

UNDERSTANDING AL-WALA' AND WAL- BARA' - By Ustaz Hj Ali Hj Mohamed

It is imperative to put the concept - al-Wala' and al-Bara' (Love and Hate for the sake of Allah) - in its proper perspective to allow us to identify and weed out all strands of misinformation and misleading ideological leaning shrewdly woven to propagate extremism and violence. The principle of al-Wala' and al-Bara', in its original conception, requires an insightful contextual knowledge as a basis of understanding its meaning and allusion. It is a sacred, divine code of conduct Allah swt has enjoined for Muslims to adhere to. An imaginative element of a belief system it is not as it has been made out to be by a few who hold sinister agenda. Surely it is not an idea given birth by those given to radicalised or extremist predisposition. Though there have been attempts by the lot to distort and misrepresent the true meaning of al-Wala' and al-Bara', and turn it into a slogan underpinning their violent intent.

From the linguistic standpoint, al-Wala' signifies loyalty, devotion or love. Al-Bara' in contrast means extrication, free from anything or anyone, devoid of blame or hate. Islam relates al-Wala' to love for the sake of Allah, His Messenger, fellow Believers and those worthy of Allah's pleasure. Al-Bara' is interpreted as devoid of of infidelity, transgression, paganism or anything that is destructive.

The principle has been hijacked by the extremists and those bent on terror, and rolled it into basic ingredients for concocting hatred against non-Muslims or those not in sync with their ideology. The consequence of this dodgy interpretation is the promotion of misguided support for a way of life that is hostile, adversarial and violent towards non-Muslims and among us. Its devious reading has sanctioned the spill of blood of the innocent.

Fundamentally, Al-Wala' dan al-Bara' describes the posture Muslims should take in their relationship with non-Muslims. Among others, the concept is clarified to address some areas of concern as follows:

How should Muslims perceive non-Muslims; and how this perception should be formed on the basis of intent?

What is the appropriate code of conduct Muslims should adopt in their interaction with non-Muslims?

How could Muslims live side by side with non-Muslims?

Among its intrinsic positive values, Islam upholds peaceful co-existence of mankind paramount. The conventions of ta'aruf which means forging of friendship through personal or social introduction; ta'awun signifying mutual aid and co-operation and taayush representing living side by side, are foundation upon which a relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims should be characterised.

The misconception of al-Wala' and al-Bara' has led the extremist to deem that, at the core, the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims must be driven by enmity and hostility. Consequentially, it solicits revulsion of anyone or anything that they perceive as infidel. The perception is craftily tweaked to advocate and license unrelenting war and aggression, and to kill, all too pathetically and deceptively in the name of Jihad.