

The Lure of Secularism

A recent law passed by the US federal government ensures that Muslim women can wear the *hijab* whilst in employment. The American administration has also displayed other acts of 'generosity' towards the Muslims, such as allowing the building of mosques and institutions for Muslims. On one occasion President Clinton himself gave a special 'Eid address. This has led to some Muslims to believe that Muslims have found a 'friend' in America. They go on to urge Muslims to distinguish between 'Muslim-friendly' Western nations and those, like France, that have a 'hostile' stance towards Muslims. They even suggest that those Muslims that do not make this distinction, and hence are against all Western nations, are paranoid. Finally, they feel that they are jeopardising any future 'gifts' that their generous hosts may give.

There is no doubt that certain Western nations do not give hand-outs to Muslims as America does. France is a very clear example of this. There are no polite 'Eid addresses from their government, rather their speeches are of an entirely different nature. Jean Claude Barreau, whilst he was adviser on immigration to the French Minister of the Interior, said,

“when somebody emigrates he changes not only his country but also his history. Foreigners arriving (to settle) in France must understand that their ancestors are the Gauls (ancient French) and that they have a new homeland.”

So, according to Barreau the Muslims in France should consider their role models to be Napoleon Bonaparte, Asterix and Obelix, and not the Prophet Muhammad (saw)! This harshness is reflected throughout French society. Muslim women are harassed for wearing the *hijab*, Muslim men with beards are spat on, the Algerian Muslims living there are considered as guilty till proven innocent by the security forces. Similar attitudes are adopted in Denmark, where Muslims are seen as peasants sponging off the State and called 'Longcoats' (a reference to the clothing of Muslim women). There was even discussion by the establishment suggesting that Muslim women should marry *Kafir* Danish men!

It is in the light of these facts, that some Muslims say that Muslims should open their eyes to the kindness shown by other Western nations, like America. They are bowled over by offers of grants for Muslim-run organisations. However, before they plunge into the arms of the American administration, as many have done, here are some other facts to consider:

1. All Western nations, including America, are Capitalist by their ideology, and hence secular by their creed. As such all Western nations seek to strengthen this creed within society. They aim to ensure that when it comes to the sphere of politics only Capitalism is implemented. To ensure this is the case other beliefs must not interfere with the affairs of politics. So, it does not matter whether a citizen is a Hindu, Christian, Jew or Buddhist as long as they support the political concepts of Capitalism, such as freedom and democracy. If any creed were to challenge the creed

of secularism, the State would intervene to prevent this. As Barreau put it, with his customary tact and diplomacy,

“Islam has its place in France provided that it is willing to be as unobtrusive as other religions.”

This applies to all Western nations, including America, as is made clear from their secular constitutions.

2. Islam by its nature cannot be ‘unobtrusive’, as per Barreau’s secular standard. For unlike religions such as Hinduism, Islam is both spiritual and political. All Western governments are aware of this fact, including America and other so-called ‘Muslim-friendly’ governments. In an article published in the July 8, 1989, edition of the Times Newspaper, Clifford Longley wrote that,

“The (British) Home Office must know that some of their Muslim Beliefs at least at face value are not compatible with a plural society; Islam does not know how to exist as a minority culture, for it is not just a set of private individual principles and beliefs. Islam is a social creed above all, a radically different way of organising society as a whole.”

3. Though all Western nations will work to ensure that secularism is strong within their lands, they do differ in the styles they adopt. Some will use the ‘carrot’ and others the ‘stick’. The styles differ according to what the particular administration believes is the best way of achieving their objectives.

So, France uses the ‘stick’ when pursuing this policy. This stems from her intense pride at producing the ‘founding fathers’ of secularism. After all, key thinkers in the foundation of the liberal democracy were Frenchmen, such as Rousseau and Voltaire. Furthermore, France was the first nation to initiate revolution for the cause of secularism. In addition to all of this, parts of the French lands fell under the control of the Muslims during the time of the Khilafah, a memory that France will not easily forget! Nor will she forget that a huge Muslim population sits on her doorstep in North Africa. Hence, France has chosen to use a ‘stick’ when dealing with the Muslims.

