

## Universalism And Nationalism in The Field Of Islamic Political Thought Within The Framework Of The Thoughts Of Hasan Al-Banna

(Hasan Al-Banna Düşünceleri Çerçevesinde İslam Siyasi Düşünce Alanında  
Evrenselcilik ve Milliyetçilik)

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## Universalism And Nationalism in The Field Of Islamic Political Thought Within The Framework Of The Thoughts Of Hasan Al-Banna

**Abstract:** The modern theoretical ideas of nationalism and universalism came into being due to a movement that emerged in Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries. They started to have consequences on the Muslim world, notably in the Middle East, following events such as Arab nationalism, which occurred during and after World War I. Subsequently, this issue is significant as regards the comprehension of modern Islamic thought and nationalism and the relationship between Islam and the West. However, scholars of the Muslim community were initially opposed to the notion of nationalism due to its western origin, believing that it would have a negative effect on the ummah in the Islamic world. The supporting ideology of universalism against the nationalistic movement intended to prevent the state's disruption and the religious perception of Islam being dominated only by Arabs. Hasan el-Bennâ and other scholars have sought to interpret universalism and nationalism within the framework of Islamic thought. A worldview el-Bennâ teachings are a powerful expression of Modern Islam that embraces the brotherhood. His opinions on literature and social life are still respected and upheld today. Furthermore, he embraced what was required for Egypt to prosper while condemning Western colonialism and missionary efforts. According to el-Bennâ, many Muslims lacked knowledge of modern civilization; hence he believed there could be something to learn from Western education, such as patriotism and nationalism. As an Egyptian, el-Bennâ aimed to create a feeling of national identity for Egypt based on nationalist ideas from the end of the 19th century. Although acknowledged in secular political theory, this issue is still a topic that is regularly used in Islamic thought. In essence, el-Bennâ placed a strong emphasis on creating a feeling of national identity among Egyptians and inside Egypt. In fact, one of his principal aims was to develop and ensure progress within Egypt, highlighting the importance of fighting for the Muslim Brotherhood for the sake of Egypt. According to el-Bennâ's historical perspective, nationalism is an essential factor. The historical background of nationalism was initiated due to the processes of secularisation established by the Reformation, which finally brought about the demise of Christianity within Europe. As a result, nationalism within Europe is considered an important issue, with 'national selfishness' causing parallels with 'individual selfishness which permeates Western culture. El-Bennâ, however, adopts a milder approach toward national beliefs among Muslims. To show that Islam is the origin of the contemporary idea, el-Bennâ described the Islamic ideals of al-wataniya (patriotism) and al-qawmiya (nationalism) as two of their core principles. Additionally, he claims that the West misjudged these ideas and continued to describe them as an indication of their proper Muslim explanation. Additionally, his al-wataniya term might be classified by ways of faith and belief and not by employing, as the West does, regional boundaries. In order to detail, el-Bennâ offered patriotism as a strategy for achieving independence by asserting that Islam requires doing all necessary measures (Jihad) to liberate the watan (Homeland) from imperialist powers as well as further exploitation and enslavement. To summarise, el-Bennâ describes nationalism as al-qawmiya. Hence, one's love for one's homeland strengthens its community and relations. On the other hand, el-Bennâ defined the term of universalism, the Islamic perspective of territoriality, was related to the idea of Darul Islam and is a term central to Islamic beliefs. Darul Islam remained for a long time, being a comprehensive and organized corporation, with non-Muslim land being regarded as a transitory differential space under the flag of Islamic universalism. However, early jurists of Islam had no alternative other than to accept the entity of lands ruled by non-Muslim. The juridical concept of Darul Islam was utilised to describe the faith and assign it to Islamic-ruled countries. Darul Harb's belief in a land where war or chaos is occurring increased over land outside Muslim sovereignty. Basically, Darul Islam/Darul Harb are terms that describe themselves as relating to the Islamic state and have been utilized to spread to other countries since the 8th century. Within this system, countries under Muslim rulers governing and practising Islamic law, are considered Darul Islam (the land of Islam). Other countries, though, are considered to be Darul Harb (the country of war). This article aims to discuss the concepts of nationalism and universalism within the framework of Islamic political thought established by Hasan el-Bennâ's views. Consequently, nationalism, described by Hasan el-Bennâ as al-qawmiya, has been evaluated to be equivalent to patriotism, strengthening social relations. Furthermore, Hasan el-Bennâ's idea of universalism within the framework of Islamic thought is based on brotherhood, el-Bennâ stated that we are all brothers, racial nationalism is detrimental, and no one is superior to others.

