

Islam and Democracy: A Paradoxical Study of Syed Maududi and Javed Ghamidi

Authors : Waseem Makai

Abstract : The term 'political Islam' now seem to have gained the centre stage in every discourse pertaining to Islamic legitimacy and compatibility in modern civilisations. A never ceasing tradition of the philosophy of caliphate that has kept overriding the options of any alternate political institution in the Muslim world still permeates a huge faction of believers. Fully accustomed with the proliferation of changes and developments in individual, social and natural dispositions of the world, Islamic theologians retaliated to this flux through both conventional and modernist approaches. The so-called conventional approach was quintessential of the interpretations put forth by Syed Maududi, with new comprehensive, academic and powerful vigour, as never seen before. He generated the avant-garde scholarship which would bear testimony to his statements, made to uphold the political institution of Islam as supreme and noble. However, it was not his trait to challenge the established views but to codify them in such a bracket which a man of the 20th century would find captivating to his heart and satisfactory to his rationale. The delicate microcosms like selection of a caliph, implementation of Islamic commandments (Sharia), interest free banking sectors, imposing tax (Jazyah) on non-believers, waging the holy crusade (Jihad) for the expansion of Islamic boundaries, stoning for committing adulteration and capital punishment for apostates were all there in his scholarship which he spent whole of his life defending in the best possible manner. What and where did he went wrong with all this, was supposedly to be notified later, by his once been disciple, Javed Ahmad Ghamidi. Ghamidi is being accused of struggling between Scylla and Charybdis as he tries to remain steadfast to his basic Islamic tenets while modernising their interpretations to bring them in harmony with the Western ideals of democracy and liberty. His blatant acknowledgement of putting democracy at a high pedestal, calling the implementation of Sharia a non-mandatory task and denial to bracket people in the categories of Zimmi and Kaafir fully vindicates his stance against conventional narratives like that of Syed Maududi. Ghamidi goes to the extent of attributing current forms of radicalism and extremism, as exemplified in the operations of organisations like ISIS in Iraq and Syria and Tehreek-e-Taliban in Pakistan, to such a version of political Islam as upheld not only by Syed Maududi but by other prominent theologians like Ibn-Timyah, Syed Qutub and Dr. Israr Ahmad also. Ghamidi is wretched, in a way that his allegedly insubstantial claims gained him enough hostilities to leave his homeland when two of his close allies were brutally murdered. Syed Maududi and Javed Ghamidi, both stand poles apart in their understanding of Islam and its political domain. Who has the appropriate methodology, scholarship and execution in his mode of comprehension, is an intriguing task, worth carrying out in detail.

Keywords : caliphate, democracy, ghamidi, maududi

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