**Time for Pakistan to Take the Saudi Route**

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Pakistan needs a reset. One that Saudi Arabia went through. One doesn’t need to lose your religious identity to modernize. All MBS did was to bring Saudi Arabia back to basics when it came to religion. That process is still going on but what a start already. Pakistan needs to do the same. Do it and watch the world come to you…

Pakistan is broken. We know that. Since its birth all the relevant indicators have been on a downward spiral. But more of that and how to fix it in 100 days later. For now, I’d like to talk about a sensitive topic: religion i.e. Islam. One God. One book. One Prophet (PBUH). Yet so many sects. Why? It is time to de-Islamize Pakistan. Let me explain before you accuse me of blasphemy.

Except Islam, every faith has evolved by its followers. Such as the Bible has been updated numerous times. Other major religious (Holy) books have been updated as well numerous times over the centuries. The Quran is the only book on planet earth that remains untouched and pure to its core. Yet (unfortunately) it is the one major religion that has numerous subsects all created by humans filled with emotions (and greed) just after demise of our Prophet (PBUH).

All seemed to have forgotten His (PBUH) last sermon. All seemed to have forgotten the hard struggles that the Prophet (PBUH) and his companions went through once Islam was declared.

If anything, we Muslims make it easier for Islam to become a media target.

Fast forward 1445 years later to present day with so many numerous tragic events, such as 9/11 in the recent past or the Siege of Makkah in the late 70s, have all had some form of negative baring on the reputation of Islam under the comfortable influence of Western propaganda of anti-Islamic rhetoric.

Dare I say it we do not help ourselves at all. If anything, we Muslims make it easier for Islam to become a media target. Even amongst ourselves, let alone the Western media. Why I am saying all this….

Well; let me start by saying that as someone who grew up in Saudi Arabia during the 70s & 80s where super strict rules were applied – from closing of shops during prayer times, to, not mixing of genders openly in public, to TV censorships and so on. Islamic Studies was a subject taught multiple times a week from first grade all the way till tenth grade – separate from Quran which was taught multiple times a week from first till tenth grade. Religion was drilled in us whether regardless how much a child is struggling to understand the depth-ness of the faith.

When my parents landed in Saudi Arabia from Pakistan in late 60s; there was none of this strictness I just described. Fast forward 40 years and look what is going on in preset day Saudi Arabia. HRH Mohammad Bin Salman, MBS for short, has “freed” Saudi Arabia and released it from the shackles. Normalized it. Women have started driving. Wearing the abaya is not mandatory yet encouraged for modesty.

The call for prayers still happens. For those who want to pray can do so. For those that do not want to don’t have to. It is up to God to judge them not human beings. Salafism i.e. a more puritanical form of Islam practiced by Prophet Mohammad and his companions is what is going in Saudi Arabia. Islam got the right truthful image. As a result, the whole world is flocking to the Kingdom. It is the center of business world now.

Pakistan needs to follow suit. The Shariah scholars of the country need to stop thinking they are celebrities. They need to understand that there is only one same moon that they all try to sight (as though perhaps Pakistan has its own moon different to the rest of the world).

The Quran is a complete code of life yet many of the practices of the people (of Pakistan) do not reflect what is in the Quran. Unfortunately they reflect all the sects that have become so filled with emotions trying to proclaim one mightier and righteous than the other.

Please give it a break. There is only one Quran. There is no mention in it of the word Sunni or Shia let alone any of the other minor sects. Stop blurring the lines between culture and religion. It is a societal cancer.

Part of the reason why 50% of our population, the Pakistani women, sit at home (minus the kitty party aunties) as a burden on the economy through no fault of their own. Blame it on Pakistani Islam filled with ritualistic tendencies implemented by a patriarchal society of male chauvinistic egos (and Bushra Bibi aka Pinky Peerni). If Pakistan is to stop the economic hell hole then this is one of the pillars it needs to eradicate, ostracize, and emancipate itself from completely.

And it begins with Islamic Studies in the government and private schools. Furthermore, it begins by adding regular subjects such as science & mathematics to the Madrasas (deen & duniya). Pakistan needs an Islamic reset. One that Saudi Arabia went through. One doesn’t need to lose your religious identity to modernize. All MBS did was to bring Saudi Arabia back to basics when it came to religion. That process is still going on but what a start already.

Pakistan needs to do the same. Do it and watch the world come to visit you. You have everything you need to become a world class destination in less than 100 days. I would bet that at least half if not majority of your diaspora sitting abroad that openly disowning you (yet secretly loving you) will all come rushing back to you.

An idle brain is destructive. Majority of our population is under the age of 30. That is a ticking time bomb so easily manipulated. They need to be woken up from this hypnosis and guided towards the righteous path. I say this again that all this and more can be done in 100 days and Pakistan’s economic fortunes will flourish for the first time in its history and all the indicators will for once be trending upwards. \*\*\*\*\*

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