

The Spirit of Patriotism

Love for Country
that Embraces
All Identities



Maulana
Wahiduddin Khan

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MAULANA
WAHIDUDDIN KHAN

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FOREWORD

Love for one's homeland is a profound human emotion—one that surpasses boundaries of belief, culture, and geography. It reflects the natural bond between a person and the land where they are born, raised, and shaped. This connection goes deeper than mere geography; it includes memories, language, traditions, and the shared experiences of a community. Treasuring one's homeland is not just emotional—it is a form of civic duty and an expression of ethical awareness.

Throughout history, people have found their identity, strength, and belonging in their homeland. To love one's homeland is to care for its well-being, to hope for its peace and progress, and to actively contribute to its future. It also involves honouring its diversity, protecting its environment, and working towards maintaining justice and harmony within it.

This booklet presents an important perspective—that love for one's homeland is not only natural, but is affirmed across philosophical and spiritual traditions. Many Islamic scholars, for example, have recognised it as a noble sentiment. Mulla Ali al-Qari (d. 1606), a well-known

jurist, once noted: “Indeed, love for one’s homeland is not contrary to faith.” (*Al-Asrar al-Marfu‘ah*, p. 181)

Another classical commentator, Ibn Battal (d. 449 AH), wrote:

“God has placed love for homelands and longing for them in human nature—and the Prophet also exemplified this. In this lies the noblest model to follow.” (*Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*, Vol. 4, p. 453)

Although religious texts may not always provide explicit commandments about this sentiment, cultural and historical narratives consistently affirm its importance. For example, it is documented that: “He [the Prophet] loved his homeland.” (*Siyar A‘lam al-Nubala’*, Vol. 15, p. 394)

And in another prayer attributed to him: “O God, make us love Madinah as we love Makkah...” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1889; *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1376)

Even symbolic gestures are noted, such as his affection for Mount Uhud: “This is a mountain that loves us, and we love it.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2889)

And upon returning to Madinah: “Whenever the Prophet of Islam returned from travel and saw the walls of Madinah, he would speed up his ride out of love for it.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1886)

Such narratives, regardless of one's faith perspective, highlight the emotional and moral value attached to one's homeland—a value echoed by commentators and scholars:

“This Hadith indicates the legitimacy of love for one's homeland...” (*‘Umdat al-Qari* by Badr al-Din al-Ayni, Vol. 10, p. 135; *Fath al-Bari* by Ibn Hajar, Vol. 3, p. 621)

And: “The same ruling applies to any other beloved land...” (*Al-Lami’ al-Darari* by Maulana Zakariya Kandhalwi, Vol. 5, p. 279)

Beyond religious traditions, similar reflections are present in the writings of Muslim scholars, mystics, and poets throughout history. For instance, Ibrahim ibn Adham is quoted as saying:

“Among all I have endured and forsaken, nothing has weighed more heavily upon me than the parting from my homeland.” (*Hilyat al-Awliya’*, Vol. 7, p. 380)

Raghib al-Isfahani similarly observed: “Through love of homeland, cities are built.” (*Muhadarat al-udaba’*, Vol. 2, p. 652)

And a Bedouin voice from history once remarked: “If you want to know a man's character, observe his longing for his homeland.” (*Al-Mujalasah wa Jawahir al-‘Ilm* by al-Dinuri, Vol. 2, p. 208)

Such statements resonate not only with faith communities but with all individuals who cherish rootedness, memory, and responsibility. They confirm that love for one's homeland is neither narrow nor divisive—it serves as a basis for service, empathy, and collective growth.

This booklet, based on the writings of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, presents the view that true patriotism unites rather than divides. It is not narrow-mindedness—it is generosity of spirit. It is not against religion; rather, it serves to strengthen it. In these pages, the reader will discover a new perspective on love for one's homeland—that loving one's country with a positive mind, sincerity, ethics, and active commitment is one of the most effective foundations for building a better world.

Dr Farida Khanam

July, 2025

New Delhi, India.

LOVE FOR ONE’S COUNTRY— A NATURAL DISPOSITION

Umar ibn al-Khattab, the 2nd Caliph of Islam, once said: “God has populated the lands through love of the homeland” (*ammarallahu al-buldana bi-hubb al-awtan*)—*Al-Tidhkira* by Ibn al-Hamdun, Narration No. 407.

This saying highlights a fundamental truth: love for one’s homeland is part of human nature. It is through this affection that towns and cities prosper and thrive.

If we consider that this very nature is a creation of God, then love for one’s country may also be viewed as a virtue rooted in faith, for faith itself reflects the pure, divine-endowed nature of human beings.

The well-known saying, “Love for one’s homeland is part of faith” (*hubb al-watan min al-iman*)—although not an authenticated Prophetic hadith—expresses a sentiment that, in my view, remains essentially true. (*Diary*, 29 February 1996)

THE PROPHET'S LOVE FOR HIS HOMELAND

When the Prophet of Islam was forced to migrate from Makkah to Madinah, he looked toward Makkah and said:

“By God, you are the best land of God and the most beloved land of God to me. Had I not been driven out from you, I would never have left you.” (*Sunan Ibn Majah*, Hadith No. 3108)

Later, when Makkah was conquered, the Prophet had a full opportunity to make it his residence again. But he returned to Madinah and remained there for the rest of his life. After his passing, his grave was made in Madinah.

From this, it becomes clear that the statement he made about Makkah was not of a religious (*shar‘i*) nature. If it had been, then he certainly would have stayed in Makkah after its conquest. But his return to Madinah despite regaining control of Makkah proves that the statement was not a religious ruling; rather, it was a sentence that came from the emotion of love for one’s homeland. (*Diary*, 12 November 1996)

It is generally believed that the reason for this statement was that Makkah is a sacred city. But I believe that this statement came from the feeling of patriotism. It was an expression of the same emotion that arises in every human being when they are forced to leave their homeland.

In later times, the tradition of na‘t (poetry in praise of the Prophet) developed among Muslims. In these na‘ts, the greatness of Madinah is always described. I have never seen Makkah’s greatness described in these poems. If Makkah were absolutely and universally the sacred city, then the na‘ts should have praised Makkah, not Madinah. (*Diary*, 14 September 2006)

NATIONALISM AND LOVE FOR ONE’S COUNTRY

In early 1971, I travelled to Pakistan by train, specifically to Lahore and Faisalabad. This was a time of heightened tension between India and Pakistan due to the emerging Bangladesh conflict. As soon as I crossed the border, a porter approached me and said, “The Major Sahab is calling you.” He then led me to a military tent where a Pakistani army officer, dressed in uniform, was seated. We were the only two people inside.

After I entered, the officer asked, “Can you share any Indian military secrets?”

His question instantly angered me. I responded firmly, “Major Sahab, please speak to me with the understanding that I am a loyal citizen of India.”

I said this while standing on Pakistani soil, inside a military tent, fully aware that had he chosen to shoot me, my death might have gone unnoticed and unreported. Still, I said everything I believed needed to be said, as an Indian—and I said it without hesitation. I added, “If your war against India relies on obtaining secrets from people like me, do you think you can win? In today’s world, war strategies are so top secret that even the Defence Minister may not be fully informed.”

At that moment, I knew that everything about me—my religion, my dress, my language, my family customs—was different from those of a typical Hindu. Yet in terms of national sentiment, my feelings were no different from those of any deeply patriotic Hindu.

This, to me, is the essence of Indian nationalism: unity in diversity. In personal matters, we may differ. But in national matters, our collective identity must be one. That is not only a principled stance—it is a practical and rational one.

This incident is one among many that reflect how deeply rooted my love for my country truly is.

Those Hindus who know me closely—such as Swami Om Poorna Swatantra (New Delhi) or Swami Chidananda (Rishikesh)—often say: “The patriotism we see in you is something we haven’t witnessed in anyone since Mahatma Gandhi.”

It is this inner longing, this devotion to my homeland, that compels me to speak so openly.

On 20 January 1997, a gathering was held at Pioneer House in New Delhi, attended by several of the city’s most educated citizens. The topic of discussion was: “Would Gandhi Succeed in Today’s India?”

