Islam and Secularism: Where the Unlike Charges Repel

Ali Samaila*
Indonesian International Islamic University
Email: ali.samaila@uiii.ac.id

Aishatu Abubakar Kumo
Department of Religious Studies Gombe State University, Nigeria
Email: jauroji1988@gmail.com

Saleh Hassan
Department of Religious Studies Gombe State University, Nigeria
Email: hassansaleh67@gsu.edu.ng

Nasir Yahaya
Indonesian International Islamic University
Email: nasir.yahaya@uiii.ac.id

Rabiu Abdulmudallib Bello
Halqatu Darus Sahabah Qur'anic School Gombe, Nigeria
Email: rabiu081@gmail.com

Abstract

Since the advent of secularism in the middle-ages there exist a strong debate among Muslim scholars and thinkers on its compatibility with Islam. The proponents of secularism popularly known as secular Muslims upheld that Islam and secularism are two sides of the same coin because of their shared aspects while its opponents (the Islamists) uphold otherwise. This paper depends on convergence theory to argue that there are some similarities as well as differences between the two concepts. The study suitably adopted descriptive and comparative approaches of qualitative research to generate and analyze data. The study found that there are two types of secularism namely: the radical and moderate secularism. The radical secularism which is usually translated as "extremist" is characterized by hostile approaches to religion while the moderate secularism known as soft secularism acknowledges religious freedom, tolerance and pluralism which are all inherent in the Islamic world views. The major differences between the Islamic world views and that of the moderate secular views lie in the fact that Islam calls for humanity to embrace its faith (*Da'awa*) in spite its strong position on religious freedom and the Islamic concept of moderation (*Wasatiyyah*) which advocates upholding balance stance between two opposing extremes. On a final note the research recommends that Muslims should strongly uphold the Islamic teachings in their individual and societal lives alike.

INTRODUCTION

Religion constitutes an integral aspect of the world's cultural and historical heritage. Throughout various epochs, humanity has embraced different forms of religion as a fundamental component of its cultural identity.[1] Religion plays a crucial role in addressing fundamental existential questions, such as the purpose and meaning of life, as well as associated responsibilities and obligations. Specifically, Banchoff &Wuthnow (2011) maintain that religious belief is a significant aspect of daily life in many Muslim majority countries.[2] However, the influence of secular tendencies, driven by modernism, has significantly diminished the authority of religion in the contemporary world.[3] Consequently, the inherent dynamism and balanced nature of Islamic religion have become more pronounced than ever before in the sense that its flexibility warranted guidance on how to live with the new development whether in the individual or public spheres of life. This study will primarily look at the points of similarities and dissimilarities between the Islamic world views and the secular world views. As it is a known fact that secularism concerns with religious freedom, worldly matters and separation between state and religion. Islam as aged-old religion that cater for the human needs in all ages had been for long spelled out its own world views relating to these ideas of modern secularism. Thus, basing on convergence theory [4] which suggests that different ideologies, beliefs or cultures tend to converge over time, sharing common values and principles; this paper contends that both Islam and secularism share some common aspects while Islam stands apart in terms of the purpose and objectives it set to depend for instance the balanced nature of Islamic religion that is centered on upholding a middle position between two opposite ends make it not to focus on solely mortal life as profound by secularism. Similarly, in all other ideas of secularism Islam had its own peculiarities. This paper is segmented into four sections the first section is the introduction while the rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 presents data and methodology. Section 3 presents discussion of the results. And finally section 4 concludes the paper. This will explore the real issues at stake on secularism and Islam.

