

# Loyalty to Ones Country

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## **Holy Quran**

"O ye who believe obey God and obey the Prophet and obey those in authority from among you."  
[4:60]

## **Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be on him)**

"He who obeys me, obeys God; he who disobeys me disobeys God. He who obeys his authority obeys me; he who disobeys his authority disobeys me". (Muslim, Kitab al Ijarah).

## **Promised Messiah (Peace be on him)**

"The Holy Qur'an commands, 'Obey Allah and obey His Prophet and obey those in authority among you.' Believers are to obey those in authority, besides God and His Prophet. To say that 'those in authority' does not include a non-Muslim-Government would be a manifest error. For, a government-or authority-whose ordinances are in accordance with the Shariah (that is, they are not in conflict with it) is 'authority from among you.' Those who are not against us are among us. The Qur'an, therefore, is unequivocal on the point. Obedience to governmental authority is one of its imperatives." (Works and Speeches, Vol. (i), p. 261)

## **Khalifa tul Messih II (May Allah be pleased with him)**

"Officers of Government, assistants, clerks, every one: your obligation to carry out orders or directions issued to you by the Government is a special and a serious one. When Government makes a thing binding, then, there can be no deviation, not even by a hair-breadth. Honest belief implies nothing else. When a person elects to serve a Government, forthwith he enters into a solemn covenant. It is that he will be unsparing, sincere and honest in carrying out the duties and obligations assigned to him. If he breaks the covenant, he makes himself answerable both to Government and to God. He engenders his faith, his relation with God." (al Muslih, June 18, 1953)

## **Additional Reading**

### **Faith and Country: The Question of Divided Loyalty**

By Mirza Bashir Ahmad (1893-1963)

*Translated from Urdu by Professor Mohammad Aslam*

<http://ahmadiyyatimes.blogspot.com/2010/01/faith-and-country-question-of-divided.html>

During the U. S. Presidential election [of 1960] two contestants were in the field: Nixon and Kennedy. Kennedy being a Catholic, doubts were raised over his loyalty to the role of President. Catholics are followers of the Pope, and strict in their religious affiliation. If U.S. interests demand one thing and the Pope (or Kennedy's own faith) another, what will Kennedy do? Of two conflicting loyalties, which one will he choose? Will he choose his country and his high office? Or, will he choose his Catholic faith? Will he play the role of President hundred percent? Or will he compromise it by his fealty for the Pope?

Astute Kennedy survived the question and got away with a simple answer. Should the two loyalties-the Pope and the Presidential office-conflict, Kennedy said, he would give up the Presidential office but remain a simple Catholic. (Time, September 26, 1960).

Kennedy's answer proved satisfying to Americans. The election swung in his favor and he became President. For the next four years now he will be the Head of the U.S. State. As U.S. Head, he will hold the reins of world politics; the reins of one of the two steeds which pull the chariot of world affairs, the reigns of the other steed being in the hands of the Russian dictator. Gog and Magog in mortal conflict! God help this poor world!

On closer view, however, Kennedy's reply could not be correct even in Christian terms. Was not Jesus confronted by a similar question? And what was Jesus' reply? Did he not say (Matt. 22:21-22) "Unto Caesar, Caesar's and unto God, God's"? Kennedy did not say this. Maybe, he did not wish to risk unpopularity with American voters. Maybe, if he had done so, American voters would have become confused, uncertain whether Kennedy was a good enough American. This does not make Jesus' reply, however, less clear or less correct. Loyalty belongs to different contexts. In each context it takes its own course. Determined to remain loyal in every context and honest to God in our judgment and understanding, we should have no difficulty, confront no conflict. Jesus, however, was speaking to the Israel, not to men in general. His reply was limited by his context, by his country and his people. He thought only of Caesar. He did not put the matter in universal terms. Islamic (or Ahmadiyya) conceptions are different. Islam (or the Ahmadiyyat) is universal. It is for all men, everywhere, in all sorts of contexts. The teaching of Islam sets forth the subject of loyalties in terms, which cover every condition and all circumstances. The principles of Islam are universal. They relate to all kinds of situations. Muslims, therefore, have no difficulties, no reservations on the subject. No anxiety, conflict or confusion. We can hold our heads high. We are neither ashamed nor uncertain as to what we must do in any given circumstances. This clear conscience, we owe to the grace of our God. We concede this with humility. Read the verse in the Holy Qur'an (4:60):

"O ye who believe obey God and obey the Prophet and obey those in authority from among you."

