

Islam and the Issue of Human Rights: Compatibility or Contradiction

Adil Hussain Bhat^{1*}, Irfan ul Haq²

Department of Political Science, Aligarh Muslim University

Corresponding Author: Adil Hussain Bhat syedadilshakeel@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Since the Islamic resurgence in early 1970s, there has been a great deal of interest in the ontology of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its consistency with Islam. Ever since its foundation, the notion of human rights have long been the source of continuous contention between modern Muslim and Western intelligentsia. This paper begins with a brief introduction of Islam and the concept of human rights. The primary focus of the paper is to present a better understanding of Islamic law concerning with human rights and to examine the difference between the secular human rights and Islamic human rights. The paper will argue that the human rights in Muslim world have always been explicitly grounded in religious terms. Moreover, the paper also aims to highlight and understand the rationale why Muslim countries in particular are reluctant to accept or ratify the international covenant on human rights. Notwithstanding that, the purpose of this paper is threefold; (1) to present the human rights concept in Islam; (2) to highlight major differences between the principles of Islamic law and modern human rights notion; (3) to present the rationale behind the major disparities between Islam and the established standard of human rights.

INTRODUCTION

With over two billion followers, Islam is the second largest religion after Christianity, and is the fastest growing religion in the world. Nevertheless, if major discrepancies between the Muslim attitude towards the so-called universal human rights established and recognised by United Nations were found, then it would mean that one-fourth of the world's population might question the legitimacy of the human rights principles. The concept of 'human rights' is highly debated in the contemporary Muslim world. The Muslim scholars are not unanimous on whether Islam and human rights are compatible. Some Muslim intellectuals advocate the concept of human rights by arguing that the 'concept human rights is not only compatible with Islam but its (human rights) origin lies within the Islam itself.' However, some Muslim intelligentsia maintain that the modern notion of human rights and Islam are diametrically opposed to each other. Additionally, some Muslim scholars argue that despite some of the inconsistencies between the two traditions, there is a great possibility of reconciliation between Islamic law and the Western principles of human rights by employing the 'harmonistic approach.'¹ This 'harmonistic approach' acknowledges that although there are few disagreements between two discourses on some points, "there are concepts, doctrines and tools of interpretation that can be used to harmonise the two."²

The imprints of human rights concept is found in both traditional and modern scholarship of Islam. In Islamic tradition, the human rights concept falls under the wider discourse of obligation and duties. Whenever the Muslim scholars talk about human rights in Islam they refer to the claims individuals had on one another, instead of rights conferred to human being by virtue of being human. The Islamic scholarship on human rights tend to view human relations in terms of rights (or in Arabic *Haqq*) and duties (*Wajib*), conferred directly by God.³ Therefore, the relationship between rights and duties is closely tied with each other. With regard to this, Ebrahim Mossa argue that the rights are not absolute in Islam and "every right thus has a reciprocal obligation."⁴ Furthermore, he said, in Islam "rights are framed within a religious-moral framework where the omission of a duty/right is subject to religious sanction and its commission results in the acquisition of virtue."⁵ Therefore, human rights in Islam are deeply rooted in the belief that God alone is the sole Law provider and the source of all Human rights. Moreover, it is also held that the roots of Islamic human rights lies in primary sources of Islam, that is, the Quran and the hadith of Prophet (p.b.u.h). This implicitly implies that if the discourse of human rights has to gain acceptance among Muslim population, it must first establish a necessary relationship with Islam.

This paper has been discussed under six sub-headings. After this introductory section, section II, focusses on the meaning, definition and the origin of human rights concept. Section III of the paper includes the discussion on the Islamic concept of human rights. Moreover, this section also highlights the contribution of some of the prominent Islamic scholars in the development of Islamic discourse concerning human rights. Section IV, of the paper forms the main part of the paper. The principal objective of this section is to explore the inconsistencies between Islamic law concerning human rights with that of international human rights discourse, by identifying four areas of conflict. Section V, discusses the theological and anthropological differences between Islamic and the Western conception of human rights. The final section, section VI, presents some concluding observation.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Human rights are described as those rights “that are enjoyed by the people by virtue of their humanity. They are the rights without which the person’s existence would be considered as less than human”⁶. In context of this paper, the term human rights refers to all those rights that are available to everyone, by virtue of being human without ‘any sort of discrimination on the basis of religion, race, caste, or national origin.’ Therefore, human rights are universal in nature that take precedence over all other rights of people. They are absolute and independent of obligations and in fact, it is imperative that all human beings have equal access to them because “being human cannot be renounced, lost, or forfeited.”⁷ Human rights are absolute in nature as they are applied to all human beings and that the discussion of human beings cannot be separated from human rights. The meaning and importance of human rights becomes more clear with the Jack Donnelly, when he said;

