



Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

Islam vs. fanaticism



Islam is the religion of peace, tolerance and justice. However, due to terrible distortion of real Islam it turns into a tyrannical religion. Allah the Almighty, the Creator of the gigantic Universe tells in the Holy Koran that, "There is no compulsion in religion [The Noble Koran

2:256]."

But fanatic mullahs and so-called religious scholars want to implement their so-called "Islam" even by force.

Md. Anisur Rahman
National University of Singapore

Nihilism

A few days ago, in a story published in the Rising Star supplement of your daily, a nihilist was shown as a ruthless killer. It might seem quite trivial (and not to mention, weird) actually, but I do feel that a point needs to be made about that.

Firstly, we need to understand that all human beings are nihilist to a degree (by their very nature and biological limitations human beings cannot be absolute nihilists, though those who, say, commit suicide for the sake of it, or to investigate the afterlife existence might be close to it. As Nietzsche said, Nihilism is a double-edged sword, and it depends on the wielder as to how to possess it for one's gain). Many of us only care about incidents directly affecting our life and show little, if

any, concern to the more macro-level incidents. To bring forth a pertinent illustration, in the movie 'Good Night, and Good Luck' CBS newscaster William Burrow rightly pointed out that if we make the TV an instrument for immediate gratification and do not attempt to educate or inform the masses to things or issues which don't concern them immediately, then democracy, justice and eventually a liveable society cannot prevail.

However, that is slightly beside the point here. I was trying to point out the inherent nihilist in every one of us. Rebelliousness in itself is a form of nihilism. Our societies' mighty and powerful, most of them conforming to the established but flawed social order, had to portray nihilism as an undesired virtue to protect

themselves.

But nihilism in itself cannot be bad, at least that's what I believe. Why not take a look at Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of *Übermensch* or Superman (as I type his name wrong, the spellchecker corrects me. Anyone with such a difficult to spell name having a mention in a standard English dictionary can not be all wrong with his philosophy!). When a person understands, to an extent, the meaninglessness of our actions, or rather, cannot find meaning to them, Nietzsche suggests that we live our life as 'works of art', to be idolised by the Supermen (Nietzsche mentioned Goethe as one close idol)

Monwar Hussain
Institute of Business Administration
University of Dhaka

Quality education?

It is absurd nowadays to think about studying in private universities. A big chunk of money has to be put at a time to get admitted in a private university. By giving money students are just getting a certificate but they don't have any idea of what they've been taught. At the end of their study in this type of universities the students have to walk down the street, their head down with a lot of frustration.

Are not the private universities pinching money from the students in the name of quality education and lure of credit transfer facilities? Sometimes it is hard to find out whether the banner is for the university admission or an agency to send people overseas?

There are some exceptions; some private universities have their own status and take all responsibilities to provide quality education. But their semester fees are so high that a middle-class family cannot bear the costs. Majority of these universities don't have govt. approval but they are running their business from the heart of the city. Of course, they have strong backing to run the business while the education ministry is unconcerned. These universities are trapping the students by holding out lofty promises. Some of these universities are established next to a bus terminal or residential hotel. They don't have their own campus where students can hang out. These sorts of issues cannot be overlooked.

Rajul Hasan
Sydney

Proposed ministry of NRB

I read Professor A. S. Islam's article in Point-Counterpoint, recently published in the DS, with great interest and appreciation. I endorse every word he says. Among Third World countries

Bangladesh started off from a relatively high vantage point in terms of academic standards and scientifically trained manpower, and yet today we are termed scientifically lagging and are lumped with the least developed countries. Authorities in Bangladesh have neither fully realised the importance of tapping into the very rich gold mine of expatriate scientists and utilising them in sustainable development, especially in the area of molecular biosciences and biotechnology, nor have they seriously launched any programme to make Bangladesh internationally competitive in these fast developing areas of science and technology. This is in sharp contrast to what has transpired in the rapidly developing countries such as India, China and Brazil.

The proposed Ministry of NRB affairs can certainly help in identifying and harnessing this great wealth for raising scientific proficiency in Bangladesh and in stemming the very damaging brain drain. This would need to be done in partnership with the Ministry of Science and Technology, academic institutions and the private sector in Bangladesh.

From my own personal experience I can attest that this concept is anathema to certain people in power and to those who do not wish to be pushed out of their comfort zone.

The national emphasis is on training people for jobs overseas to generate foreign exchange through remittance inflow. In that context the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment is doing commendable work but that is no substitute for the proposed Ministry of Non-resident Bangladeshis suggested by Professor Ahmad Islam.

While the existing Ministry (<http://probashi.gov.bd/>) is serving semi-skilled people, the loss of

trained scientific manpower is having a devastating effect on Bangladesh's much needed transition from being scientifically lagging to scientific proficiency. Many universities in Bangladesh are producing excellent science graduates for the job market in the West, where they serve as the R&D engine and help to create wealth for those countries, and yet their are no cogent policies to create conditions to retain our best brains here or induce them to return.

I hope that the people in power pay heed to Professor' Islam's very wise counsel in the establishment and modus operandi of the proposed Ministry of NRB. I also hope that they listen to his advice about letting this Ministry operate without political interference so that its future is not affected by regime change.

Ahmed A Azad
Melbourne, Australia

Teachers' salary

I suggest the government raise the salaries of the teachers without any further delay. However on one condition! All teachers have to refrain from earning an extra - exuberant - and tax-free income by providing so called "coaching" to students, and close down their illegal coaching centres at once. Teachers should be told by the government to teach in the classroom and not in coaching centre for extra money.

Will the teachers agree with this?

Mariam Ferdousi
Ramu, Cox's Bazar

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Finally, we have found one Bangladeshi Jew sympathiser. It is my question to this Jew sympathiser, how would he feel if his home was forcibly taken away from him? How would he feel if the Jewish soldiers murdered his dear son or daughter? How would he feel if his wife or mother was forced to work in a labour camp?

We really do not need to recognise Israel. Israel does not exist. These Jews came out of nowhere & yet they flourished.

Palestine is the true state that needs to be recognised.

Minhaj Ahmed, Uttara, Dhaka



Dream and resolve of a village girl

I received the following email letter from a regular reader of my column. I thought her email would be inspiring to numerous other readers of The Daily Star. As you will read from her letter below, she has been educating herself and was supporting her two brother's education as well a truly surreal story indeed.

Assalamu Alaikum. It's one of the greatest joys of my life that you have replied. I have known you by your writings. Your foresight about Bangladesh is clear and for this I have seen a new horizon within you. Your article on approval of Malaysian investment projects is very helpful for my paper on Foreign Direct Investment.

From class eight I am self dependent. It was tough for me from that time living in a remote village but I am confident now. I have three brothers. After admitting into DU, I have spent all of my efforts for

my immediate elder and youngest brother. Now my youngest brother is studying BBA (3rd year) and the other one is studying chartered accountancy at ICAB. After a long time, my parents are very pleased with us. Though my parents have no formal education, they have incomparable wisdom and their all dreams enriched by me.

I have a great wish to go abroad for PhD. or another degree but not only I have no dollars I have about taka 2 lakh loan from various sources.

My insight has told me to write to you. I have duties, responsibilities, dream of survival, tension of fulfilling my goal and for all these, I have no special friend.

Can you show me the way by which I can achieve my goal? You are always inspiring to me. May Allah be with you!

Dr. Abdullah A. Dewan
Professor of Economics,
Eastern Michigan University