

## **Religion and Democracy in Pakistan A Muslim Perspective**

**HAFEEZ UR REHMAN**

**Department of Anthropology**

**QUAID-I-AZAM UNIVERSITY**

**Islamabad**

**PAKISTAN**

Email Address: [hafeezanthro1952@gmail.com](mailto:hafeezanthro1952@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** The word ‘democracy’ has been derived from the Greek word demokratia (demos, the people, and kratein, to rule), i.e. a government in which the people hold the ruling power either directly or through elected representatives, or one may be tempted to say that it is a ‘system of rule by the ruled’. Democracy may be either direct, and exerted by popular assemblies or by plebiscites on all legislation, or indirect, and exerted by representative institutions. Direct democracy was practiced in some of the city states of ancient Greece, where during the sixth and fifth centuries BCE most of the city-states achieved a more or less democratic constitution; indirect democracy, which is better suited to modern nations states with large populations, was developed in England in the seventeenth century (known as the Westminster type of democracy) and imposed on France and North America, as a result of revolution, in the eighteenth century. Thus started the age of democracy and by 1850 the majority of civilized nations had adopted democratic institutions. Now let us consider Pakistan. It is not an Islamic state in the true sense of the term, as Islam favours Presidential (or Khilafat) system more than the Parliamentary system. So far as democracy is concerned, it has been under military rule for almost half the period. It has become truly democratic after Article 58(2)(B) of the Constitution has been repealed. Henceforward it can be reasonably expected that the course of democracy in Pakistan will be smooth and swift. It is quite clear that Islam and democracy are not mutually exclusive. There are quite a few features, such as equality and tolerance, which are common to both. A truly Islamic state can, therefore, be set up in Pakistan which would be more democratic in the true sense than some of the modern states which claim to be democratic but are not so in actual sense of the term. To sum up, the concept of a Westminster type of democracy does not exist in Islam, though the guarantee of Civil Rights and the need to consult are common to both.