

National Unity and Development from Islamic Point of Views

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Abstract: National unity is an aspiration of people in all societies, but in many cases it cannot be achieved on the ground and if so, it would quickly break down and starts to emerge among the same society members. In this paper, the researchers tried to develop a definition of national unity in view of the Islamic concept of man that regards him as the vice-regent of Allah on the earth. Based on this vision which, consists and consolidates the basic of human rights; the right of dignity, the right of social justice, the right of freedom in its many forms, the right of security and peace, the right of care and protection and the right of housing the foundations of national unity can be reserved, flourish and last. The study also highlighted the meaning of development from the Qur'anic concept of urbanization, explaining the role of the right foundations of national unity and stating that man is the core and pivot of development first and foremost. This paper comes to the conclusion that there is no significance of development without taking into account the needs of man and respecting his rights.

Key words: National Unity • Islamic Development • Co-exist • Rights • Quran

INTRODUCTION

Societies nowadays face many problems and challenges such as lack coexistence and social harmonization between their members, thus divergences began to appear between the components of the same society, to the extent that each category came to lock on itself, considering itself the rightful owner first and last.

Accordingly, this paper was set out to clarify this issue through exposing three main themes, summed up in the following: the concept of national unity, the foundations of national unity and its components, national unity and development.

Undeniably, the attempt of this paper is to find a solid ground on which people can rest to achieve their goal of unity, leading to development and progress; this objective would be realized by means of rules where they

are not only ideas meet and minds concur, but the Islamic vice-regency vision, along with the humanitarian denominators are the foundation.

The Concept of National Unity: Researchers differed in the definition of national unity, as a result everyone defined it through the vision he adopted and believed in. In the following steps some of what they said to define national unity will be presented of which was chosen in this research.

The Dutch revolution (1787) defines patriotism as: "to show love to the country through willingness for reform and revolution" [1]. The Italian philosopher Machiavelli defines it as: the rise of the leader in a country to a status of sanctity, as the pivot of national unity in a state; the obedience of the governed to this leader who fears the implications

of this unity as consulting the governed people would lead chaos and anarchy as they can be nice only when forced to [2].

In view of the Italian politician (Mazzini), it means: the awareness of all the governed of their belonging to the land on which they live and their union and association with it [3]. The Swiss philosopher (Jean Jacques Rousseau) sees that, it is "the social contract between the people and the existing political system, so as that people are united by a decisive national unity, within a framework of shared responsibility, where the individual obeys the government. This latter is a social order accepted by him willingly and by choice, a link between the sovereignty in uniting the people and their values and an expression of their integrated will in the public administration. This in return, is the outcome of the desire of individuals. It differs, in aggregate, from the individual will as it is not an expression of something spontaneous or fortuitous, but as an expression of patriotism based on values and ideals. This unity is associated with democracy through a democratic government in which people can gather and able to mingle with each other" [3].

The Soviet leader (Stalin) defined it as: the participation of individuals in the language, land and economic life or in the psychological formation, reflected in the characteristics that describe the national culture. This participation is achieved through the stability of individuals historically on a specific territory. It is also the abolition of all national privileges of the state members by way of a law applied throughout the state, which prevents all restrictions on the rights of minorities, whatever their origin or religion [3].

According to Hobbs (a philosopher of the seventeenth century AD in England) it means: state control and the increase of its components through an absolute sovereignty, which will contribute to the weakening of its opponents or competitors; the state must also inculcate qualities of loyalty and patriotism in individuals through programs of education, training and policy guidance [4].

According to the Islamic thinker Muhammad Salim Al-Awa, it means: "the reference to the spirit that should prevail in a multi-religious country among the people of these religions in regards of tolerance, love and bearing, displayed by all followers of a faith towards beliefs of the people of another religion - or other religions - and their practices" [6].

While Tamawi defines it as "a strong link between the citizens of a particular country, based on clear elements felt by everyone and believed in, where people are ready to sacrifice in defending them" [7]. According to Abdullah Al-Mubarak, it means: "unity of a group of people in religion, economics, society and history in one place, under the banner of a unified rule" [8].

From an Islamic perspective national unity can be defined as a relationship of cohesiveness and cooperation among the members of one nation based on the principles of the divine vice-regency vision, which highlighted the value of man's rights and dignity and clarified his position in the universe as the first master and that everything in the universe is in use for his service in order to achieve the great objective for which he was created, namely the worship and the edification of earth.

Foundations of National Unity: National unity, in order to be successful and act as a core for society and its advancement and progress, must be built on the basis of clear and solid foundations that give no room to any misinterpretation. These foundations we yield are based on the common denominators between all human beings and are consistent with human nature. Indeed, they are extracted and deduced based on the principles of the Quranic concept of vicegerent that consist the definition of man, his purpose and goal.

