

## **America's Identity Crisis: Secularism, Liberalism, Conservatism or Something Else?**

American identity is deeply rooted in its history of European colonization and the subsequent creation of the United States. The founding fathers emphasized the separation of powers as a reaction to European autocratic systems. Freedom became a crucial societal concept: freedom of ownership leading to extreme capitalism, where individual wealth is valued above all; freedom of religion, emphasizing the separation of church and state; and freedom of expression, allowing all thoughts and forms of self-expression without corrosive restrictions.

These ideals, however, soon faced challenges to basic human nature and rationality. American secular identity came into question, leading to dilemmas such as labor rights vs. corporate interests, social responsibility vs. individualism, individual freedom vs. public interest, women's rights vs. the rights of the unborn child, and capital punishment debates. These challenges tested the authenticity and applicability of basic American values.

American secularism is experiencing a profound identity crisis, recently reflected in increasingly polarized views on LGBTQ+ rights and the role of religion in public life. The extreme secular agenda's push for campaigns targeting children, introducing LGBTQ+ themes through various media, including cartoons and educational materials, aims to normalize values that question biological sex and promote medical interventions without parental consent. These new values and the push from the extreme left with severe repercussions on anyone disagreeing with that agenda that contradict long-held societal beliefs, created a major societal divide and tension. This divide puts into question where the line of tolerance from all sides is. A dilemma of identity and values.

The Colorado Republican Party recently defended a social media post and email urging the burning of Pride flags during Pride Month. The post on X stated, "Burn all the #pride flags this June," and an email from party chairman Dave Williams condemned Pride Month as an attack on decency and a threat to children. Similarly, the Texas Republican Party adopted a platform targeting marriage equality and same-sex parenting during their annual state convention. This platform opposes the Supreme Court's 2015 Obergefell v. Hodges decision, denies marriage licenses to same-sex couples, and allows businesses and state employees to refuse recognition of same-sex marriages, calling homosexuality an "abnormal lifestyle choice."

These measures reflect the party's broader push for conservative values in education and public spaces, highlighting a growing backlash and raising questions about America's identity. A survey indicated that 59% of Americans believe transgender and gender ideology has gone too far, and a Gallup poll noted a decrease in acceptance of same-sex relationships. Issues like transgender participation in sports and gender-affirming care for minors remain contentious, contributing to a polarized environment. Public figure Joe Rogan voiced frustration with Pride Month's prominence, stating, "People are going, 'Enough, Enough!' Stop shoving this down everybody's throat!"

Resolving this dilemma requires thinking beyond progressive and conservative agendas. Islam offers a unique perspective on identity, values, freedom, individualism, social responsibility, and gender roles with proactive, rational, and equitable solutions. According to Islam, Allah, the Creator of all, defines who we are. The purpose of our creation and differences in roles, genders, ethnicities and races! The final criteria! Setting the stage for societal values and rules to come.

Allah (swt) explains in the Quran:

• Surah Ar-Rum, Ayahs 20-21 (30:20-21): ﴿وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ إِذَا أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ تَنْتَشِرُونَ \* And of His signs is that He created you from dust; then, suddenly you were human beings dispersing [throughout the earth]. (20) And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought. (21)﴾

• Surah Al-Hujurat, Ayah 13 (49:13): ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿O mankind, indeed, We have created you from male and female and made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.﴾

• Surah An-Nisa, Ayah 1 (4:1): ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ﴿O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and "the womb relatives". Indeed, Allah is ever, over you, an Observer.﴾

Based on these verses, Allah (swt) clearly defines our creation from male and female to reproduce and grow humanity. The family structure starts with harmonious, loving, and respectful marriage between a male and female. Islam forbids sexual relationships outside marriage to protect the family structure and create greater societal values over individual desires.

Islam defines clear, consistent roles and responsibilities for each human being based on their capabilities and abilities, holding everyone accountable for their actions.

Surah An-Nahl, Ayah 97 (16:97): ﴿مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِمَّنْ ذَكَرَ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.﴾

Islam treats everyone equally without discrimination but expects adherence to its values and societal rules for total well-being. In Islam, consistency of adherence comes from the belief that Allah, the creator who set the rules, knows what is best for all. Islam offers a clear, consistent, and comprehensive way of life, remedying today's identity chaos.

Muslims in America should stand tall with their Islam as a comprehensive solution to the identity crisis, reclaiming our role as the best Nation raised for humankind:

Allah (swt) explains in the Quran:

• Surah Aali-Imran, Ayah 110 (3:110): ﴿كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۚ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ ﴿You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah. If only the People of the Scripture had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are believers, but most of them are defiantly disobedient.﴾

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