There are many papers and academic writings on secularism and its relation with Islam. This study review the followings for their significance. Larsson's paper presented a debate on secularization and the division between religion and politics by Yusuf al-Qaradawi and the Egyptian-Swiss Tariq Ramadan. Larsson argue that the debate on secularization in the Islamic world can be broadly categorized into two opposing views: one perspective asserts that Islam is a personal matter of belief, while the other advocates for the imposition of Sharia as the societal foundation. Both al-Qaradawi and Ramadan share the perspective that secularization

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[1] Ulkar M, *The Essense and Significance of the Religion of Islam in the Upbringing and Preservation of the Best Moral Qualities of a Person* in JournalNX a Multidisciplinary Peer Reviewed Journal, 2020

[2] Banchoff, Thomas F., and Robert. Wuthnow, Religion and the Global Politics of Human Rights. Oxford University Pres, 2011

[3] J. Valk et al, *An Islamic Worldview from Turkey, Palgrave Series in Islamic Theology, Law and History*, https://doi.org.I0.I007/978-3-319-6651_1

[4] Huntington, S. P. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster Rockefeller Center, 1996

involves a separation between religion and politics. According to al-Qaradawi, while secularism may find acceptance in a Christian society, it cannot gain approval in an Islamic society due to inherent differences between Islam and Christianity. He contends that Islam encompasses a comprehensive system of worship (*'ibādah*) and legislation (Shari'ah), distinguishing it from Christianity. The scholar contends that advocates of the separation between religion and the state, under the banner of secularization, are essentially promoting atheism and rejecting Islam. He further describes the idea of prioritizing human reason over divine law as contradictory to Islam's essence, asserting that accepting secularism amounts to apostasy. Instead, he encourages believers to adopt a middle way (*wasatiyya),* allowing them to maintain their faith without leaning towards extremism or secularism.[5]

Despite Ramadan's strong belief in Islam as a comprehensive system governing both public and private spheres, he expresses the view that secularization, inherent to European identity, is not problematic as long as Europe upholds the principle of freedom of religion and avoids compelling Muslims into complete religious absence. According to him, freedom is a fundamental aspect of Islam, and given that Islamic history lacks a supreme authority like the church, Muslims should not inherently oppose secularization. However, it's important to note that this perspective should not be misconstrued as an endorsement of secularization or a diminishing of the importance of religion. On the contrary, Ramadan contends that a 'correct' understanding of Islam can only be attained by returning to its sources. He argues that Muslims should not face difficulties in distinguishing between the private and public domains.[6]

This article relates to this current study but deficient in addressing the similarities between Islam and secularism which the research would specifically focus to fill the lacuna. Alam Mansoor contends that achieving peace and political stability is possible only through the adoption of secularism and democracy, asserting that Muslims can reclaim their former glory by embracing these systems. In his perspective, these systems not only align with Islam but are deeply rooted in its teachings. According to Mansoor, Western-style secularism consists elements such as religious freedom, state non-interference in religious affairs, church-state separation, constitutional incorporation of these principles, and judicial safeguarding of religious freedom as a fundamental right.[7]

The author emphasizes that these features of secularism, including religious freedom, are not foreign to Islam; pointing out instances in the Qur'an and the Prophet's actions, such as granting religious freedom to Jews in Medina and extending amnesty to enemies in Makka after conquest, as evidences. The views upheld by the researcher attribute the resistance to secularism in Muslim countries to the secularism's Western association and its challenge to the traditional role of the church in state matters and also link the decline of Muslim empires to colonization by France, Britain, and Russia, leading Muslims to perceive the West as responsible for their diminished power. Furthermore, he highlights Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's

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[5] Larsson G. (nd) Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Tariq Ramadan on *Secularisation: Differences and Similarities in Gabriele Marranci (Eds) Muslim Societies and the Challenge of Secularization: An Interdisciplinary Approach Singapore*, Springer

[6] *Ibid*

[7] Alam Mansoor, *Islam and Secularism in Pakistan Horizon* Vol. 66, No. 3 pp. 37-49 Pakistan: Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, 2013, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24711502 accessed on 15th January, 2024

abolition of the Khilafat in 1924 and the imposition of Western reforms in Turkey, particularly the introduction of secularism, as factors that intensified the opposition of Muslim orthodoxy to the concept of secularism.[8]

