

Roots Of Nationalism In The Muslim World

Shabir Ahmed

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Introduction

The Muslim world has been characterised by failure, disunity, bloodshed, oppression and backwardness. At present, no Muslim country in the world can rightly claim to be a leader in any field of human activity. Indeed, the non-Muslims of the East and the West now dictate the social, economic and political agenda for the Muslim Ummah. Furthermore, the Muslims identify themselves as Turkish, Arab, African and Pakistani. If this is not enough, Muslims are further sub-divided within each country or continent. For example, in Pakistan people are classed as Punjabis, Sindhis, Baluchis and Pathans.

The Muslim Ummah was never faced with such a dilemma in the past during Islamic rule. They never suffered from disunity, widespread oppression, stagnation in science and technology and certainly not from the internal conflicts that we have witnessed this century like the Iran-Iraq war. So what has gone wrong with the Muslims this century? Why are there so many feuds between them and why are they seen to be fighting each other? What has caused their weakness and how will they ever recover from the present stagnation?

There are many factors that contributed to the present state of affairs, but the main ones are the abandoning of the Arabic language as the language of understanding Islam correctly and performing *ijtihad*, the absorption of foreign cultures such as the philosophies of the Greeks, Persian and the Hindus, the gradual loss of central authority over some of the provinces, and the rise of nationalism since the 19th Century.

This book focuses on the origins of nationalism in the Muslim world. Nationalism did not arise in the Muslim world naturally, nor did it come about in response to any hardships faced by the people, nor due to the frustration they felt when Europe started to dominate the world after the industrial revolution. Rather, nationalism was implanted in the minds of the Muslims through a well thought out scheme by the European powers, after their failure to destroy the Islamic State by force. The book also presents the Islamic verdict on nationalism and practical steps that can be taken to eradicate the disease of nationalism from the Muslim Ummah so as to restore it back to its former glory.

Nationalism Defined

The concept of nationalism cannot be understood without studying the way humans identify and relate to each other in society. This study will enable a differentiation to be made between various forms of grouping and nationalism.

Human beings can identify or group together on the basis of:

- Love of a particular land or a country - patriotism
- Tribe, lineage or race - nationalism
- Religion - spiritual bond
- A particular issue - bond of interest
- A creed - ideological bond

Patriotism arises when people come together due to the love of a country. It is a form of unity that comes about when that particular country is under external threat e.g. military conflicts with other nations. The effect of this bond results in people of different backgrounds setting their differences aside to form a common front in support of the government. A classical example of patriotism was found during the so-called invasion of the Falkland Islands by Argentina. Public opinion in the United Kingdom was mobilised against Argentina through the media machinery, uniting political parties of all shades in the process. The message was simple: “We are fighting for Queen and country.” This unity, based on patriotism, soon evaporated after the Falkland Islands were captured from Argentina.

The inherent weakness of patriotism, as a basis of uniting people, is that it unites people temporarily, and only then if an external threat is looming in the horizon. Hence, patriotism has no role to play during peace time, and it cannot, therefore, be a basis of a permanent unity.

Nationalism is a bond between people that is based upon family, clan or tribal ties. Nationalism arises among people when the predominant thought they carry is that of achieving domination. It starts from the family, where one member asserts his authority to achieve leadership in the affairs of the family. Once this is achieved, the individual extends his leadership to the wider family. In this way, the families would also try to achieve leadership in the community they reside in. The next stage is that of tribes competing with each other, all trying to dominate others in order to enjoy the privileges and the prestige that comes with this authority.

Nationalism cannot unite the people because it is based on quest for leadership. This quest for leadership creates a power struggle between the people and this leads to conflicts among various strata of society. Examples of power struggles can be clearly seen in many Muslim countries, such as in Saudi Arabia where the Saud family has achieved leadership over others by force, and in Sind, Pakistan, where the Bhutto's have secured massive influence through feudalism.

Another drawback of nationalism is that it gives rise to racism. This is expected if people are allowed to compete with each other on the basis of their race. Some whites, for example, may see themselves as superior to the blacks, or vice-versa, leading to polarisation of the races and a divided society.

The Islamic verdict on nationalism is presented at the end of the book.

The spiritual bond is a grouping of people based on their ‘religious belief’ which is not a comprehensive belief covering every aspect of life. An example of a spiritual bond is when people identify with each other on the basis of being a Christian, a Hindu or a Jew.

Spiritual bond does not unite people on issues other than matters of belief and worships, hence it is limited and cannot be the basis of any lasting unity.

Another way people group together is on the basis of some common interest. Pressure groups are an example of such groupings, where people unite over a particular issue which affects their life. Examples of such groups are the Suffragettes from the past and, more recently, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), Anti-Nazi League, Farm Animal Welfare Council and so on. Normally, once the issue has been resolved this type of grouping disappears.

Uniting over common interest does not serve to unite people permanently because when the issue is resolved, people will disperse. Besides, people can hold different opinions over the same issue, thus leading to a clash. For example, some people may support the deployment of nuclear weapons as a means of security whilst others, like members of CND, will call for nuclear disarmament. Hence, common issues do not provide the basis of a permanent unity.

The final way in which people can group together is on the basis of an ideology. An ideology is a creed that provides a set of rules and regulations according to which man lives and which he refers to in order to solve his problems. This is commonly known as an ideological bond. It only takes into account the creed and nothing but the creed. Colour, race and gender are irrelevant. This type of bond is found amongst Muslims, Capitalists and Communists.

Ideological bond is a permanent bond because it arises from a creed, which is an intellectual conviction pertaining to the meaning of life. The creed is never influenced by colour, race, language, love of a land or local issues. Hence, it is the only basis for permanent unity. Islam calls for this type of unity, as it will be seen later in the book.

Nationalism Before The Dawn Of Islam

The Arabian peninsular, during the period leading up to the dawn of Islam, was heavily split on nationalistic lines. People living in a tent or a house formed a family; a group of families made a clan and a group of clans formed a tribe. Each tribe had its own set of rules and regulations according to which people were governed. Honour, pride and loyalty were held in high esteem by these tribes. All activities were confined within the framework of the tribalistic structure and anyone stepping outside these limits was reprimanded. Herding together in this fashion provided security for the individuals belonging to the tribe and also for anyone seeking refuge with them.

