



The Intensive Drive to Secularize the Identity of the Muslim Youth in Bangladesh

In 2015, a picture had gone viral in social media in Bangladesh- a picture of a Hijabi woman playing in the Hindu festival of colors, commonly known as 'Holi'. Many of the Muslim youth of Bangladesh now visit temples on Puja festivals, don a furry red cap on Christmas or clink little glasses of vodka under fireworks during the eve of a new year. Through numerous methods and measures, the West and the Bangladeshi government have created a society fit only for secularism, where these youths are forced to shed their honor as Muslims and be secularized.

Since the rise of the internet, electronic media has become a powerful tool of the Western Imperialists to control the minds of the youth around the world. Through television shows, movies, music, etc., the West encourages the Muslim youth to do only what will bring enjoyment to their life, forgetting Islam and its values. Furthermore, mass media in Bangladesh, who are paid agents of the West, are also playing an important part in secularizing the Muslim youth of the country. Promotion of beauty contests by big companies and social networks in Bangladesh have had young girls idealize and participate in activities that reveal their bodies and sell their physical beauty. Singing competitions are used by the media as a tool to promote secular and pagan festivals as participants are encouraged to dress a certain way and sing certain songs. Relationship between the genders have lost all Islamic boundaries. Even selfie competitions have become a new trend, where companies and newspapers look for the 'perfect selfie', hence encouraging the youth only to think of their physical appearance and how to appear more attractive. Gaming conventions are also highly endorsed by well-known companies, where 'gamers'- people who spend an unhealthy amount of time on the computer screen playing video games, come and purchase gaming items and participate in 'gaming' competitions.

The story does not end here. In order to cater to the expectations of the society and also declare themselves a peaceful members of the community, a new breed of "liberal" Muslims are being promoted to the youth by the West. They are the first to use the rainbow filter in Facebook to support the LGBT community and bravely declare "Je suis Charlie" yet say very little against the oppression on Muslims in Palestine, Syria, Myanmar, or the rest of the world. Just like the good global citizen, their logic only allows them to condemn Muslims for terrorism yet say very little about the war on terror. The media highlights these Muslims and the Muslim youth idealize this form of Islam, being misled by words such as "peace" and "justice".

The controlled media has beautified the materialistic side of life, and have demonized Islam. Islam is represented by the media as a symbol of oppression and violence. Oppression of women, the torture of the hijab, all the hidden terrorist groups that you will only hear of in the papers but never find any physical proof - everything negative and bad is solely linked with Islam and is portrayed in print media. Many movies, such as the 'American Sniper' and 'The Clay Bird' that depict negative images of Islam, showing Islam to be a violent and backward religion, are nominated for Oscars and many such awards. It is clear the West is open regarding its hatred towards Islam. Many atheists in Bangladesh have found their voice through online blogs, which they use only to berate, humiliate and insult Islam in all written manners possible. These blogs are highlighted by the media as freedom

of speech and many misguided Muslim youths take heed of their vile words. Thus the Western powers make sure that the Muslim youth have a misguided notion of Islam so that they will never want to have anything to do with their Deen.

The Bangladeshi government, who are nothing but a puppet regime that only exist to please their Western Colonialist masters, have come up with new laws and policies to keep the Muslim youth away from Islam, or criminalize them for associating themselves with their Deen. There have been protests by Madrassah students regarding the contents of the atheist blogs. There was no freedom of speech for these students; according to unofficial reports, 2000 of these peaceful protesters were shot and killed in the night during an intended blackout, and their dead bodies were loaded into trucks and disposed of. No form of media was allowed to formally report the incident and all traces of blood and evidence were washed away that very night. This year, two young men were recently arrested for advising women to observe modesty and wear the hijab. Even women were not spared from their tyranny; two young sisters of Hizb ut Tahrir were arrested while distributing leaflets for an online conference and were taken to remand, where they were subjected to violence and brutality. The Madrassah schooling system is constantly under attack by countless ministers and the secular media; they are declared to be 'terrorist production zones' and are always under strict surveillance. Private Islamic schools are also not spared from harassment; they are always under government proctoring, and are threatened and forced to participate in pagan activities and observe national traditions. Internationally renowned Islamic speakers are sent back from the airport in Bangladesh, whereas many Bollywood icons and international musicians are free to enter the country and instill their corrupt ideologies to the youth with no government intervention at all. Time and again, this dictatorial regime has made it very clear that Islam has no place in Bangladesh.

