Secularism and the Muslim World: An Overview

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Abstract: While secularism emerged as a distinct political ideology in the later part of 18th century, it came into view in the intellectual domain much earlier. Though it came into practice officially in the Muslim world, in particular, Turkey in the early 20th century, still there is lack of sufficient literature, concerning its various forms, how the term has been evolved as a political ideology, and how it has been viewed so far in the Muslim world. As such, the paper has sought to present the key notion of secularism taking into account its origin, typology and find out how the term has been viewed or practiced until now in the Muslim world. The paper found that secularism is of mainly two types – radical or hard, and moderate or soft. However, in the Muslim world, it has been viewed based on three different approaches – the radical or extremist approach, moderate or liberal approach, and the Islamic revivalist approach which may be both extremist and liberal depending on the contexts. Finally, the paper argued that the core values of liberal secularism such as pluralism, religious freedom, neutrality to all religions, and so on are inherent in Islam.

Keywords: secularism, secularization, Kemalism, moderate secularism, Islamic revivalism

I. Introduction

Secularism is a philosophical, political and sociological concept. While it came into view as a distinct political discourse in the late 18th or in the early 19th century as a consequence of a series of historical events, it came into practice as a state political doctrine in the early 20th century in the Muslim world, in particular, Turkey, due mainly to Ataturk's reforms policy. In the 20th century, the term became the centre of intellectual and political discussions not only in the west but also in the east (Toprak, 2005; Wu, 2007; Carmikli, 2011; Weir, 2015; Meacham, 2015). Some scholars contemplate secularism as completely a western socio-political perception while others think that it is not even unknown historically in the orient. It had existed in the east for centuries with its wonderful form involving various dimensions during the Mughal rules, in particular, Akbar's regime (1556-1605) of Mughal India (Sen, 2005; Ali, 2015). As Ali (2015) stated, most of the Mughal rulers were tolerant and liberal in their approach. In the west, it came into being with the patronization of totalitarian absolutist

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rulers, and their intellectual die hard mentors, for example, Nicola Machiavelli (1469-1527), Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). It started a journey in Europe as a social and political discourse and a political process as well, and then was turned into a social movement. However, there has not been so far sufficient number of studies in the academia that can reveal the backdrop of secularism, its varied meanings, typology, and how the term has been viewed or practiced until now in the Muslim world. As such, the paper attempts to examine historical perspectives of secularism, its diverse meanings, its different forms or types and find out the various approaches to secularism in the Muslim world. The article chiefly relies on document analysis method using secondary sources of data.

II. Historical Perspectives of Secularism

The term 'secularism' may have been derived from three historical perspectives focusing both socio-political and historical contexts. These are the social background, political reality and socio-political thought.

(i) **Social background**: Social backdrop of secularism involves a number of such social contexts or historical events that contributed to the origin of secularism in Europe as renaissance, reformation and enlightenment movement, religious movements, for example, protestant movement, industrial revolution and emergence of mercantilism, urbanization and finally the French Revolution. These phenomena and historical events, in particular, the age of enlightenment and the French Revolution played a pivotal role towards the rise of humanism, freedom thought and speech, liberty, individualism and consumerism in society and thereby facilitated the emergence of secularism in Europe (Kosmin, 2002; Weir, 2015; Meacham, 2015).

(ii) **Political reality**: Political ground reality enforced political actors to take some steps to lessen the influences of Church on the society and to ensure supreme power of absolutist rulers. In Europe, the Church used to take hold of all three spheres of society—status, power and wealth in its grip within the 11th century AD. From the 15th to 18th century, the kings of Europe were in confrontation with the church to extend their power, wealth and prestige. As a result of their efforts, state power was strengthened and set the church aside from the sociopolitical realm (Aston, 2002).

