



The Muslim was Never Meant to Blend into Falsehood but Rather Stand Distinct with the Deen of Haqq

Recently and for the first time, my daughter's girl school ran 'Pride Week' to celebrate and support the LGBT cause and promote it amongst the students. Each day, they organised various activities from a 'Cake Bake Sale' to raise money for charities supporting the cause, to airing a film glamourising the concept, and an assembly where some girls – some as young as 12 or 13 described their experiences of 'coming-out'. All this was clearly a move to further normalise the concept of homosexuality amongst the future generation, within a society where liberalism has become more and more muscular and aggressive by the day. It's a society where those who hold resolute to their religious beliefs are viewed as 'abnormal' and treated more and more as social outcasts, marginalized and vilified for their values, and made to feel like strangers in countries where many have lived their whole life.

On the last day of the week, the school encouraged the pupils to come dressed in multi-coloured clothing to represent the rainbow colours of the LGBT flag rather than their school uniform and to donate £1 for the so-called 'privilege' to do this which would go to a LGBT charity; all to show their support for the cause. Out of all the activities, this particular one posed the greatest dilemma for the Muslim parents at the school, for they had to decide if they should send their daughter in that day dressed in clothes that would represent support of the concept of homosexuality (an act which Islam clearly prohibits), OR should they send them in normal school uniform where they would no doubt stand out from the crowd and perhaps be labelled as homophobic and even viewed as potential 'PREVENT' material, entering the radar of the government's counterextremism strategy being implemented in schools. Some argued that they shouldn't send their daughters into school in uniform as this would make them uncomfortable to be dressed differently from everyone else, or they would be viewed as intolerant to diversity, or interrogated about their beliefs in an environment where their children were already self-conscious about being different due to their Islamic dress, or scared about expressing their Islamic ideas due to the fear of being labelled 'extreme' or even just 'strange'. Hence, they were fearful about the repercussions upon their children and their schooling.

There is no doubt that, as Muslims in the West, we and our children face huge pressures in holding on to our Deen today. Attacks on our Islamic beliefs are coming at us constantly from all directions, thick and fast. Sometimes they are obvious while at other times they take on a subtler form of emotional manipulation to make us loosen our grip on our faith and compromise our Islamic ideals. We are being made to feel embarrassed or even ashamed of our beliefs whether they are regarding homosexuality, the Islamic dress, gender segregation, the Islamic marital rights and responsibilities, the hudood, the concept of Islamic governance and ruling by the Shariah under the Khilafah, or supporting our Ummah across the world and calling for their liberation from occupation or Western colonial interference or wars. We are being made to feel that we are divisive, trouble-makers, regressive, extreme and a threat to others if we hold onto or express these Islamic concepts.

And it's our children who often face the brunt of this relentless secular liberal onslaught against our Islamic values and ideals in their schools, amongst their peers, in mainstream and social media and in the general society that they live. Indeed, the pressure they face in holding on to their Deen and to be silent about their beliefs is at a scale which we, as their parents, have never experienced as children growing up in the West. And the intensity of this challenge should never be underestimated.

In this atmosphere where fear is being stoked all around us as Muslims and where we are already demonized and marginalized by those who hold contempt towards Islam, or viewed with suspicion and hatred by those who are ignorant about our beliefs; the temptation is all too often to simply blend into our environments, to keep our heads down and to not be seen to be different in order to avoid bringing 'unnecessary' attention to ourselves. Our desire for the 'easy-life', or to avoid being bothered by the Islamophobes, or to escape the tentacles of government counterextremism measures can cause us to be fearful of standing out as distinct with our

Islamic values. And our yearning for acceptance or approval by the society in which we live and those we interact with, and to not be viewed as 'strange' or discriminated against in our rights or deprived of our interests can lead us to compromising our Islamic principles and be silent about our beliefs.

We feel the pressure to try and prove to those around us, to the media and to the society, that we're just as British, American, Australian, European as the next person – that we're just like everyone else – with a few insignificant differences, i.e. that we pray and fast, keep away from pork and alcohol, eat halal meat, and as women wear a hijab on our heads. We ignore the fact however, that the secular basis of these western nations to which we attach our identity and their liberal values make man and his desires sovereign in life and society – the absolute antithesis of Islam's belief that sovereignty belongs to Allah (swt) and His Laws alone. Allah (swt) says,

﴿أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ وَأَضَلَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ وَخَتَمَ عَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَجَعَلَ عَلَىٰ بَصَرِهِ غِشَاوَةً فَمَنْ يَهْدِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ﴾

“Have you seen him who takes his own lust (vain desires) as his ilah (god), and Allah leaves him in error knowingly, and seals his hearing and his heart and puts a covering on his sight? Who can then guide him after Allah (has condemned him)? Will you not take heed?” [Al-Jathiya: 23]

Some of us may take a step further by trying to mould or rather deform our Islamic beliefs into a version that is more acceptable to western secular liberal tastes so that our Deen is seen to be in-line with secular values. So, we try to argue that Islam's promotion of tolerance to those of different faiths also makes us tolerant of homosexuality even though Islam unequivocally defines it as a sin. Or we try and justify our right to wear the Islamic dress from the liberal premise of freedom of choice, which leads us to also accepting the right of individuals to dress in any way they wish due to freedom of choice, even if it exposes their bodies in the most provocative way; hence, disregarding Islam's clear rejection of immodesty or lewdness in dress, speech, or action. However, Allah (swt) says,

﴿وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ﴾

“And whoever seeks a Deen other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him, and he will be a loser in the Hereafter.” [Al-Imran: 85]

In all of this, we seem to have forgotten the true nature of Islam, AND our true mission in life as Muslims.