However, with all these 'protective measures' to keep the youth away from the dangers of Islam, the Bangladeshi government has failed to provide any real security to the people. Only last year, many young women were brutally abused and assaulted in the crowds of Dhaka University area during the celebration of the Bengali New Year. This had created a nation-wide uproar, and the criminals were identified via social media. However, the government refused to take any measures as they were politically associated with the currently-in-power Awami government. Tonu, a girl who was recently raped and murdered in the district of Comilla inside the Cantonment area, had also caught the attention of the headlines. Yet, ten days after the incident, the government falsely declared that she was not raped to avoid taking further action.

Education has become a new tool for the government to make the Muslim youth strangers to Islam. In recent times, the National Board textbooks were made free to all students. However, some silent edits have been made to "secularize" education. The Bangladeshi government has made the National Board take out all texts about or related to Islam and instead replaced these texts with writings about Hindu rituals and beliefs. The removed texts that were seen 'unfit' for education were stories that encouraged good morals and kindness as a part of Islam. Although ironically the textbooks were intended to be made free from "religion", students now have to learn about pagan beliefs and rituals without a choice. From the 193 texts that are present from Class 1 to Class 10, 137 texts are related to paganism and works of atheistic inclination, and the remaining texts have absolutely no relation to Islam at all. Furthermore, board examination texts incorporate content which berate Islam; hence students are forced to write answers that humiliate their Deen. The Awami Regime is forcing the youth to stay unaware of even the smallest details about Islam from the education system, leaving them ignorant so that they can be made to believe anything about Islam that suits the needs of the government.

Furthermore, education is now focused on grades and numbers; hence students are willing to use any methods necessary to score a good mark. Cheating in exams have become a norm and board examination questions are usually leaked to students in advance. The value for true knowledge and learning is fading fast. Bangladesh now has a vast number of students with high GPA scores who know almost nothing of what they have studied, hence making them incapable of real life jobs. To further enhance the spreading ignorance, the Bangladeshi Government encourages the Education Board to allow more students to receive high scores each year to put on a mask of success, whilst crippling the future of the Ummah by mass producing more uneducated graduates.

Government policies have been imposed upon the people of Bangladesh to act in a specific manner in order to fulfill the agendas of the West. The two Muslim holidays are the Eid ul Fitr and Eid ul Adh'a, which are celebrated by all Muslims around the world. However, Pohela Boishakh, the first day of the Bengali calendar and a day for pagans to celebrate in order to keep bad spirits at bay, has been forced to become the largest festival in the country. A new government policy now declares that all government workers get a salary bonus so that they may observe this pagan holiday. Another policy has been imposed on all government-run and semi-government financed schools that they must keep their schools open and force students to celebrate the Pohela Boishakh. Thus the Bangladeshi government has been very successful in forcing its civilians to observe pagan rituals.

The fruits of the Bangladeshi Government's incessant attempts at secularizing the youth is blatant today. The absence of Islam from the hearts of the Muslim youth have created a moral void, and hence crime rates have shot up. Reported child rape and murder cases have gone from 8 cases in 2012 to 30 cases in the year 2015 in the country. There have already been 75 reported child murders from January to March in this year. Teen pregnancies, drug abuse, eve teasing, etc. have all become a common and accepted phenomenon in today's youth. Furthermore, the media has ingrained hatred of Islam into the minds of the young Muslims. Through the portrayal of atheist blogs, various media content, news and control of educational texts, the youth of Bangladesh only understand Islam as a form of repressive religion and that any form of political Islam will result in dictatorial regimes of oppression. This is how the current secular regime gains success in suppressing any rise of Islam or Islamic values in the country by fulfilling the agendas of the West.

It is obvious that secularism and democracy has failed to give proper rights and security to today's Ummah. These ideologies did not inspire the youth to challenge themselves and create a generation of thinkers; instead they have generated ignorance and crime. Islam is that ideology that will create a generation of people who will truly become the pioneers of real change- change for the better. Our forgotten figures in history tell us of the many scientists, philosophers, army generals and other icons were created in the light of Islam, such as Tariq ibn Ziyad who had conquered Spain at the age of 17 or Ibn Sina, the father of modern medicine. Only Islam can produce a generation of youth who will lead the world in works of peace and true progress.

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