

Secular Civil Marriages Performed by Muftis is the Same as Secular Governance Performed by Muslim Rulers

News:

This week Turkey's parliament approved a law to allow state-registered muftis – officials employed by the state's Religious Affairs Directorate – to perform civil marriages that were previously administered only by municipal officials. Opposition parties, secular Kemalist women's rights groups regard this as another blow to secularism and women's rights under the so-called Islamist AKP. (agencies)

Comment:

As usual, anything that evokes the slightest association to Islam causes goose bumps and heart ache on the secularist Kemalist in Turkey. Thus they openly define this bill as an attack against secularism. Secular Kemalists fear the new law will encourage domestic violence, oppression of women, but first and foremost pave the way for child marriages. They claim that there is no age limit and girls can get married after reaching puberty according to Islam. Thus they claim, muftis would be more likely to turn a blind eye to an underage bride than registry officials. Fact is that the main concern of these seculars is not even the women's and girl's rights. In contrary they sit on pins and needles as they fear to lose their secularism. So the secularist main opposition CHP even vowed to take the law to the Constitutional Court out of this reason.

The AKP and the supporters of the law on the other side argue that the new law will facilitate civil marriages, and does not change anything else, as the marriage procedures and requirements, including age limits, will remain untouched. The muftis will have to request the same documents as the registry officers. Furthermore this law means that 1,038 muftis around the country will be able to conduct wedding in addition to the municipality officials authorized at present, which makes civil ceremonies more accessible and faster, and will reduce unregistered marriages.

But how should we as Muslims evaluate these discussions? Firstly, we can eliminate the discussion that marriages conducted by muftis would increase violence against women. Fact is, that violence against women does not occur due to marriage – whether Islamic nor civil marriage – but due to the corruption in the minds of the people that devalues the woman. This corruption is the result of the more than 90 years of alienation from Islam, its culture and values, and the non-implementation of the laws that protected the woman, but instead the implementation and imposition of secular liberal values. Historic record since early times of Islamic governance, and especially the Islamic court rulings during the Ottoman Khilafah prove how Islam protected women from abuse, humiliation, exploitation and violence. Husbands, who dared to disregard their wives' rights, were punished with imprisonment or even divorce by the court.

Secondly, the issue of child marriage (according to Turkish civil code) is another than the sexual abuse of children, and has nothing to do with Islam or Islamic wedding ceremonies. We live in a Turkey where children are exposed to the promotion of free sexuality within an increasing number of corrupted adults. The decades ongoing systematic promotion of a non-Islamic lifestyle and liberal secular capitalist values made the human forget that it was created by a superior power to whom he will be returned and trialed for his deeds in this world. This produced humans who adore their own whims and desires for the price of

harming the well-being and even life of vulnerable children and women. Additionally true cases of child abuse receive almost no legal punishment due to ineffective court procedures, or punishment with absolutely no dissuasive effect, while sexual relations out of wedlock and mutual consent even under the age of 18 are not pursued legally, unless someone files a complaint. Young women under the age of 18, however, who wish to unite their lives with the man they love, but with the approval of Allah (swt) are punished for their morality and virtue.

Thirdly, and in fact the danger in this regulation is the fact that Muslims might regard the civil wedding procedure conducted by muftis as an Islamic act of wedding and therefore waive Islamic wedding. For until today, Muslims in Turkey used to marry with an Islamic wedding in addition to their civil wedding. So the truth is that this law is not alienation from secularism, rather it is mischievously further secularizing the Muslims by heinously undermining the Islamic regulations of marriage and thus secularizing the sacred institution of marriage.

So what is the problem with the secularist Kemalists then??? Well, throughout these 15 years of AKP rule, they –knowingly or unknowingly – played a major role in supporting the AKP’s secularization policies of the Muslims in Turkey. The introduction of any action contradicting the Islamic believes of the people by the CHP would have caused and did cause uproar and resistance among the Muslims, but the same actions conducted by the AKP and accentuated with the counter-voices of the CHP made the Muslims embrace the action in order to protect their beloved “Muslim” rulers.

In this case, once again, the secular instinctive reactions of those opposing this law serve only the AKP, by creating the perception the AKP were religious, and that it is only the opposition that is still secular. At the same time, the so-called discrepancy about the secularity or non-secularity of this new law has a more important effect upon the Ummah in Turkey:

It is disguising the AKP’s deeply-non-Islamic-governance and actions towards the rest of the Muslim Ummah outside of Turkey. If the AKP truly were to serve Islam, than it would not make agreements with the enemies of Islam and the Muslims, as recently with Iran and Russia upon the orders of its master the USA, and actively support their slaughter policies in Syria. No; Turkey and its rulers caused more damage and harm within the Muslim world than any other Turkish government until now!!!

We as Muslims need to be alerted towards any step and change that comes from this government. And with regards to the fact that its representatives are Muslims, we must fulfil our duty of enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil with more sincerity, more than ever!

So we must clearly show our stance towards these ‘sandbox games’. We only want and accept clearly Islamic solutions to our problems and clearly Islamic rules and systems that will surely and without doubt lead to the liberty, development and dignity of the entire Ummah, be they male, female or child... We will not have this, unless we replace the existing ruling systems in our lands with the purely Islamic ruling system of the Khilafah Rashidah (Caliphate) upon the Method of Prophethood. So there is no sense worrying about the comments of secularists, because secular civil marriages performed by muftis is the same as secular governance performed by Muslim rulers.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
Zehra Malik**