As far as the Alam's study is concerned it can be seen that it generally up hold the synonymy and compatibility of Islam and secularism thereby overlooking the divergence angles. As such this our research will complement it in highlighting the differences between the two concepts. Resul examines Secularism and Secularization, highlighting both their points of divergence and convergence. In his defined context, Secularization is characterized by a gradual decline in religious practices, beliefs, thought patterns, and institutions. This decline is primarily associated with, or unintentionally results from, broader processes of social structural change. In modern society, religion is replaced by science, rational order, and social differentiation. On the other hand, Secularism is described as an ideology that seeks to challenge all forms of supernaturalism. It advocates for nonreligious, antireligious, or anti-clerical ideologies as the foundation for both personal morality and social institution. Additionally, the author clarifies their relationship, stating that secularism involves an intentional effort to create an anti-religious society, whereas secularization is a process in which religious views are intentionally replaced by rational order or science through either deliberate actions or social change.[9]

The author further categorizes three distinct political ideologies based on the relationship between the state and religion: Theocracy, where the state is established through religious norms; liberalism, which emphasizes the separation of state and church as essential for democracy; and a third political thought that prioritizes polity over religion. [10]

However, Resul's research project lacks explanation of similarities as well as differences between the concepts of Islam and Secularism. Thus, this article set to bridge the gap. According to Hoebink there exists a divergence of opinions among researchers regarding the compatibility of Islam with Modernity and Secularism. He defines secularism as a doctrine that promotes human autonomy and freedom from the moral authority of God and religious doctrines. At times, it is used in a narrower context to denote a doctrine seeking the separation of religious authority from political power, specifically within the state; a concept more accurately called laicism.[11]

Hoebink points out that advocates of secularism among Muslims popularly known as secular Muslims argue that neither the Qur'an nor the Sunnah prescribe an Islamic government. Consequently, they assert that the realms of politics and government should be considered matters within the realm of human reason. On the other hand, Islamists perceive secularism as a tool of Westernization and the subjugation of Muslim lands to the dominance of Western imperialism.[12]

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[8] *Ibid*

[9] Resul A, *Secularity, Positivism, Positivist Secularism and Turkey Master* thesis Submitted to the Department Political Science and Public Administration Bilkent University Ankara, 1995

[10] *Ibid*

[11] Hoebink Michel, *Thinking about Renewal in Islam: Towards a History of Islamic Ideas on Modernization and Secularization in Arabica* pp. 29-62 published by Brill 1999 https://www.jstor.org/stable/4057249 accessed on 15th January, 2024

[12] *Ibid*

Hoebink's research is to extent resembles Larson's in bringing views of Muslim scholars on how to adapt and live with secularism in the modern world setting. This study would favorably address their deficiency of explaining the synergy between the worldviews of secularism and Islam.

Bruinessen's article on Secularism in Turkey and Indonesia suggests that both nations have successfully demonstrated the compatibility of democratic governance with the preservation of Islamic values. As inheritors of rich civilizations, encompassing both Islamic and pre-Islamic periods, they have developed distinctive local expressions of Muslim religiosity. This includes the mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri in Indonesia and the Anatolian Sufism of Yunus Emre in Turkey. The majority of the population in both countries appears to endorse secularism and reject the concept of an Islamic state. Bruinessen characterizes them as secular because he argues that being both religious and secular simultaneously is feasible, given that the terms are not mutually exclusive. He emphasizes that common definitions of secularism often focus on the separation of religion from the state or politics. However, in practical terms, various forms of secular political systems exist, with very few achieving complete separation between religion and state. According to Bruinessen, the expectation is for the state to remain neutral and maintain an impartial distance from all religions.[13] Nevertheless, this current study unlike Bruinessen's will focus on differences between Islam and secularism. In conclusion, the general overview of the literatures in the subject matter reveals that the previous studies did not highlight the synergy between the worldviews of secularism and Islam. As a result, this research aims to fill this gap using convergence theory to highlight the similarities and differences between Islam and secularism.

