This empirical reality is then brought into dialogue with the tradition in a bid to reinterpret it for newer contexts. The enlightened Muslims in the subcontinent having love and respect for Islam started a freedom movement to create a separate Muslim homeland in the subcontinent for reconstruction of a model Muslim society. They hoped that through this new homeland they will be able to demonstrate that Islam was still valid and viable solution to challenges faced by Muslims in particular and humanity in general. These views were more properly articulated by Allama Muhammad Iqbal, who suggested the revival of Muslim societies in the subcontinent through the process of reconstruction. This process of reconstruction needed to be regenerated based on a new discourse to counter violent tendencies in religious and political spheres. This process needed to drew its principles from the Holy Qur'an, the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), Meesaq-e-Medina, the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan 1973 and general principles of good moral character that transcend religious, social, cultural, ethnic and regional boundaries. This is an integrated effort to build a discourse to counter violence, extremism and terrorism from an Islamic perspective, to protect rights of weak segments of society by advancing inclusive values such as peace, reconciliation, tolerance, coexistence, respect for others, social justice, equity and equality in the society.

4- Emergence of Narrative of Peace in Muslim Societies

The Amman Message (2004), Marrakesh Declaration (2016), and Paigham-e-Pakistan (2018) emerged at a time when the Muslim states, its institutions and its people desperately needed a unanimous national voices to explain the position of the state on matters related to peace, social cohesion, and peaceful coexistence. The states were also in need of demonstration of doctrinal understanding about various national issues from a perspective of faith. Various extremist groups which targeted Muslim societies and its people manifested their religious understanding for the purpose of propaganda, declared themselves the

true representatives of faith, and accused the state and its institutions of infidelity. These groups under the pretext of religious slogans started challenging the writ of the state. As per Islamic law, *jihad* is collective responsibility and has to be carried out by the state. However, these groups named their terrorist activities as *jihad* for recruiting innocent Muslims and giving legitimacy to their acts. Moreover, they disseminated their ideological disparities through multiple distorted interpretations. They created confusion that was threatening the national integrity and harmony by spreading extremism and radicalization in Muslim societies such as Pakistan.[10] Contesting them ideologically was the need of the hour which was fulfilled by The Amman Message, Marrakesh Declaration, and Paigham-e-Pakistan. In an effort to address the current discourse of radicalization and counter violent tendencies, Kingdom of Jordan, Kingdom of Morocco and Islamic Republic of Pakistan came up with faith based narratives to contest the radical ideologies and ideas.[11]

4.1 The Amman Message (2004)

The Amman Message is a global declaration of Muslims leadership calling for unity of Muslims and tolerance. It was promulgated November 9, 2004 (27th of Ramadan 1425 AH) by King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein of Jordan. It consist upon three part rulings which were endorsed 300 Muslim scholars from 50 nationalities. This message is focusing on issues of defining who is a Muslim, exclusion from Islam (*takfir*), and methodology of religious opinions (fatwa). It was announced in Amman, Jordan, as a Ramadan sermon by Chief Justice Sheikh Iz-al-Din al-Tamimi in the presence of King Abdullah II and a number of Muslim scholars. A report of the International Crisis Group states regarding the significance of the message:

> "The sermon stressed the need to re-emphasize Islam's core values of compassion, mutual respect, tolerance, acceptance and freedom of religion."

10- Muhammad Usman Asghar, "Critical Discourse Analysis of Paigham-e-Pakistan (Unanimous Fatwa): Counter-Narrative to Religious Extremism In Pakistan," 2020, 32.subservient to their vested interests. These religious interpretations and their subsequent discursive manifestation in extremist narratives have always been a challenge for the governments in Pakistan's religiopolitical history. This article critically analyses the significance of Paigham-ePakistan (meaning literally as 'message of Pakistan'

11- Asghar, 33.subservient to their vested interests. These religious interpretations and their subsequent discursive manifestation in extremist narratives have always been a challenge for the governments in Pakistan's religiopolitical history. This article critically analyses the significance of Paigham-ePakistan (meaning literally as 'message of Pakistan'

The Amman message came at a critical moment of the history when after 9/11 terrorists tried to grab the authority to speak on the behalf of Islam. This document is extensively mentioned by globally as the evidence of tolerant and peaceful dimension of Islam. This declaration paved the way for the moderate Islamic forces to contest the idea of 'clash of civilizations'. The content analysis of the document shows that it provides an extra communicative action. It is a proactive but strategic narrative which has the capacity to serve as the counter narrative for CVE purpose. Michelle Brower's highlight the significance of the Amman declaration and sates:

