

The Mystification of Nationalism

by:Sadik Ahmed*

I could sort a mystification which irritate the entire nation for centuries, a **confusion that divert the nationality towards religion**, the egoistic description of history has become a misery, one might weep for unity because of his ethnic value while wounding the harmony in vocal sword.

... true patriotic nature is to clarify unity and work out differences by all means. **Give recognition for today, appreciate God's treasures, and dream forward.**

"Ethiopia is an island of Ethiopians" no fanatic ideology can co-exist with diversified Ethiopia, the citizens are firm for concept of love but some might attempt to fraud it. Truth is a champion as God is the eternal brave victor.

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other)). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things). (Q049-013)

Long time ago I had a question to my father, regarding my youngest sister's name, which is **"Ethiopia"**. His respond was short and simple: **"we used to be Muslims in Ethiopia, not Ethiopian Muslims"**. He left so many issues for me till I grow up and pursue my dream in art arena.

I was able to listen my poems over Ethiopian radio; I wrote them with deep sincerity to express my love for my beloved country. I was trained to be a performer with the intension of elevating Muslim culture towards its base (Ethiopia). However, the hilarious stylishness approach of composer environment was miserable for amateur Muslim teenager like me. Alhamdulillah, with Allah's grace and mercy I received a call from a well known radio person and journalist - **Jemil Sherrif Sayed (Jemil-kefilwuha)** who was editor of **Bilal magazine**; I turn out to be part of that team.

Sitting side by side with **Sheik Mohamed Wale** was an honor for me, I easily relinquish my training and explore Islamic literature which also belongs to Ethiopia. Based on historical facts and current Muslim affairs, the entire Ethiopians, regardless of their religion or ethnical back ground, undoubtedly reserve the right to realize and recognize their own history. Hence, Islam is neither strange nor negligible among Ethiopians.

Most of the writers in my generation were inspired by **Bealu Girma**, who is the author of many books like the well known **"Oromai"**, and consider him as a role model. To my regret, however, very few artists or journalists have followed his scheme. During my Bilal Magazine edit tour, I met **Ato Amare Mamo**, that created a joyful moment for me. This legendary fellow has a distinguished place in Ethiopian literature; he declared to me the validation of ethio-muslim literature existence. This was his testimony: *"I sometimes read the Amharic translation of the **Quran**; it surprises me the way it is written, the book is so special and high ranking, a wonderful donation to Ethiopian literature, I admire **Hajji Mohammed Sani** and his colleagues"*. I felt good and shook his hand to leave his office. Before I opened the door, he verbalize his recommendation to me *"son don't chew Qatt"*.

Born and raised in Ethiopia, proud to be an Ethiopian Muslim, however I could sort a mystification which irritate the entire nation for centuries, a confusion that divert the nationality towards religion, the egoistic description of history has become a misery, one might weep for unity because of his ethnic value while wounding the harmony in vocal sword. Education is supremacy but some can redirect this comprehension with their ethnic-superiority by misleading the nation to disarray. This so-called dynasty (ethnic) belief, as well as self elevation might empower in imaginary circumstances to discard fellow believers even inside the same religious institution.

Being an artist is a legacy. Although Muslims are the majority of the population the narration of ethio-art is severely controlled by a single religious ideology. While many artists are fleeing homeland to America in order to acquire wealth, their bogus excuse might be freedom. Even if they are in democratic society at the crown of civilization, some of them ought to rally reverse thirty years. Moreover, they praise the offenders pattern of philosophy, which apparently was terminated by the will of Ethiopian people.

There are many Ethiopian radio talk-shows in the United States, the good news is that they have the freedom and democracy to talk, but their isn't a significant host by means of decency and devotion to guide the people towards unity. The vast majority of orators or the anchors possess ego which is based on ethnic, religious as well as political point of view. Yet political-correctness is unfamiliar among orators. Blaming each other today, pay tribute to the past or the future, creating imaginary Ethiopia is more common.

Some Ethiopian religious institutions in the United States, they certainly associate Ethiopian nationalism with their own religious ideology. We can often hear this agenda over the radio, and it is a clear dilemma too, the consequence could be bitter in terms of liberty among the citizens. Ethiopia is for everyone regardless of religious background. Based on this point I would like to emphasize some common nationalistic mistakes within Ethiopian community.

1. Misinterpret the meaning of “Ethiopian”

According to Merriam-Webster's dictionary the word “**Ethiopian**” is defined as “**a native or inhabitant of Ethiopia**”. Some of fanatic groups deserve to know the meaning of their own nationality since there is no religious presence in Ethiopian nationality.

2. Pay extraordinary tribute to the past.

My former Egyptian boss asked me “*do you know why Egypt and Ethiopia are behind nowadays*”? Before I had a chance to reply, he continued and answered his own question: “*because we praise a lot to the past*”. I do still remember my shock; if that is said of Egyptians who are in a better profile than we are, what about us? History cannot be bread or a cure for AIDS; we lost our productivity for olden times that alter our life to misery.

3. Arrogance

We have a wrong understanding of ourselves; often we Ethiopians think that our existence is so unique; we are in the Bible or in Islamic history, we resisted colonization or else. The truth of the matter is that such misguided understandings of ourselves have made us arrogant; and arrogance can't co-exist with any religious doctrine. Arrogance is a sign of shortcomings, backwardness; indeed, our obvious situation is a testimony to this fact. For decades we are the people in need; poverty has turned out to be our identity. One of the extreme factors that weaken our productivity is thus our arrogance.

4. Move on

Life is full of circumstances, anything can happen any time but the true wisdom is to get a solution and move on. Sadly, we often give great deal of time pondering over what happened rather than seeking a solution to it; our verbal convert is tremendously eloquent in terms of teasing one another but our move on ability is weak, again productivity declines in self-time ruin. Move on today ... to the future.

5. Lack of solidarity

Solidarity is a banner of tolerance, to elevate national values among the people. When a change in leadership takes place, some may find it difficult to face the reality, certainly such people rush to discard the existing control. However, true patriotic nature is to clarify unity and work out differences by all means. Give recognition for today, appreciate God's treasures, and dream forward. Lack of solidarity can have a power to depart productivity among the nation.

The proper spirit of Ethiopian-ness can not be affirmed via mystified claims; it can rather be achieved with true devotion to moral values that descended from God Almighty. Slim nationalistic behavior has never been the target of idyllic pious people; it is a self-contradictory entertainment that has created illusion for centuries.

The concept of tolerance in Ethiopia is conventional within Ethiopian Muslims, consequently its accomplishment guides the nation to peace and prosperity. Typically Muslims exhibit their broadmindedness ahead, yet they forgo the brutal emperors rule. The dividers may obtain a tad of success; the kindness of the society will appear mutually to furnish humanity, because liberty is the establishment of God. **"Ethiopia is an island of Ethiopians"** no fanatic ideology can co-exist with diversified Ethiopia, the citizens are firm for concept of love but some might attempt to fraud it. Truth is a champion as God is the eternal brave victor.

Nay, we hurl the Truth against falsehood, and it knocks out its brain, and behold, falsehood doth perish! Ah! Woe be to you for the (false) things ye ascribe (to us). (Q021-018)

I recognize why my sister is **Ethiopia Ahmed**, I understand the cause of my father who was forced to change his name in order to obtain his drivers licence. Since I left homeland, I was not lucky to see him except his graveyard in Addis Ababa. May Allah decree his mercy on him, Amen!