(iii) **Socio-political thought**: Like Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Rousseau, in Europe, George Jacob Holyoake (1817-1906), Charles Bradlaugh (1833-1891), Charles Southwell (1814-1860), Thomas Cooper (1759-1839), Charles Watt (1836-1906), and Annie Besant (1847-1933) took secularism as their core social philosophy and value of social movement. The secularist movement in Europe led by Holyoake and his ideals on secularism in 1840s and

1850s played a crucial role to shape the modern form of secularism (Taylor, 1997; Weir, 2015; Meacham, 2015). As such, Holyoake has been regarded as the prophet of secularism and indeed the pioneer of secularist movement in Europe (Gordon, 2011).

III. Secular, Secularism and Secularization: Meanings

The term 'secular' usually means not connected with religion and religious matters. The Latin word *saeculum* has been regarded as the origin of the term 'secular' which denotes both 'this age' and 'this world', and combines a spatial sense and a temporal sense. In other words, it denotes the isolation from the sacred, the eternal and the otherworldly. Specifically, it refers to the matters beyond religion or spiritualism (Kosmin, 2002; Palomino, 2011). However, the word 'secular' is associated with other terms like 'secularism' and 'secularization' expressing a variety of meanings.

As noted earlier, while Holyoake coined the term 'secularism' in 1851, its origin and development had been attributed to a number of socio-political and historical perspectives in Europe, in particular, France, Britain and Germany (Taylor, 1957;Weir, 2015). Holyoake, however, played an important role in the secularist movement until Charles Bradlaugh developed a more radical form of secularism. His ideas on secularism suggest that the state should be tolerant to all religious and philosophical doctrines, and should be especially impartial in religious matters (Wu, 2007). According to Taylor (2010), secularism involves three basic slogans of the French Revolution: liberty, equality, and fraternity. These three slogans signify three different values or meanings while they are closely related to each other. These three mottos can be explained in terms of three basic dimensions. First, no one must be compelled in the realm of religion, or basic belief. This is what is often defined as religious liberty or free exercise of religion. Second, there must be equality between people of different faiths or basic beliefs. Third, the relations of harmony and the comity between the supporters of different religions should be maintained (Taylor, 2010, p.23).

Secularism allows people of different faiths and sects to be equal before the law, constitution and government policy as a modern political and constitutional principle. It also suggests that politics should be free from religion (Akbar, 2010). However, Ali (2015) pointed out that the essence of secularism rests on two basic principles: (i) separation of religion from politics; (ii) acceptance of religion as purely and strictly private affairs of individuals having nothing to do with the state. Hence, it may be argued that secularism is a principle that mainly involves three fundamental propositions: (i) the separation of the religion from all state mechanisms; (ii) religious freedom or liberty; and (iii) the people of different religions and beliefs are equal before law.

In this regard, this is to note that though Holyoake advocated secularism, initially he was not a self-proclaimed atheist; later on he became overtly an atheist one. Holyoake argued that there is no light of guidance elsewhere in secularism but in secular truths; its conditions and sanctions exist independently, and act perpetually. Secular knowledge is based on the conduct, welfare and experiences of the earthly life. According to Holyoake (1870), the goal of secularism is to seek development of physical, moral and intellectual natures of man to the highest possible limit. Such development could only be ensured through three basics tenets of secularism: (i) the improvement of earthly life by material means; (ii) science is the ultimate destiny of man; (iii) it is good to do good and it is good to seek the good. To him, the immediate duty of life inculcates the practical sufficiency of natural morality. He further proposed that the methods of procedure for the promotion of human development could be achieved through material means (Holyoake, 1898). Holyoake's secularist doctrine proclaimed that (i) science is the true god of man, (ii) morality is secular, not religious, in origin, (iii) reason is the only authority, and (iv) freedom of thought and speech. This is noteworthy that Holyoake admires Comte's positivism as "the scientific Bible of secularism" (Taylor, 1957). As such, he was popularly known to be influenced by the positivistic thinking of Auguste Comte (1793-1857). However, Comte was more likely to be a secular humanist who was not interested to bring about any revolutionary change in society unlike Holyoake who was actively involved in secularist movement in Europe. It was assumed that that secularism is the admixture of three philosophical thoughts- Epicureanism, Hedonism and Utilitarianism. The ultimate objective of those thoughts was the pleasure-seeking in human life. According to a contemporary European thinker George Friedman, 'For secularists, the private realm is not only the realm of religion, but the realm of pleasure. There is a hedonism that is part of secularism' (Friedman, 2016).