**Keywords:** Islamic Political Thought, Egypt, Universalism, Nationalism, Hasan el-Bennâ.

### Hasan el-Bennâ Düşünceleri Çerçevesinde İslam Siyasi Düşünce Alanında Evrenselcilik ve Milliyetçilik

**Öz:** Milliyetçiliğin ve evrenselciliğin modern yorumlamaları 17. ve 18. yüzyılda Avrupa'da ortaya çıkan akımlardan sonra başlamıştır. Orta Doğu coğrafyasında ise I. Dünya savaşı esnasında ve sonrasında gelişme gösteren Arap milliyetçiliği gibi olaylardan sonra Müslüman dünyasını etkilemeye başlamıştır. Bu yüzden milliyetçilik ve İslam düşüncesi arasındaki ilişki sorunu, tarihsel olarak dinamik söylemler ortaya çıkarmıştır. Dolayısıyla bu sorun, sadece İslam düşüncesi ve milliyetçiliğine ilişkin modern yöntemin anlaşılmasında değil, aynı zamanda İslam ile Batı arasındaki diyalogun geliştirilmesinde de önemlidir. Fakat ilk başlarda Müslüman toplumun aydınları, milliyetçiliğin batı kökenli olmasından dolayı, İslam dünyasındaki ümmet birliğini bozacağı düşüncesiyle karşı çıkmışlardır. Çünkü milliyetçilik düşünceleri, Müslüman imparatorluk bünyesinde bulunan farklı etnik kimlikler bünyesinde ayrılmaya neden olabilirdi. Dolayısıyla milliyetçilik akımına karşı evrenselcilik düşüncelerini destekleyerek hem devletin parçalanmasını engellemek hem de İslam'ın sadece Arapların dini algısının önüne geçmek hedeflenmiştir. Hasan el-Bennâ ve diğer düşünürler evrenselciliğini ve milliyetçiliği İslam düşüncesi içinde yorumlamışlardır. Hasan El-Bennâ'nın dünya görüşü ve öğretileri, modern İslam'ın kardeşliği kucaklayan güçlü bir ifadesidir. Edebiyat ve sosyal hayata dair görüşleri günümüzde de saygı görmek ve desteklenmektedir. Ayrıca, el-Bennâ, Batı sömürgeciliğini ve misyonerlik çabalarını kınarken Mısır'ın gelişmesi için yapılması gerekenleri ifade etmiştir. El-Bennâ'ya göre, birçok Müslüman modern uygarlık hakkında bilgi sahibi değildi; dolayısıyla vatanseverlik ve milliyetçilik gibi Batı ideolojilerinden öğrenilebilecek bir şeyler olabileceğine inanıyordu. El-Bennâ, 19. yüzyılın sonundan itibaren Mısır'da milliyetçi fikirlere dayalı bir ulusal kimlik duygusu yaratmayı amaçlamıştır. Aslında bu konu seküler siyaset teorisinde kabul edilse de İslam düşüncesinde halen düzenli olarak kullanılan bir konudur. El-Bennâ Mısırlılar arasında bir ulusal kimlik duygusu oluşturmak için çağrılar yaptı. Aslında, El-Bennâ'nın başlıca amaçlarından biri, Mısır'ın kalkınması ve ilerlemesini sağlamak, Mısır'ın bağımsızlığı uğruna Müslüman Kardeşlerin savaşması gerektiğini belirtmekti. El-Bennâ'nın tarihsel perspektifine göre milliyetçilik temel bir faktördür. Milliyetçiliğin tarihsel arka planı, Avrupa'da Hıristiyan düşüncenin sonunu getiren reform hareketlerinin getirdiği sekülerleşme süreçleriyle başlatıldı. Sonuç olarak, Avrupa'da milliyetçilik, Batı kültürüne nüfuz eden "bireysel bencillik" ile eşdeğer bir anlama büründü. Ancak el-Bennâ, Müslümanlar arasında ulusal inançlara karşı daha ılımlı bir yaklaşımı benimsemiştir. El-Bennâ, İslam'ın çağdaş düşüncenin kökeni olduğunu gösterme çabasıyla, İslam ideallerini