“Human rights are conceived as naturally inhering in the human person. They are neither granted by the state nor are they result of one’s action... they are general rights, rights that arise from no special undertaking beyond membership in the human race. To have human rights one does not have to be anything other than a human being. Neither must one do anything other than be born a human being.”⁸

The genealogy of the human rights principles can be traced back to the “Natural law” and “Enlightenment” strands of Western philosophical and political thought.⁹ The idea of ‘Natural law’ as developed by ‘Sophocle’ in his ‘Antigone’ refers to a set of higher laws that stands above all man-made laws, and are binding on human consciousness. This concept was later on developed by the “Stoic philosophers”, when they argued for the rights enjoyed by all people by virtue of their human characteristics.¹⁰ However, they did not develop the rights, as we understand them today. The notion of rights as we have understood them today originated with the “European Enlightenment”

period that placed individual at the centre of equation and “divorced knowledge from revelation”¹¹. Therefore, the Enlightenment period paved the way for the emergence of the idea of human rights. As Ishay notes, “the legacy of the European Enlightenment for our current understanding of human rights supersedes other influences.”¹² Here, it is pertinent to mention that the human rights based on the ideas of Enlightenment lacks moral foundation because it separates “knowledge from revelation” that makes human rights theory more vulnerable and easy target of criticism. This criticism against the Western human rights discourse is discussed in later part of the paper.

The notion of human rights, as we understood it today, is linked directly to the inauguration of United Nations after the devastating effects of World War II. Article 1 of the United Nations Charter highlights the issue of human rights as one of the four main purposes of organisation, “to achieve international cooperation and in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.”¹³ Although, this article of the UN Charter was revolutionary, even more revolutionary was the creation of ‘Human Rights Commission’ in 1946, whose primary task was “to draft an ‘*International Bill of Human Rights*’ that would include a declaration of principles and legally binding human rights conventions.”¹⁴ The Commission quickly prepared the first part of the bill that was adopted by the ‘United Nation General Assembly’ (UNGA) on 10 December 1948 and came to be known as “*Universal Declaration of Human Rights*” (UDHR).¹⁵ The UDHR adopted by the UN General Assembly constitutes the first part of the “*International Bill of Human Rights*” under auspices of the UN system. The Declaration provides that “all people and all nations [as well as] every individual and every organ of society would be held morally and legally accountable to a set of fundamental rights and freedoms without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion.”¹⁶

Islam, Sharia and Human Rights

Islam, being one of the major religions in the modern world, is often portrayed as a challenger to the modern concept of universal human rights. Some Muslim scholars are deeply sceptical about Islam and its relation with the notion of human rights. In fact, they contend that the two are inherently incompatible to each other. They believe that Human rights is a Western concept and is founded on its value of secularism. Moreover, the human rights sceptics claim that Islam and human rights are incompatible because certain human rights contradict with the basic principles of an Islamic law. Therefore, they believe that if Islam and human rights are supposed to be reconciled,

certain human rights must be re-interpreted or abolished altogether, because Islamic law is God-given and are thus unchangeable. Therefore, modern Muslim scholars does not challenge human rights *per se* but are particularly against the some of the modern Human rights doctrines, which according to them, does not take Islamic principles into account.

The discourse over the compatibility of Islam and human rights has been a subject of debate for a long time. This compatibility discourse is not only “theoretically relevant to the universalization of human rights” but it is also “practically relevant to the realization of human rights in the Muslim world.”¹⁷ This is because of the fact that Islam often plays a significant role in the socio-political or public spheres of various Muslim majority states. Despite, some Islamic scholars maintain that Islam is neither the problem nor solution to the socio-political issues in the Muslim world. However, a careful examination of post 1970’s socio-cultural and political development in Muslim majority countries such as Egypt, Iran, Pakistan, Sudan, Palestine, Malaysia, Turkey and other Muslim countries shows a varying degree of Islamic influence in all spheres- public or private- of those states that implicitly or explicitly affects the subject of human rights.¹⁸