Some of the dominant tribes were Quraysh in Makkah, Aus, Khazraj and some Jewish tribes in Yathrib (Madinah) and Thaqif in Ta'if.

The strong loyalties to the tribes often led to inter-tribal rivalries. These rivalries often culminated in physical clashes, which in turn led to tribal wars, fought over trivial issues such as pastures, water, horses and camels. The period of *jahiliyyah* (ignorance) is full of such examples. During the 5th Century, one of the well known wars was *Harb al-Basus*, which started from the wounding of a she-camel named Basus that belonged to an old woman of Banu Bakr. This war lasted for thirty years with reciprocal raids, plundering and killings. *Harb al-Dalis* arose from an unfair conduct in a horse race between the tribe of Abs and Dhabyan in central Arabia. This war lasted for decades. The two tribes of Aus and Khazraj in Yathrib (now called Madinah) were involved in *Harb al-Bu'ath*, and in Makkah the Quraysh and their allies, the Kinanah, fought the Hawazin in the war known as *Harb al-Fujjar*.

Islam Eradicated Nationalism

The nationalistic structure of pagan Arabian society, which existed for centuries, was eradicated by the arrival of Islam. Islam invited people to believe in one god, Allah (swt), and to follow His (swt) commands.

For Allah (swt) says,

“And they have been commanded no more than this: to worship Allah, offering Him sincere devotion, being true (in faith); to establish regular prayer and to practise zakat; and this is the deen right and straight.” [TMQ Surah Baiyanah (98): ayah 5]

It asked for loyalty to the *deen* rather than to the tribes, for Allah (swt) says,

“O you who believe! Take not for protectors your fathers and your brothers if they love kufr above iman: if any of you do so, they do wrong. Say, if it be that your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your friends, your relatives; the wealth that you have gained; the commerce in which you fear decline, or the dwellings which you delight - are dearer to you than Allah or His messenger, or the jihad in His cause - then wait until Allah brings about His decision: and Allah guides not the wrongdoers.” [TMQ Surah Tauba:23-24]

Ties between the Muslims were therefore based upon the *'aqeedah* of Islam. All Muslims were treated exactly the same, irrespective of their family background, and anyone who declared the shahadah *“La ilaha illAllahu Muhammad ar-Rasul Allah”* became part of the Muslim Ummah.

This ideological bond continued to be the basis of the relationships between the Muslims for over a thousand years. Islam brought together the Arabs, the Berbers, the Romans, the Persians and the Indians and united them to form *ummatun wahida*, one people, as described in the Qur'an¹. Islam therefore united people irrespective of their colour, race, status or language. It was this bond, which was based on the *'aqeedah* of Islam, that provided the strength and might to the Islamic State in its campaign to spread the Word of Allah (swt) across the globe. Essentially, it was this bond that the *Kuffar* worked so hard to destroy.

¹ Surah Anbiyaa, verse 92

Attempts By The Kuffar To Destroy The Ideological Bond

Many attempts have been made in the 1300 years of the Islamic rule to quell the might and the power of the Islamic State.

During the time of the Messenger of Allah (saw), the *mushrik* (polytheist) Quraysh tried to militarily defeat the Muslims. This is evident from the many battles that took place such as the battle of Badr in 624, the battle of Uhud in 625 and the battle of Ahzab in 627. Various Jewish tribes who often allied with the Quraysh, made a number of attempts to destroy the unity of the Muslims, but their attempts were also futile.

The once mighty Persian and the Roman Empires also challenged Islam during the time of the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah. Examples of these were the Battle of Mu'tah in 629, Ajnadayn in 634, Yarmuk in 636 and Qadisiyyah in 637. Instead of defeating the Islamic State, the Persians and the Romans themselves were defeated and they became part of the Islamic State. Khalid bin Walid led the conquest of the regions of southern Syria and Iraq in 633, Damascus and northern Syria fell in 635, followed by Egypt and Persia in 639 and 640 respectively. The conquests continued, the regions of Libya were taken in 647, and Cyprus was taken in 649 by sea-warfare under the command of Mu'awiyah. Finally, the conquest of north-west Africa was completed in 670 and Spain and Sind were taken in 711 and 712 respectively.

The Christian states launched a series of crusades from Europe starting in the 11th Century. These expeditionary wars to conquer of the Islamic State followed the call of Pope Urban II at the Council of Clarmont in 1095. Although the Crusaders captured Jerusalem in 1099, and created a Christian kingdom with Godfrey of Boulogne as Prince, it was retaken by the Muslims under the command of Salah ud-Din Ayubi in 1187 in the battle of Hitten, when the Crusaders were finally defeated.

The Mongols started their campaign against the Islamic State in 1218, eventually ransacking Baghdad in 1258, but they too failed, although they killed hundreds of thousands of Muslims in the process. However, within a very short period these invaders accepted Islam and became part of the Islamic State, and took Islam back to the East. This encounter did not drastically effect stance of the Islamic State.

The Russians also came and went but the Islamic State stood majestically on the pillars of *Haq* (truth). The might of the *Kuffar* never dented the Islamic State.

Industrialised Europe tried various forms of military campaigns, but it too failed to achieve its objective of conquering the Islamic State by force, although the major European powers did manage to invade some parts of the Muslim land such as India and Egypt. However, the main body of the State was still left untouched.

It is therefore evident from history, that despite these attempts by the *Kuffar*, the Muslims could not be militarily defeated. This was due to the fact that the Muslims always fought on the basis of Islam. They understood very well the concepts of *ajal* and *rizq* - that is - that life, death and provisions are in the hands of Allah (swt), so they never feared for their lives. Once Khalid bin Walid, who was given the title *Saif-Allah* (the sword of Allah), said to his opponent in one battle, "These people with me love death the way you love life." This was enough to terrify the enemy. Also, the courage shown by the *mujahideen* on the battlefields could never be matched by the non-Muslims. There is a narration that in the Battle of Khandak, one Muslim lost his leg. Seeing that he did not have a sword in his hand, this *mujahid* picked up his leg and struck a *kafir* with it, killing the *kafir* in the process. Attitudes and immense courage, bravery, valor and determination as displayed in these example, truly made the Islamic forces invincible in the enemies' eyes.