vataniyye (vatanseverlik) ve kavmiyye (milliyetçilik) ilkeleriyle tanımladı. Ayrıca, Batı'nın bu fikirleri yanlış değerlendirdiğini iddia ediyor. Bu yüzden onun Vataniyye terimi, Batı'nın yaptığı gibi bölge sınırlarına göre değil, inanç ve inanç biçimlerine göre sınıflandırılabilir. Yani el-Bennâ, İslam'ın vatani, emperyalist güçlerden kurtarmak ve daha fazla sömürü ve köleleştirmeyi engellemek, bağımsızlığı elde etmek için cihat yapılması gerektiğini belirtmiştir. Özetlemek gerekirse, el-Bennâ milliyetçiliği kavmiyye olarak tanımlar. Dolayısıyla kişinin vatan sevgisi, içinde yaşadığı toplumu ve ilişkilerini güçlendirir. Bunun yanı sıra el-Bennâ evrensellik terimini, İslami bölgesellik perspektifi, Dârül İslam fikriyle ilgilidir. Bu terim İslami inançların merkezinde yer alan bir terimdir. Dârül İslam, gayrimüslim toprakları İslami evrenselcilik bayrağı altında geçici bir farklılık alanı olarak gördü. Dârül İslam'ın hukuki kavramı, inancı tanımlamak için kullanıldı. Dârül Harb ise Müslüman egemenliğinin dışındaki toprakları ifade etmek için kullanıldı. Temel olarak Dârül İslam/Dârül Harb, kendilerini İslam devleti ile ilgili olarak tanımlayan ve 8. yüzyıldan itibaren diğer ülkelere yayılmak için kullanılan terimlerdir. Bu sistem içinde, İslam hukukunu yöneten ve uygulayan Müslüman hükümdar yönetimindeki ülkeler, Dârül İslam (İslam ülkesi) olarak kabul edilir. Diğer ülkeler ise Dârül Harb (savaş ülkesi) olarak kabul edilir. Bu makale, siyasi İslam düşüncesindeki milliyetçilik ve evrenselcilik kavramını Hassan el-Bennâ'nın görüşleri doğrultusunda ele alacaktır. Sonuç olarak; Hasan el-Bennâ'nın kavmiyye olarak tarif ettiği milliyetçilik, toplum ilişkilerini güçlendirmeye hizmet eden vatan sevgisi ile eşdeğer olduğu değerlendirilmiştir. Ayrıca, Hasan el-Bennâ'nın evrenselcilik düşüncesi ise kardeşlik üzerine kurulu İslam düşüncesidir. El-Bennâ bütün insanların kardeş olduklarını, ırka dayalı milliyetçiliğin tehlikeli ve insanların birbirlerine karşı üstünlükleri olmadığını belirtmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İslami Siyasal Düşünce, Mısır, Evrenselcilik, Milliyetçilik, Hasan el-Bennâ

## Introduction

Nationalism is a modern ideology and movement originating in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries. Dominating a general Western movement in the 19th century, it has since become one of the most influential political thoughts in today's world. Nationalism can be defined as a feeling of loyalty that unites people through institutions and cultures (Smith, 2013). Universalism is a notion used predominantly in social policy and welfare state literature. Fundamentally, it has several sources of assumed legitimacy, which are religious, ideological, and political (Anttonen, 2002). Within the framework of Islamic political thought, nationalism, and universalism has become dominant terms in academic literature and social life since 1916. The issue of the relationship between nationalism and Islamic thought has historically caused conflict.

