



Muslim Youth: Confused Identity

After 1300 years of existing as an ideology which was established in society, Islam became relegated to the position of a mere 'religion' with the destruction of the Khilafah State. This has created the unnatural situation where Muslim children are born and raised in societies which implement an ideology that contradicts their Deen.

Today, it is strongly felt by Muslims that Islam, as a Deen, is being undermined constantly. This is because the systems which exist in society seek to protect themselves by attacking any other belief. This is all with the aim to prevent any change from taking place. The Communists attacked the Capitalists, the Capitalists attacked the Communists, as each of them sought to ensure that their ideology dominated. They wanted to retain their followers while trying to convert more people to their belief.

Today, existing ideologies have gone on the offensive against Islam, seeking to ensure their own followers are not influenced by Islam, while using all the means at their disposal to attract Muslims away from Islam and towards their beliefs.

This means that from the time they are children, our Muslim youth are being exposed to non-Islamic concepts that are present in society and this gets worse as they become older. Students are brought into contact with people and ideas that constantly seek to make them question their Deen and have doubt in their Islamic beliefs, making them susceptible to secularism and atheism.

How the ideas are spread...

The education systems in Muslim countries have always been targeted as a means to spread these ideas. For example, in Pakistan, students are taught theories of evolution as if they are established truths. Extra-curricular activities, like the Model United Nations and interschool debating societies, also ensure that Western ideas are seen as the only solution to societies' problems. Students are given questions to debate, such as 'religion is no longer relevant in today's society.' Students are taught to question religion, with the strong inference that this will keep you backwards, and to focus on ideas like the spirit of 'free-thinking' and philosophy, which are applicable in a modern society.

Social media has given secular philosophers and atheists a platform to spread their ideas and influence. Its expansion has led to a situation where there is no control over the ideas that can be spread. In Pakistan, websites and twitter accounts are being established by atheists and agnostics. They are posing as oppressed freethinkers, who are willing to give up their safety to spread what they think. Their aim is to attract the youth who have a natural curiosity about the world around them. Social media has emboldened people who wish to spread the idea that religion inhibits free thinking and progress and that religion is oppressive and unable to solve the problems they face whereas these are problems which are actually a result of the secular system being implemented in Pakistan and all over the Muslim world. They pose as rational people, as scientific progressive people and constantly offer solutions to every issue from a secular angle, blaming and undermining Islam by using the actions of a few Muslims as proof and evidence. This is creating confusion amongst the youth who are attached to Islam but are unable to intellectually handle the arguments being thrown at them.

In order to protect ourselves and to protect the youth of Pakistan and the Muslim Ummah, we need to make sure that we refer back to Islam and use it as a basis to judge actions. But in order to do this, the first step is to make sure that we have a firm conviction in Islam and an Aqeedah i.e. an absolute belief in Allah and the truth of The Qur'an, which has been established through the mind.

How Muslims should approach Islam

To avoid the problems that we see today, a child's belief in Islam has to be established by a rational method of thinking, through the mind and reason. He shouldn't believe that there is one God because his parents told him that there is. He should understand, through the use of his five senses, that "there is no God but Allah" (the Shahada).

As Muslims, we are required to use this method to establish our belief. We believe in Allah because it's the truth and this can be proven through a study of reality as we are directed in the Quran.

﴿إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالاختلافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ﴾ Allah (swt) says in Surah Al-Baqara (The Cow) - 2:164 **“Verily, in the creation of the heavens and of the earth, and the succession of night and day: and in the ships that speed through the sea with what is useful to man: and in the waters which God sends down from the sky, giving life thereby to the earth after it had, been lifeless, and causing all manner of living creatures to multiply thereon: and in the change of the winds, and the clouds that run their appointed courses between sky and earth: [in all this] there are messages indeed for people who use their reason.”**

Allah (swt) has shown us the need to use our mind to study the reality, and to draw the conclusion that He (swt) exists from the signs of creation. The Aqeeda is therefore established through the use of the mind and the process of thinking.

There are also the stories in the Quran, such as the example of Prophet Ibrahim (as), as he came to the conclusion that there was One God at a time when the people around him worshipped idols. ﴿وَكَذَلِكَ نُرِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلَكُوتَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَيَكُونُ مِنَ الْمُوقِنِينَ * فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ اللَّيْلُ رَأَى كَوْكَبًا قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَا أُحِبُّ الْإِفْلِينَ * فَلَمَّا رَأَى الْقَمَرَ بَازِعًا قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَيْسَ لِئَن لَّمْ يَهْدِنِي رَبِّي لَأَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الضَّالِّينَ * فَلَمَّا رَأَى الشَّمْسَ بَازِعَةً قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي هَذَا أَكْبَرُ فَلَمَّا أَفَلَتْ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ * إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ﴾ **“So also did We show Ibrahim the power and the laws of the heavens and the earth, that he might (with understanding) have certitude. When the night covered him over, He saw a star: He said: "This is my Lord." But when it set, He said: "I love not those that set." When he saw the moon rising in splendor, he said: "This is my Lord." But when the moon set, He said: "Unless my Lord guide me, I shall surely be among those who go astray. "When he saw the sun rising in splendor, he said: "This is my Lord; this is the greatest (of all)." But when the sun set, he said: "O my people! I am indeed free from your (guilt) of giving partners to Allah. "For me, I have set my face, firmly and truly, towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I give partners to Allah.”** [Surah Al An'am 6:75-79]

Through this story, we will also see the use of the mind and the rational method of thinking as Prophet Ibrahim again studies the reality and uses that as evidence that Allah (swt) exists.

This use of the mind and thinking to establish the Aqeeda was used throughout the centuries by the Sahaba and the scholars of Islam. It was only with the influx of non-Islamic ideas and the weakening of the understanding of Islam that led to Muslims imitating the members of other religions, and replacing the use of the mind to establish the Aqeeda, with the use of emotion and the idea of 'just having faith'!

Today, our societies prevent children from asking the fundamental questions which every human asks. We are told to have faith, to simply believe that there is one God. This leads to a weakness in the child's conviction in Allah and thus His Laws. It distorts the child's understanding of their Deen and allows the secular individuals, through social media and various other methods, to weaken their trust and conviction in Islam. When the belief in Allah (swt) is attacked and we have no rational answer to give, we will find no means of arguing against these non-Islamic beliefs.

In order to build their conviction in Islam and use Allah's laws as a basis for all of their actions, we must ensure that the Muslim youths understand the correct way to build their conviction of Allah's existence. To do this, we must allow them to ask questions, and then guide them to the correct answers. Questioning things and displaying a sense of curiosity is a natural part of growing up.

The way that the youth become convinced of their Deen is as important as their decision to identify as Muslims. Once their Aqeedah is built, once they are convinced that Islam is the truth, this builds the strongest foundation to our belief, and we are able to withstand all the kuffar ideas around us. We will have the strongest conviction that Islam is the truth and as such, we will constantly refer back to the Akham, the rules of Islam, in every decision we make.

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