



Pakistan at 74 Years, between the Nation State and the Khilafah

A claim is often made by liberal nationalist factions of Pakistan that the Pakistani nationstate founded, on 14 August 1947, was originally intended to be a progressive and democratic, secular state. The truth, however, is that pre-partition, there was no singular vision established by the Muslim leaders of Pakistan. Rather, there were several competing visions, each attached to a differing ideology.

The plan set out by the leading figures of the Muslim League was one that involved a modern, democratic, nation state that would use Islam as a guiding influence, but would otherwise work towards fostering a more nationalistic identity for its citizens. This plan for Pakistan was connected to M A Jinnah's vision which was, by all accounts, less concerned about adherence to Islam and more focused on furthering the socio-cultural and economic interests of the Muslims of the Indian Subcontinent. Islam would remain as the religion of the state, much in the way Christianity is in the Western secular states. It would not be the basis of the state and governance. Existing in contrast to this was the "Islamist" vision which postulated a Pakistan which would adhere more strictly to Shariah and would recognize itself as an Islamic state. This was a vision shared by many 'Ulema and their wider, extensive platform.

These two visions existed on separate ends to one another and between them were varying degrees of compromise, such as Allama Iqbal's vision of a "spiritual democracy." This conflict in vision that existed between the leaders of Pakistan over seventy years ago continues to exist today. Political parties, divided along secular and nationalistic lines, all champion differing ideologies and each attempt to control the political narrative of the state.

Today, partisanship that exists in Pakistan is bolstered by a selective study of history. Each political faction engages in a biased study of history, hand-picking whichever events or statements will help legitimize their narrative.

This is wrong as it falsely assumes that the political ideologies that were held by the leaders during partition can be taken as precursors for the Ummah's systems of government. Indeed, the Quran and Sunnah have made it clear that any system of ruling or government must be based in the Shariah. Allah (swt) said, (مَوْ مَنْ لَمُ يَحْكُم بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللهُ فَأُولَئَكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ» **And those who do not judge by what Allah has revealed are truly the rebellious."** [Surah Al-Mai'dah, Verse 47].

Any attempts to replace the rulings of Islam with secular systems are forbidden and negate the Muslims' obligation to their lord Allah (swt).

And so Ibn Khaldun (rh), the authority on history, demography, cultural change and society in the Islamic era, who laid the basis of much that is known today in the Western world, writes in Muqadimmah ("Introduction"), Chapter 3, Section 25, "The Meaning of Caliphate and Imamate," وأحكام السياسة إنما تطلع على مصالح الدنيا فقط يعلمون ظاهرا من حياة الدنيا ومقصود الشارع أخرتهم وكان هذا الحكم لأهل وأحكام السياسة إنما تطلع على مصالح الدنيا فقط يعلمون ظاهرا من حياة النيا ومقصود الشارع في أحوال دنياهم وآخرتهم وكان هذا الحكم لأهل بالناس صلاح آخرتهم فوجب بمقتضى الشرائع حمل الكافة على الأحكام الشرعية في أحوال دنياهم وآخرتهم وكان هذا الحكم لأهل ومعالات المعالية ومن قام فيه مقامهم وهم الخلفاء فقد تبين لك من ذلك معنى الخلافة. بالناس صلاح آخرتهم أوجب بمقتضى الشرائع حمل الكافة على الأحكام الشرعية في أحوال دنياهم وآخرتهم وكان هذا الحكم لأهل worldly rulings consider only worldly interests, working for the life of this world (Dunya). However, the intention of the Lawgiver (Shariah) for humankind is their welfare in the Afterlife (Aakhira). Therefore, it is obligatory, as required by the Islamic laws, to cause the masses to act in accordance with the Islamic Shariah rulings, regarding their worldly life and their Afterlife. This ruling authority is for the People of Shariah, the Prophets (as) and then by those who took their place, the Caliphs. Thus the meaning of the Khilafah is clarified for you."

Indeed, the Prophet (saw) said, «كانَتْ بَنِيِّ خَلَفَهُ نَبِيِّ خَلَفَهُ نَبِيِّ خَلَفَهُ نَبِيِّ مَعْلَوُهُمْ حَقَّهُمْ؛ فإنَّ اللَّهُ سَائِلُهُمْ عَمَّا اسْتَرْعاهُمْ» بَعْدِي، وسَيَكُونُ خُلَفَاءُ فَيَكْثُرُونَ. قَالوا: فَمَا تَأْمُرُنا؟ قَالَ: فُوا بَبَيْغةِ الأَوَّلِ فَالأَوَّلِ، أَعْطُوهُمْ حَقَّهُمْ؛ فإنَّ اللَّهُ سَائِلُهُمْ عَمَّا اسْتَرْعاهُمْ» "Banu Isra'il were ruled over by the Prophets. When one Prophet died, another succeeded him; but after me there is no prophet and there will be caliphs and they will be quite large in number. His Companions said: What do you order us to do (in case we come to have more than one Caliph)? He said: The one to whom allegiance is sworn first has a supremacy over the others. Concede to them their due rights (i. e. obey them). Allah (Himself) will question them about the subjects whom He had entrusted to them." [Muslim]

In order to fully establish the Islamic laws, the Ummah must rid itself of partisanship ('asabiyyah) and instead bond on the basis of Islam. Islam's group feeling and collective tendency establishes a single Jama'ah of the Muslims, when brotherhood is established on Islam. However, when Muslims are bonded on other than Islam it leads to rivalry, rancor and enmity within Muslims. It was 'asabiyyah that the Arabs succumbed to when they revolted against the Ottoman Caliphate and it was 'asabiyyah that led to the uprising of the Young Turks and the abolition of the Caliphate. In Pakistan, at 74 years, partisanship has increased to the point of sub-nationalist movements, based on ethnic groupings and languages.

In order to complete their obligation towards Allah (swt), setting their affairs of Dunya in accordance to what pleases Him (swt), the Muslims of today must discard 'asabiyyah and commit themselves to Deen. Truly, it is only Islam that can unify the hearts of all.

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