I delivered a long address on the subject. During my speech, I remarked:

“Gandhi was not entirely successful even in pre-independence India. By 1947, he himself was compelled to say: ‘Who listens to me now?’ So if he struggled to succeed then, how would he succeed in today’s India?”

Upon hearing this, a Hindu professor, slightly agitated, remarked, “You’re criticizing Mahatma Gandhi.”

His reaction stirred something deep within me. Tears welled up in my eyes, and in a voice full of emotion,

I replied: “I love Gandhi—but I love India more than Gandhi.”

After hearing this, the professor fell silent. No one else in the room commented on my critical remarks.

This entire speech was later published in the *Pioneer* (New Delhi), in the 26 January 1997 edition.

On another occasion, an educated Hindu, after listening to one of my critical comments, asked:

“You criticize our national leaders so harshly—
who gave you the right to do that?”

I calmly replied: “It is my patriotism that has given me that right.” He too fell silent. (*Hind–Pak Diary*, pp. 30–32)

PATRIOTISM

On 28 March 1998, a seminar was held at the India International Centre in New Delhi. It was organized by the Urdu Academy, and its subject was a review of the life and contributions of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. On that occasion, I also delivered a speech. Among the various points I raised, one important issue was that of patriotism.

I stated that for much of the 20th century, Muslim thinkers were, in one way or another, influenced by the ideology commonly known as Pan-Islamism. This includes several prominent figures of the modern period—such as Sayyid Jamaluddin Afghani (1838–1897), Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938), Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876–1948), and Sayyid Abul A‘la Maududi (1903–1979). These thinkers envisioned Muslims as a transnational religious community and upheld the idea that nationhood should be based on religion, not territory.

I mentioned that I am now 78 years old according to the Hijri calendar, and I have spent the greater part of my life studying Islam and related sciences. I can say with full confidence that the idea of religion-based nationhood is not an Islamic doctrine. Rather, it is a political theory, born out of specific historical circumstances.

In the first half of the 20th century, Muslim leaders wanted to rally Muslims globally against European colonial powers. To support this political agenda, they advanced the concept of global Islamic nationhood. But this was a politicization of Islam—not a true representation of Islamic teachings.

On this matter, Islam’s position is in complete alignment with the widely accepted view in political science—that nationhood is based on territory (motherland).

This is why, all over the world, a person's nationality is recorded in their passport based on their country of origin, regardless of their religion. For example, in India, both Muslims and non-Muslims are identified as Indian in their passports; in Britain, as British; in the U.S., as American, and so on.

This territorial concept of nationhood is entirely in accordance with Islam. On this point, there is no conflict or contradiction between Islamic teachings and the modern global consensus.

Maulana Sayyid Hussain Ahmad Madani (1879–1957), a leading Islamic scholar, freedom fighter (opponent of partition), and nationalist thinker in 20th-century India, once said, “In the present age, nations are formed by their territories (*awtan*).”

Some people later tried to reinterpret this statement, claiming that Maulana Madani was simply describing a global phenomenon—not endorsing it. That is, he was making a factual observation, not a normative Islamic claim. But this interpretation is not valid.

Here, I would like to clarify a foundational Islamic legal principle: The default ruling regarding things is permissibility. (*al-asl fi al-ashya' al-ibahah*)

In other words, in worldly matters, the principle is that all things are permissible unless clearly prohibited. It is

clear that on the subject of nationhood, the Quran and Hadith do not provide any explicit guidance. Nowhere do the scriptures state that nationhood is based on religion, nor that it is based on territory. Therefore, this matter falls under those worldly affairs about which the Prophet said: “You are more knowledgeable about the matters of your world.” (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 2363)

This statement means that when it comes to faith, worship, and matters of the Hereafter, Muslims are bound to follow divine guidance without interpretation or alteration. However, in matters concerning the management of worldly affairs, Islam grants people the freedom to adopt what seems reasonable and beneficial according to the circumstances.

An important example from the Prophet’s life further clarifies this principle. During the Prophet’s time, a man named Musaylimah in Yemen claimed prophethood. He sent a delegation of two men to Madinah with a written message stating:

“I have been made a partner with you in prophethood.” (*fa-inni qad u’shrikta fi al-amr ma’ak*)

After speaking with them, the Prophet asked what their personal opinion was. They replied, “Our view is the same as our leader’s.”

Upon hearing this, the Prophet said, “By God, were it not that diplomats are not punished, I would have punished both of you.” (*Sirah Ibn Hisham*, Vol. 2, p. 600)

From this incident, we learn a foundational principle of Islamic international law: in inter-state or inter-communal affairs, Islam adopts the same protocols as followed by other nations. If, in the international system, diplomatic envoys are to be protected under all circumstances, then Islam too upholds that protection—even when dealing with enemies.

By analogy, we can rightly say that in the matter of nationhood, Islam can adopt the prevailing principle that is widely accepted in the modern world—namely, that nationhood is based on territory, not religion.

This issue should not be unnecessarily turned into a matter of creed or religious dogma.

Once, I was attending a public gathering where a speaker emphasized the importance of patriotism and claimed that Islam, too, recognizes its value. To support his point, he quoted a saying attributed to the Prophet: “Love for one’s homeland is part of faith” (*hubb al-watan min al-iman*) (*al-Durar al-Muntathirah* by al-Suyuti, Hadith No. 190)

At that moment, a scholar in attendance objected, saying that the statement in question is not a saying of the Prophet, but merely an Arabic proverb.

I responded by acknowledging that, while it is true the statement cannot be traced to any verified prophetic tradition, it is more than just a proverb—a statement reflecting human psychology as a natural fact.

Scholars of Islamic tradition generally do not consider this saying to be an authentic prophetic report. Many classify it as weak or apocryphal. However, several respected scholars throughout Islamic history have affirmed the truth of its message. For example, the 15th-century scholar al-Sakhawi wrote in his work *Al-Maqasid al-Hasanah*: “I could not find a chain of transmission for this saying, but its meaning is sound.” (*Al-Maqasid al-Hasanah*, Narration No. 386)

According to the principles of hadith science, this means that while Imam al-Sakhawi did not find it traceable to the Prophet as a hadith, the concept is valid and supported within Islamic values.

There are many such statements that, while not classified as Prophetic hadiths, are nonetheless “hadith of nature”—deeply rooted in the moral and psychological makeup of human beings.

In my view, even if this statement cannot be definitively attributed to the Prophet, it still resonates as a hadith of human nature. Denying the innate love for one’s homeland is, in essence, a failure to understand the very essence of human nature.

The reality is that love for one's homeland is a natural and necessary instinct, and this alone is sufficient to say that patriotism is in harmony with Islam. Since Islam is a religion of nature (*din al-fitrah*), it addresses the fundamentals of human nature.

I explained that Islam, being the religion of nature, affirms every sound instinct of human beings. For example, there is no explicit hadith that says: "Love for one's mother is part of faith."

Yet every Muslim knows it is a duty of faith to love and honour one's mother. A person who lacks love for their mother is somewhat incomplete in their faith because there can be no contradiction between nature and faith.

In the same way, love for one's homeland is an expression of sound human nature, and it is equally an expression of one's faith. The land in which one is born, where one grows up, breathes its air, builds relationships, and constructs the fabric of life—loving such a place is not only a mark of human decency but also an extension of one's Islamic values.

I once remarked that whatever is a part of human nature does not need to be explicitly stated in the Quran or Hadith. It is automatically a part of the Shariah—not because it is enshrined in religious books, but because it is embedded in the core of our being.

The Quran and Hadith do not say: “O Muslims, love your mother.”

Why not? Because this is something that the heart embraces naturally—no divine command is needed for it. Similarly, there is no verse or hadith saying: “O Muslims, love your homeland.”

That too is unnecessary, because patriotism is an expression of human dignity, and anyone who lacks this feeling for their homeland reflects a kind of moral poverty. Such deeply rooted instincts require no formal legal command—they are already woven into the pure heart of every true believer.

However, one clarification is necessary here.

Some extremist Hindu leaders have claimed that Christians and Muslims in India can never be true patriots, because—according to them—to be a true patriot, one must consider the land of their birth as sacred. Since Hindus view *Bharat Mata* (Mother India) as sacred, even divine, they are, in their view, the only true patriots. Christians and Muslims, by contrast, due to their religious beliefs, do not regard any land as divine; therefore, these leaders argue, they cannot be true *deshbhakts* (patriots).