The Infiltration Of The Muslim World By The Missionaries

After many attempts to take on the Islamic State, the European powers realised that the Muslims were militarily undefeatable. So they set about looking for other means of weakening and defeating the Muslims. They concluded at the end that the only way to defeat the Muslims was to take their understanding of Islam away from them, and thus cause the Islamic State to collapse from within. The vicious Jewish Prime Minister of Britain, Disraeli, once held a copy of the Qur'an in the House of Commons and said that the Muslims can never be defeated until this is taken from them, pointing to the Qur'an. What he meant was that the understanding of Islam must be taken away from the Muslims in order to defeat them; and this is exactly what they set out to achieve. Sowing the poisonous seeds of nationalism was the start of the new campaign.

Europe set out to achieve its objective of destroying the Islamic State by sending its agents disguised as missionaries involved in the field of science and humanitarian aid. This invasion was designed to allow the political intelligence and the colonial departments to establish their roots in the heart of the Muslim world. The great mistake on the part of the Islamic State was that it allowed these missionaries to operate freely, not realising the consequences that were about to follow.

These missionaries, which consisted of British, French and American agents, had two main objectives.

- i) To distance the Muslims from the correct understanding of Islam, by inserting doubt and conjecture into the minds of the Muslims regarding their '*aqeedah*.
- ii) To create a rift between the Turks, the Persians and the Arabs. This was in the form of the poisonous seed of nationalism.

Establishment Of Missionary Centres

The missionary movement actually started before the Industrial Revolution erupted in Europe in the 18th Century, and it continued until the Islamic State was dismantled in 1924. A huge missionary centre was established in Malta towards the end of the 16th century. This acted as the headquarters from which they conducted their missionary onslaught on the Muslim world, but in 1625 they moved to al-Sham and tried to establish missionary movements there as well. The missionaries did not find much success beyond establishing a couple of schools and publishing few a books on religious matters, finally succumbing to failure in 1773 when their activities were shut down and they returned to Malta.

The real breakthrough for the missionaries was made during the 19th Century when the Islamic State started to introduce various types of reforms, known as *Tanzimat*, mostly aimed at diffusing the increasing pressure from the West. These reforms affected many areas, including land, taxation and the rights of non-Muslims. Although some of them were clearly contradictory to Islam, the Islamic State at that time did actually refer to *ijtihad* and it concluded that these reforms did not contradict the Shari'ah. So one cannot say that they implemented *Kufr* laws because in the minds of the Muslims, these measures did not contradict Shari'ah.

Parts of these reforms included a greater autonomy for the Christian citizens of the Islamic State. The Khulafa' gave countries like Russia and France an almost free hand in dealing with problems relating to Christians, and these countries used this opportunity to infiltrate the Islamic State. This window of opportunity led to a greater vigour in missionary work and paved the way for the establishment of a missionary centre in Beirut in 1820. This centre was to act as the deadly cancer that spread all over the Islamic State, acting as a catalyst in the decline of the 'Uthmani Khilafah.

The missionaries initially faced great difficulties but they persisted with their activities. Their first area of concern was religious preaching and religious culture; their education programme remained limited and weak. They managed to open a college in the village of A'ntoura in Lebanon. The American mission transferred its print shop from Malta to Beirut in order to print and distribute its books, and they penetrated the entire region of al-Sham by 1834.

One notable missionary from this period was the American Eli Smith, who had been working in Malta as a volunteer in charge of the mission press. Eli Smith arrived in Beirut in 1827 but a year later fear and boredom drove him out and he returned to Malta. He next returned to Beirut in 1834 and together with his wife opened a school for girls. His area of work broadened and he devoted his life to working in al-Sham, Beirut in particular.

A further opportunity came for the missionaries when Ibrahim Pasha adopted and implemented a new primary education syllabus in Syria. The roots of this syllabus lied in the Egyptian educational system which in turn was taken from the French libertian system. Ibrahim also enforced regular taxation, opening the way for the non-Muslims to hold posts in the government, and proclaimed the European view of equality of all citizens before the law. The missionaries took advantage of this opportunity and intensified their activities, expanding their printing works in the process. The Jesuits, whose order had been suspended by the Pope in 1773, returned in force, and British and American Protestant missionaries established a firm foothold by establishing the Protestant Church of Syria in 1839. Following on from this the Syrian Protestant

College, now the American University of Beirut, was established in 1866 and Jesuit activity culminated in Universite Saint-Joseph in Beirut in 1874.

Missionaries Create Civil Strife

Once the missionaries had succeeded in establishing their centres in the Islamic State, they began to look for opportunities of agitating the citizens of the Islamic State. One such opportunity presented itself when Ibrahim Pasha retreated from al-Sham. His move created unrest and fear amongst the people and the anarchy that broke out divided them. The foreign delegates, especially the missionaries, seized the opportunity and began igniting civil strife. The missionaries were able to take such a treacherous action because they knew that the 'Uthmani State had little influence in al-Sham at that time. After a period of just one year, in 1841, serious disturbances broke out in the mountains of Lebanon between the Christians and the Druze. The situation deteriorated and under the pressure and influence of the foreign states the 'Uthmani Khilafah was persuaded to design a separate ruling system for Lebanon, dividing the province into two parts; one part would be occupied by the Christians, while the Druze would occupy the other. The 'Uthmani Khilafah appointed a *wali* (governor) over both parts, aiming therefore to avoid any clashes between the two sects. This system did not succeed. Britain and France became involved in the dispute and incited civil strife wherever the official authorities attempted to quell trouble.