In contrast, 'secularization', as defined by Ian Robertson, 'is the process by which traditional religious beliefs and institutions lose their influence in society' (as cited in Haralambos, 2001). In other words, it may be defined as a changing social process through which the society and state, in particular, the modern industrial societies lose their significance in terms of religious beliefs, practices and institutions. The waning of religion is marked by a decline in religious performance, detachment to conventional faith, and defying organized religious activities in terms of payments, membership and respects, and religious festivals as well observed in the society (Marshall, 1998).

Through the process of secularization, society gradually becomes separated from religious values and institutions and thereby the influences of values and morality structure of religion in social life decline. Secularization, moreover, implies that various aspects of society, that is, economic, political, legal and moral what was previously blended with religion would gradually become separated as distinct entities (Srinivas, 1966). Hence, it may be argued

that secularization is a process of social change by which religious doctrines and organizations gradually lose their influence over various aspects in society as a result of the expansion of rationalism, humanism, science and technology, industrialization, urbanization, in particular, modernization. In the light of aforesaid discussion, it may be said that secularization is a historical transformation process while secularism is an ideology or a worldview.

IV. Typology of Secularism

While there is sufficient volume of literature on secularism, there has not been so far widely accepted typology concerning it. The availability of academic literature regarding the typology of secularism is far from satisfactory. Secularism may be classified into two distinct categories: (i) hard and (ii) soft (Kosmin, 2002; Bader, 2011; Meacham, 2015). However, secularism can also be classified into two types: (i) radical and (ii) moderate (Novak, 2006; Modood, 2010). Burak (2012), moreover, asserted that there are two kinds secularism –'assertive secularism' and 'passive secularism'. The French model is said to be 'assertive secularism' while the American model is known as 'passive secularism'. 'Assertive secularism' denotes that the state favors a secular worldview in the public sphere and aims to confine religion to the private sphere. However, 'passive secularism' addresses the autonomy of religion from the state. It implies that the state maintains the principle of neutrality to various religions and allows their public visibility.

Hence, based on the aforesaid literature, two kinds of secularism may be identified – (i) radical and (ii) moderate. In this regard, this is to note that radical secularism may be similar to hard, extremist, or assertive secularism while moderate secularism may match with soft, liberal or passive secularism in terms of ideologies or core values. The typology of secularism can be presented in the following Table:

Table 1: Typology of Secularism

	Types of Secularism	Core Values /Ideologies	Core Thinkers/ Supporters
1.	Radical (hard or assertive)	- Religion is an illusion; - Religion is an obstacle to facilitate modernization and seek knowledge; - Religion is an instrument used by the rulers for political control; - Elimination of the influence of religions or religious organizations from all the	Karl Marx, Hobbes, Max Weber, Holyoake, Charles Bradlaugh, Kemal Ataturk, Nehru and so on.

		spheres of society; - Absolute separation between state and religion, and so on.	
2.	Moderate (soft or passive)	- Pluralism; - Tolerating other religious people; - Neutrality to all religions; - multiculturalism; - Practicing all religions with equal rights; - Peaceful co-existence and liberalism; - Making no difference based on religion and so on.	John Locke, Adam Smith, and Thomas Jefferson, Gandhi and so on.

(Source: Kosmin, 2002, Novak, 2006; Modood, 2010; Madathikunnel, 2011; Burak, 2012)

Table-1 shows the typology of secularism. As pointed out in the table, secularism may be classified as mainly two distinct categories: (i) radical or hard secularism, (ii) moderate or soft secularism. Radical secularism came into view as a powerful philosophical ideology of the French Revolution. As a father of radical secularism, Holyoake treated religion as a barrier to modernity. This type of secularism treats the members of the society as having no religious and moral background at all, or it requires them to leave their cultural or religious background outside society's door (Novak, 2006). According to Marx (1818-1883), religion is an ideology which is in contradistinction to knowledge and is used by the power groups or rulers in order to exercise their political control. Hobbes, on the other hand, put forward that religious beliefs should be rejected since they are intellectually unreliable and morally dangerous (Kosmin, 2002).