This is an entirely baseless argument. Suppose someone, based on their self-made beliefs, begins to worship their mother and calls her divine. That does not give them the

right to claim that only they love their mother, and that those who don't worship her cannot love her at all. People are free to treat their mother—or even their homeland—as divine if they choose to. But they have no right, based on law or reason, to demand that others ought to do the same in order to prove their love. Patriotism does not require divinization. It requires affection, loyalty, and gratitude.

In reality, such issues are governed by global conventions, not by personal ideologies. At the international level, it is universally accepted that nationhood is based on territory—and “territory” refers to geographical unity, not some mystical or sacred unity.

Therefore, the standard for patriotism must be the same for everyone. Of course, every individual is free to hold any additional beliefs about their country, but such personal beliefs cannot become a national standard to judge others' loyalty. (*Al-Risala*, September 1998)

MUSLIMS AND NATIONHOOD

Before independence, there were two main perspectives on the issue of nationhood in the Indian subcontinent. The first was that of Muhammad Iqbal, who maintained

that nationhood is based on religion. The second view was held by Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani, who stated:

“In the modern age, nations are formed on the basis of territory.” In other words, faith is related to religion, whereas nationhood is related to one’s homeland.

In my view, Maulana Madani’s perspective was correct. I believe that all Muslims across the world are united in terms of their religious belief, but when it comes to nationhood, it is rooted in one’s geographical homeland. That is to say, a Muslim community’s nationhood is determined by the country they belong to.

This means that if a Muslim-majority country were to attack a country like India, it would not be considered an attack on the religion of Indian Muslims, but rather an act of aggression against their shared homeland.

In the face of such aggression, Muslims would defend their nation just as their non-Muslim fellow citizens would—regardless of whether the attacking country is Muslim or non-Muslim. (*Al-Risala*, August 2000—“Jodhpur ka Safar”)

A MISREADING OF ISLAM

The renowned Urdu poet Muhammad Iqbal once stated:

‘The Azar (sculptors) of modern civilization has sculpted new idols.’

He continues in the next verse:

‘Among these modern gods, the greatest is the nation.’

‘Its robe is the shroud of religion.’

This verse does not reflect the teachings of Islam. In today’s world, nationhood is universally understood to be based on one’s homeland. In my view, this concept does not contradict Islamic principles. However, Muhammad Iqbal’s idea of nationhood was shaped by a historical perception of Islam that developed during the era of the Muslim Empire.

At that time, it was assumed that all Muslims belonged to a single global nation. But after the Second World War, that empire dissolved, giving rise to more than fifty independent Muslim-majority countries. In our

current era, nationhood for Muslims must be defined by their respective homelands, not by a universal religious-political entity.

It is important to recognize that the Muslim Empire was a temporary phase of political unity—not an eternal or essential component of Islam. Treating that historical structure as a religious ideal is a fundamental mistake. (*Diary*, 12 December 2007)

NATIONHOOD IS BASED ON HOMELAND

Dr. Mubarak Ali, a renowned Pakistani historian, once stated in an interview that the term “*Muslim Ummah*,” as it is currently used in a global political context, did not exist during the classical Islamic period. In fact, the idea of a united global Muslim Ummah is a construct—a concept that never had a practical or institutional precedent in the past, nor does it now.

Even the major Muslim empires in history were not monolithic. For instance, during the Ottoman Empire, the Armenians were officially recognised as a separate millat (religious community) under the Millet System, a term used for distinct ethnic or religious groups.

Nation-states have existed among Muslims from early times, and Muslim societies have traditionally been characterised by regional, linguistic, or ethnic identities, not by a single unified nationhood. That's because Islam is a religion, not a nationality. (*Sunday Magazine*, 18 May 2003)

This principle is also evident in the Constitution of Madinah (Mithaq-e-Madina). When Prophet Muhammad migrated to Madinah and founded the first Islamic state, several Jewish tribes resided there. In this foundational document, one clause states:

“Indeed, the Jews of Banu Awf are one Ummah with the believers.” (*Sirah Ibn Hisham*, Vol. 1, p. 503)

This clause clearly indicates that Ummah in this context refers to a political community based on a shared homeland, not a religious category. The Jews of Madinah and the Muslims, living alongside each other in the same city-state, were regarded as part of a single civic nation.

If we extend this understanding to modern-day India, it suggests that Hindus and Muslims in this country are part of a single nation. Their national identity is rooted in their shared homeland.

The same principle holds true for other countries where Muslims coexist peacefully with non-Muslim citizens. In

such cases, national identity is based on territory rather than theology. (*Diary*, 26 April 2004 and 1 October 2003)

NATION AND NATIONALITY

The Quran shows that every prophet addressed his non-believing audience with the words ‘*Ya Qawmi*’ — meaning ‘O my people’ — as seen in verses 7:61, 67, 79, and 85. This Quranic expression indicates that the nationality of both believers and non-believers is the same. In reality, nationality is not determined by religion but by homeland. Religious affiliation is expressed through the word “*Millat*” (Quran, 4:125), while “*Qaumiyat*” (nationality) denotes a connection through homeland (Quran, 11:89). In modern times, homeland is universally recognized as the basis of nationality—this is also the Islamic principle. According to Islam, nationality is rooted in one’s homeland.

From this viewpoint, the Two-Nation Theory is un-Islamic. It promotes the idea among Muslims that they constitute a separate nation. Conversely, the authentic Islamic view urges Muslims to see others as part of their own community. They should be able to say “O my people” to non-Muslims, just as all prophets did. The Quran states:

“Mankind! We have created you from a male and female, and made you into peoples and tribes, so that you might come to know each other. ”
(49:13)

In this verse, “peoples” refers to groups formed through geographical or national affiliation, and “tribes” refers to those formed through lineage. According to the Quran, both forms of grouping exist solely for identification and mutual recognition—not to indicate belief or faith.

Before 1947, Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani had stated: “In the present age, nations are formed on the basis of homeland.” His statement was essentially correct. However, the phrase “in the present age” was not entirely accurate. As a matter of fact, nations have always been formed on the basis of homeland. What modern times have brought is not a change in this fundamental principle, but rather the use of more structured and formal methods for its identification—such as the inclusion of nationality in passports, the legal definition of nationality in international law, and the codification of citizens’ rights based on their national identity.

It is therefore more accurate to say that the word “nation” is still used today in the same essential sense as in the past. The only difference is that it is now applied with more clarity and precision.

Some interpret nationality in an extreme and ideological way, equating it with religion itself. But this is a form of ideological extremism. Such extremism can also be seen among Muslims. In modern times, some Muslim thinkers have interpreted Islam so narrowly that any system other than Islam is labelled *Taghuti* (tyrannical or illegitimate). For them, it became forbidden for a Muslim to live under such a system, to seek education, hold government jobs, vote, or refer legal disputes to state courts.

This concept of a Taghuti system was a product of extreme thinking and had no connection to the Islam of God and His Messenger. As a result, the practical demands of life forced even its proponents to abandon it. Today, these individuals have, without formal declaration, effectively distanced themselves from this extremist view.

The same is true of the idea of nationality. Some Western thinkers expanded the concept of nationalism and presented it as akin to a religion. However, when this ideology collided with reality, it collapsed. Today, in practice, the idea of nationality is once again understood and used in the natural, grounded sense in which it was originally used in the Quran.

In the first half of the twentieth century, many Muslim leaders failed to grasp the essential difference between nationalism and patriotism in their natural versus extremist forms. They misunderstood the issue and accepted an

unnatural, extreme version of nationalism as the norm—and on this basis, declared it un-Islamic.

A prime example of this is the renowned Muslim poet, Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938). He, too, accepted the then-prevailing extremist view of nationality and homeland as fundamental, and wrote the following verses in its criticism:

In this age, the wine is different, the cup is
different, the cupbearer too is different;

Civilization's modern sculptors have carved
new idols.

Among these new gods, the greatest is the
nation-state;

And the garment it wears is the shroud of
religion.

