

By Sh Kazi Luthfur Rahman

November 2016

What I will write in this article is my personal opinion and based on my humble understanding of the religion. The fundamental issues in Sharia are fixed and unchangeable while the scholarly opinions on contemporary issues may change depending on the enhancement of knowledge or changes in circumstances.

The subject, 'citizenship' from an Islamic perspective is quite complex, vast and profound. There may be many scholarly opinions based on the research of each and every individual scholar.

To begin let us look at the word citizenship:

- Citizenship:

According to Cambridge Dictionary the word citizenship means:

The state of being a member of a particular country and having rights because of it.

It also may mean:

The state of living in a particular area or town and behaving in a way that other people who live there expect of you.

The citizen of an individual is generally decreed by divine fate.

- Belief in fate:

A fundamental element of a Muslims faith is to have a solid belief in fate. A true Muslim is bound to be content and satisfied with the decrees and decisions of Allah, the almighty whether he likes them or not.

Allah, the exalted said in the Noble Quran:

وخلق كل شيء فقدره تقديراً

((He has created everything, and has measured it exactly according to its due measurements))

Surah Furqan: 2

إنا كل شيء خلقناه بقدر

((Verily, we have created all things with *Qadar*, Divine Pre-ordainments of all things before their creation, as written in the Book of Decrees))

Surah Qamar: 49

Through such works of Allah the exalted, Muslims have become citizens of Europe.

- Migration to Europe:

Many of our parents, grandparents and ancestors had migrated to United Kingdom as well as to many European countries starting from 16th century for many different purposes. Diplomacy, employment, slavery, trade, education, medicine, and tourism were amongst the purpose of migration. Soon many of these purposes turned into a permanent residency, before ultimately citizenship within that country. A sign to confirm this would be the establishment of Islamic places of worship alongside special cemeteries for Muslims in Europe. Recent figures show approximately 100,000 British natives have converted to Islam already making Islam as the fastest growing religion in UK and all over Europe.

- Did all these happen accidentally or happened by the will of Allah?

In Islam as previously mentioned, fate is a pillar of a Muslims belief, hence for this migration and citizenship within Europe cannot be seen as an accident. My belief brings me to believe that this occurrence happened by the will of our creator, the lord of the universe Allah the Almighty, it

is actually an undeniable fact. The wisdom behind the decree of Allah sometimes can be understood with ease, and at other times it can take a lengthier process to comprehend.

- Muslim live as a minority:

Today, there is approximately 1.6 billion Muslims across the world, making Muslims 23% percent of the world's population. This makes Islam the 2nd largest religion, which is also projected to be the largest by 2070 inshaAllah. It is estimated that a third of the Muslim Population live as minorities currently.

- Muslims always co-existed:

Muslims have always lived as minority since the early stages of Islam. Muslims co-existed and lived with people of all faiths in peace and harmony over the centuries. Approximately 9 Million Non-Muslims reside in Middle East which is the hub of Islam. Muslim rulers always provided them with safety and security and never forced them to Islam. We can see the evidence when we look at the historical churches in Egypt and in many other parts of Middle East. Another example would be the Asian sub-continent or more specifically India, it was ruled by Muslims for decades, yet vast majority of Indians are people of other faiths.

- Migration from Makkah to Ethiopia:

On the other hand, we can see the Migration of early Muslims from the holy land of Makkah to Ethiopia due to the severe enmity and harassment from the enemies of Islam within Makkah. A Christian, formerly known in history books as King Najashi of Ethiopia, granted the companions of holy prophet Mohammed PBUH with safety and security. Many companions never returned to Makkah even after it's conquest, making that land there home.

Citizenship of a state or country can attach your loyalty towards them, this brings up an important question:

- Is loyalty allowed for anyone apart from Allah?

The faith of any religious person is that the absolute and ultimate loyalty is to his creator Allah, the almighty. However, the partial and multiple loyalties can exist too. A person can be loyal to his employer, but this loyalty would not be considered as absolute loyalty, rather it would go under partial loyalty. Similarly, a person can be loyal to Allah SWT while being loyal to his parents. In the issue of loyalty, a general principle has been outlined by our holy prophet Mohammed PBUH which must be observed in all condition as much as possible:

لا طاعة لمخلوق في معصية الخالق

There is no obedience to the creation, in the disobedience of the Creator.

(Musannaf Ibnu Abi-Shaibah)

There are certain etiquettes that a Muslim should follow within his citizenship to a state:

- Roles of a good Muslim Citizen in Britain:

1. Fulfil your contracts:

Amongst the Beautiful qualities of good Muslim is to abide by the contracts and to keep their promises and respect their covenants.

The citizenship is a form of covenant and it should be observed once it has been made.

Allah, almighty said in the Holy Quran:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ

O you who believe! Fulfil your obligations

(Al-Maidah: 1)

وَأَوْفُوا بِالْعَهْدِ إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْئُولًا

And fulfil (every) covenant. Verily! the covenant, will be questioned about

(Al-Israa: 34)

2. Be a divine prophetic practicing Muslim with the best character and mannerism.

The holy Prophet Mohammed PBUH said:

وخالق الناس بخلق حسن

Show the best character to people

(At-Tirmizi)

3. Be a preacher of Islam with wisdom, beautiful speech and dialogue.

Allah, the almighty said:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ ۗ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

Invite the mankind to the way of your lord with wisdom and beautiful speech, and argue with them in a way that is better

(An-Nahl: 125)

4. Respect the law of the country and especially laws which are legislated for the health, safety and security of public, such as traffic laws, health and safety laws, and laws related to benefits etc.

5. Respect the tradition, custom and culture of other citizens while adhering to the Sunnah of Prophet Mohammed PBUH as much as possible.
6. Be a constructive person in this world and always make positive contributions.

The holy Prophet Mohammed PBUH said:

إِنْ قَامَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَفِي يَدِ أَحَدِكُمْ فَسِيلَةٌ، فَإِنْ اسْتَطَاعَ أَنْ لَا تَقُومَ حَتَّى يَغْرَسَهَا فَلْيَغْرَسْهَا.

If the Final Hour comes while you have a palm-shoot in your hands and it is possible to plant it before the Hour comes, you should plant it.

(Al-Adab Al-Mufrad)

7. Be best in whatever profession you may be in.

The holy Prophet Mohammed PBUH said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يُحِبُّ إِذَا عَمِلَ أَحَدُكُمْ عَمَلًا أَنْ يُنْقِئَهُ

Allah loves someone who when works, he performs it in perfect manner

(Al-Baihaqi)

8. Take care of the environment.

The holy Prophet Mohammed PBUH said:

اتقوا اللعانين, قالوا: وما اللعانان, قال: " الذي يتخلى في طريق الناس، أو ظلهم

Be on your guard against two things which provoke cursing. The companions said: Oh Messenger of Allah! what are those things which provoke cursing? He said: passing urine or stool in public roads or under the shades where people take rest.

(Al-Muslim)