Modood (2010) termed radical secularism as one where there is absolute separation between state and religion. According to Bader (2011), hard secularism may be termed as exclusive, assertive, aggressive, strong, intolerant and malevolent. Meacham (2015), however, suggested that hard secularism may be described as extreme one that involves the absence of religion from the public sphere and in public discourse. As such, to this view, religion should be totally separated from all spheres of society including state mechanism and politics. Karl Marx, Hobbes, Max Weber, Holyoake, Charles Bradlaugh and so on were the core thinkers or supporters of radical secularism.

The second classification of secularism, known as moderate or soft secularism, is based on mainly three vital characteristics: pluralism, tolerance of religious difference, and neutrality to all religions (Kosmin, 2002; Burak, 2012). In this view, a soft secularist is not a *convinced atheist* and a *principled materialist* as well. He may not have any antipathy towards religious beliefs and institutions. He intends to adopt *a live-and let-live* approach

towards religion until and unless it hampers his freedom of choice (Kosmin, 2002). According to Modood (2010), moderate secularism may be defined in terms of accommodative, liberal, democratic and egalitarian views. Bader (2011), on the other hand, put forward that soft secularism may be described as inclusive, tolerant, liberal, passive, benevolent and moderate. Hence, we may suggest that moderate or soft secularism can foster pluralism, peaceful co-existence, multiculturalism, democracy, practicing religions with equal rights, making no difference depending on religion, tolerating other religious people, and so on in a society. The social thinkers of Enlightenment including John Locke, Adam Smith, and Thomas Jefferson were the supporters of moderate or liberal secularism in general (Kosmin, 2002).

V. Approaches to Secularism in the Muslim World

Now the paper attempts to examine how secularism has been viewed so far in the Muslim world or whether the aforesaid typology of secularism can be explained in connection with the Muslim world. In this regard, in the Muslim world, three approaches to secularism may be found, of which the first two are more or less concerned with aforesaid two perspectives on secularism. These are (i) radical or extremist approach; (ii) moderate or liberal approach. However, the other one may be termed as Islamic revivalist approach to secularism that may be extremist or liberal depending on the contexts.

Radical or extremist approach to secularism

 The main idea of radical approach asserts that religion and state are different institutions and religion is the foremost obstacle for the modernization, development and democracy. The supporters to this approach used to believe that religion only to be allowed to private life of citizens of modern state and religiosity must be kept under the control of the state. Radical approach to secularism emerged in the Muslim society in the 1920s following the First World War in consequence of dramatic changes in the socio-political order in Turkey. These changes took place due to reforms and policies adopted by Kemal Ataturk (1881-1938), the founder and the first president of Republic of Turkey, so as to modernize his country (Bagdonas, 2008; Carmikli, 2011). His doctrine or ideals on the reforms of Turkey commonly known as 'Kemalism' was founded on six principles: republicanism, nationalism, populism, secularism, revolutionism and statism.

These six principles of 'Kemalism' were popularly known as 'Six Arrows of Kemalism'. This is worth-mentioning that Kemalist secularism did not mean the separation of religion only from the state, rather it meant the separation of religion from whole public spheres- politics, jurisprudence, education, society and so on (Wu, 2007; Bagdonas, 2008). The Kemalist regime (1923-1938) undertook a number of initiatives to eliminate the influence of

Islam in education, law and public administration and introduced civil and criminal law by abolishing Islamic law. It banned religious education and all kinds of religious signs and practices in public life including wearing headscarf or hijab in government offices and educational institutions through enacting distinct laws. It encouraged calling for Salat (Azaan), together with learning and giving sermon in Turkish instead of Arabic (Toprak, 2005; Carmikli, 2011; Aoude, n.d.). Toprak put forward (2005) that:

> The early reforms of the republic also targeted the role of Islam in politics and administration. The Caliphate, an important institution that symbolized the unity of all Muslims in the world, was abolished. All religious schools were banned and the educational system was unified under a Ministry of Education. Orthodox Islam was put under state control through the creation of a Directorate of Religious Affairs. (p. 31)

Ataturk took French's toughest idea of **laicism** instead of Anglo-American idea of liberal secularism. Anglo-American secularism signifies maintaining the principle of neutrality to all religions in a particular state in contrast to laicism which implies state's domination over the religious institutions, that is, state actively discourages religion. Hence, Ataturk officially incorporated assertive secularism or the principle of laicism as one of the main state principles in the constitutional amendment of 1928 by excluding religious symbols from public domain and putting religion under the strict control of the state (Karakas, 2007; Burak, 2012). As part of his reforms to reduce the influence of Islam in Turkish society, he changed the weekly holiday from Friday to Sunday and changed the calendar from the Muslim lunar to Gregorian. The Arabic alphabet was also changed to Latin (Toprak, 2005; Burak, 2012). Apart from Kemal Ataturk, Jamal Abdul Naser (1918-1970) of Egypt, Saddam Hussain (1937-2006) of Iraq, Reza Shah Pahlavi (1878-1944) of Iran and Ḥafiz al-Assad (1930-2000) of Syria, Islam Karimov of Azerbaijan (1938-2016) had also been the supporters of this secularism (Krämer, 2003; Wu, 2007; Rock-Singer, 2015; Safi, 2017).

Moderate or liberal approach to secularism

According to this approach, secularism dose not connote atheism, rather it means maintaining the principle of neutrality towards all religions in the political domain (Burak, 2012). The state neither promotes any religion nor makes any obstacle to freedom of belief and worship (Lloyd, 2001). Under this perspective, secularism implies the modern idea of democracy, pluralism and multiculturalism. The followers of this thought include famous politicians, thinkers, even some Ulemas. Their principal arguments behind this approach are : (i) the prophet made Medina Covenant, the first written constitution over the earth, which is the secular constitution (Ali, 2000); (ii) most of the Muslim rulers including Mughals in India, Baghdad Khilafat, Usmania Khilafat in Turkey and so on in history have followed the secularist legal and political process to run the state excepting personal law and inheritance law (Ahmed,1987; Ali, 2015); (iii) since present society is complex and connected to other

faith communities in many ways, it is difficult to apply Islamic laws in true form in all spheres of society and state in the field of economic transaction, banking, international business, and so on; (iv) each and every individual irrespective of Muslims and Non-Muslims has equal rights to practice his own religion and there is no coercion in religion (Mufti, 2006); (iv) according to Abdulaziz Sachedina, an American Islamic scholar, the Holy Qur'an provides a solid basis for making up a pluralist, just, and inclusive society (Esposito, n.d.). Hence, essences of liberal secularism such as pluralism, religious freedom are inherent in Islam.

Fethullah Gulen, one of the leading contemporary Islamic thinkers of liberal secularism, stated that religion should not interfere with the worldly life and administration should not interfere in the religious life. Every person should be able to practice his faith freely in his social setting. Each person in society should decide freely whether to belong to a religion or not. Coercion does not have any place in the core of religion, because coercion is opposite to the spirit of the religion. He also suggested that tolerance and dialogue are two important things in society (Aras and Caha, 2000; Isgandarova, 2014). If we assess the views of Gulen on secularism, we could understand that he gives emphasis to freedom of religion, tolerance and dialogue which are obviously pluralistic and democratic views concerning religion. Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, Moulana Hussain Ahmed Madani of India, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd of Egypt, Rachid Ghannouchi, a Tunisian intellectual, Nader Hashemi, and Abdolkarim Soroush have advocated for this kind of explanation. They have followed the Anglo-American explanation of liberal secularism.