When we speak of Islam, we usually refer to what we call in Arabic as *Sharia*.¹⁹ The Arabic term ‘*Sharia*’ means ‘the right path’, it is a set of religious laws that traces its roots in sacred sources of Islam, that is the Quran and the *hadith* of Prophet (p.b.u.h). Thus, human rights in Islam refers to those rights that are implicitly or explicitly enshrined in the *Sharia* principles. This demonstrates that these rights have not been granted by any legislative assembly or any temporal authority but are conferred on individuals directly by the God. The fact that human rights have been conferred by God absolutely rules out all the possibilities of temporal authority to amend or abrogate the rights that are sanctioned by God.²⁰ Therefore, the revealed teachings of Islam (Quran and *hadith*) provide the preamble for an ethical order, with key criteria for establishing justice along with a set of human rights for all individuals irrespective of their caste, race and religious affiliations.

On the issue of human rights in Islam, two divergent or often contradictory positions are there. One group of ‘scholars’²¹ maintain that the notion of human rights not only hold a special place in Islam but its doctrines also reflect the fourteen hundred years old Islamic ideal rights. Abul Al’a Maududi, a leading Islamist scholar from the Indian subcontinent, argues that “Islam has laid down some universal fundamental rights for humanity as a whole, which are to be observed and respected under all circumstances whether such a person is resident within the territory of the Islamic state or outside it.”²² The human rights as laid down in the Islam are available to everyone simply by

virtue of their status of being human or as the Covenants puts it, "rights that [endowed for] the inherent dignity of human being."²³ On the other hand, other group of 'scholars'²⁴ contend that Islam negates the practice and the idea of human rights. Sharing the same argument, Martin Prozesky asserted that in the theistic religions like Islam, it is illogical to think of the concept of human rights that dominates thinking in and of the West.²⁵ Another scholar of human rights, Jack Donally claims that human rights is primarily a Western concept. He claims, although certain rights are guaranteed under Islam but they are not human rights as such, but are simply a framework of human dignity.²⁶

To comprehend the notion of human rights in Islam, one must keep this in mind that in Islam there is an integration of 'religion' and 'state' with the aim to reorganise society by providing guidelines for public as well as private life. Consequently, Islam provides a number of human right to an individual, in accordance to its own principles and values. Abdullaziz Sachedine in his book "*Islam and the challenges of Human Rights*" maintain that the "islamic political theology based on the central doctrine of God aims to create a just public order [that] can serve as the major theological-ethical foundation for human rights and its prerequisite, namely, democratic governance in Muslim societies."²⁷ Therefore, any endeavour to promote human rights doctrines among Muslims must consider Islam and its role in the private and public spheres of the Muslim world. With respect to this, Abdullahi An-Naim observes, "the implementation of 'international human rights' norms in any society requires thoughtful and well-informed engagement of religion, because of its strong influence on human belief systems and behaviour, and that religious considerations are too important for the majority of people for human rights scholars and advocates to continue to dismiss them simply as irrelevant, insignificant, or problematic."²⁸

However, on the other hand, the prominent Muslim scholars claim that *Sharia*, from the very beginning, secured some basic human rights principles. According to Khalid Ishaque Muslims must always "seek ways and means to assure each other what in modern parlance is called human rights."²⁹ Despite his acceptance that human rights cannot be translated into the language of *Sharia* but he still suggests that something resembling to human rights already exist in the essence of Islam. He mentioned fourteen human rights doctrines clearly laid down in Quran that "can neither be suspended nor abrogated, as there is no higher authority to which they are subservient."³⁰ Much like Ishaque, another Muslim leading scholar, Majid Khadduri mentions five most important human rights doctrines held by the people in accordance to Islam, such as "right to personal safety; respect for personal reputation; right to equality; brotherhood; and justice."³¹ In the elaboration of these principles,

Khadduri makes it clear how far these rights, guaranteed under Islam, differs from the modern human rights. For instance, he claims "human rights in Islam, as prescribed by the Divine law, are the privilege only of persons of full legal status. A person with full legal capacity is a living human being of mature age, free, and of Moslem faith."³² This assertion suggests that human rights would be preserved only for the believers of Islam, and non-Muslims are only guaranteed the right to life and property, and freedom to practice their own religion.