These clashes were used as an excuse by the British and the French to interfere in Lebanon's affairs. The French sided with the Maronites and the British sided with the Druze, leading to the renewal of disturbances in 1845. The attacks were extended to include churches and monasteries. Theft, killing and pillage became common practice, prompting the 'Uthmani government to send her foreign affairs inspector to Lebanon in order to use his mandatory powers to quell the trouble once and for all. He, however, could not achieve anything significant, although he managed to reduce the tension a little. Meanwhile, the missionaries intensified their activities and in 1857 the Maronites began calling for revolution and armed struggle. The Maronite clergy incited the farmers against the feudal lords and attacked them fiercely in the North of the country, thus the revolution was ignited and it spread to the South. The Christian farmers now rose against the Druze feudal lords and the British and the French backed their respective allies. Civil strife rapidly spread all over Lebanon as a result of this. The Druze began to kill all Christians indiscriminately, whether they were clergy or ordinary people. This civil strife led to the death of over ten thousand Christians, and many more were either displaced or became homeless.

The civil strife in the area of Lebanon spilled over to rest of al-Sham. In Damascus a fierce campaign of deep hatred was waged between its Muslim and Christian inhabitants which finally led to the Muslims attacking the Christian district in 1860 resulting in them committing a massacre. This was accompanied by pillaging and mass destruction until the State was forced to intervene militarily in order to put an end to the disturbances. Although the State managed to restore calm and order, the Western countries saw it as an opportunity to interfere in al-Sham and so they dispatched their warships to its shores. In August 1860 France sent a division of her territorial army to Beirut which began the task of quashing the revolution.

This was how the 'Uthmani State was infested by civil strife in Syria and Lebanon. Its true cause was the Western states who were trying to meddle in the internal affairs of the 'Uthmani Khilafah. This they did and they managed to force the 'Uthmani State to design a special ruling system for Syria, dividing her into two provinces and giving Lebanon special privileges. From out of these events Lebanon became separated from the rest of al-Sham and it was granted local autonomy, governed by a local

administration headed by a Christian ruler and assisted by an administrative council representing the local residents. Since then, foreign countries have managed the affairs of Lebanon and have made it the centre for their activities. Lebanon therefore became the bridgehead from which the foreign powers infiltrated into the heart of the 'Uthmani State and Muslim land.

Missionaries Sow Seeds Of Nationalism

During the mid-19th Century, the missionaries adopted a policy which they had not employed before. The missionaries were not content themselves with just schools, printing shops and clinics, but went further to establish associations. In 1842, a committee was set up to establish a scientific association under the auspices of the American mission. The committee's work lasted for five years until it had managed to establish an association called the 'Association of Arts and Science'. Its members included Nasif al-Yaziji and Boutros al-Bustani², who were Lebanese Christians taken on board because they were Arabs, Eli Smith and Cornelius van Dick, who were American, and Colonel Churchill, who was English. The objectives of the association at first were vague, it had the tendency to teach science to adults, as well as teaching youngsters at school. The association encouraged adults and youngsters alike to learn Western culture, orientating them according to the missionary plan.

However, despite the huge efforts put in by the association it only managed to recruit fifty active members in the whole of al-Sham in two years. They were all Christians, mainly from Beirut, no Muslim or Druze whatsoever joined the association. Colossal efforts were made to expand and activate the work of the association but to no avail. The association collapsed after five years from its initial establishment without reaping any significant results except for the desire of the missionaries to establish more associations. Therefore, another association was founded in 1880 and it was named the 'Oriental Association'. It was founded by the Jesuits under the guardianship of the French Jesuit Father Henri Debrenier and all its members were Christians. It followed in the footsteps of the 'Association of Arts and Science' lasting only a short time before collapsing as its predecessor had done. Afterwards, several associations sprang up all over the place, but all were doomed to failure and they collapsed as before.

A new association was founded in 1857 which adopted a slightly different method. No foreigners whatsoever were allowed to join and its founders were all Arabs. Somehow it managed to succeed and some Muslims and Druze actually joined, the association accepted them because they were Arabs. Its name was the 'Syrian Scientific Association'. It became successful due to its activities and its Arabic affiliation and also because of the absence of foreigners among its membership. Its members managed to convince other people to join and they gathered support for the association until one hundred and fifty members had enrolled in it. Among its administrative staff were some noted Arab personalities such as Muhammad Arsalan from the Druze and Hussain Bayham from the Muslims. Personalities from all Arab Christian sects joined, the most noted of them being Ibrahim al-Yaziji and Boutros al-Bustani. This association outlasted all the others. Its programme was designed to accommodate all sects and be the spark for Arab nationalism. However, its hidden objective was in fact colonial and missionary dressed in the name of science. It manifested itself in the spreading of Western culture and education.

² Boutros al-Bustani, a Maronite, established one prominent school on Syria called al-Madrassah al-Watiniyyah (the National School). This school was designed to arouse Arab nationalism, and this objective was reflected in a document called *Hubb al-Watan* (Love of the Homeland). Financial support for al-Bustani's work came from Ismail, the nationalist leader who controlled Egypt at that time, and who wanted to expose Egypt culturally to the West. Al-Bustani went on to produce a political, scientific and literary fortnightly, *al-Jinan* (the Gardens) for which he adopted a motto "Patriotism is an article of faith".

In 1875, the 'Secret Association' was formed in Beirut; it was actually based on a political concept. It began encouraging the concept of Arab nationalism. Its founders were five young men from amongst those who had been educated in the Protestant college in Beirut. They were all Christians whom the missionary parties had managed to affect. Following this group's formation of the association, a small number of members were recruited by them. The association seemed to be calling, through its declarations and leaflets, for Arab nationalism and political independence for the Arabs, especially those in Syria and Lebanon. However, its actual work and its real programme was concerned with a different objective entirely. Its aim was to cast strange desires and false hopes into people's hearts. It called for nationalism, Arabs and Arabism and encouraged animosity towards the 'Uthmani State, calling it the Turkish state. It worked towards separating religion from the State and towards making Arab nationalism the basis of life. Despite the fact that the association always championed Arabism, those in charge referred repeatedly in their literature to Turkey accusing her of snatching the Islamic Khilafah from the Arabs, of violating the Islamic Shari'ah and of abusing the *deen*. This clearly demonstrates the true nature of the association and the real objective for which it had been founded, i.e. to cause unrest against the Islamic State, to create suspicion and scepticism about the *deen* and to establish political movements based on non-Islamic principles.