Furthermore, this issue is significant in regards to understanding modern Islamic thought and nationalism and improving the communication between Islam and the West (Ali, 2014; 51). Initially, Muslim scholars were opposed to nationalism because it came from the West, disrupting the unity of the Ummah, and resulted in the division of empires that encompassed all Muslims, resulting in Muslims being considered equal to non-Muslims. Hasan el-Bennâ and other scholars have examined and defined what they believe to be nationalism within the framework of Islamic thought. This essay aims to analyse the concept of 'nationalism and universalism' within the concept of Islamic thought based upon Hassan el-Bennâ's ideological framework.

### 1. Nationalism

Nationalism can be defined as a social and political ideology that initially aims to unite each group of humanity under a common political theory. The backbone and details of nationalism can vary. However, the characteristics of modern nationalism evolve around essential elements such as language, history, literature, and traditions. In summary, nationalism establishes ties that bond people and form a united community. (Al-Bazzaz, Haim, 1954; 201-204). Due to Western thought, nationalism has become a victim of the doubt and prejudice of Islam. Indeed, various scholars who have studied Islam consider nationalism to be a component of the Western invasion of Islamic culture (Ansari, 1961; 3-7).

Primarily, there is a conflict between religion and nationalism. Indeed, nationalism is believed to adopt a secular approach, thus conflicting with religion. Furthermore, the popularity of nationalism coincided with a decline in religious interest. Some scholars also emphasize that religion has been replaced by nationalism as regards providing a

fundamental framework that governs political and social life. Historically, the issue of nationalism and its relationship with Islam has highlighted a conflict between the two areas. As a result, some Islamic scholars have had difficulty being accepted because Islam does not seem to support the ideology of nationalism (Ali, 2014; 56).

According to Gelvin, who studied the theoretical basis of nationalism, Islamic qualities have significantly impacted nationalism in the Arab Middle East due to a partition between an isolated established elite influenced by western thought and the general population (Gelvin, 1999:77). Ernest Gellner (1983:1-2), who studied the theory of nationalism, defines nationalism as a political order which emphasizes a consistent approach as regards the political and national unit. Indeed, this definition of nationalism has sought to provide an understanding of the fundamental logic of the modern national state. Another study, by Elie Kedourie (1985; 10), concludes that nationalism was a doctrine created in Europe at the end of the 18th century. Nationalism adopts the approach that humanity is naturally divided into nations according to specific characteristics that can be ascertained.

Furthermore, it emphasizes that the only form of government is self-government. According to Kedourie, the main principle of nationalism belongs to the field of normative statements. Therefore, the focal point is not based on how the nation-state came into being regarding its construction but on how the idea was interpreted intellectually. This doctrine is based on the principle that each nation has self-determination. Indeed, the world is divided into a system of dominant nation states, with groups sharing cultural and ethnic approaches and beliefs, only becoming a nation when they are recognised as the owner of their state (Ozdalga, 2009; 407-423).

Over time, nationalism, a political identity created in the West, was incorporated into Western secularism. The idea that nationalism represents a separation between religion and state was significant as regards the relationship between religion and the state in the West. In Muslim countries, nationalism came into being following the related processes of foreign occupation, internal fragmentation, and political modernization. Furthermore, nationalism (al-qawmiya)\* emphasizes an opinion or a movement for the sake of a nation (qawm). It is therefore regarded as a form of patriotism in the Muslim world. Often these two terms are used interchangeably (Cleveland, W.L 1973: 45).

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\* al-Qawmiya is the concept of implies ethnic nationalism and al-wataniya implies a state nationalism associated with the nation itself.