In the same line, another Muslim scholar, Aziz Said mentioned nine principles of Islam with respect to the notion of human rights. While presenting the importance behind the human rights, he held that "human rights in Islam are concerned with the dignity of an individual that secures personal identity and promotes human community."³³ Furthermore, he asserts that the most important feature Islamic notion of human rights is that they have been granted by God (Allah), and therefore, constitute obligations to the God and that derive their authority from this connection.³⁴ In other words, it is said that in Islam, human rights are more concerned about obligations (duty) rather than rights. The Islamic perspective of human rights becomes clear when he said,

*"Human rights [in Islam] exist only in relation to human obligations. Individual possess certain obligations toward God, fellow humans, and nature, all of which are defined in the Sharia. When individuals meet these obligations, they acquire certain rights and freedoms, which are again prescribed by Sharia. Those who do not accept these obligations have no rights, and their claims of freedom [that they make upon society] lacks justification."*³⁵

Therefore, numerous authors have maintained that the discourse of human rights hold a significant position in Islam. However, the Islamic concept of an individual and rights conferred upon him denies some of the essential Western liberal characteristics of an individual and his rights. American legal scholar, Artz Donna asserts that rights in Islam simply refers to "the duties owned to God and to other individuals."³⁶ This assertion entails that the concept of rights (freedom) in Islam clearly rejects the Western liberal and individualistic philosophy of "doing one's own thing". Therefore, it is maintained that in Islam an individual is not completely autonomous as in the Western sense but 'one who submits' completely to Allah.³⁷ The leading Islamic legal scholar, Cherif Bassiouni has put this in the following lines, as

*"Unlike western philosophical and political perceptions of the separability of the individual and the state, Islamic social concepts do not make such distinction. The individual does not stand in any adversary position vis-à-vis the state but is an integral part thereof. The consequence of the relationship is that there is no apparent need to delineate rights in contraposition to the state."*³⁸

The Problem Of Islamic Human Rights

As mentioned in the above section of the paper that there exists a concept of human rights in Islam, this section aims to demonstrate how Islamic notion of human rights are different from the so-called universal human rights. To begin with, it is said that under *Sharia* law, some of the basic internationally recognised human rights are at a very serious risk. The introduction of *Sharia* law in the countries like Iran and Pakistan during 1970's demonstrates some of the most horrific violations of basic human rights and liberties.³⁹ The *Sharia* law establishes hierarchy in terms of rights, where the Muslim men are endowed with full civil and political rights, followed by Muslim women and then religious minorities. In addition, a close examination of Islamic notion of human rights reveals many areas of incompatibility between Islam and modern human rights especially with regard to its severe punishment for some crimes (such as adultery, theft, apostasy etc.), exploitation of female slaves, freedom of marriage and so on.⁴⁰ However, the study of this paper is restricted only to the three areas of incompatibility, such as, the prohibition for Muslims to change their religion; the inferior status of Muslim women which affects their civil and political liberties particularly after marriage; the Secondary status of non-Muslims (*dhimmis*) living in predominantly Muslim states. In addition, the major Theocentric and Anthropocentric approach difference between Islam and the modern notion of human rights respectively is also subject of discussion.

Prohibition of Muslim Conversion to Other Religions

Under the *Sharia* law, the conversion of Muslim to any other religion is prohibited. This prohibition on conversion violates the Article 18 of 'Universal Declaration' that grants everyone the right to "freedom of thought, conscience and religion including that of freedom to change his religion and belief."⁴¹ Therefore, this article of the 'Universal Declaration' affirms the religious freedom as a basic human right. However, many Muslim majority countries including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq and other Muslim countries restrict various aspects of religious freedom that contradict with the established human rights standards. The restrictions include apostasy laws and blasphemy laws. According to the traditional interpretation of *Sharia* law, the conversion of a Muslim to any other religion would be tantamount to apostasy and thus punishable to death.⁴² Blasphemy is also a punishable offence.

However, the contemporary Muslim scholars have departed from the traditional consensus that considered apostasy and blasphemy as a religious crime punishable by religious law. While presenting the rationale behind the imposition of apostasy and blasphemy laws in earlier times of Islam, the contemporary Muslim scholars claimed, "When the state becomes guardian of the faith, then any threat to the state is also regarded as an attack on religion."⁴³ Therefore, instead of considering apostasy as a crime against religion, they view

it as a political crime punishable at the will the state authorities. Similarly, another contemporary Muslim scholar Abdullahi An-Naim contends that there is not even a single directive in the holy Quran that “stipulates earthly punishment for apostasy, as it goes against the principle of tolerance in Islam.”⁴⁴ To substantiate his claim, he often quotes the Quranic verses such as (2:256) that says, “There is no compulsion in religion...” and (18:29), where God has instructed the Prophet (p.b.u.h) to “Say, the truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills- let him believe; and whoever wills - let him disbelieve...”