Revivalist approach to secularism
Islamic revivalism literally means a new birth of Islam or the rebirth of the importance of Islam. It involves a movement or efforts made to renew the community from within through practicing true values of Islam (Abdullah, 2003). In response to changes in global political order and transformations in Islamic countries due to westernization or modernization, deprivations, foreign manipulations, internal malaise and so on, Islamic people are trying to preserve their own culture, values and identity, that is, they are getting deeply attached to Islam as a way of life in order to resolve their worldly difficulties in all aspects of life. This growing phenomenon has been termed as Islamic revivalism which negates both westernization and secularization (Lapidus, 1997; Abdullah, 2003). According to Dallal (1993), the roots of Islamic revivalism stemmed from four intellectual trends of Islamic thought in the period of mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. These trends include the works of the Arabian Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1787), the Indian Shah Wali Allah (1703-1762), the West African Uthman Ibn Fudi (1754-1817), and the North African Muhammad Ali al-Sanusi (1787-1859). This is note that Shah Wali was influenced

by the ideals of Wahhab, known as 'Wahhabism' which stresses on the sovereignty of God, that is, no object of worship other than God, the supremacy of the Quran and Sunnah in all aspects of life and the establishment of a Muslim state on the basis of only Shariah or Muslim law. However, Wali's strategy was to correct the social world through mediation and synthesis. Fudi's prime concerns were to correct the domestic troubles and commercial corruption in Muslim communities in West Africa in the 18th century through social and political reforms adopting conflicts. In contrast, Sanusi was primarily concerned with the creation of an ideal society based on mercy and tolerance avoiding conflicts (Dallal, 1993).

However, Lapidus (1997) put forward that modern Islamic revival movements originated in the 1920s and 1930s with the formation of *the Society of Muslim Brothers* in Egypt by Hasan al-Banna, and the Jama'at-i Islami in India founded by Mawlana Abul Ala Mawdudi. The basic principle of these movements lies in the philosophy that each and every Muslim has to abide by the teachings of Islam as per Quran and Sunnah, if they are to restore peace, communal solidarity, social justice, and remove corrupt regimes as well. According to Lapidus (1997), the revival movements have usually two strategies to accomplish their goals: (i) to build an Islamic society through education and community organizing based on bottom-up approach and thereby eventually take over the state; (ii) to call for political violence in order to drive out corrupt government or foreign dominated government by the direct capture of the state power.

However, Islamic revivalism is often associated with name of Jihad-Salafism or Jihadi School which is a distinct ideological movement of Sunni Muslim. Two streams of Islamic thought were primarily responsible for the emergence of the Jihadi School in the later 20th century. As stated earlier, the first is associated with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt which was initiated by Hasan al-Banna. The Brotherhood is an entirely Sunni movement which came into view in response to the rise of Western imperialism and the associated decline of Islam in public life (Lapidus, 1997; Bunzel, 2015). The second stream of Islamic thought encouraging the Islamic State's ideology, however, is known as Salafism, a primarily theological movement in Sunni Islam concentrating on purifying the faith. Salafism focuses on eliminating idolatry (*shirk*) and affirming God's Oneness (*tawhid*). Salafis treat themselves as the only true Muslims and consider those who practice so-called "major idolatry" to be exterior to the boundaries of the Islamic faith. However, this is to note that 'Wahhabism' called for Jihadi movement in the late 18th century in the Arabian Peninsula that involved the destruction of tombs and shrines, the enforcement of proper ritual practices and cleansing Islam of Shi'ism (Bunzel, 2015).

In the later decades of the twentieth century, different violent Islamist groups arose in the Arab Middle East, in particular, Egypt and Algeria influenced by both Muslim Brotherhood

activism and Salafi extremism. Today's al-Qaeda and ISIS may have similar ideology which is radical in nature guided by Jihadi-Salafism while their strategies may be different. ISIS is a political extremist actor with political goals while al-Qaeda is more of a political organization with extremist beliefs. Compared to ISIS, al-Qaeda is more gradualist and less exclusionary (Bunzel, 2015; USIP, 2017). In this regard, this is to note that many Islamic extremist groups including Taliban, al-Qaeda, and Islamic States or ISIS have been supposedly patronized by the USA so as to maximize its geo-political and economic interests (Dreyfuss, 2005; Rollins, 2011; Sharp and Blanchard, 2013). Moreover, a number of historical and political factors are also responsible for fuelling violence and terrorism in the Muslim world for the sake of Islam (Esposito, 2015).