The Right to Dignity and Equality in Creation and Origin: God Almighty depicted that the origin of humans is one, as they were created from the same entity, He says: (O people, fear your Lord who created you from a single soul and created from it, its other half and reproduced from them many men and women and fear Allah from Whom you demand (your mutual rights) and don't cut the relations of kinship. Surely Allah is Ever and All-watcher over you.). Nisa: 1.

Sheikh Saadi commentated on this verse saying: it means a reminder to mankind that they are created out of one, encouraging them to be affectionate to each other and pity each other, "and in telling that he created them from the same soul and spread them in the territories of earth, being from the same origin, so as they would be sympathetic to each other and compassionate to each other" [9].

This recall is also an indication that humanity is one mankind family of one human in which must prevail, the principles of compassion, communication and non-enmity,

the fact "that humanity is out of one and the same origin, their father Adam. Adam was from dust, who was the one soul, which unity requires making the human family affectionate, cooperative, loving, non-hostile, adversarial or fractious" [10].

The fact that Allah made it clear, that the origin of humanity is one, makes the divine statement honor the sons of Adam, (and indeed We have honored the children of Adam and We have carried them on land and sea and have provided them with lawful good things and have preferred them above many of those whom We have created with a marked preferment) Al-Isra:70.

A general address that includes all the descendants of Adam peace be upon him , Imam Al-Alusi says regarding this verse: "i.e. We made the whole of them, the righteous and malefactor, honorable i.e. : with unlimited uncountable honor and advantages" [11].

The discourse of the divine honoring makes human rights deserved and protected for all mankind. Truly, the preference and differentiation should be by a divine exceptional address since it is God Who identified dignity, this exception was articulated clearly in the Qur'an (the most honorable in the sight of Allah, is the most pious) Al-Hujurat: 13. It is a dignity based on action and faith and not on race, color and ethnicity. The Prophet peace be upon him stated : (there is no preference of an Arab over a non-Arab, a non- Arab over an Arab, nor the red over a black, or a black over a red, except by piety, the most honorable is the most pious) [12]. Consequently, if the national unity is based on this principle since the first moment, the matter would be easier and upright; the individual would feel his value, position and dignity.

Recognition of and Belief in Diversity and Difference:

Almighty Allah said: (Had your Lord willed, He could surely have made mankind one nation, but they will not cease to be different) HUD: 118. The meaning of this is: "People will still be different in their faiths, whims in religions, venerations and the various desires; except the ones the Lord had mercy on, who believed in Him and His messengers, as they do not differ in the Oneness of God, the ratification of the messengers and what came to them from God" [13].

The aspirant for national unity has to realize that diversity in all its aspects is Allah creation (O mankind We created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another , the most honorable in that the sight of Allah is the most pious, Allah is All-Knowing All-Aware). Al-Hujurat: 13.

Taking into account people's differences and diversity, the success of national unity must be based on a consistent, specific and solid basis; that will boost acquaintance, cooperation, awareness of the rights and performance of duties.

Justice: Justice is one of the most honorable principles urged by Islam, not only justice in the Islamic relations, but it also exceeds it to external relations with non-Muslims, rather with all human beings no matter how different are their religions and ethnic backgrounds. Allah Almighty says: (Allah commands you to return trusts to their owners and if you were to judge between people judge with fairness. Verily, how excellent is the teaching He gives you. Truly, Allah is All-Hearer, All-Seer.) Nisa: 58.

The statement in the verse is encompassing the return of the trusts to their owners whoever they were, as well as ruling between people with justice, because through returning the trusts and achieving justice result security and stability, " the term of "Justice " was used- which is settlement - to designate a beneficial settlement that results in goodness and security...and justice: is equality between people or between members of a nation: in allocating effects to the rightful owners and endowing each person his due, without delay, it is equality in entitlement to things and means of empowerment in the hands of their owners, the first one is justice in designating the rights and the second is justice in the implementation; justice is not in the allotment of effects to people without entitlement" [14].

We note that Allah had broadened his command, He said: (O ye who believe! Be witnesses to God, even against yourselves or your parents, kin, be he rich or poor, Allah is better protector to both. So follow not the lusts, lest you avoid justice; and if you distort your witness or refuse to give, verily, Allah is ever Well-Acquainted with what you do) Nisa: 135.

In the verse, "He extended the order to do justice, because justice maintains order and is the basis of communality, including what it bears as being witness to Allah for truth, even against oneself, parents and relatives and not favor anyone for their riches, or because of poverty; because justice and the truth have priority over personal rights and the rights of kinship and other" [15].