The nature of Islam, the Deen of Haqq (Truth), is that it did not come to 'blend' or 'mould' into the false ideas of societies but rather to challenge the corrupt ideas and change the wrong thoughts of the people to what is best for humanity based upon the ideals, values and laws set by the One who alone has the infinite knowledge of how to organise the affairs of mankind in the most just and harmonious way. Furthermore, Islam's beliefs and laws stand in stark contrast to that of secularism, liberalism, and all other non-Islamic ideologies and systems. For example, Islam states that the Believer should live in submission to Allah (swt) and His Commands, while man-made ways of life advocate that man should live in submission to his desires and what they dictate. Islam states that the Believer should refer every action and matter – individual and societal - to God for judgement to decide if it is right or wrong, while secularism rejects this, arguing that it is the right of men and parliaments to legislate the laws of a society. Islam states that happiness and true success is gained by seeking the Pleasure of our Rabb (swt), while capitalism believes that these are acquired by securing the pleasures and benefits of this life. And Islam prohibits any form of extramarital intimacy and strictly regulates the interaction of men and women, while liberalism encourages and celebrates such relationships.

Due to this stark difference between the Deen of Haqq and all other ways of life, Islam will often be viewed as strange or abnormal in environments where injustice and falsehood dominates. This is inevitable and to try and hide this distinct nature of Islam is to fail to appreciate the purpose for why it was revealed; to take mankind from the oppression of man-made ways of life to the justice of the Laws of the Creator (swt). Sahl b. Sa'd as-Saa'idi (ra) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said,

«إِنَّ الدِّينَ بَدَأَ غَرِيبًا وَيَرْجِعُ غَرِيبًا فَطُوبَى لِلْغُرَبَاءِ الَّذِينَ يُصْلِحُونَ مَا أَفْسَدَ النَّاسُ مِنْ بَعْدِي مِنْ سُنَّتِي»

“Islam began as something strange, and it shall return to being something strange, so give glad tidings to the strangers.” It was asked, “Who are those strangers, O Messenger of Allah?” He replied, “Those that correct the sunnah when the people become corrupt.”

Indeed, Islam is like the bright star in the darkest of nights that leads a lost traveller to his correct destination. Therefore, to try and hide its distinction to all other ways of life amounts to hiding the light of its truth. Indeed, the strength of Islam lies in preserving and showing to mankind the uniqueness of its ideas and its distinct manner of organising societies to prevent problems, hardships, and oppression. It is therefore presenting its beliefs and laws in an undiluted, uncompromised and honest fashion and explaining clearly how when they are implemented in their entirety they can practically solve the multitude of issues facing the world today that will lead the thinking person to the truth of this Deen. Allah (swt) says,

﴿وَلَا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

“And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know what it is.” [Al-Baqara: 42]

The Muslim, who embraces this Deen of Haqq which was revealed to enlighten this world with truth and justice, should also understand his or her mission in life. It is not to simply blend in with environments which are submerged in falsehood and corruption; or to ‘fit-in’ with the crowd, while the crowd is following a path that leads to destruction and misery in this life and the next; or to keep our heads down so that we can fulfil our individual interests and enjoy an easy-life free from the tests and difficulties that inevitably come with holding onto the truth and standing for what’s right. NO! The mission of the life of a Believer is the same mission embraced by our beloved Prophet (saw): to submit to all the Commands of our Rabb (swt) and to carry the light of His Deen to those around us and to the whole of humanity.

However, if we embrace this mission as we are obliged to by our Rabb (swt), we should know that we will inevitably face various tests, difficulties and challenges to our interests, and be seen as ‘strange’ by many just as the Messenger (saw) and the sahaba were when they rejected idol worship, the burying of daughters, the lewd practices, the cheating in the market place, the oppressive treatment of orphans, women and slaves, and the superiority of the tribal bond over that of Islam which were the corrupt norms of the Quraysh and Makkan society. However, they stood tall and distinct with their Islamic beliefs, remaining firm to their convictions and never compromising, diluting or concealing the truth, regardless of being mocked, ridiculed, slandered and physically harmed for their beliefs.

So, as Muslims living in the West today, we also need the courage of our convictions to stand confident and distinct with our Islamic beliefs, and to also instil this concept in our children. We need to build the Deen within them in a manner where they are proud of their Islamic values and laws and what they bring to this world – not with a sense of arrogance but rather with a great sense of responsibility to lift mankind from oppression and darkness with the light of their Deen. We need to remind ourselves that the only acceptance and approval that we should seek is that of the one who created us and in whose Hands our destiny lies. And we should not fear being viewed as ‘strange’ due to our beliefs because Allah conveys His Glad Tidings to the strangers, and because the importance of our mission as Muslims requires us to look beyond superficial labels. Allah (swt) says,

﴿وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ﴾

“And who is better in speech than one who invites to Allah and does righteousness and says, "Indeed, I am of the Muslims."” [Fussilat: 33]

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