METHODOLOGY

Another controversial issue in the debate over Islamic human rights is the lower status of women. Although the Muslim intelligentsia denies that Islam discriminates against women, yet there is a widely spread perception that Islamic law systematically discriminates women. Generally, it is claimed that the ‘Muslim women are isolated, oppressed and denied some of the prerogatives that are available to men.’⁴⁵ In many Muslim majority countries, women are frequently mistreated and there have been numerous cases of Muslim women being subjected to horrific acts, such as honour killing.

Under Islamic *Sharia*, women are considered as inferior to men and hence require the guardianship of men. Generally, the Muslim women are not permitted to participate in the public life on equal terms as Muslim men. They are barred from holding any high-level posts such as executive or judicial office.⁴⁶ The women have “right to property” under the Islamic law, but the share of their inheritance is half of the Muslim men. The right to marry is more restricted for women as compared to that of men, since woman are permitted to marry a Muslim man only, whereas Muslim man has the freedom to marry a believer (women) of any of the revealed scriptures (*ahl al-Kitab*). In addition, Muslim men also have the right to keep four wives simultaneously, unless they treat them equal. Therefore, women have little rights compared to that of Muslim men. With respect to this, Masood Baderin asserts, “Islamic law recognises that men and women are equal ontologically, but does not advocate absolute equality of roles between them, especially in family relationship.”⁴⁷

Secondary Status of Non-Muslims

The traditional interpretation of *Sharia* divides the residents of state into Muslim citizens and *dhimmi* citizens. The *dhimmi* citizens were the non-Muslims residents who lived within the boundaries of an Islamic state on the basis of an agreement and hence, are often referred as *ahl al-dhimma* (people of the contract). Initially, the status of *dhimma* was offered only to believers of revealed scriptures (*ahl al-Kitab*) or monotheists, but with the expansion of Muslim empire, the *dhimma* status was applied to unbelievers or polytheists living in an Islamic state. The *Sharia* law provides that non-Muslims have no civil and

political rights, not even communal autonomy, unless they have been granted the status of *dhimma* and whoever is granted the status of *dhimma* is endowed with some limited civil, political and religious rights in exchange for the payment of *jizya* tax.⁴⁸ However, it is argued that the *dhimmi* citizens while enjoying rights would be debarred from holding certain key positions that are available to Muslims. As for instance, *dhimmis* would be restricted from holding high political positions and from occupying the key military posts. Therefore, *Sharia* imposes certain restrictions on non-Muslims to hold key posts from where they can influence the policy of state.

Although the traditional *dhimma* model is not implemented in majority of the Muslim countries but it continues to influence the thinking of some of the ideologues of Islamic revivalism. Many Muslim revivalist scholars who advocate for the continuity of traditional *dhimma* model of non-Muslim citizenship use the discrimination against Muslims done in the West as an argument in support of their position.⁴⁹ However, the discriminatory treatment against Muslim in the West cannot be used as the basis to discriminate non-Muslims in the Muslim majority countries. Highlighting the fear among non-Muslims due to the Islamic model of *dhimma*, Ebrahim Moosa argues that the non-Muslims living in the Muslim majority countries fears that the re-establishment of an Islamic state would mean a return of traditional *dhimma* model. He summarizes the fear of non-Muslims by asserting "if Islamic parties come to power they may declare the country to be a 'domain of Islam' and relegate non-Muslim to a status of second-class citizen under the guise of being a 'protected people' (*ahl-al-dhimma*) as defined by an Islamic law."⁵⁰

The Theocentric Versus Anthropocentric Difference

In addition to these problems, another fundamental difference between Islamic law concerning human rights and established human rights is that the former is based on a "theocentric approach" while the latter is "anthropocentric approach."⁵¹ Theocentric means placing God (Allah) at the centre of equation whereas anthropocentric emphasizes on making Man (human being) as the central domain. Therefore, "the former is a religious perspective while the latter is a secular in nature. Based on religion, Islamic law always follows theocentric approach and makes direct references to God as the original granter of human rights."⁵² The 'Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights',⁵³ also known as UIDHR, marked the culmination of Islamic human rights debate, explicitly made references to God (Allah) and pledges to remain loyal to the model behaviour of Prophet (p.b.u.h). The UIDHR also declares that in "terms of our primeval covenant with God, our duties and obligations have priority over our rights."⁵⁴ Therefore, this declaration clearly distinguishes the Islamic

framework of rights from that of secular human rights where human beings are endowed with some unrestricted prerogatives simply for being human. The former law minister and prominent lawyer of Pakistan, Allah Bukhsh K. Brohi, further distinguishing Islamic framework of rights from the Western notion of human rights writes;