METHODS

This study being a qualitative one adopts the descriptive and comparative research approaches. In this way the descriptive method was used to describe both the concept of Islam and secularism. The researchers reviewed the existing literatures on Islam and secularism and extracted the descriptions of the two concepts and their features. The comparative method was used in the process of analysing the similarities as well as dissimilarities of the two concepts. Thus, going by the above scholarly statement and the explanation given, the suitability of adopting the approaches became clear.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Concept of Secularism

The word Secularism and Secularization often used interchangeably but scholars mostly differentiate them. Secularism simply refers to that which is not religious. The meaning of the word came from the Latin root "saeculim" which means age or generation.[14] Therefore going by the definition we can find that secularism focus upon the worldly life. Similarly,

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[13] Bruinessen M.V, *Secularism, Islamism and Muslim intellectualism in Turkey and Indonesia: Some Comparative Observations in Mirza Tirta Kusuma (ed.), Ketika Makkah Menjadi Las Vegas: Agama, Politik dan Ideologi*, Jakarta: Gramedia, 2014

[14] Larsson G. (nd) *Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Tariq Ramadan on Secularisation: Differences and Similarities in Gabriele Marranci (Eds) Muslim Societies and the Challenge of Secularization: An Interdisciplinary Approach* Singapore, Springer

Usturali sees secularism as "worldliness" of the political authority, in accordance with the origin of the word "secular". Since the state affairs are by definition worldly and mundane, interfering in the sacred or religious affairs or making religion a point of reference or a source of justification as well as interference by religious authorities into the politics would conflict the secular principle and in turn decrease the legitimacy of state.[15] On the contrary, Shock (2020) analyses how the word secular which is the base form of secularism was used in different contexts and fields of science without any attachment to religion.

However, secularization as a terminology of social sciences can be seen as a gradual reduction in religious practices, beliefs, thought patterns, and institutions. This decline typically happens in connection with, or as an unplanned outcome of, broader social structural changes. In modern society, religion gives way to the prominence of science, rational order, and social differentiation. On the other hand, Secularism is an ideology that seeks to criticize all manifestations of supernaturalism and the institutions associated with it. It promotes non-religious, anti-religious, or anti-clerical principles as the foundation for personal morality and social organization.[16]

In addition, Sociologists have used secularization to indicate a variety of processes in which control of social space, time, facilities, resources, and personnel was lost by religious authorities. A slight distinction between secularization and secularism is while secularization primarily involves a broad separation of church and state or structural shifts in society, secularism, in contrast, represents an ideology that aims to promote a secular worldview.[17] Resul's perspective provides more detail, suggesting that secularism involves a purposeful endeavor to establish an anti-religious society, whereas secularization denotes a process in which religious perspectives are intentionally replaced by rational order or science through deliberate efforts or societal changes.[18]

The terms "*dahriyya*," denoting a materialist or atheist perspective, and "*ilmaniyya*," relating to matters of the world, can be employed in discussions about processes resembling secularization in the Arabic terminology. The term "ilmaniyya" originates from "ilm," signifying science or knowledge. As secularization is frequently linked to worldly aspects, the Arabic expressions "alamaniyya" or "dunyawiyya" may also be utilized to describe it.[19] Nevertheless, al-Attas opines that the closest approximation to the secular in Islam might be reflected in the Quranic term "*alhayât al-dunyâ*," translating to 'the worldly life.' The term *dunyâ*, originating from *dana* signifies something being 'brought near.'[20]

The origin of secularism can be traced back to the Middle Ages in Europe when there was a strong tendency for religious persons to despise human affairs and to meditate on God

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[15] Usturali, Adil, *A Conceptual Analysis of Secularism and its Legitimacy in the Constitutional Democratic stat*e, 2015.

[16] Resul A, *Secularity, Positivism, Positivist Secularism and Turkey Master thesis Submitted to the Department Political Science and Public Administration* Bilkent University Ankara, 1995

[17] Larsson G. (nd) Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Tariq Ramadan on Secularisation: Differences and Similarities in Gabriele Marranci (Eds) *Muslim Societies and the Challenge of Secularization: An Interdisciplinary Approach* Singapore, Springer