The term nationalism, was first used in the Muslim world by Jamal Al-Afghani (1838-1897), Muhammed Abduh (1849-1905), and Shakib Arsalan (1869-1946) to establish a united states and separate it from the Ottoman Empire. Afghani defined that the umma (nation) was to serve for pan-Islamism. He also stressed that jinsiyyah (meaning of genus) is similar to al-qawmiya regarding regional nationalism. On the other hand, Abduh used the term watan to mean the country and umma to signify the nation. According to Abduh, nationalism is an independent process of establishing a national state. Amir Shakib Arsalan (1869-1946), similar to al-Afghani, was inclined to use political Arabism terms to signify nationalism in the religious context. Arsalan classified the term umma (nation) more as a community of believers than as a secular nation for nationalism (Ali, 2014: 65). Therefore, nationalism was referred to in the Muslim world under the terms of umma or al-qawmiya.

## **2. Hasan El-Bennâ and His Thought on Nationalism**

Hasan el-Bennâ (1906-1949) was the founder and leader of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, one of the largest and most significant movements in the Muslim world. Established in 1928, it remains active today in many Muslim countries. El-Bennâ's framework of thought and his doctrines represent a strong voice of Modern Islam, encompassing the brotherhood. His ideas and beliefs regarding literature and social life are still valued and adhered to today. Furthermore, while rejecting Western colonialism and missionary work, he was able to accept what was necessary to develop Egypt. According to el-Bennâ, many Muslims lacked knowledge of modern civilization; hence he believed there could be something to learn from Western education, such as patriotism and nationalism (Kramer, 2010: 43).

Being an Egyptian national el-Bennâ sought to establish a sense of identity for Egypt based on Egyptian nationalist thought since the end of the 19th century. Indeed, this issue, recognised in secular political thought, remains a frequently used concept within Islamic circles of thought. Fundamentally, El-Bennâ emphasized establishing a sense of identity among Egyptians and within Egypt. Indeed, one of his principal aims was to develop and ensure progress within Egypt, highlighting the importance of fighting for the Muslim Brotherhood for the sake of Egypt (Manfred, 1982: 76).

Anthony Smith's 'territorial, national' term adopts a similar approach to el-Bennâ's concept of nationalism within Egypt. According to Smith, the idea of the nation, defined before establishing independence, must primarily eliminate foreign entities within the country and then, subsequently, seek to develop a sense of identity within the nation (Smith, 2013: 87). El-Bennâ, furthermore, stressed the fact that Egyptians must seek to

establish a united sense of identity, for the benefit of the country and its' people. Indeed, he highlighted the honour of working for and serving Egypt, with it being a sacred part of the Islamic world. Additionally, while establishing an Islamic political thought, el-Bennâ adhered to the notion of nationality, identity, and homeland. According to el-Bennâ, an Egyptian identity is a form of sub-identity. In contrast, Muslim identity is upper (el-Bennâ 1978: 87). Hence, el-Bennâ, who sees 'Islam Ummah' as an upper identity, suggested that limiting the love and loyalty of the Egyptian homeland goes against fundamental Islamic values.

According to el-Bennâ's historical perspective, nationalism is an essential factor. The historical background of nationalism was initiated due to the processes of secularisation established by the Reformation, which finally brought about the demise of Christianity within Europe. As a result, nationalism within Europe is considered an important issue, with 'national selfishness' causing parallels with 'individual selfishness which permeates Western culture. El-Bennâ, however, adopts a milder approach toward national beliefs among Muslims. Indeed, it has been suggested that nationalism is an understandable reaction to Western pressure upon Muslims and provides a positive role in the political unification of all Muslim countries (Brykczynski, 2005: 4).