Freedom: Freedom is essential for any progress and prosperity the ability for self-determination and the choice in what he believes are essential for man and without it,

happiness cannot be achieved "a human is not considered a being if he does not feel his personality, dignity and ability to make his fate with his hands not the hands of others ... a man who is led to what he does not want and is forced to do what he dislikes will not be happy. Moreover happiness is only accomplished with security, who has no freedom has no security" [16]. Allah blesses Caliph Omar ibn al-Khattab, who expressed this historical principle in his famous saying: "since when you enslaved people whilst they were born free?" [17].

The freedom from Islamic perspective Includes various type of freedoms such as:

Freedom in Belief: Allah says: (There is no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error, whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy hand hold, never breaks and Allah is Hearing, Knowing), Al-Baqarah:256. There is no compulsion in religion, "i.e. do not force anyone to embrace the religion of Islam, because only Allah Who can guide people to Islam and enlighten their heart to His truth and if someone, Allah has blinded his heart and sealed on his sight and hearing, would not benefit entering Islam forcibly or under duress" [18]. The task of the Prophet is the preaching and warning only, belief and disbelief are not in his hands (the prophet) but in the hands of God Almighty and the free will of the warned. Allah Almighty said: (You are but a Warner). Surat Fatir: 23.

Political Freedom: political freedom was evident in Islam through the principle of Shura mentioned by the Holy Quran explicitly the Almighty said: {and consult them in affairs (of moment)} Al-Imran: 159. He also said in Al-Shura: 38(who (conduct) their affairs by mutual Consultation).

Political freedom includes the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, Allah said: (The believers, men and women, are protectors, one of another: they enjoy what is just and forbid what is evil), Surat Al-Tawbah: 71. The Prophet (SWA) says (By the One Whom my soul is in His Hand, you will promote what is just and forbid evil, or Allah would send punishment upon you and then you call Him but He will not answer your prayers) [19].

This indicates the need of freedom to express our opinion. Indeed this was confirmed by the prophet peace be upon him when he said: (Whoever among you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand if he cannot, then with his tongue, then if he cannot with his heart and that is the weakest of faith) [20].

Freedom of Movement Within and Outside the State:

This is evident from the paper that the Prophet peace be upon him wrote when he arrived in Medina, he said: "Whoever leaves is safe and whoever stays is safe in Medina, least the one who commits an injustice or a sin" [21].

Freedom of Work and its Guarantee, the Almighty Says:

(it is He Who made the earth manageable for you, so traverse ye through its tracks and enjoy the sustenance which He furnishes: but unto Him is the Resurrection) Al-Mulk: 15, "i.e., travel to as many territories as you wish and visit their regions in pursuit of the types of gains and trades" [18].

If the above-mentioned freedoms are guaranteed to individuals and groups then national unity is on the right track, its goal is to be reached with ease, protected by the cover of security and social stability.

Security: Security is essential in human's life, The Prophet peace be upon him, stated (whoever is secure in his property, well in his body and has his daily sustenance is as if he got the riches of the world) [19], security and safety components are the basis for development and the main tools to every national unity and a sought objective in every society, that is because of their impact on the sense of human beings life and existence. Allah said: (For the Covenants -of security and safeguard enjoyed- by the Quraysh, Their Covenants -covering- journeys by winter and summer. Let them Adore the Lord of This house, Who Provides them with food against hunger and with security against fear of danger) Surat Quraysh: 1-4.

The Right to Life: The preservation of the sanctity of the human soul and the prohibition to expose it to perish is one of the five necessities guaranteed by Islam to human beings, Allah says: (do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden except by right), Al-Isra: 33. Even an assault on a single human is considered as an attack on humanity, the Almighty said: (On that account: we ordained for the Children of Israel that if any one slew a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief In the land - it would be As if He slew the whole people: and if any one saved a life, it would be As if He saved the life of the whole people. Then although there came to them our apostles with Clear Signs, yet, even after that, many of them continued to commit excesses in the land.) Surat Al-Maida: 32.

He made the retaliation punishment of the aggressor on human's soul a life, the Almighty said (and you have in retaliation life, O men of understanding, that you may fear Allah), Al-Baqarah: 179. In retaliation there is life for the community to get rid of those who abuse people's lives, then safety, security, tranquility and stability will prevail between people. That is why the success of national unity is closely linked to sanctity of life and its protection and not to be subjected to destruction or abuse, otherwise there is no meaning to any unity.

Protection and Care: The Prophet peace be upon him was to one who decreed this right through the document of Medina, which is the first Constitution of the State of Islam, he said peace be upon him: "And whoever from the Jews follows us, is entitled to our support and fellowship neither oppressed nor considered as enemies" [21].