[18] Resul A. *Secularity, Positivism, Positivist Secularism,*

[19] Larsson G. (nd) Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Tariq

[20] Al-Attas M.N (2023) *Secularization and the Crisis of Identity: The Muslim Encounter with Modern Western Civilization Kuala Lampur*, np

and the afterlife. As such in reaction to this tendency, secularism, during the Renaissance appeared as people began to show more interest in human cultural achievements and the possibilities of their fulfillment in this world (https://www.britannica.com › topic › secularism). In the light of the above it is observed that Secularism came into being in reaction to Christian monasticism which calls for ascetic and devotional life devoid of any connection to worldly life and its luxury. However, Alam's view suggests a seemingly contradictory opinion which attributed the origin of secularism to the response of incessant religious and sectarian wars among the Christians resulting in their lives becoming unfavorable[21]. In line with this, Usturali have identified this origin of secularism as historical contingent approach to prove that secularism emerged out of specific historical conditions including records of religious wars and the rise of absolutism in early modern Europe.[22] Although Alam did not specify a period when the concept came into use the dual views will shade more light on the concept of secularism. Usturali was however, traces the origin of secularism to enlightenment approach which concerned with normative basis of the modern state and identifies the supremacy of employing human reasons called autonomy. This simply means modern state is only legitimate so far as it respects the autonomy of its citizens. In addition, considering the essence and extent of secularism it seems like both opinions carry significance because secularism encompasses focusing both worldly affairs which oppose monasticism and also connotes religious freedom to prevent religious war as well as exercise of human autonomy to achieve the legitimacy of modern state.

Types of secularism

Scholars have identified two types of secularism, the radical and moderate. The radical was said to take a form of assertive or extremist secularism while the moderate seems very soft and played a liberal and passive position in terms of ideologies and values. [23]The ideologies of the two types of secularism can be succinctly presented below:

1. Radical secularism**:** this type of secularism regarded religion as illusion which may be obstacle to modernization. It is used by the rulers for political control. It affirms the separation of religion with state as well as elimination of religious organizations in all the spheres of society. The proponents of this type of secularism include Karl Max, Hobbes, Max Weber, Kemal Ataturk, and so on.
2. Moderate secularism**:** this type of secularism tolerates pluralism and neutrality, multiculturalism and liberalism. It condone given other religions equal right. The proponent of this form includes John Locke, Adam Smith, Thomas Jefferson and Ghandi, etc.

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[21] Alam Mansoor, *Islam and Secularism in Pakistan Horizon,* 2013 Vol. 66, No. 3 pp. 37-49 Pakistan: Pakistan Institute of International Affairs https://www.jstor.org/stable/24711502 accessed on 15th January, 2024

[22] Usturali, Adil, *A Conceptual Analysis of Secularism and its Legitimacy in the Constitutional Democratic state*, 2015

[23] Al Faruki J. and Roknuzzaman Md., *Secularism and the Muslim World: An Overview* in *Journal of Social Sciences, Rajshahi College* vol.1 (1), 2017

These two types were sometimes regarded as hard and soft forms of secularism; assertive and passive among other terms.[24] Both the two revolve around either confining religion to private sphere or advocate for autonomy of religion from the state.

Manifestation of Secularism in the Contemporary Time

According to Bruinessen the Secularism that existed since its inception to the present time can be categorized in the following three types:[25]

1. Separation of state and religion in order to protect religion from politics and to guarantee religious freedom. In this they accommodate religious practices to the reasonable extent like in the United States of America.
2. Separation of state and religion in order to protect the state and the political process from interference by religion. This is mostly described as strict or militant secularism known as (laïcité, 'laicism'). A typical example of this is French secularism.
3. Neutrality of the state towards religions (in the sense of equal distance towards all religions). This variety of secularism typically emerged in multi-religious societies with long histories of inter-religious conflict. India is the good example of this type.

Islam and Secularism convergences and Divergences

In order to have a clear picture concerning the intersection between Islam and Secularism it is important to give a brief background on the features and characteristics of Islam that relates to Secularism.

1. Freedom of Religion and Tolerance

Islam promotes religious freedom in such a way that it gives any human being absolute free atmosphere to accept any religion of his choice or to live without inclination to any religious belief and prohibits forceful imposition of Islam on humanity. The freedom of religion and tolerance accorded by Islam to humanity were enshrined in the Qur'an and demonstrated by the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him. Qur'an states: "Let there would be no compulsion in (acceptance of) religion". (Qur'an 2:256).