The Arabic expression "in authority from among you" should not mislead any one into thinking that loyalty to authority is limited only to Muslim authority. No, not at all. The verse teaches obedience to authority as such. "From among" (Arabic min) also means over or of or in. The verse teaches decorum and discipline in public affairs. It makes loyalty to ruling authority an Islamic duty. Ruler and ruled are pictured in the verse as one group. Always, the verse implies, a community or people consist of both rulers and ruled. The ruled owe obedience to the rulers.

This being so, it becomes idle to dispute over the meaning of the verse; to construe that rulers whom Muslims are to obey must be Muslims is simply absurd.

The Promised Messiah, Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement (on whom be peace), writing about the verse laid down very clearly:

"The Holy Qur'an commands, 'Obey Allah and obey His Prophet and obey those in authority among you.' Believers are to obey those in authority, besides God and His Prophet. To say that 'those in authority' does not include a non-Muslim-Government would be a manifest error. For, a government-or authority-whose ordinances are in accordance with the Shariah (that is, they are not in conflict with it) is 'authority from among you.' Those who are not against us are among us. The Qur'an, therefore, is unequivocal on the point. Obedience to governmental authority is one of its imperatives." (Works and Speeches, Vol. (i), p. 261)

So also in the Hadith, the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and the blessings of God) says:

"He who obeys me, obeys God; he who disobeys me disobeys God. He who obeys his authority obeys me; he who disobeys his authority disobeys me" (Muslim, Kitab al Ijarah).

In this hadith the whole subject of obedience becomes illuminated. Loyalty and obedience belong by right only to God, Creator, Master, Lord of Men and Nations. Others have authority derived from Him. They reflect the Authority, which is God's. A Prophet is vicegerent of God, a Messenger, bearer, of divine ordinances. To obey the Prophet is to obey God. Similarly one who has authority among men is responsible for discipline, for order among God's creatures; a guardian of their lives, property and honor. Obedience to such a one is most pleasing to God. It is obedience to God. Obedience, at whatever level, is one and the same: it is obedience to God. Truly said the Holy Prophet, 'Obedience to me is obedience to God and obedience to authority is obedience to me.'

In accordance with all this (the Holy Qur'an, the Holy Prophet's Hadith, the writings of the Promised Messiah), the present Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement, Hadrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, inculcated loyalty to one's State. He said clearly:

"Our belief is that Islam requires every one to be loyal to the state under which he lives... To think that Ahmadis in India or Pakistan will remain loyal to their respective Governments only so long as the Ahmadiyya Head requires them to be so, is senseless and stupid. The Ahmadiyya Head has no prerogative in this matter. His role is to recapitulate, to implement, the teaching and spirit of Islam, not to alter one jot out of it. He is to fulfill not to destroy... Loyalty to a Government or State, according to us, is ordained by the Holy Qur'an and the Qur'an is the Book of God... The Ahmadiyya Head or Khalifa has no right to alter an ordinance contained in the Holy Book. The Khalifa is a deputy, not a dictator. A deputy is bound to authority in the same way as are all the others." (al-Fazl, April 5, 1949)

On another occasion, he said:

"Officers of Government, assistants, clerks, every one: your obligation to carry out orders or directions issued to you by the Government is a special and a serious one. When Government makes a thing binding, then, there can be no deviation, not even by a hair-breadth. Honest belief implies nothing else. When a person elects to serve a Government, forthwith he enters into a solemn covenant. It is that he will be unsparing, sincere and honest in carrying out the duties and obligations assigned to him. If he breaks the covenant, he makes himself answerable both to Government and to God. He engenders his faith, his relation with God." (al Muslih, June 18, 1953)

In common wisdom also, it seems but plain that a movement which seeks adherents, fellow-members, and believers, in all parts of the world cannot but hold on to the principle that every one has to be loyal to the Government under which he lives. Anything short of this would mean disaster. Disorder and disruption rather than peace and goodwill. Disastrous for the movement, and productive of large scale conflicts, such as might destroy good human relations all over the world. If Ahmadis have the least bit of wisdom, they will not entertain a policy which will put an end to their own existence, or jeopardize peace in general. Ahmadis today are to be found in many parts of the world, outside Pakistan and India; in Malaya, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, parts of East Africa (such as Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika), parts of West Africa (such as Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone), Switzerland, Holland, Germany, UK, USA, Canada, South America and so on. Even outside Pakistan and India, in places their numbers run into thousands, and the numbers are on the increase. Such a movement brooks disaster, if it begins to oscillate between different loyalties. Divided loyalty can only be fatal for such a movement-fatal both spiritually and physically.