What is in fact a certainty concerning these movements is that they had been initiated by the Western powers. It was they who established them, monitored their progress and managed them. They also wrote reports about their activities. For instance, the British consul in Beirut sent a telegram to his government on 28th July 1880 saying,

"Revolutionary leaflets have come into circulation, Midhat is suspected to be the source, despite this, the situation remains calm. Details in the post."³

This telegram was despatched in the wake of a leaflet distributed on the streets of Beirut and posted on the walls there. The telegram was soon followed by several letters sent by the British consuls in Beirut and Damascus. The letters were accompanied by copies of the leaflets which the association had distributed and should therefore rightly be regarded as reports on the movement set up in the Protestant college which began its activities in al-Sham. The association's activities were more evident in al-Sham, although they took place in other predominantly Arab areas as demonstrated by what the British commissioner in Jeddah wrote to his government in 1882; in a report about the Arab movement he stated,

"However, news has reached me that even in Makkah itself some intellectuals have begun talking about freedom, it seems to me from what I have heard that a plan has been designed aiming at uniting Najd with the land between the two rivers, i.e. the South of Iraq, and appointing Mansur Pasha as ruler, as well as uniting 'Asir and Yemen by appointing 'Ali ibn 'Aabid to rule over them."⁴

Britain was not the only interested party, France also displayed a great deal of interest. In 1882, one of the French officials in Beirut voiced the French concern by saying,

"The spirit of independence is well spread and I noticed during my stay in Beirut the dedication of Muslim youths in establishing schools and clinics and in reviving the country. What is worth mentioning here is that this movement is

³ *The Islamic State* by Taquiddin an- Nabhani, page 185, Al-Khilafah Publications, 1994

⁴ *Ibid*, page 186

free of any sectarian influence, the association welcomes the membership of the Christians and relies on them to participate in the nationalist activities.”⁵

A French national wrote from Baghdad,

“Everywhere I went I was faced with the common feeling, on the same scale, of hatred for the Turks; as for the concept of initiating a collective action to get rid of this much hated situation, this is very much under way. In the horizons a wind of Arab movement is gathering strength and is about to be born. This people who have been oppressed for a long time are about to proclaim their natural status within the Muslim world and direct the destiny of this world.”⁶

Missionary work in the name of religion and science was not merely confined to the focus of the attention of the US, France and Britain, but extended to most of the non-Islamic states, including Czarist Russia who sent missionary expeditions and Prussia (Germany) who sent a group of ‘sisters’ (the nuns of Carodt) to participate with other missions. In spite of the difference of opinion among the various missions and Western delegates regarding their political programmes, which took into consideration their international interests, the objective was the same; the preaching of Christianity and the spreading of Western culture in the East coupled with the arousal of the suspicions of the Muslims towards their *deen*, pushing them to resent it and to regard their history with contempt whilst leading them to praise the West and its way of life. The missionaries carried out their preaching according to their great hatred of Islam and the Muslims. They despised the Islamic culture and its way of life and they regarded the Muslims as backward barbarians, which still remains the ill-considered opinion of nearly every European. The results that they achieved are reflected today in the concentration of disbelief and colonialism in our lands.

⁵ Ibid, page 186

⁶ Ibid, page 186

The Impact Of The Missionary Movement

The missionary movement had a devastating impact on the Muslim world. What the *Kuffar* could not achieve in a thousand years by the use of force, the missionaries achieved within a century.

The organic growth of the missionary movement and its open and effective participation in the educational movement resulted from the attempted reforms by the Islamic State in the 19th Century. The establishment of schools, colleges and universities enabled the missionaries to infuse the *Kufr* culture with the culture of Islam. The concept of offensive jihad was attacked, the Western principle of equality of all citizens before the law was preached, and doubts raised about the suitability of Shari'ah in the age of technology. Tolerance of religions was taught, even if the proponents of these religions contravened the limits of the Shari'ah. History taught from a certain angle was used to inject pride amongst the various Muslims and last, but not least, the idea of nation states was proposed as the only means of revival and progress for the Muslims.

The missionaries had a lasting impact on the minds of the Muslims and they succeeded in creating animosity between the citizens of the Islamic State in the name of religious freedom and managed to initiate among the Muslims, Christians and Druze various kinds of religious activities related to the *'aqeedah*.

The mistake of the Islamic State in allowing these missionaries to operate in the first place, and its inability to counteract the attacks on Islam subsequently, meant that the likes of Mustapha Kamal and Rifa'a Badawi Rafi al-Tahtawi⁷ were attracted by Western ideals and they became subservient, consciously or unconsciously, to Western concepts. Most of these people were actually educated by, or had some other contact, with European countries, and it was this exposure that mesmerised them. They dreamt of revival of the Muslims based on the Western thought of separating *deen* from the state, not realising that it was not the *deen* that was at fault but the correct understanding of Islam, and the method of its application was the failing point.

The rise of such people, some of whom were actually on Western payrolls, enabled the West to launch the final phase of their conspiracy - that of the political invasion of the Muslim world. This was done by the encouragement and support of various nationalistic ideas, which were later solidified by the establishment of Arab and Turkish political parties such as the Turkiyyah al-Fatat Party, the Union and Progress Party (also known as 'Young Turks'), the Arab Independence Party and Covenant (al-'Ahd) Party. Revolts against the 'Uthmani Khilafah were organised and financed by the West through these nationalistic political groups and some key individuals. One such individual was Sharif Hussain⁸ of Makkah, who was paid £200,000 a month by the British Foreign Office to campaign for an independent Arab state, which was promised to him through McMohan, the British High Commissioner of Egypt, in 1916,

“The two districts of Mersina and Alexandretta [both now in Turkey] and portions of Syria lying to the west of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo, cannot be said to be purely Arab, and should be excluded from the limits demanded...As for the regions lying within those frontiers where Great Britain is

⁷Rifa'a Badawi Rafi al-Tahtawi (died in 1873) called for *Wataniyya* and secularism. *Watan* here referred to the geographical area and not the Muslim Ummah. The source of his call being freedom, and its centre Egypt.