The prophet Muhammad exemplified genuine sense of tolerance in his relation to the different religious communities in Madina such as Jews and Idolaters. Interestingly, the Islamic religion aligns with this core principle of secularism concerning freedom of belief. However, it is worth noting that despite Islam's notion on religious freedom, Muslims are encouraged to invite others to embrace Islamic faith in an honorable and respected manner. This article strongly argues that advocating for people to accept Islam does not in any way contradict the Islamic concept of religious freedom. The claim by Alam[26] that *Da'awa* is a reserved work of the prophet is simply a baseless because numerous Qur'anic injunctions exhorted Muslims to carry out this task, as long as it does not involve a coercive approach to impose the religion. Qur'anic verses that call for engaging in *Da'awa* include: "And let there be (arising) from you a nation inviting to (all that is) good enjoining what is right and

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[24] *Ibid*

[25] Bruinessen M.V**,** *Secularism, Islamism and Muslim intellectualism in Turkey and Indonesia: Some Comparative Observations in Mirza Tirta Kusuma (ed.), Ketika Makkah Menjadi Las Vegas: Agama, Politik dan Ideologi*, Jakarta: Gramedia, 2014

[26] Alam Mansoor, *Islam and Secularism…*,38

forbidding what is wrong and those will be the successful"(Q3:104). Also "(O Prophet) call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation and reason with them in the best manner" (Q16:125). And "You are the best community ever raised for humanity. You encourage good, forbid evil and belief in Allah…." (Q3:110)

Although it may appear that chapter 16 verse 125 is a direct and specific communication to the prophet, according to the technical explanation of Muslim scholars the command to the prophet is generally considered a command to the entire Muslim nation except in a situation or task that only carry out by the prophet.[27] Consequently, the duty of *Da'awa* is not a restricted duty to the prophet. That was why this great duty was clearly stressed in verse 104 of chapter 3 where it is mentioned that group of people among Muslim should actively promote good acts and forbid wrongdoing. Imam al-Qurtubi has commented that the vanguard of *Da'awa* should consist learned individuals among the community, specifying that not everyone is obliged to undertake this duty (2022).

Similarly, the Muslims' belief in truth of Islam and incorrectness of any religion other than it does not contradict the Islamic principle of religious freedom. This is because the Qur'an which preaches religious freedom is the same scripture declares any religion apart from Islam null and void (Q3:19 and Q3:85). It is logical to comprehend that there is difference between believing that something is not good and depriving others of the freedom of believing in it or practicing it. Muslims believe that any religion apart from Islam is invalid but this does not mean prohibition on people from believing or practicing other religion. In connection to this, Islam made it clear that division of people into difference religions and beliefs is a divine making. Allah decreed that human beings would not be united under a single religion (Q11:118-119). Therefore, both Islam and secularism share the principle of religious freedom but what made Islam distinct is the concept of inviting people to Islam and the declaration that all other religions are invalid. For secularism or secular society there is no need for *Da'awa* and all religions are considered on the same pedestal.

2. Living Luxury Life

As it was mentioned earlier that one of the main cause for the emergence of the secular world view was a reaction to Christian monasticism which abhor luxury life. That was the reason why Secularism is rooted upon worldly pursuit as opposed to religious asceticism. Islam in the contrast accepts luxury without extravagance and disapproves monasticism. In consonance with secularism Islam allows individual to enjoy his life within the limits set by Allah's provision and regulations. However, unlike secularism Islam encourages its adherents to marry between enjoying the mortal life and struggling for the religious life that is aimed at the afterlife. This is in accordance with the Islamic principle of balance known as *wasatiyyah*. This principle distinguishes Islam as an exceptional and unique religion because it maintains balance between two opposing extremes. Many religions focus too much on morality and spirituality at the expense of practical aspects such as law, or emphasize too much on law while neglecting spirituality. Islam gives room for all aspects

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[27] *Al-Juwaranah I. M &Qadir Ali (2015) Al-Isyanul Madaniy: Dirasatan Qanuniyyatin mu'asaratin* in *Mujallatul urduniyyah* vol.12 no 2 http://hdl.handle.net/123456789/1040 accessed on 24th January, 2024

of religion, and it does not demand every Muslim to strive for an ideal that is excessively high or perfect for him to follow. Islam discourages Muslims from spending 24 hours performing religious duties and ignoring the worldly life. The following Qur'anic verse shed light on this principle:

> "Rather, seek the ˹reward˺ of the Hereafter by means of what Allah has granted you, without forgetting your share of this world. And be good ˹to others˺ as Allah has been good to you. Do not seek to spread corruption in the land, for Allah certainly does not like the corruptors" (Qur'an 28: 77).