This view of nationality and patriotism is clearly
baseless. Strangely, many Muslim scholars
and intellectuals of that era treated political
developments as existential threats to Islam itself.
In reality, no political rise or fall can challenge
the enduring nature of Islam.

For instance, when the Ottoman Empire collapsed in the
early twentieth century, the scholar Shibli Nomani wrote:

The fall of the Ottoman state is the fall of the
Shariah and the Muslim nation—

How long can one remain devoted only to family and home?

This belief—that the downfall of a government equates to the collapse of Islamic law and the Muslim community—is undoubtedly unfounded. Such a thing has never happened in the past, nor can it ever happen. For example, the rightly guided caliphate came to an end, yet Islam endured. The Umayyad dynasty fell, but Islam continued. The Abbasid Empire collapsed, Muslim rule in Andalusia ended, the Fatimid rule in Egypt disappeared, and the Mughal Empire in India disintegrated—yet none of these political declines led to the downfall of Islam.

The same applies to various extremist ideologies that arose in the twentieth century—such as Communism, Nazism, Nationalism, and exaggerated forms of Patriotism. All of them eventually faced the same fate: nature’s law rejected their extreme elements. Ultimately, only what aligns with the natural order endures.

What remained in the end was only what aligned with the natural order.

The eternal law of nature stands above everything else. It automatically eliminates imbalanced and extreme ideologies from the course of history and gives space only to those ideas that are moderate and in harmony with the natural design. (*Al-Risala*, February 2004)

THE ISSUE OF NATIONALISM

Sayyid Jamal al-Din Afghani was born in 1838 and passed away in 1897. He became a symbol of the ideology that began with the support of the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid, which came to be known as Pan-Islamism (Ittihad-e-Islami). During Afghani's time, nearly the entire Muslim world had fallen under the political subjugation of British and French colonial powers. He rose to challenge this Western domination. To strengthen his mission, he formulated the idea of Islamic unity. According to him, all Muslims around the world—whether living in Muslim-majority or minority regions—constituted a single Ummah. He believed they were all bound together in one political unity.

Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, in line with this view, stated that Muslims across the globe should be seen as an international party. Ayatollah Khomeini and other leaders popularized the term al-Ummah, which quickly gained acceptance among Muslims worldwide. The Urdu Poet Muhammad Iqbal articulated this same idea in his famous couplet:

Let Muslims be united in guarding the Sacred
Sanctuary,
From the shores of the Nile to the deserts of
Kashgar.

This transnational vision did not appear to conflict with the circumstances of the colonial era. At that time, much of the world was governed under a single political order, and almost all Muslims were subjects of it. However, when colonial rule collapsed and the era of nationalism emerged, the world was divided into many distinct political entities. Previously, the issue was loyalty to a single empire—now it became loyalty to over a hundred separate national units.

As noted in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Vol. 7, p. 719):

“Pan-Islamism was the dominant ideology of the Muslim world in the 19th century, prior to the rise of Nationalism.”

After the Second World War, as the global political landscape changed, Muslims found themselves facing an intellectually complex situation. Those who had once defined their political identity within a global Islamic framework were now compelled to reorient themselves within local nationalist structures.

At that pivotal moment, to the best of my knowledge, only one scholar in the entire Muslim world made a serious attempt to respond to this challenge: Maulana

Sayyid Hussain Ahmad Madani (1879–1957). During the intense political climate before 1947, he made the bold and timely declaration:

“In our time, nations are formed on the basis of homeland.” (*Nazariyah-e-Qaumiyyat*, Maktaba Danish, Mazang, Lahore, p. 22)

This was undoubtedly an instance of ijtihad-based guidance. Unfortunately, the scholars of Deoband later reversed this position. They argued that his statement on the matter constituted a mere *khavar* (informal observation or report), rather than an *insha*’ (formal legal declaration).

This is no simple matter, but rather is one of extreme delicacy. It calls for careful reflection in the most impartial and objective manner.

Based on the previously stated position, the ideological view is that Islam is the nationality of all Muslims worldwide. In other words, Muslims’ political loyalty has traditionally been closely tied to their religion. However, as national identity in most countries is now defined by territorial homeland, this religious-political ideology comes into conflict with modern local realities around the world.

For instance, in modern states like the United States, the United Kingdom, or India, the prevailing concept of nationalism requires that Muslims living there show

exclusive political loyalty to their homeland, with no extra-territorial allegiance. In contrast, the ideology of al-Ummah asserts that Muslims' loyalty should lie with international Islam, not with their respective nation-states.

This contradiction has led to widespread suspicion about the national loyalty of Muslims in every country where they live as a minority.

This is a serious and complex issue. From a purely ideological perspective, Muslims face two choices:

First, they might opt to stick firmly to their stated position—that they belong to a global Islamic nation and do not subscribe to local nationalism—then, they must be prepared to accept all resulting consequences. For example, if a country refuses to admit them into the military, excludes them from the foreign service, denies them diplomatic posts, or treats them as second-class citizens due to doubts about their loyalty, they should accept these outcomes as a natural cost of their belief.

Second, Muslims choose to declare openly that the concept of al-Ummah as a political ideology was the personal opinion of certain Muslim leaders, adopted in reaction to specific historical contexts, and that it was mistakenly framed as a religious doctrine. They can then publicly reject this ideology and, as Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani once declared, affirm that:

‘While Muslims across the world are united in faith, their national identity (nationality) is determined by their homeland, not by religion.’

If Muslims clearly announce this position, the contradiction will be resolved, and their national loyalty will no longer be in doubt.

However, if Muslims choose neither option—if they remain silent on the matter, yet begin actively participating in the material and political life of their respective countries—then they are undoubtedly adopting a double standard.

That is, silently altering their practical behaviour without openly reviewing their ideological stance. Such conduct is not principled—it is opportunistic and motivated by convenience rather than conviction.

Adopting such a dual approach is not a trivial matter. It has serious consequences. It will lead to the loss of principled character among Muslims. Their spiritual development will stagnate. Their intellectual process will stall. They will be deprived of the opportunity to evolve as complete human beings. They will say, ‘We feel cut off from the deep spiritual joy that the Quran refers to as an increase in faith’ (*Quran*, 48:4).

Ultimately, this condition will lead to intellectual stagnation. Muslims will no longer be able to make significant contributions to global knowledge and thought.

The Quran states that every prophet's community was given a distinct Shariah (divine law) and a clear path (minhaj) from God (*Quran*, 5:48). Although this appears to refer to differences between communities, the real intent is to highlight differences based on time periods. That is, the people of each era were given a Shariah and minhaj suited to the specific conditions of their time.

This is precisely why a well-established legal principle in Islamic jurisprudence holds that:

“Legal rulings change with the change of time and place.” (*I'lam al-Muwaqqi'in* by Ibn al-Qayyim, Vol. 3, p. 11; *Al-Majalla Al-Ahkam Al-Adaliyyah*: 39)

This principle of divine legislation (*tashri'*) was not limited to the communities before the Prophet Muhammad. It remains equally relevant for his Ummah even after the finality of prophethood. The only difference is that earlier communities received this legislative guidance directly from their prophets, whereas, after the seal of prophethood, this task of legal adaptation and renewal is to be undertaken through the *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) of scholars.

In light of this legislative principle, it is entirely appropriate to say that the contemporary global concept of nationality, which has now become widely accepted and established across the world, should serve as the basis for a renewed *ijtihad* in determining the Islamic position on the matter.

And that revised position is precisely what Maulana Sayyid Hussain Ahmad Madani had announced during the pre-1947 political period.

According to this legal-religious perspective, while Muslims today are undoubtedly united in belief and religion, their national identity (nationality) should be determined by their country of residence. That is, the nationality of Muslims in any given country is the same as that of other groups living in that country. (*Al-Risala*, December 2003)

INDIAN NATIONALISM

The question, “What constitutes Indian nationalism?” is the subject of our discussion today. It is, without doubt, a matter of great national significance. Resolving this question is crucial to the country’s progress and development. Ideally, this issue should have been conclusively settled in 1947, at the time of independence. Yet, we find that the debate continues to this day—clearly showing that, more than half a century later, no universally accepted answer has been reached.