⁸ Sharif Hussain was the governor of Hijaz during the time of the ' Uthmani Khilafah.

free to act without detriment to the interest of her ally France...Great Britain is prepared to recognise and support the independence of the Arabs.”⁹

This is how the deadly seed of nationalism was implanted in the Islamic State. By the turn of the 20th Century the fever of nationalism had spread to all corners of the Islamic State, shaking the State violently as never before.

The final and the most brutal assault on the Islamic State was launched in the wake of the 1st World War by the Europeans when they despatched their forces to conquer the once invincible state. The Islamic State, after centuries of decay, just crumbled without any resistance. When General Allenby entered al-Quds (Jerusalem) in 1917, he said,

“Only today the Crusades have ended.”¹⁰

The dream of every European then became a reality.

⁹ *The Middle East - The Arab World and its Neighbours* by Peter Sluglett and Marion Farouk-Sluglett, page 12, Times Books, 1993.

¹⁰ *The Islamic State* by Taquiddin an-Nabhani, page 189, Al-Khilafah Publications, 1994

Nationalism Since The Dismantlement Of The Khilafah State In 1924

The end of Islamic rule in 1924 created many artificial Muslim states that used nationalism as the basis for their existence. However, these states were far from the 'independence' that their creators fought for against the 'Uthmani Khilafah. Indeed, the promises of independence by the West were outright lies and in reality, it was a vicious trap that the Muslim fell in. The real intent of the West was to colonise the Muslim world culturally, but when the Islamic State came within the reach of their claws, they settled for nothing less than the physical invasion of Muslim Land. This they enshrined in Article 22 of the League of Nations after the 1st World War,

“Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of their development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognised subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a mandatory, until such time as they are able to stand alone.”¹¹

Naturally, the 'administrative advice' had to be taken by the newly formed nationalistic states, which according to Britain and France meant nothing short of invasion. Britain took over Iraq, Palestine and Transjordan, while France took Syria and Lebanon. All that was left of Sharif Hussain's 'independent Arab state', known as the Kingdom of Hijaz, was absorbed into what is now Saudi Arabia in 1925.

It can be seen, therefore, that despite the creation of many nationalistic states in the Muslim world, Muslims still lag behind rest of world. Although Muslim countries are no loner colonies of the West, the stagnation that we have suffered is so severe that we have literally become economic slaves to the West, which is far worse. Attempts have been made since then to revive the Muslims but none of them have succeeded. Nationalism has left a trail of failure in the Muslim world. Some examples of failed attempts to revive the Muslims based on nationalism are presented below.

Egypt

Gamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt is a classical example of such failure. Nasser came to power in 1954 and began to propagate his vision for Egypt. In his book *The Philosophy of Revolution* he outlines the three main roles of Egypt as the leader of the Arab world, the Muslim world and of the black African nations struggling for independence. Nasser's hope of uniting the Arabs primarily hinged around Arab nationalism. He imagined that the Arabs would unite simply because they had a common language, dress and history. However, Nasser did manage to arouse Arab nationalism to the extent never seen before. The nationalisation of the Suez Canal in 1956 and the merger between Egypt and Syria in 1958 to create the United Arab Republic, bringing together two of the most strategic countries in the Middle East, further boosted his call of 'Arabism'.

The call for 'Arabism', however, was also accompanied by reckless socialist economic policies that crippled the country. Also, as the Ummah learnt later, Nasser was nothing more than a pawn in the struggle between Britain and America in the Middle East. Although Nasser was seen to be publicly backed by the former Soviet Union, in reality he was an agent of America¹².

¹¹ Ibid, page 10.

¹² Miles Copeland, in his book *The Game Player*, recalls that Nasser's involvement with the CIA began before coup d'état that ousted King Farook from power in July 1952. Subsequently, CIA assisted in the establishment of Mukhabarat (intelligence service), advised on the re-organisation of Interior Ministry and provided protection for Nasser against assassinations.

The breakup of the United Arab Republic in 1961, and the triumph of Israel in the 1967 war, when it captured Sinai from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria and the West Bank from Jordan, put an end to Nasser's 'Arabism'. This great nationalistic experiment had failed and to this day the Arab world is still divided into many states.

Turkey

Turkey, being the seat of the 'Uthmani Khilafah, is one of the countries that was deeply affected by nationalism. The vision of Mustapha Kamal to forge a nation based on nationalism did materialise but it failed to progress in any substantial way. Neither the nationalistic policies of Kamal's Republican People's Party in the past, nor those of the secular Motherland Party or the Socialist Democratic Populist Party now, are ever going to return Turkey to its former glory. Instead, Turkey is gradually slipping towards civil strife as Kurdish nationalism takes root.

Kamal's attempted revival based on Turkish nationalism has left Turkey in the cold. The area which was once honoured as the capital of the leading state of the world, the Islamic State, has now become the diseased state, left for nowhere; it is not accepted by the Europeans nor by the Middle East. Nationalism has brought nothing but humiliation for Turkey, yet despite this, the Turkish government still persists with Turkish nationalism.

Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States

Saudi Arabia and the various states in the Gulf reflect a classical case of nationalism that was nurtured by the West, especially Britain. The powerful tribes were mobilised from these areas against the 'Uthmani Khilafah through financial deals and promises of independent states.

The British first used Sharif Hussain and his sons Faisal and 'Adbullah to revolt against the Khilafah. These revolts were instigated through the assistance of the famous British agent T. E. Lawrence¹³, who was trying to harass the Islamic State's forces and disrupt their communications on the right flank of General Allenby's army advancing from Egypt during 1917. However, when Sharif later fell out of favour with the British, they replaced him with 'Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud, who was also being financed by the British in his struggle to gain control.