It is worth noting that Islam only allows the Muslims attain the worldly pleasure but all their efforts to attain the pleasure in the world must serve the ultimate goal of life, which is to please Allah and win His rewards. Thus, Islam accepts cultivating the life of this world comfortably as campaign by secularism but strikes balance between worldly enjoyment and religious life unlike secularism.

3. Separation between State and Religion

In discussing this concept it is paramount to have a background on relationship between secularity and politics. Resul outlined three main political system based on the relationship between state and religion as far as secularism is concerned.[28]

a. Theocracy: in this system the state is an entity or institution established through the norms or principles originated from the church or religion.

b. The second system may be called liberal, which puts forward the full of state and church. According to this view the separation between state and church is necessary for democracy.

c. The third view puts forward the superiority of polity to religion. Religion should be dependent upon polity.

Moreover, as previously explained, one of the fundamental aspects of Secularism is the separation between state and religion. This means that religion should not interfere in the affairs of governance and conversely the political leaders should not in any way have say in the religious matters. However, Islam being a comprehensive religion that concerns with both individual and the entire communal aspects of life does not accept the division of state and religion because Islam is meant to be a path to guide individuals irrespective of their social status on how to live according to its dictates. It guides leaders how to administer justice to their subjects; advises common people how to be obedience to their leaders and to maintain good relationship to the fellow citizens as well as the environment itself. The glorious Qur'an contain a basis for every aspect of human life including religious, political, social or economic as expressed in the following verse: " …And We have revealed the book to you explaining clearly everything and a guidance and a mercy and as glad tidings to Muslims " (Q16:89)

Ibn katheer commented on the phrase "explaining clearly everything" proving that the Qur'an contain all beneficial knowledge. It gives insight to the historical events and the foreknowledge of future occurrences, explain what is lawful or unlawful and addresses

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[28] Resul A. *Secularity, Positivism, Positivist Secularism*,

essential man's need in his life covering worldly matters, religion, sustenance and the matters relating to the hereafter.[29]

Some writers opine that Islam advocates for the separation between state and religion. They argue that even the Prophet in Madina put the religion aside in his rule; that was why the religious communities live in peace and the state thrived economically and politically (Alam, 2013). In addition Larson (n.d) contends that the rightly guided caliphs had their leadership in favour of democracy derived from the Arabic concept of *shurah*. Nevertheless critical examination of the duo opinions reveals that the prophetic leadership lacked Islamic inspiration, the prophet governed solely based on his opinions and reasoning. This assumption is in the first place directly challenging the comprehensive nature of Islam and plainly portraying that Islam has no code for governance. The assertion is not only unfounded but also is flawed in its reasoning because it is equal to the belief that Qur'anic messages have no essence or value. Secondly, it can be contended that this argument is questioning the infallibity of the prophet and contradicting the bunch of Qur'anic verses indicating that Prophet's declarations and actions were guided by revelation from God. It seems illogical that a Prophet sent with a comprehensive code of life, would keep it aside for another system. It is on record that Prophet Muhammad was asked to judge between people based on what Allah has revealed to him (Q5:49). There are several instances when different people came to him Muslims and non-Muslims alike asking him to judge between them with the book of Allah (Q4:105). The rules governing Zakat and economy, Jihad and inter-community affairs all were revealed to the Prophet in the Qur'an. So it is irrational to believe that the Prophet's rule is not based on theocratic principles. Additionally, the Madinah charter reportedly drafted by the prophet, was crafted based on divine revelations he received from Allah as His messenger. If it is established that the prophet did not separate the state affairs with religion, one can equally debunk the argument that the rightly guided caliphs' rule was based on democratic principles. This is supported by the Prophet's prediction of a thirty-year period of governance after him, guided by his teachings, followed by the emergence of kingdoms.[30]