One imaginary situation is often posed. Two countries, both with Ahmadi populations, go to war, Ahmadis in the two countries profess loyalty to their respective Governments. What are Ahmadis going to do in such a contingency? Will they still side with their respective Governments and engage in mutual killing? The question is not a new one. Neither for us, nor for the rest of the world. Our answer has always been this: Yes, even in such a contingency, Ahmadis will remain loyal to their respective Governments. This belief of ours is not of our making. It is a belief taught by God and explained by His Prophet. It is a belief we cannot alter or dilute. If loyalty to their respective Governments results in the killing of Ahmadis by Ahmadis, well that is there and, there is nothing more to be said or done. It is but a consequence, an obligation entailed by our religious belief. Principles have priority over persons. Persons may be sacrificed for the sake of principles, not principles for the sake of persons. Such mutual killing will be forgiven by the Wise and Merciful God of the Qur'an. It will be the result of His own teaching, of conditions, over which we have no control.

The situation, however, is not so imaginary. History is full of instances in which professors of the same creed have fought each other. Hindus have fought Hindus, Christians, and Muslims.

Believers have put to death other believers of the same religion sometimes several hundred thousand in number. The most cruel wars in history have been fought without cause, and with the most tragic consequences. What then if Ahmadis have to fight against Ahmadis? They will fight and kill one another, if necessary, to save a divine principle: the principle of loyalty to the

state to which one belongs. Such wars are an understandable obligation. So, Ahmadis may fight on opposite sides. But while they fight they will also pray for the return of peace, a peace which makes the world safe for truth and justice.

True, Ahmadis owe spiritual allegiance to one leader or Imam. How, one may ask, can they be permitted to take part in mutual killing? The answer is again the same: The Ahmadi Imam is no dictator or ruler who can do what he likes or order his followers as he pleases. The Ahmadi Imam or Khalifa is himself subject to Islamic Law, the Shariah. The Shariah is above the Khalifa, not the Khalifa above the Shariah. We may quote from the statement of the present Khalifa again (the second Khalifa of the Promised Messiah):

"No Khalifa has the power to alter any of God's ordinances. The Khalifa is no dictator. He is only a deputy. He is bound to carry out a law, to put through some one else's commands. He is subject to that law, those commands, as much as all the others in the fold." (al-Fazl, April 5, 1949)

We should also remember that the Ahmadiyya Khilafat is a spiritual institution. It has and seeks no political power, no statehood. Ahmadis seek to advance only by spiritual methods. They and their Head are content to live as loyal citizens under Governments, which guarantee freedom in religious matters.

Then, have not Catholics fought Catholics, belonging to different countries, different states? And yet Catholics owe allegiance to the Pope, believe in him and obey him, as though he were God on earth, (being successor of Christ, the God incarnate). And not Catholics only. Muslims also have fought Muslims. Muslims fought Muslims in the time of the Abbaside Khalifas, whose Khilafat was received as authentic by all Sunni Muslims? Again during the Turkish Khilafat, Muslims of different countries fought one another and yet they owed allegiance to one Khalifa or Imam. These facts are eloquent. They speak and speak loudly. They prove that followers of one and the same creed, owing spiritual loyalty to the same leader or chief, can go to war against one another. Why not Ahmadis? Why cannot they be trusted to do the same? Why cannot they be loyal to their Imam and yet be loyal to the states under which they live?

To be brief, the Ahmadiyya stand is clear and clean. Need we reiterate that we Ahmadis living in different countries, under different states and Governments, are loyal to the countries in which we live, to the states and Government under which we live. Ahmadis of Pakistan are loyal to Pakistan, deeply concerned to exert and to pray for its progress and prosperity. Similarly Ahmadis of India are loyal to India. The position is inevitable. It is the position the late Quaid-i-Azam perceived so clearly in 1947. He commended to Indian Muslims the duty of loyalty to India. Ahmadis in Indonesia; are loyal to Indonesia, Ahmadis in Syria and Egypt to the UAR, Ahmadis in West Africa to their African Governments, Ahmadis in Germany are loyal to Germany, Ahmadis in Britain are loyal to Britain, in America to America and so on. This is the divine command and the voice of our hearts. And he who does not believe us and attributes some other belief to us, offends against God and grievously wrongs us. "And our last words are, True praise is for Allah alone, the Lord of all the Worlds."