

**ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND ITS
CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE**
A Discourse on Selected Issues

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IIUM PRESS
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA



Islamic Thought and its Contemporary Relevance

[A Discourse on Selected Issues]

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IIUM Press

Published by:
IIUM Press
International Islamic University Malaysia

First Edition, 2011
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Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia

Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Thameem Ushama: Islamic **Thought** and its Contemporary Relevance: A
Discourse on Selected Issues

Bibliography p.

Includes Index

ISBN

ISBN: 978-967-0225-69-2

Member of Majlis Penerbitan Ilmiah Malaysia – MAPIM
(Malaysian Scholarly Publishing Council)

Printed by :

IIUM PRINTING SDN. BHD.

No. 1, Jalan Industri Batu Caves 1/3

Taman Perindustrian Batu Caves

Batu Caves Centre Point

68100 Batu Caves

Selangor Darul Ehsan

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ONE

Nationalism in the Discourses of Muslim Revivalists

Thameem Ushama

This essay presents a brief analysis of Nationalism as understood by twentieth century Muslim revivalists who endeavored to revive Islam through their articulations, exegetical interpretations and critiques of secular ideologies, philosophies and worldviews. Their analysis of Nationalism was not merely based on hearsay or any unilateral understanding or bias, but contains considerations of its historical, ideological, epistemological and philosophical origins, as well as its foundations and developments in Europe, especially after the Reformation Movement split continental Christianity into two major denominations.

The study is both significant and relevant due to an enormous misunderstanding of Nationalism and its role on the part of Muslim leaders, be they social or religious in general and head of states in particular. Many of them apply this ideology as a unity factor, locally, regionally or globally and use it to arouse national sentiment to create state loyalty and solidarity. Although, it is a contributing factor towards unity at some level, historically, Nationalism's role has been unilateral, parochial or chauvinistic as opposed to universal. In most cases, it has been used in the political arena.

The methodology adopted in this paper is qualitative. We primarily consult original works of selected Muslim revivalists in order to underscore their interpretations, observations and critiques of Nationalism from an Islamic perspective. It is obvious that in the process of evaluating Nationalism, they employed Qur'anic and Sunmatic frameworks to reach their conclusions. As this paper is written for a conference, the scope is very limited and as such it does not provide too many examples, illustrations and details but rather concentrates on the centrality of the theme.

Beginning with a brief definition and overview of the term Nationalism we then refer to synonymous terms used in Arabic which draw