If this right applied to the Jews who practiced a religion other than the state religion, in a state where they chose to live, thus this right primarily should be granted to those who practice the state religion. : That is what can ensure the national unity and its success and continuity. Protection and care must be granted to the citizens without any discrimination against any of them. Indeed protecting people is the real remedy that can prevent envy and vendetta from prevailing among the people.

The Right to Housing: The scholars of Islam ruled on the necessity of securing housing for the citizen who lives within a Muslim state. If the Community Fund (Baytulmal) and state funds were insufficient to provide food, drink, shelter, the responsibility is then on the rich Muslims, Ibn Hazm said: "it is a duty on the people of each country to provide for the poor amongst them, the Sultan forces them in case the due on wealth (Zakat) and other wealth do not cover for that. They are allocated then necessary sustenance, dress for the winter and summer likewise and a shelter to protect them from rain, summer and the sun and the eyes of passers-by" [22].

If this is required from a state to secure for its members, first and foremost then is not allowed to violate the sanctity of this home and this is what the decision of the Prophet peace be upon him was in the document of Medina: "It is prohibited to violate the sanctity of a home without the permission of the dwellers" [21].

The right to housing and its sanctity are ignored by many of those calling for national unity. They see unity as sharing political matters and power issues whilst unity is much deeper than that. As it is one the necessity of life,

it is a part of every individual rights, because if the individual rights are met than it becomes easier for him or her to appreciate and defend social unity. Indeed care should be reserved for every individual as he is the first element, the basis of unity and the label of its success.

National Unity and Development: Any idea or work need an objective and purpose, these goals and targets vary according to the idea at hand. National unity is an idea staunchly proposed within communities, whether Muslim or other and the goal overall, is due to the sense of those adopting it that communities need to be stable and follow the pace of development leading to progress, prosperity and stability [23, 24]. The researchers' aim, by introducing the concept of national unity through the Islamic vice-regency concept, at showing its impact on the sought development process, exposing this fact is in what follows.

The term development varies in meaning, according to the researchers' perspectives nevertheless the majority mean by it the economic aspect and industrial and urban development. The researcher in the light of the Islamic view tends to favor the idea that advancement is closely linked to the issue of the divine vice-regency to man on this earth and the task assigned by Allah - the Almighty - when He made him the vice-regent on it.

Allah SWT depicted man's mission towards the universe through the utterance of prophet Saleh in verse 61 of Surah Hud: (To the Thamud people (We sent) Salih, one of their own brethren. He said: "O My people! Worship Allah. Ye have no other god but Him. It is He who hath produced you from the earth and settled you therein: then ask forgiveness of him and turn to Him (in repentance): for My Lord is (always) near, ready to answer.) He summarized the mission as reform and edification.

About this verse Sheikh Sharawi says: when the letters (Alif, Siin and Ta) are added to the Arabic verb ('amara) it means a request. "Ista'marakom" means edification, which requires two conditions: first: to keep good matters at their quality and second: to develop and improve them [25].

Accordingly, man is the aim the main object and instrument of any development as it is stated by Alwani: "he is an instrument and the purpose of development. Economic growth is a means to ensure the welfare of inhabitants and an expansion of the open options to man" [26]. Therefore development is composed of two aspects: an abstract aspect and a concrete physical one.

Neither one can be substituted or superseded at the expenses of the other. As if this happens, there will be malfunction, leading to diminishing the individual and the society as a consequence.

National unity is the real guarantee for coexistence and harmonization in a multi-racial society, It is the motor that aspires people with diverse world views and different races to cooperate to build and defend their same civilization. That is can be only by : “enhancing the individual’s potential and instilling spiritual and behavioral values that can trigger positive deep effects in shaping his personality at all levels: social, cultural, economic and political... within the frame of a divine, spiritual, behavioral and intellectual system that stresses man and his mission of vice-regency on this earth” [25].

Precisely, national unity that should prevail to achieve development and creativity is the one that guarantees the rights of individuals and society and at the same time specifies the duties and lays down the essential bases encouraging individuals to seek knowledge, endeavor and work hard to establish a society, proud of its civilization and prosperity.

CONCLUSION

We have shown through this study that national unity means a relationship of cohesiveness among the members of one nation. We have shown also the importance of Islamic concept of vice-regency concept which values man’s dignity and rights and how it looks to man as the master of universe whom everything in the universe is created and geared for him to use to worship Allah and achieve his noble mission in the world. The right to justice, the right to freedom, the right to security, the right to life, the right to housing are all part granted by Islam for the purpose of development and national unity and in turn to promote world prosperity, peace and security.

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