By the end of 1927, the Saud family had managed to secure control of most of the Arabian peninsular, and in the same year, a treaty was signed with the British who gave the family complete authority in return for the Saud's recognition of British suzerainty over the Gulf Sheikdoms of Qatar, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates and Oman. In 1932, Arabian peninsular was named Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Since then the Saud family has kept a very tight control of the area, establishing the authority on a tribalistic structure. The entire government is run by the members of the Saud family, which is currently in excess of five thousand.

As for Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates and Oman, Britain had installed its agents as rulers even before the demise of the Islamic State in 1924. Al-Said family signed treaties with Britain in 1891, al-Sabah of Kuwait signed in 1899, al-Thani family followed suit in 1915 and various local rulers of United Arab Emirates also followed the same pattern.

The installation of these families as rulers by the British returned the Arabian peninsular to the pre-Islamic days when various tribes were ruling the region. This form of governmental structure has not revived the Muslims of this region. Indeed, dividing

¹³ T.E. Lawrence is portrayed as a hero in the film Lawrence of Arabia, where he is seen as an ordinary man caught up in the conflict between the Arabs and the 'Turks'. In reality, Lawrence was a British agent whose task was to organise revolts against the Islamic State.

the area on nationalistic lines has obliterated any hope of progress because the rulers are all too busy trying to secure their positions. Despite the fact that the Arabian peninsula has income from oil that far exceeds even the Western countries has not resulted in any form of progress. Except the oil, there is no industry or any plans to establish one. The money that oil has brought since the 1940's has been siphoned off to the Swiss banks accounts and Investment Houses of the Western nations. Nationalism has not elevated these states, rather, it has subjected them to the control of the *Kuffar* more than ever before.

Iran

The rise of Iranian nationalism can be traced back to the 19th Century during the infiltration of the missionary movement in the Islamic State. Since then Iran also had its share of foreign intervention, occupations and collaborations. However, the key period that need to be highlighted is the period since the eruption of the so-called 'Islamic Revolution' in 1979, which transformed the entire shape of the society.

The 'Islamic Revolution' eradicated the Iranian monarchy of the Shah and replace it with what is claimed to an Islamic system. Close examination of Iran shows that it is still very far from the system that Islam calls for. Although *jilbab* and *khimar* are common, as well as the beards and the sound of adhan, the laws that are applied still reflect non-Islam. Also, the constitution of Iran stipulates that the head of the state can only be an Iranian. This clearly contradicts Islam because tribe, race or colour are not conditions for the post of the head of the state. So the revolution in Iran has not uprooted nationalism, instead, it has further strengthen it.

Pakistan

Pakistan was created in 1947 be to an entity for the Muslims in the Indian sub-continent. Although the vision given to the masses was that Pakistan would be an Islamic State, in reality, Pakistan was carved-up as a secular nationalistic state. On August 11, 1947, Pakistan's constituent assembly met in Karachi for the first time and Mohammed Ali Jinnah, who was elected to preside over the meeting, said,

"I think we should keep in front of us our ideals and you will find that in the course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims will cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State..."¹⁴

When a Muslim ceases to be a Muslims in the political sense, it means that Islam will not play any part in running the state, but he keeps his rituals of worships, he becomes a secular person since secularism is to divorce the *deen* from the state. So Jinnah's vision of Pakistan was that of a secular nation. Furthermore, the Muslims were encouraged to rally behind a nationalistic slogan, 'Pakistan Zindabad' (Long live Pakistan), which is heard even to this day in Pakistan and outside.

The creation of Pakistan was meant to unify and revive the Muslims. However, this experiment was flawed right from the start as differences emerged between East and West Pakistan. Despite the fact that more than half of the Muslims in united Pakistan spoke Bengali, the ruling elites in West Pakistan adopted Urdu as the state language, Urdu being the language spoken in West Pakistan. Added to this was the fact that Bengali people were seen as an inferior race, and responsibility of governance was thus exclusively in the hands of West Pakistan. Most of the industrial development was also carried out in the Western wing and the Bengali people became very alienated.

¹⁴ *Speeches of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah as Governor-General of Pakistan*, Sind Observer Press, Karachi, 1948.

These factors, and the campaign by India to destroy the unity of the Muslims, led to a power struggle between East and West Pakistan. At its zenith, this power struggle became the struggle of two races, namely, the 'Pakistanis' and the 'Bengalis'. Nationalism reached climax in 1971 when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto refused to relinquish power after Mujibur Rahman, from East Pakistan, won the General Elections with a slim majority. Mujibur Rahman went on to create a Bengali state called Bangladesh, thus completing the destruction of united Pakistan.

Carving-up united Pakistan on nationalistic lines did not solve any problems for the Muslims. Disunity has made the Muslims weak militarily and economically, especially Bangladesh which continues to suffer from wide-spread crippling poverty and corruption even to this day.

In summary, we can conclude that nationalism has never worked for the Muslims. It did not provide unity, progress nor harmony but created disunity, instability and dependence on foreign nations and organisations like the UN and the IMF.

The Prohibition Of Nationalism In Islam

Nationalism is a concept alien to Islam because it calls for unity based on family and tribalistic ties, whereas Islam binds people together on the *'aqeedah*, that is, belief in Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw). In other words, Islam calls for the ideological bond.

Grouping together on tribalistic lines is clearly forbidden. It is narrated by Abu Dawud that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, **“He is not one of us who calls for *'asabiyyah*, (nationalism) or who fights for *'asabiyyah* or who dies for *'asabiyyah*.”** And in another hadith, the Messenger of Allah (saw) describes the one who calls for nationalism as being like the worm that crawls in the bottom of the dung, and in the hadith recorded in Mishkat al-Masabih, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said **“He who calls for *'asabiyyah* is as if he bit his father’s genitals”**

There are many examples in the seerah where the Messenger of Allah (saw) had rebuked those who upheld nationalism. On one occasion a party of Jews conspired to bring about disunity in the ranks of the Muslims after seeing the Aus and Khazraj within Islam. A youth from amongst them was sent to incite remembrance of the battle of Bu'ath where the Aus had been victorious over the Khazraj, and he recited poetry to bring about division between them. As a result there was a call to arms. When the news reached the Messenger of Allah (saw), he (saw) said, **“O Muslims, remember Allah, remember Allah. Will you act as pagans while I am present with you after Allah has guided you to Islam, and honoured you thereby and made a clean break with paganism; delivered you thereby from disbelief; made you friends thereby?”** When they heard this they wept, and embraced each other. This incident clearly highlights how the messenger of Allah (saw) rebuked any forms of tribalism. Allah (swt) then revealed,