“The fundamental difference is in the perspectives from which Islam and the West view the matter of human rights. The Western perspective may by and large called anthropocentric in the sense that man is regarded as constituting the measure of everything since he is the starting point of all thinking and action. The Islamic perspective on the other hand is theocentric that is, God conscious... In essence, the believers have only obligations or duties towards God since he is called upon to obey the Divine law, and such human rights as he is made to acknowledge stem from his primary duty to obey God. Yet, paradoxically, in these duties lie all the rights and freedoms. Man acknowledge the rights of his fellow men because this is a duty imposed on him by religious law to obey God and the Prophet (p.b.u.h) and those who are constituted as authority to conduct the affairs of state.”⁵⁵

Therefore, the Islamic principles of human rights are often described as both religious and humanitarian. The Islamic principles of human rights maintain “dual relationship, one vertical between human beings and God and other horizontal, between human beings themselves.”⁵⁶ It is held that the ‘vertical relationship’ in the Islamic conception of human rights is the religious obligation towards God that once fulfilled automatically strengthens the relationship between human beings. Conversely, the so-called universal human rights law based on “the secular premises does not make any reference to God (Allah) instead human rights are considered as a social practice that arises from human action and not granted by God.”⁵⁷

The secular philosophy of the ‘Western human rights declaration’ have sparked a debate among Muslim intelligentsia whether exclusion of God from the declaration makes the human rights document inconsistent and irrelevant with *Sharia* law.⁵⁸ As a result, majority of the Islamist scholars tended to denounce international human rights as fundamentally inconsistent with Islamic legal principles. However, some Muslim scholars challenge this view and argued that the criteria for determining the compatibility or incompatibility of any human document with Islamic law, is not ‘reference to God’ but the essence of the particular document. As Riffat Hassan wrote,

“Reference to God does not necessarily make sacred, nor does non-reference to God necessarily make profane any human document... a document such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which, though “secular” in terminology, seems to me to be more “religious” in essence than many “fatwas” given by Muslims and other religious authorities and agencies.”⁵⁹

CONCLUSION

In the conclusion of this discussion, it can be stated indeed there exists a concept of human rights in Islam but that is altogether different from the Western idea of human rights. As I have discussed above that the Islamic standard of human rights is absolute in the sense that it ensures a balance between rights and duties. In Islam, human rights stem from a moral-religious background in which Allah (God) grants certain rights to human beings, who are expected to fulfil certain duties and obligations while enjoying those rights. Moreover, the paper highlights the distinction between Western human rights and Islamic scheme of human rights, and argues that Islam renders some of the principles that are in conflict with the established discourse of human rights.

Despite some major differences between the Islamic and universal of human rights standards, both Muslim and Western world recognise the importance of the promotion and protection of human rights. The paper concludes, even though Islam may not be the primary factor for the promotion of human rights in modern societies, but it is unquestionably an important factor that could be positively employed for improving the human rights conditions in the Muslim world. This paper suggests that any endeavour for the promotion of human rights in Muslim world must take Islam in consideration. Indeed, the success or failure of Islamic human rights theory is determined by how well the contemporary Islamic political thought addresses contemporary issues and challenges in the Muslim societies. Thus, this paper advocates for the possible reconciliation between Islamic and Western precepts of human rights, which can be accomplished by employing "harmonistic approach."

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations so that further research is still needed on the topic Islam and the Issue of Human Rights: Compatibility or Contradiction.

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Universal declaration of human rights should not be confused with international bill of rights. Universal Declaration of Human Rights together with the two covenants; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Political Rights are collectively referred as the International Bill of Human Rights.

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In this paper, the term *Sharia* is used in a strictly legal sense and refers only to the primary sources of Islamic law (i.e., Quran and *hadith*). The Quran is the revealed book and is the main source of Islamic law while the hadith is the recorded sayings and practices of Prophet (p.b.u.h), which supplement the Quran as a source of law

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