

Patriotism & Islam

As a result of the intellectual decline among Muslims and the absence of the Islamic concepts and values, not only have many ideas of Islam been misunderstood by Muslims, but many non-Islamic ideas have become associated with Islam. Patriotism is our subject of discussion. What patriotism is, how it emerged among Muslims, and the rule of Islam for it will be covered in this article, Insha'Allah.

Patriotism (Watania) is a bond that exists among individuals who share a common land. This bond results among them because of the love of this particular land. It, therefore, appears only when the land is threatened. This bond is an emotional bond that exists among animals and birds, as well as among human beings. Patriotism exists in the above mentioned beings as a manifestation of the instinct of survival. Therefore, the patriotic bond is an instinctive one.

Furthermore, patriotism is a temporary bond. It only appears when the shared land is attacked or threatened by an outside force. Since this bond is an instinctive one, and it exists among animals, it is an animalistic bond. If two dogs in a yard, for example, were attacked by a human, one finds that the two animals unite to prevent the danger that may occur from the attacker. But, once the outside danger is gone, their unity is also terminated. In addition, if a piece of meat is thrown to them, they will fight each other over it, and even kill each other, if they have to. The same applies to human beings.

By looking closely at this bond, one finds that it only exists among people who do not live their lives according to an ideology. For, if human beings carry ideological thoughts and concepts, they will behave according to them. With the absence of these thoughts, they all behave in an emotional manner; i.e, instinctive motivation.

Since Allah (SWT) has blessed us with the Islamic belief and system, it becomes mandatory on us to behave according to the ideological concepts of Islam. Furthermore, we are obligated to base our emotions on the Islamic thoughts and concepts. The Prophet of Allah (saw) says, "You will not become believers until you set your emotions and desires according to what I have brought." Clearly, what the Prophet of Islam brought are simply the Islamic concepts of belief and do's and don'ts. Therefore, it is forbidden to set our behaviour according to mere instinctive emotion. Thus, patriotism is haraam (sinful) to exist as a bond among Muslims.

patriotism is a foreign idea that has no origin in Islam

The concept of patriotism did not exist among Muslims, until the beginning of the nineteenth century, This concept of homeland (watan) and love of one's homeland (watania) was introduced by Muslims who were fascinated by the West, after visiting it. Rifa'a at-Tahtawi and Khair Al-Din at-Tunisi were the pioneers in introducing this concept to the Muslims. Rifa'a at-Tahtawi introduced patriotism as the valid bond among Muslims and non-Muslims, in his book 'Takhlis Al-Ibriz fi Talkhis Paris.' It is worthy noting that this book was written in France and was reviewed and checked by his French teacher, Jomar.

Thus patriotism is a foreign idea that has no origin in Islam. And, if one thinks of its consequences one clearly sees the destruction it causes to the Muslim Ummah. For now, the Muslim Ummah, after being divided into 46 states, has lost the meaning and concept of one Muslim Ummah, with one Muslim land. Thus, one finds that Muslims in each of these states feel patriotic toward the piece of land with its political boundaries, put by the Kafir colonialists. So, for example, Muslims of Kashmir would feel loyal to that particular land called Kashmir, close to those people in Kashmir, and not feel loyal to any other land or people. This is haraam.

If Islam strongly rejects such a bond, then how does Islam view the land? And what bond does it allow to exist among Muslims?

Islam views the entire earth as either land of Kufr (Dar Al-Kufr) or land of Islam (Dar Al-Islam). Dar Al-Kufr is the place that is ruled by the divine laws of Islam and secured by the Muslims. And Dar Al-Kufr is the place ruled by laws other than Islam, and its security is by non-Muslims

(Kuffar). Based on this Islamic rule, there is nothing called a Palestinian land, Syrian land, or Pakistani land. All of these lands are Muslim lands, conquered by Muslims. Nor is there a sacred land, except the one that Islam regards as sacred, such as the House of Allah, in Mecca. To explain further, if a Muslim owns a piece of land and resides on it, in Dar al-Kufr, and Muslims advance to conquer this land, does he fight them for the sake of his land or his homeland? The answer is clear. It is haraam to follow his patriotic feelings and fight the Muslims. For the Prophet (saw) says, "To curse a Muslim is sinful and to fight a Muslim is Kufr." Therefore, patriotism is an invalid bond, Islamically.

Lastly, by looking at our leader and example to follow, our Prophet Muhammad (saw) loved Mecca, but when he was ordered by Allah to leave it with his companions, for the sake of Islam, they left without any hesitation. Furthermore, they stayed in Medina and fought in defence of Dar Al-Islam, against their own people from Mecca. Where was that patriotic bond then? Non-existent. Weren't Abu-Bakr, Umar, Ali, Suhaib (Roman), Salman (Persian), Bilal (African) brothers regardless of their watan?

O Muslims, the only valid bond that Islam accepts is the bond of belief. "Verily, only the believers are brothers." "Who invites to tribalism (nationalism) is not one of us." The only homeland for us is Dar Al-Islam. Then and only then will we feel that we belong and Muslims are our only relations. O Allah, make us from those who hear something and follow the best of it. Ameen.

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