

## **Awami League government's hostile takeover of 'Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited' and the inevitable failure of the pragmatic politics of 'gradualism' (tadarruj)**

### **News:**

On January 5, the most profitable private bank in Bangladesh, Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited (IBBL), which has been controlled by the Islamic political party Jamat-e-Islami, has brought major changes in its top brass. Including appointing pro-government secular personalities as its Chairman and Managing Director, changes were also brought about in the board of directors and management team. Apart from many of the mainstream Islamic political parties and personalities, several nationalist political parties and media personalities have also been highly critical of Awami League government for this shameless act of forceful acquisition of a popular private bank, fearing that it would have long-run negative impacts in the private sector of the country.

### **Comment:**

IBBL is the largest Sharia-based bank in Bangladesh which began its journey as the first Islamic bank in South and Southeast Asia. Since its inception in 1983, its board positions have been filled with people associated with Jamaat-e-Islami (JI). From policymakers such as Chairman and Managing Director to executives and lower level employees, all have always been appointed from among JI party members and/or its supporters. It is thus no wonder that taking control of such a big and long-nurtured institution of Jamat, which has been its prime financial backbone, was a blunt political move by the regime to inflict catastrophic damage to the party.

Let us take a more critical look at this unfortunate consequence suffered by one of the largest and influential Islamic political parties vis-à-vis the change it has always projected to bring about through this institution. The intended goal of JI via IBBL has to be evaluated in light of their "gradualist approach" (tadarruj) or "Islamization" – a pragmatic concept of establishing Islamic state through Islamizing the kufr institutions slowly, rather than following a radical approach to change the society comprehensively after establishing the Khilafah state first. The proponents of this methodology (i.e. tadarruj) have always believed and spread the idea that establishment of Islamic state (Khilafah) under the dominion of secular kufr society is impractical and rather a romantic fanciful idea. Rather we are always asked to believe that all the institutions of a kufr society could be taken control of through Islamizing all its spheres gradually. The idea to compromise with non-Islamic beliefs and establishments for achieving this goal has also been propagated in the name of achieving "maslahah" (common benefit) – a pure Kufur Machiavellian approach ('end justifies the means') adopted to attain Islamic goal by shunning Shariah principles!

Thus we see emergence of Islamic banks and Islamic insurance companies etc, keeping abreast with similar Islamic institutions in many other fields of a non-Islamic society, as part of the gradualist approach to popularize Islam in each sectors which would automatically pave the way for establishing Islamic state eventually.

The dismal consequence of one of the crucial and powerful tools, i.e. IBBL, of the gradualists is a glaring example of the methodological fallacy of ‘gradualism’. The proponents of this method have always failed to understand that various institutions of a Kufr system exist to protect the very foundation of the system, not to let people of rival ideologies use it to destroy the system itself. Whoever walked down this slippery Machiavellian path of ‘gradualism’ to implement Islam in fact ended up being slowly and completely enveloped by the long tentacles of Kufr ideology. To popularize the idea of ‘Islamic Banking’ (!), keeping aside the discussion that how on earth a fractional-reserve based bank can be Islamic?!, plenty of compromises Jamat Islami did to retain its influence in this gigantic institution that it nurtured for so long. In recent times, IBBL has regularly been organizing ‘dua mahfil’ for Sheikh Mujiur Rahman on his death anniversary, crores of taka it regularly needs to put into government’s fund to keep the regime pleased, and very recently it even thanked God (through media announcement) for saving the life of Prime Minister Hasina from a plane crash – all these tactics in any way cannot be endorsed by normative Islamic politics.

The ‘gradualist Islamists’ have always been so much fascinated by western political models that it became their only paradigm of thinking beyond which they could never foresee the coming of an Islamic State. Thus rather than calling for a radical and comprehensive change of the entire society, Bangladesh Jamat-e-Islami has always believed in the method of Islamizing various sectors of secular Bangladesh with a vision that one day all these sectors would become completely Islamized which would then force the secular government to back down from the power. But what we rather saw that Jamat was compelled to change its logo by eliminating the word “akimuddin” (establish Islam) in 2016 and with using the red and green color on it resembling Bangladeshi flag with the name ‘Bangladesh’ on the red part (even though it is categorically mentioned in their literatures also that nationalism is forbidden in Islam). Now after losing control of their most influential entity inside the financial sector of the country together with the same reality for rest of their other non-political institutions, the idea of ‘Islamization’ or ‘gradualism’ has turned out to be a complete utopia. People now are being convinced that the path of ‘pragmatism’ towards an Islamic State through ‘Islamization of Kufr’ will spiral downward to ‘Kufrization of Islamic entities’.

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