

The Civil State and the Challenges of Reality

(Translated)

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By: Ustadh Nasser Reda*

The term “civil state” has recently emerged and gained currency within political circles in Muslim lands. This occurred after democracy lost its luster in the public imagination and its incompatibility with the creed of great Islam and its tolerant rulings became apparent. Since the disbelieving, colonialist West—along with its agents in Muslim lands—failed to successfully market or promote democratic ideology, they introduced the term “civil state” as a form of deception; in reality, it is the very same democratic system of governance—defined, as they claim, as rule by the people according to the people's will.

The civil state is defined as an institutional political system based on equal citizenship, the rule of law, and equality among all individuals regarding rights and obligations. It is associated with the nation-state, or territorial state, model established by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648—following the Thirty Years’ War between Catholics and Protestants—which created a reality that compelled European nations to agree on defined borders for each state. While this concept may appear convincing, it carries the seeds of its own corruption in three respects:

Firstly: It assigns the role of legislation to people instead of the Lord of the people, Allah (swt). This is the root of corruption in any ideology not founded upon divine revelation; human beings are unfit to act as legislators due to the limitations of their intellect—being inherently imperfect, incapable, and in need.

Secondly: Under the capitalist ideology of the civil state or democracy, adherence to the law implies that—provided one avoids legal repercussions—one is free to do anything. The reports of corruption and the Epstein Island affair in the disbelieving West, along with the exposed scandals involving politicians and rulers, serve as evidence of this. In contrast, Islam is implemented first through the individual's piety toward Allah (swt), then through the influence of a society that enjoins good and forbids evil, and finally through the power and authority of the state.

Thirdly: There is scarcely a state on earth that does not contain groups of diverse ethnicities, races, and religions; yet, the civil, democratic state has failed to successfully manage their coexistence within a single territory. Under the pretext of protecting minority ethnic groups and guaranteeing their rights, the concept of proportional representation in political life was devised, taking into account the distinct characteristics of each group.

The most prominent challenges facing the civil state in Muslim lands are:

Firstly: Its stance on Deen. It prohibits the existence of any legislation or laws derived from Islamic belief—contrary to the words of Allah (swt) Who said, **﴿إِنَّ الْحُكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ أَمَرَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ﴾** “**Legislation is not but for Allah. He has commanded that you worship not except Him**” [TMQ Surah Yusuf: 40]—which causes Muslims to reject it. Islam is a religion that encompasses the state and all systems of life, **﴿وَنَزَّلْنَا﴾**

﴿عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ﴾ **“And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all matters”** [TMQ Surah An-Nahl: 89].

Secondly: The presence of diverse races and ethnicities within Muslim lands—a feature of every country, alongside sectarian differences in some. How has the civil state addressed this challenge? The Dutch thinker Arend Lijphart devised “consociational democracy” as an alternative to traditional majoritarian democracy. He argued that a society diverse in ethnicity, religion, and sect requires proportional representation for all groups in government—based on a quota system—along with a veto right for minorities. The result was administrative and governmental bloat, as well as government failure due to the appointment of unqualified individuals to high-ranking state positions. Examples include the breakup of Yugoslavia into seven states and the division of Sudan into two; the trend of fragmentation continues. In contrast, Islam works to forge unity among peoples and addresses the issues of individuals and society as human matters—transcending race, color, gender, or religion—through legislation derived from Divine Revelation rather than human whims.

Thirdly: The adoption of political pluralism—while excluding parties based on Deen—in Muslim lands will inevitably lead to the emergence of Islamic parties and groups. This creates an ideological conflict that threatens the stability of governance, causes the civil government to fail, and paves the way for the military to seize power through a coup.

Fourthly: The concept of dividing power and wealth among societal factions frames governance as a “cake” to be sliced up and wealth as spoils for politicians to seize. In contrast, Islam views governance as a responsibility, a trust, and a Shariah obligation of benevolent guardianship. Islam has established specific Shariah rulings regarding this, outlining how authority is acquired and how resources are distributed among all; a ruler is entitled to nothing from it beyond fair compensation, and political work is regarded as an act of worship and obedience to Allah (swt), not a means of employment or profiteering.

In summary, the call for a “civil state” is essentially a call to exclude Islam and its systems from public life and to replace the Shariah of Allah (swt) with man-made, secular laws.

Consequently, it is impermissible to govern by such a system or to advocate for it. As Allah (swt) says, ﴿فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ﴾ **“But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, [O Muhammad], judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves”** [TMQ Surah An-Nisaa: 65]. Instead, the Shariah obligation is to call for the implementation of the Shariah Law of Allah (swt) within the state of the Khilafah (Caliphate), thereby averting the death of Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic ignorance) against which the Messenger of Allah (saw) warned.

*** Head of the Central Contact Committee of Hizb ut Tahrir in Wilayah Sudan**