

Concepts: Nationalism

The Muslim nations suffering from 200 years of western dominance haven since the first World War, sought to liberate themselves from the dire situation that has befallen the Muslim Ummah so as to halt our dramatic decline, and to resume our path of progress and enlightenment. However, whilst many of us are all too familiar with the conditions within which we live, and are full with the desire of taking the leadership of mankind, that Islam calls for, too few realise the way to achieve this liberation and progress. Consequently, we have seen many people adopt western political ideas as the way to their liberation. Among the concepts adopted by the, people for this task is that of Nationalism.

The concept of Nationalism, so alien to Islam, first reared its ugly head with the growth of Arab nationalism which was fashioned during and immediately after the second world war. Whilst many were enchanted by its empty slogans and chants especially during the 1950's its subsequent failure has not only led to the abandonment of it as a means to liberation but has quickened Muslims to the true solution.

When the general standard of thought of a nation deteriorates, some bonds of low values and standards come into existence, these bonds originate from the instinct of survival which exists in all creatures.

Such bonds always take the emotional form and consequently, they are always susceptible to change. They emerge in the case of foreign aggression on the homeland, either when the state is attacked or occupied. Accordingly, when the threat is removed, or the state is at peace, which is the norm., such bonds disappear. The most distinct types of such bonds are patriotism and nationalism.

Patriotism differs from nationalism, in that, it is a bond that relates to the land and the people who live upon the land. Whereas in nationalism the prime value is the nation. In many respects nationalism is the family tie in a wider sense. It comes into being when the level of thought is shallow, and it is the extension of the mastership tendency in the individual, upon the family, his people and ultimately, with the widening of the individuals consciousness, mastership over other peoples. Consequently, conflict arises between people for mastership and status in life. Accordingly, racialism prevails among the people of this bond, and the notion of supporting themselves against all others dominates them. Thus this bond is inhuman and always remains liable to internal conflicts if not kept busy with external conflicts.

This bond of nationalism is an unworthy relationship and an invalid bond between mankind, for it is tribal, emotional and inhuman. Moreover, it provides no system with which to organise life's affairs, thus, we find Nationalist/Socialists and Nationalists/Capitalists. It is in sum, worthless.

The correct bond is that of Aqeeda (creed) which is not based solely on emotion, but on the mind. Islam came to establish only one relationship which binds men together in the sight of Allah, and if this is formally established then all other relationships based on blood, land or any other considerations are eliminated.

"Say: If it be that your fathers, yours sons, your brothers, your mates, or your kindred; the wealth that ye have gained; the commerce in which ye fear decline; or the dwellings in which ye delight - are dearer to you than Allah, or his Messenger, or the striving in his cause; - then wait until Allah brings about his decision - and Allah guides not the rebellious." (Surah 9:24)

There is only one true system for mankind and that is Islam, all other systems are Kufr. Islam came to elevate the position of man to free him from the bonds of the earth and soil, and the bonds of flesh and blood. A Muslim has no country except that part of the earth where the Shariah (law) of Allah is established, and he has no nationality except belief. A Muslim has no relatives except those who share the belief in Allah, therefore a bond is established between him and other believers through their relationship with Allah, The Supreme, The Glorified. A Muslim has no relationship with his mother, brother, wife and other family members except through their relationship with the Creator and only after this they are joined through blood.

“O Mankind! reverence, your Guardian-Lord, who created you, from a single person, created of like nature, his mate and from them twain, scattered (like seeds), countless men and women, reverence Allah, through whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (That bore you): for Allah ever watches over you”. (Surah 4.1)

This does not mean that a Muslim is prevented from showing kindness to his parents, on the contrary; Allah The Supreme states:

“Thy Lord hath decreed that ye Worship none save him, and (that ye show) kindness to parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age with thee, say not 'fie' unto them nor repute them, but speak unto them a gracious word”. (Surah 117:23)

But, if they openly declare their alliance with the enemies of Islam then all the filial relationships of a Muslim are ceased and he is not bound to be kind and considerate to them.

Abdullah ibn Abdullah ibn Zaid has reported that the prophet (peace be upon him) called Abdullah ibn Abdullah ibn Ubay and said ‘Do you know what your father said?’ Abdullah asked ‘may my parents be a ransom for you, what did my father say?’ The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said, ‘If we return to Medina (from the battle), the one with honour will throw out the one who is despised’. Abdullah then said ‘O Messenger of Allah, by Allah he told the truth. You are the one with honour and he is the one despised. O Messenger of Allah, the people of Medina know that before you came to Medina no one was more obedient to his father than I was. But now, if it is the pleasure of Allah and his prophet that I cut off his head I shall do so’. The prophet (p.b.u.h.) replied ‘No!’. When Muslims returned to Medina, Abdullah stood in front of the gate with his sword drawn over his fathers head telling him ‘did you say if we return to Medina the one with honour will throw out the one who is despised, by Allah, now you will know whether you have honour or Allah’s messenger. By Allah, until Allah and his messenger gives permission you cannot enter Medina, nor will you have refuge from me’. Ibn Ubay cried aloud and said twice ‘People of Khazraj, see how my son is preventing me from entering my home’. But his son Abdullah kept repeating that unless the prophet gave permission, he would not let him enter Medina. Hearing this noise, some people gathered around and started pleading with Abdullah, but he stood his ground. Some people went to the prophet (p.b.u.h.) and reported this incident. He told them ‘Tell Abdullah to let his father enter’ When Abdullah received the message he told his father ‘Since the prophet (p.b.u.h.) has given permission you can now enter’.

It is well known that the blood relationship between the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) and his uncle Abu Lahab, and his cousin Abu Jahal were severed. And we see that Mohammad (p.b.u.h.) was from Arabia, Suhaib from Rome, Bilal from Abyssina, and Selman from Persia and yet they were all brothers.

O Muslims, know that the victory is achieved under the banner of Iman, and under no other banner. The striving is purely for the sake of Allah for the sake of the deen and His Law, for the protection of the horse of Islam and for no other purpose. It is not for spoils, fame nor for the honour of the country or nation.

Abu Musa reported that a man came to the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) and enquired: A man fights for booty, a man fights for fame and a man fights that his position may be known, who then (fights) in the way of Allah? He said who fights to raise highest thereby the word of Allah, is in the way of Allah. (agreed)

And Allah, The Supreme.savs:

“Thou will not find folk who believe in Allah and the Last day loving those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even though they be their fathers or their sons or their brethren or their clan. As for such he hath written faith upon their hearts and hath strengthened them with a Spirit from Him, and he will bring them into Gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide. Allah is

well pleased with them, and they are well pleased with Him. They are Allah's party. Lo! is it not Allah's party who are successful?" (Surah 58:22)

And:

"There is a goodly pattern for you in Ibrahim and those with him, when they told their folk: Lo! we are guiltless of you and all that ye worship beside Allah. We have done up with you. And there hath arisen between you and us hostility and hate for ever until ye believe in Allah only". (Surah 60 :4)

To conclude, it is reported that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said "Get rid of these partisanships, these are foul things" and "He is not one of us who calls towards partisanship, who fights for partisanship, and who dies for partisanship". Thus nationalism is not only a worthless bond between people it is also totally unIslamic.

Al-Fajr Magazine, September 1985