The concept of *Shurah (*consultation*)* may exhibit certain aspects of democratic governance, yet it would be inaccurate to characterize the leadership of the rightly guided caliphs as democratic rule. This article contends that, extending this argument, even the subsequent kingdoms following the era of the rightly guided caliphs, such as the Umayyad and Abbasid, operated under a theocratic system. Despite instances of injustice in their governance, these kingdoms acknowledged Islam as the state religion and endeavored to incorporate elements of Sharia in their rulings even though they don't strictly follow it.

In the views of al-Qaradawi the idea of secularism rooted in the separation of state and religion might find acceptance in a Christian society but it can never enjoy a general acceptance in an Islamic society. He argues that Christianity lacks Shari'ah or a comprehensive life system to which its adherents should be committed. The Christians have not experienced a truly religious based government, making it easier for them to accept

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[29] Mubarakpuri S. et al, *Al-misbahul Munir fi Tahdhibi Tafsiri Ibn Katheer* vol.8 Riyadh: Darussalam, 2003

[30] Shakir A (tahqiq) A. Hanbal, *Musnadul Imami Ahmad* vol.36 Al-Qahira: Darul Hadith, 1995

secularism compared to Muslims. In contrast Islam encompasses both worship ('ibadah) and legislation (Shari'ah), which is not true of Christianity. Al-Qaradawi further asserts that those people who accept a division between religion and the state and follow the path of secularization are merely advocating atheism (*ilhad*) and rejecting Islam. Embracing this ideology is viewed as a direct opposition to Islam and is an open denial of the divine guidance and a rejection of Allah's injunctions. He stressed that the Shari'ah is valid for all periods and that the rise of the so called 'modern society' has not rendered Islamic laws or the guidance of Allah obsolete. It is also blasphemous to think that people know better than Allah. Prioritizing human reason above divine law is contrary to the essence of Islam. He further concluded that to accept secularism is 'downright riddah' (*Ridda sarih*), i.e. apostasy from Islam. Believers should rather strive for a middle way (in Arabic *wasatiyya*) that allows Muslims to adhere to their faith without becoming extremists or secularists.[31] Therefore, upholding Shari'ah as comprehensive code leads Muslims to have a decent life and helps government to exercise its duties efficiently.

CONCLUSION

Going by the foregoing discussion it is observed that secularism being the by-product of secular modernity was originated during the enlightenment period in response to Christian monasticism. Various scholars and researchers categorized secularism into radical and moderate in which the former represents a type of secularism which negates the authority of religion in totality while the latter is the passive one that recognizes freedom of religion, pluralism and tolerance. However, Islam as a comprehensive code of life has since time immemorial developed the concepts of religious freedom, balanced between the enjoyments of material world and struggling for the religious life and theocratic system of governance that prioritizes religion over polity. In drawing the synergy between Islam and secularism, it was discovered that both concepts share common grounds to some extent while to some extent Islam stands apart. In line with the findings of this study it is necessary to recommend that Muslims should endeavor to follow the dictates of Islam in their individual life as well as the communal life. It is a pity that Muslim countries in the contemporary time due to the neo-colonial domination continue to be following the so-called secularism and even thinking that it is compatible with Islam.

Certainly as indicated above Islam accepts even the passive secularism world views but with restrictions. For the Muslims that found themselves in the setting of non-Muslim or ardent secular countries such as France or United State of America Islam became the most adaptive and flexible religion that grants a Muslim way out in all situations. Tariq Ramadan being an outstanding Muslim scholar residing in Europe expresses his opinions as how Muslim should live and adapt to the secular authority. He views that secularization being a fundamental aspect of European identity is not problematic as long as Europe upholds the principle of moderate secularism which guarantees freedom of religion and avoids compelling Muslims to abandon their religious practice entirely.[32]

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[31] Larsson G. (nd) Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Tariq
[32] Larsson G. (nd) Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Tariq

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