Al Bennâ's 'Our Mission' document is not only a theoretical piece of work but also a political instrument. Through this document, el-Bennâ sought to dispel the incorrect belief upheld by many Egyptian politicians that the Brotherhood's opinion of political Islam divides the nation's unity and weakens youth solidarity. As regards this, he defines that the Brotherhood shares the nationalistic aims of liberating the land from European colonisation and uniting individuals within a given country. 'Our Mission' (El-Bennâ 1978: 96). A further opinion of Al- Bennâ as regards nationalism is described by tactical flexibility. Indeed, in his open letter to King Faruq and other Muslim leaders, written in 1948, he proposes that Islam is guaranteed to supply the nascent nation with its needs. El-Bennâ, therefore, appears to be endorsing nationalism since it will increase the nation's power. In reality, however, his political view highlighted the differences between nationalism and Islam. Nationalism is just a strategic steppingstone in establishing a universal Islamic state. National liberation could represent to the Muslim Brotherhood only a part of the way or a single phase of it (Wenner, 1982: 336).

El-Bennâ redefined the idea of nationalism, protecting the nation's opinion, and changed it into a statement of Islamic loyalty. Therefore, whatever effort that was made for the welfare of Egypt also meant working for the benefit of Islam, Arabia, and the East (Mura, 2012: 34). It has been observed that Hasan el-Bennâ's view on nationalism was

based on a fundamental distinction that reflected the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood movement. According to its doctrine, nationalism is not a concept to be rejected totally, but it should be distinguished as regards its criteria and context. As a result, the central concept of nationalism, with its aim of bringing about a sense of identity and unity in a country, is considered positive. However, any subservient concepts regarding discrimination and racism are rejected (Ansari, 1961: 23). Indeed, el-Bennâ proposes certain types of nationalism according to the Muslim Brotherhood and adheres to the ideology that nationalism should be relative to protecting a nation's relatives. This concept is understood within Islam, with every human wanting the best for their relatives. The term 'Nizamcilik (Nationalism),' which can be defined as striving to achieve the best for the homeland and nation and placing value on its land, is considered positive and necessary by el-Bennâ. If nationalism adheres to jihad and the approach that every society is fulfilling its duty, it can be accepted by the Muslim Brotherhood. El-Bennâ supported this idea and stressed that Islam agrees with this form of nationalism. As regards nationalism, the only approach that el-Bennâ wholeheartedly rejects is racism, which opposes the idea of brotherhood, and as he states, racism destroys the love of brotherhood and only leads to hate (el-Bennâ, 1978: 98).

El-Bennâ described al-wataniya (patriotism) and al-qawmiya (nationalism) as two Islamic values in his effort to present Islam as the source of the modern concept. Additionally, he claims that the West misjudged these ideas and continued to describe them as an indication of their proper Muslim explanation. Furthermore, his al-wataniya term could be characterized by methods of faith and belief and not using regional boundaries according to the West. To expand, el-Bennâ proposed patriotism to be a means of independence by suggesting that it is necessary within Islam to attempt all efforts (Jihad) to free the watan (Homeland) from imperialist states and further exploitation and enslavement. To summarise, el-Bennâ describes nationalism as al-qawmiya. Hence, one's love for one's homeland strengthens its community and relations (Levy, 2014: 139-158).

### **3. Hasan El-Bennâ and His Thought on Universalism**

The term universalism, the Islamic perspective of territoriality, was related to the idea of Darul Islam and is a term central to Islamic beliefs. Darul Islam remained for a long time, being a comprehensive and organized corporation, with non-Muslim land being regarded as a transitory differential space under the flag of Islamic universalism. However, early jurists of Islam had no alternative other than to accept the entity of lands ruled by non-Muslim. The juridical concept of Darul Islam was utilised to describe the



faith and assign it to Islamic-ruled countries. Darul Harb's belief in a land where war or chaos is occurring, increased over land outside Muslim sovereignty (Mura 2014:76).

Darul Islam/ darul harp are terms that define themselves as relating to the Islamic state and have been utilized to spread to other countries since the 8th century. Within this system, countries under Muslim rulers governing and practicing Islamic law, are considered Darul Islam (the land of Islam). Other countries, though, are considered to be Darul Islam Harb (the country of war). Indeed, the ultimate aim is for Darul Islam to dominate the whole world, with the entire world, as a result, being under Islamic law. Indeed, this point of view was adopted by the states that described themselves as the Islamic country (Darul Islam) until the end of the Crimean War of 1856, when the Ottoman Empire was considered part of the European states system by the Umayyads and Abbasids. Furthermore, Islamic states that had gained independence after the decolonisation process, moved away from the darul harb perspective following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (Ozel, 2012: 52).

