PATRIOTISM AS A SOCIAL AND MORAL VALUE

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Patriotism, as both a social and moral value, has long been recognized as a fundamental principle shaping human societies. It reflects a deep emotional attachment to one's homeland, a sense of responsibility toward fellow citizens, and a commitment to the common good. Beyond mere territorial loyalty, patriotism embodies ethical and cultural dimensions, encompassing values such as justice, courage, solidarity, and selflessness. Historically, philosophers, writers, and spiritual thinkers across civilizations have emphasized that love for the homeland is not only a personal sentiment but also a collective duty that sustains social cohesion, moral development, and national identity.

In many societies, patriotism serves as a guiding force for ethical behavior, inspiring individuals to act with integrity and contribute positively to their communities. It bridges personal and public life, linking individual responsibility with societal welfare. This value has been articulated through literature, historical narratives, philosophical treatises, and educational traditions, reinforcing its importance in cultivating an enlightened and harmonious society. In the modern era, patriotism continues to hold significance in fostering civic engagement, cultural preservation, and national unity. Amid globalization and increasing intercultural interactions, a morally grounded sense of patriotism helps societies balance universal human values with local identity and heritage. By examining patriotism as a social and moral value, this study seeks to highlight its enduring relevance, its historical and philosophical foundations, and its role in shaping responsible, ethical, and committed citizens.

There is a word in the world that constantly shines in the human heart like a divine light, spreading warmth to the body, comfort to the soul, and peace to life. This word is “Homeland”, which stands alongside the venerable word “Mother.” There is only one mother and only one homeland in the world; this concept never changes and never grows old. Just as bread is always nourishing, these words never lose their value, no matter how often they are spoken. Both are unique and precious to the heart. To express the most beloved essence of the homeland, we say “Motherland.”

Patriotism is a sentiment common to all wise and virtuous people throughout the world. The ancient Greek philosopher Socrates (469–399 BC), born and active in Athens, exemplified this. He was first and foremost a courageous defender of his homeland, performing his military duties bravely in the war against Sparta. Similarly, Aristotle’s social and political teachings, particularly his theories on the ideal state and patriotism, influenced not only his fellow citizens but also later Central Asian thinkers’ views on love of homeland, civic responsibility, and virtuous society, as well as the social and political thought of Western European intellectuals in the 16th–17th centuries. Aristotle argued that “a virtuous person, even if deprived of life, will accomplish much for friends and homeland.”

In building Roman civilization, certain moral and spiritual qualities-political acumen, courage, patriotism, and ambition-greatly aided the Romans. The Roman philosopher Cicero was not only a renowned orator but also a theorist of oratory. Out of his 58 speeches, 17 survive partially and around 30 in fragments, attracting listeners with their clarity, logical structure, and eloquence, leaving opponents speechless. Cicero asserted: “Parents, children, and close relatives are precious, but all our concepts of love culminate in the single word ‘Homeland.’ If giving for the homeland were useless, which conscientious person would hesitate to give their life for it?”

Throughout history, philosophers consistently supported the republic and their homeland. In times of endless strife, revolts, and wars, Cicero became a symbol of the

republic, freedom, peace, and stability. In one of his last speeches, he noted that victory could not exist without a republic, nor could defeat. His life exemplifies selfless service to homeland and state, inspiring future generations. The French philosopher, historian, and sociologist Charles-Louis de Secondat, Montesquieu (1689–1755) emphasized that the power of ancient Rome stemmed from the citizens' prioritization of the homeland and public welfare above all else, and their dedication to the prosperity of the state. Such social and spiritual qualities were linked to political freedom and the republican system of governance. Montesquieu argued that the collapse of the republic and the rise of imperial tyranny resulted from a weakening of citizens' patriotic sentiments. He also stated, "The best way to instill love of homeland in children is for parents themselves to love their country."

The French writer, philosopher, historian, and critic Voltaire encouraged patriotism and enlightenment regardless of contradictions in philosophy. He believed: "All conflicts in society arise from poor governance. Those who govern poorly must live in conscience-driven suffering all their lives. The people's discontent will ultimately be resolved through revolutions. Revolutions, linked to upheaval, either elevate or ruin a country." Despite spending much of his life abroad, Voltaire loved his homeland: "My love for my country does not blind me to foreign successes; on the contrary, the stronger my love, the more I wish to enrich my country in the world."

The Renaissance poet, philosopher, publicist, and statesman Dante Alighieri paid particular attention to patriotism under the influence of Eastern philosophers such as Al-Farabi, Avicenna, and Averroes. In his Divine Comedy, Dante places those who served their people, homeland, and nation in the highest realms of paradise, emphasizing virtue, public service, and moral excellence. According to Dante, a person's ethical conduct, virtuous behavior, and love for homeland and people determine their spiritual reward.