In my view, the primary reason for this prolonged uncertainty is the failure to distinguish between two

distinct domains—that which is national (collective) and that which is individual (personal). In any society, certain matters belong to the national sphere, where uniformity is essential, while others lie in the private sphere, where diversity is both natural and necessary.

If national matters are left to individual preference, it may lead to national fragmentation. Conversely, if individual matters are subjected to national enforcement, society can descend into disorder.

Much of the confusion stems from overzealous individuals from various groups who have failed to maintain this distinction. The result: some have tried to treat national matters as personal, while others have insisted on turning personal matters into national issues. Such unnatural and unrealistic efforts have done nothing but give rise to social discord.

Take, for example, when some Muslims express joy over Pakistan's sports victories, citing emotional ties due to shared religion. However, this reflects a misapplication of private sentiment to national concerns.

India is our homeland. Whenever India competes with another country—whether on the battlefield or the cricket field—our emotional alignment must naturally be with our own nation. In such matters, individual deviation is not acceptable. Just as it is wrong to make what is private

into something public, it is equally wrong to turn what is public into something private.

The simplest and most natural way to understand this distinction is by looking at it through the lens of a family, which is the foundational unit of any nation. A nation, after all, is a collection of families. Now consider how this principle operates at the family level: there are always some matters of common interest, on which all family members hold a shared opinion, and other matters where personal preferences naturally differ.

For instance, a family's economic decisions—such as income, expenses, and budgeting—require consensus and cooperation. If every member followed a separate financial strategy, the very survival of the family unit could be at risk.

In contrast, when it comes to individual preferences, each case is different. For instance, one person may enjoy a particular type of food, while another prefers something else. Some choose Western clothing, others Eastern. One might be drawn to literature, another to science. Some are deeply religious, others more liberal in their beliefs. One may favor furniture in a certain color, while another likes a different shade, and so on.

This dual principle—uniformity in shared concerns and freedom in personal matters—governs all families, whether Hindu, Muslim, or of any other background. It

is a universal principle of human nature, and it operates everywhere in the world.

In November 1991, I had the opportunity to attend a seminar on national integration in Solapur, Maharashtra. On that occasion, the local MLA, Shri Tulsidas Jadhav, delivered a memorable speech. He said:

“In my own home, I saw that my father was a non-vegetarian, while my mother was a strict vegetarian. Yet, there was never any conflict between them. For years, I observed that my mother would wake up each morning, first prepare meat for my father, and place it on the dining table. Only afterwards would she bathe and then cook a vegetarian meal for herself.

She followed this routine until the end of her life. Despite such a major difference in food habits, they never argued over it. They lived together with mutual respect and affection throughout their lives.”

This anecdote illustrates a broader truth about every family: some matters are shared, while others are personal. Shared matters are those that affect all members equally—such as family reputation, livelihood, advancement, and safety. In these areas, there is naturally a common understanding among family members.

In contrast, there are personal matters—such as food preferences, clothing styles, leisure activities, and habits—where everyone prefers their own choice. The natural principle of life is that in shared matters, unity must be maintained, while in individual matters, each person should enjoy personal freedom.

The key to a successful society lies in striking the proper balance between unity and diversity.

Just as these principles apply at the family level, they extend—on a larger scale—nationwide. A nation, too, consists of both collective national interests and individual interests. When these two are clearly distinguished and each is respected in its own domain, the nation functions smoothly. But when this distinction is blurred, and ideological pressure is applied to merge both domains, the issue no longer remains a manageable social concern—it becomes a source of prolonged national conflict.

A family is based on kinship, while a nation is built upon a shared homeland. The basic principle of nationhood is that all individuals living within a common geographical boundary belong to the same nation. In India, for example, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, and Parsis—all are members of one nation. Whether we call it Hindustani, Indian, or Bharatiya, the idea remains the same.

Within the human collective that constitutes Indian nationalism, there is one common element, alongside

certain aspects that are individual in nature. Matters related to India's unity or its material well-being—such as political integrity, territorial sovereignty, or economic progress—are shared concerns. On these issues, every citizen, regardless of religion or background, must adopt a unified national perspective.

For example:

- Kashmir is not a “Muslim issue” for a Muslim; it is an Indian issue.
- Punjab is not a “Sikh issue” for a Sikh; it is an Indian issue.
- Assam is not a “Christian issue” for a Christian; it is likewise an Indian issue.

In all matters tied to the nation's collective political, economic, or geographic interests, there can be no separation in thought or loyalty across individuals or communities.

Beyond this domestic sphere, many areas are governed by individual preferences, such as religion, diet, dress, language, lifestyle, and marriage customs. In these domains, each person should have the freedom to act according to their beliefs and personal choices. This standard is now universally accepted by developed nations.

The only reasonable limit to this individual freedom is that it must not infringe upon the freedom of others. As

one American citizen aptly told a fellow countryman—after being struck on the nose by someone who misused the idea of “freedom”:

“Your freedom ends where my nose begins.”

To summarize: Every person living in the land between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean—as defined in our Constitution as “India”—is an Indian. All such individuals form one nation. It is essential that everyone adopt a shared national outlook and live together with mutual respect and cooperation.

However, within this national collective, individual ways of life cannot be uniform—nor are they, in fact, uniform anywhere in the world. In the national sphere, unity of thought is a necessity. But in the personal sphere, the same human nature that demands unity in one area also demands diversity in the other.

Even four brothers born to the same parents may share a common outlook in matters concerning the family’s collective interest, but their personal temperaments, tastes, and lifestyles will often differ.

From this, we understand that what we call Indian nationhood consists of two distinct spheres:

- In one, uniformity is essential, and division cannot be tolerated.

- In the other, diversity is natural, and success lies in mutual tolerance.

In the first sphere, we live by the spirit of:

“I became you, and you became me”—*Man tu shudam, tu man shudi*

In the second, we follow the principle:

“Let us agree to disagree.”

A truly successful Indian nationalism can only be built when these two spheres are clearly understood and honoured. If separatism in the national domain deserves to be called treason, then in the personal domain, the opposite attitude applies. As Walt Whitman eloquently put it:

“I am large enough to contain all these contradictions.” (*Al-Risala*, February 1995)

REFERRING TO THE COUNTRY AS 'MOTHERLAND'

A person once emailed to ask whether calling India the Motherland (*Madar-e-Watan*) is permissible or not. The answer is that discussing this in terms of permissible and impermissible unnecessarily turns it into a religious-

legal issue. This approach reflects a kind of extremism—the tendency to treat every issue as a matter of Islamic law. In Islamic teachings, this attitude is called *ghulu* (excess), which is clearly discouraged in the Quran and Sunnah.

Once, a Companion, Wabisah al-Asadi, came to the Prophet Muhammad with many questions. The Prophet did not answer them directly but instead said: “Seek a fatwa from your heart.” (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 18006)

This means not every issue should be turned into a legal ruling. At times, one should rely on their natural moral sense—what their heart and conscience tell them.

Those who refer to India as Motherland are not claiming, literally, that they were born from its womb. This is clearly a metaphorical use of language. In essence, Motherland refers to the same concept as birthplace, native land, or homeland. If, hypothetically, someone were to interpret Motherland literally—as if people were physically born from the soil—then that would be their personal view, not yours. You are free to use the word Motherland with the meaning you understand. Others may interpret it differently, and that is their concern, not yours.

This too is part of the wisdom of life: not every idea needs to be pushed to its logical extreme. Often, it is better to understand things in terms of their widely accepted, conventional meanings.

The term Motherland (*Bharat Mata*) began to be used in the late 19th century by leaders of the Indian independence movement for political purposes. It has no religious basis or origin. (*Al-Risala*, September 2016)

COMMUNAL HARMONY

On April 16, 1994, at the invitation of the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, I was in Nagpur. There was a meeting held at Reshimbagh (Nagpur), where I gave the inaugural address. In my speech, I said that after independence, India could not become the developed nation that it ought to have become. The biggest reason for this is the lack of unity in the country. Therefore, I have made communal harmony my mission for the nation.