However, this is noteworthy that not all forms of Islamic revivalism are extremist and politically violent. Because, many Islamic intellectuals including al-Sanusi in North Africa have been so far found to be not extremist, even though they may have been motivated by the teachings of Quran and Hadith and guided by dedications towards serving the humanity through preaching Islam and their reformative ideals in the Islamic world (Dallal, 1993). Hence, Islamic revivalism does not necessarily mean only extremism; it can also be liberal depending on the context. This is also to note that while Taliban, al-Qaeda and ISIS may have extremist ideology, they have been said to be motivated by the misinterpretations of Islam, rather than the true values of Islam (Yahya, 2002; Alfiah, 2013; Esposito, 2015). However, it is often assumed that Sufis are tolerant and Salafis are violent. In this regard, Woodward et al. (2013) claimed that it is a baseless assumption. They found that all Sufis are not tolerant while all Salafis are not violent. In this connection, this is worth-mentioning that the core values of Islam do conform to the principles of humanity, tolerance, communal harmony, peaceful co-existence, and so on. There are numerous verses of the Holy Quran which talk about peace, tolerance and religious freedom. The following verses can be pointed out in this regard:

> "There is no compulsion in religion. True guidance has become clearly distinct from error. Anyone who rejects false deities and has belief in God has grasped the Firmest Handhold, which will never give way. God is All-Hearing, All-Knowing." (Quran, 2:256)
>
> "Help one another in works of righteousness and goodness, and help not one another in sin and aggression." (Quran, 5:2)
>
> "The Truth is from your Lord; so let him who please believe and let him who please disbelieve." (Quran, 18:29)

Hence, the values of liberal secularism involving pluralism, neutrality towards all religious people, religious freedom, and the like are inbuilt in Islam. As such, Islam itself is a liberal secular religion.

VI. Summary and Conclusion

While secularization as a distinct political discourse emerged in Europe in the later part of 18th century basically as a result of two historical events- the Enlightenment Movement and the French Revolution, it came into practice officially in the Muslim world in the early 20th century due to revolutionary reforms adopted by Kemal Ataturk. As noted earlier, due mainly to the expansion of modernization or westernization, secularization is expanding across the world. However, secularism has not taken similar patterns all over the world. The study found that there are two main patters or types of secularism, one of which is known as radical or hard secularism which follows the French model, and the other is moderate or soft, often called, liberal secularism which applies to the American model characterized mainly by the principles of religious freedom and neutrality towards all religions.

The study identified three approaches to secularism that have been so far followed or practiced in the Muslim world. These are: radical or extremist approach to secularism; moderate or liberal approach to secularism; and finally, Islamic revivalist approach to secularism. Radical approach to secularism is one largely followed by Kemalist regime in which religion was viewed to be separated from all spheres of public domain and public visibility of Islamic practices or rituals were discouraged, even in some cases prohibited. Moderate approach to secularism which considers Islam as one inclusive of pluralism, religious freedom, neutrality to all religious people and so on, and thus the core values of liberal secularism is inherent in Islam. Islamic revivalist approach to secularism came into being in the Muslim world in response to a series of phenomena including western imperialism, westernization, and internal malaise encouraging the change of social order through reformations as per Quran and Hadith, and radicalization as well. Thus, Islamic revivalism may result in extremism that involves the change of the social order through political violence or conflicts. The study argued that while today's Islamic extremist groups such as Taliban, al-Qaeda and ISIS may be motivated by the misinterpretations of Islam, they have been supposedly patronized by the USA to realize its geo-political and economic interests. However, this is to note that Islam is a religion of peace and harmony and itself is a liberal and tolerant religion since it allows pluralism, multiculturalism, democracy, peaceful co-existence, religious freedom, and the like in society. Hence, the essence of liberal secularism is inbuilt in Islam.

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