Abu Abdullah Rudaki's qasida "Boyi Joyi Mulyon" awakens love for one's homeland through vivid imagery. Rudaki employs artistic expressions connected to the native soil and the scents of one's birthplace, which evoke emotional responses in both the mind and heart. This makes the work especially effective in fostering patriotism among youth. In this qasida, Rudaki emphasizes that true human value lies not in material wealth but in one's spiritual connection to the homeland. The homeland is not merely a geographic territory-it is a source of inspiration, the meaning of life, and an essential part of one's identity.

In Sufi teachings, the homeland is considered the ultimate spiritual destination, comparable to the highest station of a servant. Junayd Baghdadi states: "There are servants of God who reach many spiritual stations. They ride the horses gifted by God and swiftly advance toward Him." In Abu Sulayman Dorani's doctrine, "Faith (iman) is more virtuous than knowledge, for faith is homeland." This implies that the soul's original destination, even before entering this world, is the true homeland. Similarly, the Sufi Alloyor refers to one's "original homeland" as the ultimate spiritual abode.

Imam Al-Ghazali remarked: "The homeland has its rights. First, one must live peacefully and gratefully in it. One must miss the homeland when away, feel anger if it is insulted, and defend it if attacked. If we live in this paradise-like homeland, we should live in peace and gratitude, whether for study, commerce, or other purposes, and remember it while traveling."

Love for the homeland and courage are also reflected in the life and writings of Najmiddin Kubra. The Sufi states: "To drink the cup of martyrdom while defending the motherland is equivalent to attaining union with God." When the Mongol forces besieged Gurganj, the seventy-six-year-old Kubra refused to flee, demonstrating his unwavering loyalty and patriotism. He argued: "I spent the best days of my life here; now, in these perilous times, abandoning the city would be dishonorable. We are born

of this soil, and here we shall die." Even in times of crisis, Kubra exemplified unity of action, word, and moral conviction in defense of the homeland.

Academic Aziz Qayumov, analyzing the Naqshbandi teaching of "safar dar Vatan" (travel within the homeland) through the writings of Alisher Navoi, explains:

"Live within your homeland and travel it; if a journey is required elsewhere, undertake it without hardship." This means one should prioritize exploration and experience within one's homeland. Traveling abroad is permissible, but only if it does not cause hardship or distraction. Therefore, all journeys should ideally begin with one's motherland.

In the 18th century, the Turkmen poet and thinker Makhtumquli Firaqi focused on patriotism as defending Turkmen lands against foreign invaders, uniting divided tribes, and building a strong, peaceful, and cohesive state. According to him: "To love the homeland means to protect its people from ignorance and hostility, and to guide them toward continuous progress." Thus, his patriotism is inseparable from humanitarian values, linking the country's peace to the moral health of society. Makhtumquli's philosophy emphasizes enlightened freedom, unity as strength, justice-based governance, and harmony between patriotism and humanism.

In the teachings of Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, patriotism is central to human development and attaining both worldly and spiritual success. It requires every individual to care deeply about their nation and homeland while valuing peace and stability. He stated: "We, the progressive people, strive for the homeland, establish schools, serve religion and knowledge, and continue our work even if criticized by the ignorant or opposed by outdated methods. Our service to faith and nation is unimpeded by their words." Indeed, ignorance and poor governance, the rise of immorality, and lack of education threaten societal well-being and weaken patriotism, leaving the nation vulnerable to foreign domination and losing its honor and respect in the eyes of other peoples.

Patriotism, as a social and moral value, plays a vital role in shaping both individual character and the collective identity of society. It goes beyond mere attachment to territory, encompassing ethical principles, civic responsibility, and a commitment to the welfare of one's nation and fellow citizens. Historically and cross-culturally, thinkers, philosophers, and leaders have emphasized that genuine patriotism combines love for one's homeland with moral integrity, courage, and a sense of justice. As a social value, patriotism fosters unity, solidarity, and civic engagement, encouraging citizens to contribute positively to the development and stability of their communities. As a moral value, it instills virtues such as selflessness, honesty, respect for others, and dedication to the common good. In contemporary societies, where globalization and intercultural interactions are increasing, patriotism rooted in ethical and moral consciousness remains essential for preserving national identity, promoting social cohesion, and ensuring sustainable development.

Ultimately, patriotism is not simply an abstract sentiment but a guiding principle that inspires responsible and morally upright behavior. By nurturing patriotism as both a social and moral value, societies can cultivate citizens who are not only loyal to their country but also committed to justice, human dignity, and the advancement of humanity as a whole.

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