بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Dual Loyalty: Where Must a Muslim's Allegiance Lie?

News:

US: Abdul El-Sayed disavows Muslim Brotherhood and criticizes implications that he has 'dual loyalty'. (Source)

Comment:

At a town hall in Caro, Michigan, Democratic Senate nominee Abdul El-Sayed was pressed by an attendee to disavow the Muslim Brotherhood. He did so, then turned the question back on his questioner, arguing that it assumed his faith gave him an allegiance to "something that is not our Constitution." He went further: "For me, that Constitution is the guiding light."

The exchange came amid sustained attacks from his Republican opponent, Mike Rogers, and from President Donald Trump, both of whom have tried to tie him to the Muslim Brotherhood. El-Sayed has called those attacks religious prejudice. Much of the commentary since has stayed on that partisan surface. But for Muslims, the more important question is where does a Muslim's ultimate allegiance lie, and what does Islam require of us in political life?

What allegiance to a constitution means:

A constitution is not a slogan or a symbol of belonging. It is the framework that decides who holds the authority to legislate, who determines what is lawful and unlawful, and who sets the rules that govern people's lives. Allah (swt) answers this clearly: ﴿إِنِ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ﴾ **"Legislation is not but for Allah."** [TMQ Yusuf: 40].

Allah is not only the One we turn to for comfort or worship in Salah. He is our Creator, our Lord, and the One whose guidance governs the whole of our existence. In the Islamic understanding of sovereignty, the right to set the ultimate standard of law belongs to Him.

Secular democracy begins from a different foundation. Legislative authority is exercised through human institutions, under a constitutional framework that people write and people amend. These are two distinct answers to the question of where the authority to govern comes from, and that is why the issue reaches far beyond whether any individual politician is personally devout.

Tawheed and the meaning of loyalty:

For Muslims, this conversation cannot be framed as Republicans versus Democrats. It must be viewed through the lens of Tawheed: the exclusive worship of Allah (swt) and the recognition of His ultimate authority.

The concept of Al-Wala' wal-Bara' (loyalty and disavowal) gives the phrase "dual loyalty" a very different meaning. In the media debate, it is an accusation of divided national allegiance. In Islamic terms, the real concern is placing human authority alongside Allah (swt) as an equal source of legislation. That is not a political technicality; it touches the heart of one's Aqeedah.

Seen this way, the significance of the Caro exchange is not that a Muslim rejected accusations of dual loyalty. It is that the answer offered was to name a man-made

constitution as the guiding light, the final reference point, with no place left for the sovereignty of revealed law.

Not a faith we "happen" to hold:

In defending himself, El-Sayed compared his situation to that of John F. Kennedy, a candidate who happened to be Catholic. The comparison is meant to reassure that Iman (faith) a private attribute that does not touch public office i.e. secularism in practice.

Muslims should pause on that framing. Since when did Islam become something we simply happen to be? Our Deen is meant to shape how we see the world, how we understand justice, how we treat people, and how we approach political authority. Allah (swt) says: ﴿قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾ **"Say, surely my prayer, my sacrifice, my life, and my death are all for Allah, Lord of all worlds."** [TMQ Al-An'am:162].

Our lives, not only our prayers:

Islam does not present divine guidance as something to be set aside on entering public office. It addresses judgment and governance directly. Yet today many of us have grown used to an arrangement in which religious commitment is treated as personal, while the authority to legislate rests with secular institutions. That separation is precisely what Islam's comprehensive understanding of Deen challenges. Several Muslim candidates pander to the Muslim vote while openly contradicting Islamic principles and values. One must ask how such representation within governance truly benefits the Muslims while going against the legislation of Allah (swt).

Beyond the electoral cycle:

For the Ummah, political activism must therefore be rooted in Islam and guided by its laws. Our allegiance to Allah (swt) must remain the sole source of our political vision, and Tawheed demands that we recognize Him as Creator and Lawgiver, submitting to His guidance in all our affairs.

That means looking past election seasons and individual personalities, and focusing instead on the ideas that political systems represent. Faces change, parties alternate, and rhetoric shifts, but the underlying challenge remains: Muslim lands divided and occupied, their resources exploited, the Shariah set aside, and the Khilafah absent. Changes in leadership within the existing order will not resolve that, and our activism cannot depend on those who uphold it. We have been called to offer an alternative.

We cannot afford shifting or divided loyalty. Our loyalty belongs to Islam, and our aim must be to see it prevail. As Allah (swt) says: ﴿هُوَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَرۡسَلَ رَسُولَهُۥ بِٱلۡهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ ٱلۡحَقِّ لِيُظۡهِرَهُۥ عَلَى ٱلدِّينِ كُلِّهِۦ ۚ وَكَفَىٰ بِٱللَّهِ شَهِيدًا﴾ **"It is He who sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth that He may make it prevail over all other religions. And sufficient is Allah as a Witness."** [TMQ Al-Fath: 28].

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