One point I mentioned in this context was that the root of the problem lies in unnecessary misunderstandings developing on both sides. If interaction between the two communities increases, these misunderstandings will naturally fade away, and normal relations will be reestablished among people.

I shared various incidents and, through real-life examples, explained that every person is a human being.

If someone appears to you as an opponent, it is only a temporary condition.

I mentioned that the way some Muslims react so strongly to Vande Mataram or similar issues is not due to any real conflict, but rather because of unnecessary sensitivity. Before 1947, such sensitivity was not present among Muslims. As a result, Muslims themselves used to make such remarks, and no reaction followed. I recited a few verses of Muhammad Iqbal, for example:

*Sare jahan se achha Hindustan hamara
Hum bulbulen is ki, yeh gulistan hamara*

Better than the entire world is our Hindustan,
We are its nightingales, and it is our garden.

*Mir-e-Arab ko aayi thandi hawa jahan se
Mera watan wahi hai, mera watan wahi hai*

From where came the cool breeze to the Chief of
Arabia (Prophet of Islam),
That is my homeland, that is my homeland.

*Hai Ram ke wujood pe Hindustan ko naaz
Ahl-e-watan samajhte hain us ko Imam-e-Hind*

India is proud of the existence of Ram,
The people of the nation consider him the Imam of
India.

Before 1947, no Muslim would be offended by such verses of Muhammad Iqbal. Today, if a Hindu or a Muslim compares something similar, it immediately triggers a flurry of statements and letters in newspapers. The reason is that incompetent leaders have unnecessarily made Muslims sensitive to such issues. (*Nagpur ka Safar*, 1994)

PATRIOTISM AND NATIONAL UNITY

There was a gathering of Muslim scholars. One of the speakers remarked in his speech that Muslims are wrongly accused of not being part of the country's mainstream (*mukhya dhara*), whereas, in reality, they are. When my turn came to speak, I said that, in my view, this complaint is entirely valid. He asked, how so? I responded: Inclusion in the mainstream begins from the point at which one accepts that Hindus and Muslims form a single nation. That fundamental acceptance, however, has yet to be realized.

I said that every Indian scholar who applies for a passport writes "Indian" in the nationality section, just as a Hindu does. This means that the nationality of both Hindus and Muslims is the same, and therefore, both are one nation. But the scholars have still not made this declaration.

Before 1947, under the influence of the Muslim League movement, the idea was deeply implanted in the minds of all Muslims that Hindus and Muslims are two separate nations. That same mindset, consciously or unconsciously, continues till date.

To bring both communities into the national mainstream, the first step must be a unified declaration by the scholars stating that national identity is based on homeland. Since the homeland of both Hindus and Muslims is the same, they are therefore one nation.

For the sake of personal benefit, everyone lists Indian as their nationality on the passport form. But when it comes to making this very point as a public declaration, they are not ready. How strange is this contradiction that exists in people's lives. (*Diary*, 26 November 1995)

GOOD INDIAN

In the English magazine Sunday, issue dated November 19-25, 1995, a detailed interview with Mr. Arun Shourie was published. The interviewer was Mani Shankar Aiyar. In this interview, one of the things Mr. Arun Shourie said was that it is very difficult for a good Muslim to be a good Indian as well.

After reading the interview, I called Mr. Arun Shourie on the phone. I said, “Tell me, am I a good Muslim or not?” He said, “Who can say that you are not a good Muslim?” I said, “Then listen: I am both a good Muslim and a good Indian.” While saying this, the words spontaneously came out of my mouth—“If I am not a good Indian, then Mahatma Gandhi also was not a good Indian.”

A few days after this incident, Dr. Mahesh Chandra Sharma (Member of Parliament) came to my office to meet me. I narrated this conversation to him. After listening to it, he said, “Maulana Sahib, you do not need Arun Shourie’s certificate to be a good Indian. You are a good Indian even without such a certificate.” (*Hind-Pak Diary*)

After that comes another incident. From November 23 to December 1, 1996, I was in Pune. One night, before Fajr, I woke up at 4 a.m. I made ablution and offered two rak‘ats of prayer with long recitation. After that, I sat in my room, and suddenly I remembered that Shri Guru Golwalkar and Mr. Arun Shourie had written that a good Muslim can never be a good Indian.

Thinking about this, tears flowed from my eyes involuntarily—that such people know so little about a human being. Much more aware of human nature was the 19th-century American poet Walt Whitman, who said:

I am large enough to contain all these contradictions.

I was saying this and crying: By God, I am a good Muslim, and at the same time, I am a good Indian. To say that I am not a good citizen of the country I was born in is an insult to my human dignity.

Love for one's country is a purely natural emotion. And that which is rooted in human nature can never be absent from any human being.

I said in my heart: Even if Mahatma Gandhi were to be born again and say, "I give you a certificate of being a good Indian," I would refuse to accept it. I would say: Does a son need a certificate from someone else to prove he is a good son to his mother? By God, I am a good Indian without any certificate from Guru Golwalkar or Gandhi.

The tears that flow in solitude out of love for India—unseen by anyone—are in themselves enough to confirm that I consider myself, in the fullest sense, a good Indian. (*Pune Ka Safar*, November 1996)

LOYALTY AND LOVE

In the history of Islam, the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah stands as an example of accepting the status quo, and in matters of dispute, the only workable approach is that a person accepts the status quo.

While speaking with Rahat Abrar Sahib (Aligarh), Khurshid Ahmad Sahib (Bombay), and several other Muslims, I said that I have, on many occasions, stated in Hindu gatherings and meetings that it is often said a Muslim cannot be a good Indian. This is a baseless statement. I am, in every sense, a Muslim. Even so, I am, in every sense, a good Indian.

Then I said, if I am not a good Indian, then Mahatma Gandhi was also not a good Indian. I further said that I do not need a certificate from Guru Golwalkar to be a good Indian. Without any such certificate, I am a good Indian.

To my visitors, I said that I speak honestly and openly in front of my Hindu friends because my love for India is genuine. From my heart, I wish for India's progress and success, not in hostility toward others, but in striving to be a beacon of peace, development, and unity. (*Diary*, 14 November 1996)

SENSE OF PATRIOTISM

Dr. Hamidullah Nadwi is a professor in the Arabic department at Bhopal University. He came to Delhi. During a conversation, he said that the incompetent Muslim leadership of the present time has done a dangerous thing:

through their unfounded claims, they have taken away the sense of patriotism from the Muslims of India.

The condition of Muslims here is now such that they do not truly consider India to be their homeland, and at the same time, they are also aware that no other country is willing to accept them. In this way, they have mentally become out of place—both in their own country and in other countries. This mindset has caused Muslims tremendous harm. (*Diary*, 1 October 1997)

In the present time, Muslim leaders have voiced much opposition to nationalism and patriotism, which has now become a part of the psychology of a large number of Muslims. One argument presented is that modern nationalism and patriotism could erase Muslim identity, causing them, as a distinct millat, to lose their independent existence.

But this fear was simply the result of ignorance. Most importantly, it was this narrow interpretation of identity that led Muslims into a state of isolationism. As a consequence, their worldly progress came to a standstill, and at the same time, numerous misunderstandings about their religion began to spread among the general public. (*Nagpur ka Safar*)

RICH INDIA, POOR AMERICA

Once, Mother Teresa was invited to the United States. She participated in a large gathering where the President of the United States was also present. On that occasion, Mother Teresa was asked to say a few words. Beginning her speech, the first sentence she said was: “I have come from rich India to poor America.”

What she meant was that, although America is rich in material terms, it is spiritually poor—whereas India, despite being materially behind, is ahead of America in spiritual terms.

Mother Teresa was born in Albania. In her youth, she acquired Indian citizenship. After that, she truly considered India her homeland. The above sentence was spoken out of a sense of patriotism. There are many people who were born in India, yet even so, they are deprived of this kind of patriotic feeling. (*Diary*, 2 October 1997)

THIS IS NOT ISLAM

According to the report, there are fifteen thousand Muslims in the U.S. military. These people are going through a kind of psychological crisis. That is: whether they should, after joining the U.S. military, participate in a war against a Muslim country like Iraq or not.

It was reported that an American Muslim named Akbar, who was stationed in Kuwait with the U.S. military, in a state of mental distress, attacked American soldiers with a grenade and killed six of them.

