

## **Concepts That Must Be Corrected**

### **1. The Concept of Accepting Pluralism... and Following Ambiguous Matters**

*November 9, 2010*

A term emerged to the surface during the celebration held to honor Dr. Muhammad Imara, in a speech delivered by one of his admirers, highlighting his multifaceted talents and his enrichment of Islamic heritage. As a foundation of his intellectual construction, it was noted that he "accepts pluralism" and establishes it as a principle.

As we have previously indicated, these terms that have begun to scatter left and right from the mouths of our "thinkers," without discipline or connection, represent a severe danger to the path of the Islamic revival movement. These terms are extremely fluid and changeable, and one does not know what is intended by them - whether good or evil, or, according to the concept of modernist moderation, something in between that good and that evil!

It is an obligation upon the capable to clarify these ambiguous terms, as following them without establishing their meanings is, without doubt, following ambiguous matters - carriers of multiple meanings. This is precisely what we are forbidden from in His saying, the Almighty: "But those in whose hearts is deviation follow that of it which is ambiguous, seeking discord and seeking an interpretation" (Quran 3:7). In this lies what confuses the intended meaning for the listener and opens the door to interpretations for the speaker, so that both the listener and the speaker are on different paths that do not meet. Consequently, language loses its fundamental characteristic, which is conveying controlled meanings from the tongue of the speaker to the mind of

the listener. Do not underestimate this problem, for it is the foundation of every affliction that humanity has known in its journey to this day.

The new term is problematic and ambiguous in both its aspects: the words "acceptance" and "pluralism." The listener does not know what is meant by pluralism. Is it cultural pluralism, such as accepting classical vertical poetry alongside modern free verse poetry, for example? Or cultural pluralism in the broader sense of culture, such as accepting the culture of urban dwellers alongside the culture of rural and Bedouin peoples? Or is it political pluralism, meaning accepting party politics based on differences in reform programs? Or political pluralism in its more general sense, accepting party politics based on religious or tribal foundations equally? Or is it national pluralism, meaning that a person carries multiple citizenships alongside their original nationality and owes allegiance to them as they owe allegiance to their mother country?

Or is the intended pluralism the pluralism of religions in one homeland, as exists in the land of Egypt, with a Muslim majority living among a Coptic minority? Or is it the pluralism of sects within one religion, such as those with rationalist Mu'tazila heretical thought, who deny authentic hadiths, to which Dr. Imara belongs, in their presence on the Islamic scene alongside the people of Sunna and Jama'a who follow the methodology of the righteous predecessors?

Then the word "acceptance," which can be attached to any of the previous meanings of pluralism, what is meant by it in this context? Is it acceptance of satisfaction and welcome, or acceptance of compulsion and submission? Is it acceptance of an imposed reality, to be silent about until a time, or is it acceptance of a law of life from which there is no escape or avoidance? Is it conditional acceptance in some meanings of pluralism, and unconditional in others? Or is it absolute acceptance without conditions?

"Accepting pluralism" is, therefore, a meaning that is extremely ambiguous, extremely problematic, if thrown carelessly and intended as praise for one of the prominent names in the field of Islamic thought. As we have seen, the term may carry "praise" for its owner, or it may carry "criticism" and disparagement of his position, depending on what is intended by it.

Absolute acceptance of pluralism is a shameful and fallen matter that does not elevate the status of a thinker, nor does it serve as good praise for a writer, whether in cultural, political, national, or religious pluralism.

In cultural pluralism, we do not see a classical Arabic poet among the great ones accepting modern poetry that is neither rhymed nor metered, considering his acceptance as a weakness of poetic faculty in producing what the predecessors produced. As for those who accepted it, it was for the sake of innovation and distinction, as Al-Aqqad said, through different poetic subjects and unity of construction versus unity of verse, like the Apollo school and the Diwan school. But all of these don't accept the poetic decline that is called poetry, which is neither poetry nor prose

Then cultural pluralism in its broader sense is undoubtedly acceptable in its land and homeland as long as - and this is a legal condition - it does not conflict with the religious or customary constants of society, as would be the case if rural and Bedouin culture carried the principle of female infanticide or contempt for women.

In political pluralism, under a legitimate Islamic government, one can accept pluralism that carries reform programs taking different paths for the nation's scientific and practical advancement. But this does not mean accepting religious parties that multiply with the multiplication of minorities of religions and sects, for this is a matter that completely contradicts Islam. Religious

political partisanship means nothing but accepting the call to distorted, hostile religions under the auspices of Allah and His Messenger. We do not know under what legal basis the proponents of deviant renewal and false moderation can slip in acceptance of this pluralism.

Religious pluralism, as we mentioned in our previous articles, means preserving the covenant of those with whom treaties are made, and respecting the rights of protected people (dhimmi) from the People of the Book and polytheists, Jews and Christians, on the condition that they preserve the covenant and safeguard the trust. Otherwise, they are among us like the Banu Qurayza with the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him - they have no covenant or protection after they betrayed him, peace be upon him, to the polytheists of Quraysh in the Battle of the Trench. If they betray and conspire against the noble homeland that sheltered them, and from whose goodness the flesh of their children grew, and they collaborate with the polytheists of the West, or the protected people among those who joined the polytheists of the West, then they would have nothing at that time but the sword.

National pluralism follows this meaning, as the homeland is open to whoever wishes to live in it safely, peacefully, or as a treaty-holder from the protected people. They have what Muslims have, and upon them is what is upon Muslims, according to what the Sunna of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, has decreed - which the proponents of deviant renewal and false moderation want to bypass. They abolish the meaning of protection (dhimma) because they are unable to confront the polytheists with it, out of fear and weakness in both strength and faith, and they replace it with the term "citizenship," which differs from the concept of protection both in form and substance.

But the proponents of deviant renewal and false moderation never cease to split our heads with renewal, modernization, reality, the passage of time, and changing events, which necessitates changing meanings - all this empty chatter that carries no substance, if it does not carry poison.

Similarly, national pluralism that allows a son of a protected or indigenous homeland to betray his country for the sake of his immigrant country is not acceptable - not legally, customarily, or morally. Rather, it is rejected in all the man-made laws of humanity, and its perpetrator is sentenced to death on charges of high treason. Some countries do not even allow their citizens to hold multiple citizenships. This is precisely what we mean by the confusion of these random concepts that are tossed around by the mouths of our "thinkers" in their "intellectual" gatherings.

The most amazing thing is the position of our "thinkers" regarding these ambiguous concepts, as none of them bothered to explain to their readers and followers the vocabulary of these concepts, out of respect for the minds of their readers and followers. Even though our "thinkers" are the proponents of rationalism over the people of Sunna, it would have been more appropriate for them to have the patience to explain what they mean by these ambiguous matters. But they preferred closure, ambiguity, and concealment, and turned away from clarification, precision, and explanation, for a need in themselves that only Allah knows.

From here, we see that these ambiguous concepts, which have now become features of the dictionary of our contemporary "thinkers" from the proponents of deviant renewal and false moderation, must have their purposes clarified by their proponents, and their meanings must be made precise. Otherwise, they fall under the scope of the verse of Al Imran.

What a pity for those who fall under the scope of the verse of Al Imran.

O Allah, show us the truth as truth and grant us to follow it, and show us falsehood as falsehood and grant us to avoid it.