
Be a good citizen

Allah (SWT) says: “*(Believers), you are the best community singled out for people.*”
(Ali Imran:110)

The above *ayah* tells us that part of the fundamental teachings of Islam is striving to contribute towards good. A Muslim should be remembered for his contributions regardless of where he is. As such, it is our duty to do good in the best possible manner in the society and the country we live in.

A citizen who loves his/her country will always contribute to its growth and prosperity. Such contributions arise from a commitment to the state as well as to universal principles such as justice, peace and prosperity.

A citizen who is loyal to his/her country will contribute to its political, social and economic stability. Every citizen should uphold the values the country stands for. Muslims, like every other citizen, also have the responsibility of ensuring that these values and principles, which also Islam espouses, are upheld. Thus, we should forge racial harmony, respect differences and work with others. We should also contribute to the country's economic growth, especially as competition grows as a result of globalization. Most importantly, we must be committed to defend this development and progress against any form of external threat.

Good citizens are very important assets for any country. To be good citizens, the Muslim community needs to actively contribute to the well-being of the nation. While doing so, it is also important to develop a strong identity. This issue of identity often arises when the government calls for integration and equality.

Being a good Muslim does not conflict with being a good citizen. Our identity as Muslims is not centred only on Islamic laws and individual rights. A Muslim's identity includes becoming a good citizen, observing the country's constitution, upholding justice,

maintaining harmony, and showing respect for religious freedom.

Dr. Salah al-Sultan has given several guidelines, derived from Islamic principles, for Muslim communities in plural societies and secular states. These guidelines include being patriotic and committed to contribute towards the progress and prosperity of the country.

According to him, Muslims have a responsibility to do the following, regardless of where they reside:

1. observe the fundamental religious teachings,
2. exude the true teachings of the religion, and
3. call others to do good.

The Muslim community that bases its religious life on profound principles and strong values will be able to thrive in all circumstances. Adaptation to contextual needs does not necessarily mean that each Muslim will forsake Islamic values and principles. Instead, adaptation means that a Muslim is able to live according to his/her religion, and in harmony with society, because everyone is guided by a set of shared principles and values.

A good Muslim believes that love for one's homeland is part of human nature, so long as principles, which are not at odds with Islam, are upheld in the country. A good Muslim is responsible for upholding justice, maintaining peace and improving the quality of life in his/her country. A good Muslim also understands that love for one's homeland is a part of the Islamic identity. Wallahu A'lam.

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