America, on the other hand, chooses to use a ‘carrot’ when pursuing this policy. This is because, unlike the French, they have a great sense of self-confidence. This stems from two facts. Firstly, they pride themselves on the fact that although the French had a great part in formulating secularism, today, the USA is the nation with the oldest written secular constitution in implementation. This was because American thinkers and politicians took great pains to codify these principles, long before and after the American Revolution. Secondly, America is the world’s leading nation and has been exporting her ideology to great effect. So, America has chosen the ‘carrot’ rather than the ‘stick’. She hopes to tempt the Muslims into secularism, rather than beating them into submission. This is the case of all so called ‘Muslim-friendly’ Western governments. In August 1987, the Times Newspaper suggested a formula for the existence of Muslims in the West. It is proposed that the

“Muslims can maintain their fundamental beliefs while giving up any other demand to the Western way of life, and if Muslims accepted such compromise, we must help them in practising their belief and their own institutions.”

In line with this formula, so-called ‘Muslim-friendly’ governments have taken it upon themselves to dream up their own version of Islam. This ‘secular-Islam’ involves removal of all the Islamic rules that the West would find objectionable. Since these rules are in the fields of ruling, foreign policy, judiciary and economics, in practise this leaves very little in ‘secular-Islam’! Furthermore, to replace what has been chopped out, ‘secular-Islam’ proposes that the West should be referred to in these fields. This ‘secular-Islam’ is found throughout the West, in various guises such as, ‘American Fiqh’ and ‘Moderacy’. These ‘Muslim-friendly’ governments have even found ‘West-friendly’ Muslims to preach this corruption. Muslims find themselves subjected to a barrage of seminars, conferences and even khutbahs denying Islam’s role in politics on the one hand, but demanding Muslims to vote for Western political parties, on the other.

The end-product, however, regardless of the style, is exactly the same. That is to say, Muslims are free to practice Islam in their personal lives, but when it comes to politics that is never acceptable. This is the line that no Western nation can ever accept to be crossed, for that would undermine the basis for their very existence, secularism. It is from these facts that one can conclude that no Western Capitalist government is ‘Muslim friendly’. No matter how many ‘carrots’ are strewn before the Muslims, the ‘stick’ will be brought out when this line is crossed. One ‘stick’ that America has used is the threat of taking back the ‘carrots’. Indeed, many Muslims are scared of crossing the line for fear of losing their community centre or Mosque. Another ‘stick’ is the great witch-hunt against the ‘fundamentalists’. Already many Muslims have been expelled from America for holding Islamic political views.

Muhammad (saw) was never taken in by the styles that the *Kuffar* used in their war against Islam. He was always aware that, regardless of the style they employed, they hoped to distance him from carrying Islam in its totality, political and spiritual. So, at one time the Quraysh used the ‘stick’. They persecuted, tortured and boycotted the Muslims, including himself (saw). However, they found that this style began to fail to achieve that which they had set out to do. For their harsh style built sympathy for the Muslims amongst the Disbelievers and strengthened the resolve of the Believers. So, ‘Utbah ibn Rabi’ah was sent by the Quraysh to the Prophet (saw), saying,

“You have outraged our gods and religion and accused our forefathers and wise men of impiety and error. You have left no stone unturned to estrange the relations with us. If you are doing all this with a view to getting the wealth, we will join together to give you greater wealth than any Qurayshi has ever possessed. If ambition moves you, we will make you our chief. If you desire kingship we will readily offer you that. If you are under the power of an evil spirit that seems to haunt and dominate you so that you cannot shake off its yoke, then we shall call skilful doctors to cure you.”

Note, that the Prophet (saw) was not just getting a vote or an acknowledgement from the Congressman or Parliament of the time. He (saw) was being given the leadership of the entire *Kufr* system, on condition that he abandoned Islam in its totality. Yet, he was not tempted by the ‘carrots’ offered, nor did he fear the return of the ‘stick’. Rather he replied with Qur’an in a manner that left the regime deeply unsettled. He

knew full well that this new style was not due to their sudden realisation that Islam was the Truth, rather he (saw) knew that this style was a new attempt to achieve the same evil purpose that they had always had. As one obedient to Allah (swt) he could never ever accept their conditions, for all the rewards of this Earth are nothing before service to the Lord and Creator, Allah (swt). There is no clearer warning for those who remain blinded by the gifts of the enemies of Islam today.