

Allegiance and Jihad in Contemporary Islamic Thought

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The primordial form of personal commitment – the bay’ a – is usually translated as “oath of allegiance”. Historically it was a transaction, ratified by the clasping of the hands of the parties involved, it was a token of the relationship and mutual obligations between rulers and ruled. Recent researches pointed out that in modern time the term „oath of allegiance” was literally translated into Arabic as yamin al-wala’. This term coexist with bay’ a indicating that the two are not identical. Yamīn al-walā’ denotes an oath or a solemn declaration of loyalty which may be offered in a variety of contexts (appointment of judges, soldiers’ s allegiance to the state or acquiring new citizenship, etc.) The interpretation of this double form of the declaration of loyalty sheds light on difficulties when jihad and its social conditions are to be described.