



CLEAR FOCUS PRODUCTIONS

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AD252 Islam in the West

Religion of State

Narrator: Welcome to Brick Lane in the east end of London. Home to generations of new immigrants down the years. And recently especially from south Asia. Including many Muslims. I can see in front of me a Halal butcher. And beside me a textile shop selling Asian fabrics. One important issue for any migrant community, is that of belonging and loyalty to homeland and their new society. And with Muslims there's the extra dimension of solidarity with other Muslims from across the world. Here's the Muslim scholar Tariq Ramadan on the issue of dual loyalty, both to the Muslim bomber and to the non Muslim western state.

TR: As a citizen of a country in Britain, in Germany, in France, you respect the law. You respect the constitution. So your commitment is to your society. This is the way you are loyal. And as you are critical with the spiritual community, you can also be critical towards your own government. Because you are not blindly supporting your country. You support your country when it's right. And you are critical when it is wrong.

Narrator: So what does critical loyalty mean, when a western state goes to war with a Muslim majority state?

TR: This is the practical questions that we had to face, just after the [one word] war. And when American Muslims were asking is it possible to be part of the American army, and then to go in Afghanistan to kill Muslims. You have this perceived doubly loyalty. It's the Umar on one side. And on the other side there is the question of being loyal to your country. And here is a very interesting discussion that we had among Muslim scholars. Some Muslim scholars mainly coming from Saudi Arabia saying you can't. You can't go to kill Muslims because it's Islamically prohibited. So you have to say 'No'. Some other scholars sort of said 'Yes go there to show you're loyalty to your country. Show that you are a good America. So go there. You have to show that you are really loyal. Being on the principles'.

My answer as to this was not this at all. It's just look you are loyal to your country. And then as any single citizen you have to ask yourself is this right or wrong. So if your country is going to kill people who are innocent. Having nothing to do with you, and clearly it's an unjust decision, you have something which is for all the citizens, not only for Muslims. Something which is called 'objection of conscious'. That I can't do that. And many Christians and Muslims did that during the Vietnamese way. Say we cannot go there. And for me there were and still are the dignity of the American. You know history saying we can't. But, it has nothing to do with the religion of the enemy. It's not because they are Muslims.