WEEKLY ISLAMIC ARTICLE

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ISSUE NO.008/2017 FRIDAY: 28/7/2017

TRIBALISM AND RACISM IN ISLAM

Islam is against all forms of racism, tribalism and bigotry. What people know but keep forgetting time and again is that, we came from one Father and Mother: Adam **(peace be upon him)** and Hawa **(peace be upon her)** thus making us all from one race and one family, that was afterwards split in to nations, countries and different races.

The tribalism that occurs nowadays is based on people forming factions on the basis of race, colour or homeland. This is akin to the ancient tribalism that existed between the tribes of 'Aws and khazraj; It is one of the leftovers of ignorance. There had been many wars between 'Aws and khazraj during the ignorance era with a great deal of enmity and hatred, until Islam came and they entered therein, resulting in brotherhood by The Grace of Allah.

I personally don't know much of tribalism in other continents but I do know that of Africa. Though it is blessed with diversity in different tribes and culture, Africa is a hotbed of tribalism and disunity. One of the main goals of Shaytan, when it comes to revenge against humanity, is to break ties between a man and his brother. To fight this, we as brethren in Islam should live by the practises of our beloved Prophet Muhammad **(peace and blessing be upon him)** and love for our brothers what we love for ourselves.

The Prophet **(peace and blessing be upon him)** delivered an instructive parable to use about the likeness of one who adheres to tribalism. Abdullah ibn Mas'ud reported that he said: **"Whoever supports his people in oppression is like a dead camel that falls in to a well and is pulled out by its tail."** In other words, he disowns anyone who lives by the ideology or support of tribalism. Tribalists might be outwardly muslims, but in reality, Allah will not count them among the true believers. Jubair ibn mut'im reported, the Messenger of Allah **(peace and blessing be upon him)** said: **"He is not one of us who calls to tribalism. He is not one of us who fights for the sake of tribalism. He is not one of us who dies following the way of tribalism."**

This must not be misunderstood. Islam does not forbid a muslim to love his homeland, tribe or country, rather, it forbids basing one's feelings of love, loyalty and hatred on that basis. Loyalty, love and hatred should all be based on our religion, Islam.

The prophet **(peace and blessing be upon him)** used to love Makkah because it was the most beloved land to Allah. But he did not love the kufaar (disbelievers) who lived in there, rather he fought them because they fought against Islam and killed muslims. Neither he nor his companions ever gave precedence to their love of Makkah over the laws of Allah. So when Allah forbade those who had migrated from Makkah to go back to it, except for Hajj and three days after it, they adhered to that and did not stay there for longer than that period. Their love for Makkah did not make them disobey Allah, let alone do anything that was worse than that.

While in todays' world, you see that tribalism and devotion to ones tribe and country has gone to such extremes that places of shirk are venerated (regarded with great respect) just because they are in one's country, the flag is venerated because it represents the country, so the people stand and salute it with a reverence that is absent in their prayers when they stand before their Lord.

Our Lord Allah has commanded us to uphold justice with all human beings, regardless of their race, colour, religion or identity. He says in the chapter An-nisaa 4:135, **"O you who believe, be persistently standing firm in justice as witnesses for Allah, even it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. Follow not your desires, lest you not be just."**

My final advice for you is to try and watch what you say to your fellow muslims. This is because the prophet **(peace and blessing be upon him)** firmly censured the poets of his time who had a habit of excoriating entire tribes, for it would be wrong to negatively stereotype an entire religious group with all its unique individuals and diverse interpretations. Aisha **(May allah be pleased with her)** reported the messenger **(peace and blessing be upon him)** saying: "Verily, the greatest of people in falsehood is a man who insults another man by disparaging the entire tribe."

I would like to come to a conclusion with this, my dear brothers and sisters. Islam strictly rejects all forms of tribalism, racism and bigotry. We must not justify oppression, or take lightly what Allah, His prophet **(peace and blessing be upon him)** and Islam have strictly forbidden. We must take lead in upholding justice and the rights of each and every person in our religion Islam and all of humanity included.

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