> "It is quite clear that the 'Amman Message' is being actively and effectively wielded as evidence that the call for leaders bearing a true, moderate and peaceful Islam has been heeded. What is less clear is the extent to which political and religious elites are promoting the principles of the Amman Message - that is, it is unclear that steps are being taken to promote toleration of those Muslims whose inclusion is widely deemed problem foster mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence in the face of sectarian strife, to deter or censure those who stoke the flames of sectarianism or deed. The Message works better as a justification of the war and an identification of which side the 'good guys' are on than as a propagator of moderate Islamic values."[12]

4.2 Marrakesh Declaration 2016

The Marrakesh Declaration was promulgated on January 2016 by around 250 Muslim heads of state, religious leaders, and scholars. It is aimed at "defending the rights of religious minorities in predominantly Muslim countries." The document was revealed in Morocco in presence of "representatives of persecuted religious communities — including Chaldean Catholics from Christians and Yazidis from Iraq. On this event the King Mohammed VI of Morocco stated:

"We in the kingdom of Morocco will not tolerate the violation of the rights of religious minorities in the name of Islam...I am enabling Christians and Jews to practice their faith and not just as minorities. They even serve in the government."

12- MICHAELLE BROWERS, "Official Islam and the Limits of Communicative Action: The Paradox of the Amman Message," *Third World Quarterly* 32, no. 5 (2011): 954-955.

In January 2016, Muslim scholars, politicians, activists, and interfaith clergy from around the world gathered in Marrakesh, Morocco, over two days to address the rights of minorities living in Muslim-majority areas of the world. The gathering was a long time in the making, advanced via scholarly and political dialogue and motivated by growing alarm over the brutalization of minorities by violent extremist groups claiming Islamic legitimation. The Marrakesh Declaration emerged as a call to action grounded in the Charter of Medina, which was promulgated by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The declaration affirmed that as contractual citizenship non-Muslims have the right of equal treatment in a multicultural society. The signatory of the declaration affirmed that:

"Minority rights have a precedent in, and are essential to, Islamic law and tradition in accordance with international legal standards. They further called on politicians, scholars, artists, and others in Muslim-majority societies to advance the protection of minority rights based on equal citizenship through legal, political, and social processes, to ensure that minority communities—indigenous for centuries in the present-day Muslim world—can continue to flourish there."[13]

The Marrakesh Declaration is addressing the challenge of human rights in Muslim societies. In presence of representatives of forty-two governments, Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah affirmed that this document will sets a new religious precedent for minority rights. The content analysis of the document shows that "the Declaration is grounded in scholarship and encapsulates a sophisticated and cogent conversation between (religious) tradition and modernity, it has received little attention in the Muslim world, and has been viewed largely as an elite, idealistic initiative."[14]

4.3 Paigham-e-Pakistan (2018)

Paigham-e-Pakistan is a national narrative of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. It was launched by the President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan on January 16, 2018 in Aiwan-e-Sadr. This agreed upon national narrative was coordinated by Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University, and Islamabad in collaboration with Higher Education Commission of Pakistan and other institutions of religious education. This unanimously agreed-upon document is titled as "Paigham-e-Pakistan." Paigham in Urdu language is used in the meaning of message. Paigham is also used in the meaning in of "circularization." There

13- Susan Hayward, "Understanding and Extending the Marrakesh Declaration in Policy and Practice," n.d., 01.

14- Hayward, 02.

are many English words which are used in the meaning of paigham. Circularization is one of these meanings. In the literal sense, this word is also used in the meaning of "messaging."[15] Technically, "Paigham-e-Pakistan" is a national narrative of Pakistan. It was issued by the President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. It is comprised of an introduction, joint declaration, and unanimous fatwa. This fatwa was issued by the leading ulama of all schools of thought. It was prepared in accordance with the injunctions of the Holy Qur'an, the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan 1973. It reflects the collective thinking of the state of Pakistan. The message identifies the problems faced by Pakistani society and establishes the foundation of devising a strategy to achieve the goals of the creation of Pakistan. Through this message, Pakistan is being projected as a strong, united, developed, cultured, and modern nation in the international community.[16]

15- https://www.darsaal.com/dictionary/urdu-to English/%D9%BE%DB%8C%D8%BA%D8%A7%D9%85.html accessed on July,19,2021

16- Paigham-e-Pakistan,(Islamabad: Islamic research institute,2018)'ix-x; https://www.iiu.edu.pk/?p=28435; http://www.paighamepakistan.com/background-2/;Dawn.com (2018-01-16). "Govt unveils 'Paigham-i-Pakistan' fatwa against terrorism". *DAWN. COM*. Retrieved 2018-01-16; https://www.bbc.com/urdu/pakistan-42702303; https://tribune.com.pk/story/1610044/1-1800-pakistani-religious-scholars-declare-suicide-bombings-haram-new-fatwa,retrived on July 17,2021.

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