“O you who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared and die not except in a state of Islam. And hold fast together all of you to the rope of Allah, and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allah’s favours on you; for you were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace you became brothers; and you were on the brink of the pit of fire, and He saved you from it. Thus Allah make His signs clear to you that you may be guided.” [TMQ 3:102-103]

It is transmitted by at-Tabarani and al-Hakim that in one incident some people spoke very lowly about Salman al-Farsi. They spoke of the inferiority of the Persian in relation to the Arabs, and upon hearing this the Messenger of Allah (saw) declared, “Salman belongs to *ahl al-bayt* (the Prophet’s family).” This statement of the Messenger of Allah (saw) disassociates all links based on lineage and tribal considerations.

It is also transmitted, in two different versions, by Ibn al-Mubarak in his two books, *Al-Birr* and *As-Salah*, that some disagreement occurred between Abu Dharr and Bilal and Abu Dharr said to Bilal, “You son of a black woman.” The Messenger of Allah (saw) was extremely upset by Abu Dharr’s comment, so he (saw) rebuked him by saying, “That is too much, Abu Dharr. He who has a white mother has no advantage which makes him better than the son of a black mother.” This rebuke had a profound effect on Abu Dharr, who then put his head on the ground swearing that he would not raise it until Bilal had put his foot over it.

The incidents above demonstrate that tribal ties have no place in Islam. Muslims are commanded to stick together and not to disassociate themselves from each other just because they come from different tribes. The Messenger of Allah (saw) also said,

“The Muslims are like a body, if one part of the body hurts, the rest of the body will also suffer” meaning that the Muslims, whether they are of Chinese, African, European or Asian origin, are one Ummah and they cannot be separated from each other. No tribalistic ties should ever break their unity.

Some people claim that the Messenger of Allah (saw) approved of nationalism because during the migration to Madinah, he (saw) said about Makkah with tears in his (saw) eyes, **“You are the most beloved land of Allah to me.”** However, this saying has nothing to do with nationalism, and this can be seen from the full saying which people often do not quote, **“You are the most beloved land of Allah to me because you are the most beloved land of Allah to Allah.”** The Messenger of Allah’s (saw) love for Makkah was based on the noble status that Allah (swt) has given to Makkah, and not because he (saw) was born there. All Muslims should have this love and affection for Makkah because it is the most beloved land in the sight of Allah (swt). After all, the Muslims pray towards Makkah and go there to perform hajj there as it houses the Ka’ba. The above saying of the Messenger of Allah (saw) therefore has nothing to do with nationalism.

Not only does Islam forbid people from grouping on nationalistic ties, but it also prohibits the establishment of more than one state, whether these states are based on nationalism or otherwise. The only state that is allowed for the Muslims is the Islamic State, which is a state that is governed exclusively by Islam. Allah (swt) addressed the Messenger (saw),

“And rule between them by that which Allah revealed to you, and do not follow their vain desires away from the truth which came to you” [TMQ 5:48]

and,

“And rule between them by that which Allah revealed to you and do not follow their whims, and beware (be on the alert) that they may deviate you away from even some part of what Allah revealed to you.” [TMQ 5:49]

The speech of Allah (swt) to the Messenger (saw) is a speech to his (saw) Ummah unless specific evidence comes to restrict this. In this case, there is no such restriction, and so it becomes obligatory for the Muslims to rule according to Islam. And ruling according to Islam leaves no room for nationalistic constitutions whatsoever because what is applied, and what forms the criteria for judgement, is the Book of Allah (swt) and the Sunnah of the Messenger (saw).

Ruling according to Islam can only be achieved in one state, with one Khaleefah. It is reported in Sahih Muslim that ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘As narrated that he heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, **“He who gave the bay‘ah to an Imam, giving him the clasp of his hand and the fruit of his heart has to obey him as long as he can. If another comes to dispute with him (his authority) strike the neck of that person.”** Abu Saïd al-Khudri narrated that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, **“If a bay‘ah is taken for two Khaleefahs, kill the latter one.”** And ‘Arafaja said that he heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, **“If someone comes to you when you are united over one man and wants to break your strength and divide your unity, kill him.”**

This unity of the Muslims was clearly highlighted in the document that the Messenger of Allah (saw) wrote when he established the Islamic State in Madinah. In this document, which was to regulate the relationships of Muslims and non-Muslims in the Islamic State, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said regarding the Muslims, “Allah’s covenant amongst them is one” and “Believers are brothers to the exclusion of others” and “The peace of the believers is indivisible. No separate peace shall be made when

believers are fighting in the way of Allah.” These statements serve to indicate that Muslims are one body and they are not to be treated separately.

Furthermore, the obligation for having one state, and not many nationalistic states, also comes from the Ijma’ of the Sahabah. When the Messenger of Allah (saw) died, the Sahabah convened to discuss the appointment of the Khaleefah in the courtyard of Bani Sa’ida. One person had proposed that the Ansar should elect their own amir and the Muhajireen their own, but Abu Bakr narrated the hadith that forbids the Ummah from having more than one leader. So the Sahabah never allowed more than one ruler and their consensus is a legitimate evidence for us.

Islam therefore leaves no room for the Saudi state, an Egyptian state, or a Pakistani state. Islam calls for one state with one ruler where all Muslims are tied together by the ‘aqeedah of Islam. And this is a matter decided by Islam to which we must submit to, for Allah (swt) says,

“It is not for a believer (male or female) that when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter that they should have any choice in the matter.” [TMQ 33:36]

And those who still uphold nationalism, remember what Allah (swt) says,

“Those who oppose Allah’s order have to be warned that a calamity may strike them or a painful doom may fall upon them.” [TMQ 24:63]