In my view, the choice for American Muslims in this case is not whether they should join the U.S. military and fight against a Muslim country or not. The real choice is simply this: either accept U.S. citizenship or leave America by renouncing that citizenship.

To me, this is a hypocritical (double standard) approach: to accept U.S. citizenship, benefit from its material comforts, and then, when the country faces a national war, refuse to support it.

I do not subscribe to the concept of the Ummah as it is commonly understood among Muslims today. In my view,

Muslims are a global community in terms of religion, but in terms of homeland, their loyalties should be with their own country—just as members of other nations, while having a distinct religious identity, still stand with their fellow citizens in national matters. (*Diary*, 26 March 2003)

A PRACTICAL OBSERVATION

On BBC London's Hindi news program, there is a regular segment titled *Baat Ek Safar Ki* ("A Story of a Journey").

Under this segment, the incident presented on 13 November 2003 was as follows: A man named Mushtaq Khan from Samastipur (Bihar) shared that he had travelled to Karachi (Pakistan) to meet his sister. This journey was commenced in September 1991. He said that he departed by train from the Wagah Border. When he reached the Pakistani border (Attari), some passengers informed him that the current Pakistani Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, had announced that passengers coming from India would not be subjected to customs checks. Hearing this, Mr. Mushtaq Khan was very pleased.

However, when their train reached Lahore Railway Station on 11 September 1991, the situation turned out to be

entirely different. The customs staff began aggressively inspecting them. When Mr. Mushtaq Khan, disturbed, said something, one of the customs officers lashed out at him. He said in a contemptuous tone, “You look like an Indian just from your face.”

Mr. Mushtaq Khan replied with these words: “The faces of us Indians shine with light, while the faces of you Pakistanis drip with disgrace.”

This incident reflects the feelings of ordinary Indian Muslims. The common Muslim, who lives peacefully alongside Hindus, holds such sentiments in their heart about India.

But the case of so-called Muslim leaders and so-called Urdu journalism is different. It is their negative writings and negative speeches that create the kind of problems which give hardline Hindus the chance to say that Indian Muslims are not patriotic. (*Diary*, 13 November 2003)

KINDNESS TOWARD FELLOW CITIZENS

Two gentlemen came to meet me. They were Muslims and lived in Britain. During the conversation, I said to them that a Muslim should have love for his homeland—British Muslims should love Britain, and American Muslims should love America.

They said, “Even if the people there hate us, should we still love them?” I said, “Yes.”

Then I narrated this hadith to them: “Never debase your character by saying that if people treat you well, you will treat them well, and if they harm you, then you will do worse to them. Instead, become accustomed to being good to those who are good to you and not wronging those who harm you.” (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 2007)

This shows that Islamic ethics are not based on tit-for-tat behaviour. Islamic ethics are based on one-sided, unilateral moral conduct. (*Diary*, 28 July 2011)

NATIONAL CHARACTER

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan is one of India's largest educational and publishing institutions. At its invitation, I travelled to Bombay (now Mumbai) in November 1993. The reason for this visit was that Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan had organized a special gathering, in which I was invited to participate and deliver an address.

At this event, during my half-hour speech, I emphasized two particular points: Hindu-Muslim unity and national character.

While explaining the importance of Hindu-Muslim unity, I said that it was for the sake of this very unity that Mahatma Gandhi had gone to Noakhali (Bangladesh). During his stay there, on 5 December 1946, he wrote:

The present mission is the most complicated of all I have undertaken in my life...I mean to do or die here. "To do" means to restore amity between Hindus and Muslims; or I should perish in the attempt. (*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 86, pp. 197-198)

Regarding national character, I said that national character means placing the interest of the nation above all. Wherever the nation's interest is involved, personal interest should be made secondary. (*Bombay ka Safar*, November 1993)

TEARS OF PATRIOTISM

I met with some people. During the conversation, the topic of patriotism came up. The question was raised: Who is a true patriot, and how can one recognize them?

I asked, "Do you know that a mother loves her son, and a trader loves his customer as well?"

They said, "Yes, everyone knows that."

Then I asked, "Do you know any mother who has wept out of love for her son?"

They said, "All mothers are like that. If a mother hears that her son is in trouble, she will certainly shed tears."

I said, "Now tell me—do you know any trader who cries for his customer?" They replied, "We don't know of any such trader."

I said, "Now let me change the question and ask something else. All of you belong to different political parties. Every party leader claims to be a patriot. Can any one of you tell

me which leaders in your party have ever cried over the condition of the country?" Everyone said, "We don't know of any such leader. Everyone claims to be a patriot, but no one cries for the country."

I said, "Now listen to my conclusion: The person who weeps in sorrow for the country is a true patriot. And the one who only delivers speeches in the name of the country is a fake patriot." (*Bombay ka Safar*, November 1993)

NATIONAL AWARENESS AND NATION-BUILDING

For the development of the country, a programme is essential. But before the programme, the individuals are needed who will willingly adopt that programme.

I said that, at present, it is necessary to foster this awareness among Hindus and Muslims: that differences always exist in every society. We must learn to live together despite disagreements and grievances.

The solution to our country's problems is the same as what someone once said: Peaceful resolution of conflicts.

For this purpose, we must launch an intensive awareness programme. (*Sevagram ka Safar*, March 1993)

ABOVE DIFFERENCES, THE NATION FIRST

At the invitation of Bharat Vikas Parishad, a trip to Rajasthan took place. On 31 March 1995, at 3:00 p.m., a meeting of youth was held at the Information Centre (*Sochna Kendra*). After the opening speeches, I was given the opportunity to speak.

In my speech, I stated that if we adopt two things, then nothing can hinder the country's progress.

Presently, the condition is such that people only know how to take from the country—they do not know how to give. This mindset is not only harmful for the country but, in the long term, it is also harmful to the individuals themselves. We must ensure that, in comparison to personal interests, the interests of the nation is held higher.

The second thing is that the greatest obstacle to this country's progress is the Hindu-Muslim conflict. This conflict is entirely based on misunderstandings.

During the time of the Emergency, when both Hindus and Muslims were arrested and placed in jail together,

each one realized that their doubts about the other were baseless. If interaction between Hindus and Muslims somehow increases, then all misunderstandings will disappear on their own. (*Rajasthan ka Safar*)

FROM THE WORDS OF A SENIOR CITIZEN

I was born on January 1st, 1925, in Uttar Pradesh during the British India era. Now, as a senior citizen, I have witnessed the transition from colonial rule to independent India.

I was born into a family renowned for its role in the freedom struggle. My elder brother, Iqbal Ahmad Khan Suhail (MA LLB), Advocate (1884–1955), was not only a freedom fighter but also a poet. In one of his poems, he wrote:

*Ghalat hai yeh keh faqat Hinduon ka leader tha
Ke tha tamaam jahan bhar ka rehnuma Gandhi*

It is wrong to say he was only the leader of Hindus; Gandhi was a guiding figure for the entire world.

Iqbal Ahmad Khan Suhail contested the 1936 elections in Uttar Pradesh and, after winning, became a member of

the UP Assembly. As I grew older, I came across Swami Vivekananda's book 'Letters of Swami Vivekananda.' In letter number 271 dated June 10, 1898, he wrote to a friend and shared his vision for a free India. He expressed it in these words:

“For our own motherland, a junction of the two great systems Hinduism and Islam—Vedanta brain and Islam body—is the only hope I see in my mind's eye, the future perfect India rising out of this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible with Vedanta brain and Islam body.” (*Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 427)

These beautiful memories stay etched in my heart. I actively participated in the freedom movement to the best of my ability. For example, before independence, I once travelled to Mau (UP) to hear Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) speak. I still remember how eager people were to attend, even riding on the rooftops of buses and trains just to get there. Similarly, I attended a rally in Phoolpur (Azamgarh) where I heard Subhas Chandra Bose (1897-1945) speak. As we know, Subhas Chandra Bose formed the Azad Hind Fauj (Indian National Army) in 1942. His iconic slogan still echoes in history:

“Give me blood, and I will give you freedom.”