When the world is seen to be a place where Muslims and non-Muslims are considered to be constantly at war, the areas occupied by non-Muslims became known as Darul Harb, hence a country of war. Even during the most critical period regarding Islam's spread, neither Hz Muhammad nor the first four caliphs adopted the concept of Darul Harb. Moreover, in the Qu'ran and even in the hadiths, the concepts of Darul Islam and Darul Harb are not referred to. These concepts were invented by Islamic scholars. To expand, Darul Islam and the concept of Darul harb are frequently discussed under the concept of Darul Sulh (peace). Those advocating the ideas of Darul Islam and Darul harb, state that this doesn't necessarily suggest a constant war. According to this approach, positive relations can be established, and agreements can be made between Darul Islam and Darul Harb states (Ozel, 1993: 54).

El-Bennâ's early beliefs highlight a solid and clearly defined pan-Islamic discourse that replaces the concepts of nation and loyalty. Hence, nationalism and pan-Islamism are generally united, though pan-Islamism assumes the more dominant role in conceptualisation and celebration. Indeed, el-Bennâ questioned 'what we bring to humanity, proposing that the universalistic idea of Islam be established upon the notion of brotherhood. (Mura, 2012: 74). Furthermore, el-Bennâ did not classify societies as jahiliya like Sayyid Qutb, indicating that he had more universal ideas. According to el-Bennâ, all people are brothers and equal, with no one being superior to the other.

Furthermore, he suggested that people had lost track of their primary purpose in life, and that the aim of the Muslim Brotherhood, was to remind them of this purpose. El-

Bennâ emphasised that even if people come from a different culture or have a different view, they still come from the same lineage and are brothers (el-Bennâ, 2007a: 54). People cannot be classified, and this distinction is wrong and unjust. Therefore, it can be stated that el-Bennâ was clearly opposed to categorising people.

While defining the universal understanding of Islam, el-Bennâ mentions that their dawa (aim) is Rabbani (godly) and universal. Dawa is Rabbani (godly) because its real purpose is that people recognise and obey Allah (God), the only ruler. He highlights the fact that we live in a materialistic world that does not care about people individually. Indeed, people need to follow a clean and superior path in order to ensure that their dawat (aim) is universal and directed towards and addressing humanity. According to el-Bennâ, it is impossible to separate people or to classify them, as no one is superior over the other. They can only gain any advantage through devotion. In this regard, el-Bennâ emphasises his opposition to racism, highlighting the fact that no race is superior to the other. (el-Bennâ 2007b: 34). Therefore, his views can be seen to be universal.

### **Conclusion**

Nationalism is considered to be a modern thought process that originated in the 17th and 18th centuries. Modern nationalism highlights the importance of developing social life, industrialisation, media activities and education. Furthermore, it is considered to be a political and social need. Thus nationalism stresses the significance of finding ties that unite people and nations together.

Nationalism has been a subject of discussion within Islam since the death of the prophet Muhammed (s.a.v). Indeed, many Islamic scholars believe that nationalism is not a useful form of discrimination. In modern times. Nationalism was used, especially after the First World War, as a form of discrimination between Muslim nations. Specifically, Pan-Arabism was a strong nationalistic movement within the Muslim world between 1916 and the end of the 1970s. However, el-Bennâ and the Muslim Brotherhood were strongly opposed to the racist mentality adopted by the nationalistic movement. Indeed, versus in the holy Qu'ran and in Prophet Muhammeds hadiths vehemently reject the concept of racism. According to the findings, nationalism, which el-Bennâ described as al-qawmiya, has been evaluated as being equivalent to patriotism, which endeavours to strengthen social relations. Furthermore el-Bennâ's view on universalism is Islamic thought based upon brotherhood, stressing the fact that all people are brothers, racial nationalism is dangerous, and people have no superiority over each other.

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