In the same spirit, I once attended a socialist gathering where I heard a speech by Jayaprakash Narayan (1902-1979). The event was held in Azamgarh. As is well known, Jayaprakash Narayan later became known as Lok Nayak. And so, my youth days passed by. Then came that historic day, August 15, 1947. I did not hear the famous speech delivered at midnight by the then Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten (1900-1979), broadcast on All India Radio at 12:01 AM, in which he declared:

“Today, India is free.”

Like many others, I couldn't listen to the speech live on the radio, but I read it in the newspaper the next morning. On August 15, 1947, I was in Azamgarh. I still remember that night clearly: when I stepped out of my residence and walked through the streets of the city, I was surrounded by the glow of joyous lights. The entire city was lit up in celebration. That light has now faded, but the time has come for all of us to come together and light a new lamp, heralding a new era for India. An era of rebuilding the nation. The era envisioned by Swami Vivekananda. The era for which Mahatma Gandhi gave his life. The era whose final chapter perhaps still awaits the pen of India's historian.

I am now over 90 years old, but my hopes are still alive. Every morning, I leave my room and sit quietly, waiting for the sun to rise. I remember that once, during an Independence Day program, I heard an Urdu poet recite:

*Burj-e-mehn se nikla sooraj,
roshan apna mustaqbil hai*

From the tower of endeavour, a sun rises; our
future shines brightly.

I watch the sunrise every morning, hoping that this day might be the one—the day longed for by a freedom fighter who once wrote a book titled Roshan Mustaqbil, ‘A Bright Future.’ I greet each new dawn with these words:

“That morning will surely come; That morning
will surely come.”

India earned its historic freedom through peaceful struggle. Now, the task of rebuilding India should also be pursued through peaceful means. Just as India once made history with peace, it is now time to harness that same strength—peace—for its reconstruction. Peace was India’s strength in the past; it remains so today, and it must continue to be our strength in the future.

On August 15, 2020, India celebrated its seventy-fourth Independence Day. Now, the time has come to decisively chart our course as a free nation. Independence Day should serve as a trendsetter for us. We must declare the year 2020 as a trend-setting year and carefully determine the direction we want to take as an independent people.

Swami Vivekananda once said that his dream for India was to see it emerge as a spiritual superpower after independence. India, without doubt, has the potential to become such a spiritual superpower. To turn that potential into reality, only one thing is needed, a united and democratic effort by all.

I am over 90 now, and in that sense, I have gained extensive life experience. Based on my experience, I believe there is only one practical model for India's development. That is the same natural model often called the American model. The American model emphasizes free competition, which means creating an environment where individuals succeed based on merit, not favouritism. The true key to progress is competition, not favouritism.

In America, the principle in every field is compete or perish, meaning either compete or be finished. In common terms, this is called do or die.

According to the law of nature, no group in this world can advance through favouritism. It can only succeed by demonstrating its worth through competition. It is competition that elevates a person from man to superman. This is because the Creator has designed this world based on the principle of challenge and response. The key to individual or societal progress is to let nature operate freely. Any other principle would be man-made and can never be practically implemented.

This is the natural model. The model of competition is motivating. In contrast, Nehru adopted the Russian model, which he called the socialist model. But in practice, this model is demotivating. Now is the time for us to adopt a model based on motivation and to fully abandon the model that leads to demotivation. The final moment has arrived for us to replan India's development.

Once, John Kenneth Galbraith (1908-2006), a former US ambassador to India, said in a statement, India is a functioning anarchy. I do not see this as criticism but

as a challenge, and I pray that India becomes an ideal democracy. (*Al Risala*, October 2020)

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Question

In a letter published in the May 2004 issue of *Tadhkeer* you referred to a speech delivered at Delhi's Constitution Club, in which you described the 'Two-Nation Theory' as an idea developed by Muhammad Iqbal and Mr. Jinnah. You argued that prophets addressed their communities as "O my people," implying that all inhabitants of a region—regardless of religious belief—constitute a single nation.

With due respect, I would like to raise a point: The Qur'an consistently distinguishes between believers and disbelievers—addressing them separately, affirming that they are different, and stating that each follows a separate path (e.g., 32:18, 68:35–36, 109:1–6).

In light of these verses, how can it be maintained—as you seem to suggest—that believers and disbelievers form a single nation? (Muhammad Siddiq, Islamabad)

Answer

1. When the Quran establishes that earlier prophets addressed their non-Muslim audiences with the words

“O my people,” (e.g., 7:61, 11:89, 36:20, 39:39, 40:29), this same approach becomes part of the model (*uswah*) of the Prophet Muhammad. This is because the Quran, in addressing the Prophet, states: “So follow their guidance” (6:90)—referring to the guidance of the earlier prophets.

This shows that they made no distinction based on a person’s social or ethnic identity; rather, the distinction you refer to pertains to religious belief, not to one’s human or ethnic affiliation. Reports from the traditions (*riwayat*) confirm that the Prophet Muhammad followed this example in practice as well. During the Battle of Uhud, when his opponents struck him with a stone that injured his face, blood began to flow. At that moment, he acted in accordance with the example of a previous prophet.

Abdullah ibn Mas‘ud, describing the event, said: “It is as if I am watching the Prophet describing a prophet from among the earlier prophets. His people struck him and wounded him. He was wiping blood from his face and saying: ‘O God, forgive my people, for they do not know.’” (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1792)

What I have stated in this matter is based on clear textual evidence (*nass*). In contrast, what you have written relies entirely on analogy and inference (*qiyas wa istinbat*). It is a well-established principle that no analogy or inference can override a direct textual proof.

2. The real problem with people like you is that you have permanently split humanity into two groups: Muslims and

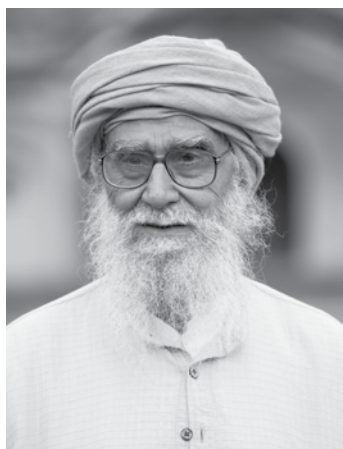
those who deny the truth (*kuffar*). Because of this split, you believe that there is an eternal Muslim nation on one side and an eternal non-Muslim nation on the other. This kind of division is completely wrong.

A Muslim, in essence, is not the name of an ethnic group, nor is a denier (*kafir*) defined by ethnicity. The difference between the two depends solely on whether one has discovered the truth or not. Therefore, throughout human history—and into the future—it has been the case that some individuals born into Muslim families gradually drift away from Islam, while others, previously unfamiliar with it, come to explore its teachings and adopt them based on personal conviction.

For this reason, it is entirely reasonable that the foundation of nationhood should lie not in religion, but in a shared homeland. Religious identity can evolve over time, whereas the identity of a homeland generally remains stable.

Hence, it is both natural and reasonable that nationhood should not be based on religion, but rather on homeland. Religious affiliation can change over time, whereas the division of homelands generally remains stable.

To better understand the verses you mentioned in your question, you may refer to my Quran commentary *Tazkir al-Quran* and the chapter titled ‘The Issue of *Kufr* and *Kafir*’ in my book *Hikmat-e-Islam*.



Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (1925-2021), an Islamic scholar, spiritual leader, and peace activist, was internationally recognized for his seminal contributions to world peace. The Government of India posthumously honored him with the Padma Vibhushan Award in 2021 for his contributions to spirituality. Maulana authored over 200 books that delve into Islam's spiritual wisdom, the Prophet's non-violent approach, its relationship with modernity, and other contemporary issues. His English translation of the Quran and Quran Commentary are widely appreciated for their simplicity, clarity, and ease of understanding. In 2001, he founded the Centre for Peace and Spirituality International to promote a culture of peace and convey the spiritual message of Islam at a global level. CPS International Network is taking the legacy forward.

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Love for one's homeland is a natural and profound human sentiment that nurtures identity, belonging, and moral responsibility. It goes beyond the land itself, encompassing memories, traditions, language, and shared experiences. While the Qur'an and Hadith do not explicitly command love for one's country, they uphold principles that reinforce its value.

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