



Dear Chetan, Politics and Fiction are not the same!

It was not at all surprising to read the preposterous and at the same time ludicrous arguments made by Chetan in his blog article in *Times of India* dated August 6, 2016, entitled “How to tackle radical Islam: The more we have dictatorships in the name of religion the more global terrorists will persist.” Just like any arm-chair thinker, Chetan took pot-shots at Islam (the easiest way to hog limelight and portray oneself as an intellectual), while talking about the US Presidential Elections and the communal statement of Donald Trump related to banning the Muslims from entering the US in order to provide safety to the US citizens, as in his bigoted view, the presence of Muslims puts a question mark on the safety of the citizens.

Chetan writes, “Half of America seems to support Trump,” who believes that terrorism stems from “Radical Islam” and argues that in order to fix this problem we have to “call a spade a spade, and point out that the broader religion of Islam itself is somehow breeding, sanctioning or at least spinning off as a byproduct radical Islam.” Had he been even a little sincere in his research or at least even slightly aware of the historical facts and hypocrisy resulting from the power politics (which even a X standard student knows), he would not have made those shallow arguments, which sound nothing more than a broken record played by every untalented ambitious rookie, desperately trying to sound like an intellectual.

The myth of Muslim terrorists stands no ground if we take a mere casual look at the statistics provided by the (Federal Bureau of Investigation) FBI documenting all the terrorist attacks during 1970 – 2012, including a decade after 9/11. It states that out of 2400 terrorist attacks, 60 of them were carried out by Muslims, which corresponds to a meagre 2.5% of all the attacks. This means that an American terrorist suspect is over nine times more likely to be a non-Muslim than a Muslim. The report further claims, there were more Jewish acts of terrorism in the United States than Islamic, yet when was the last time we heard about the threat of Jewish terrorism in the media? Why are not Chetan and the like crying hoarse about the non-Muslim terrorists? Why is there a complete blackout of the incident where the perpetrator is non-Muslim, for example, the Norwegian Anders Breivik who killed 80 people, however no one questioned his religious orientations or inclinations. The answer is known to all those who have eyes to see, ears to hear and heart/mind to understand, yet for those who want to hide behind the veil of political naivety, then in short and simple words – anti-Islam rhetoric sells and can garner you votes and at the same time divert the attention of people from real issues of the world. In the year 2016 alone, the United States of America has witnessed a massive 263 cases of mass shooting, where a total of 9,908 people have died, but the parochial vision of Trump and his die-hard fans fail to see it as a question of safety of citizens.

As for the question of “Radical Islam,” then the whole world knows what the CIA did during the Cold War as they crossed all the barriers of humanity in order to further their agenda to “bleed the Russians.” In order to stem the expansion of the communist ideology, the CIA supplied the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan with money and weapons and exploited their religious beliefs for its own benefit. The CIA gave birth and then nurtured the armed groups during its ideological war with the USSR. The armed militias were held in high esteem and Ronald Reagan invited the leaders of the armed militia to White House and boosted their morale and thanked them. About the Nicaraguan rebels who were fighting the communists, Reagan likened them with the “Founding Fathers” of the US. It was the CIA which gave rise to the growth of poppy cultivation in Afghanistan in order to finance its war effort and hence are directly responsible for the drug menace in the region. And as for the recent crisis of ISIS, then it is well documented and crystallised fact that the US created the preconditions for the rise of this radical *Sunni* group after invading Iraq in 2003 despite the red signal from the United Nations.

He further goes on to justify the suspicious treatment of Muslims which often lead to xenophobic crimes against them. One should ask him what will happen to the society if such type of inductive reasoning is applied to outcast the whole of the community?

He further writes, “The reason for so much terrorism in the name of Islam is not just religion. It is the presence of several undemocratic, rich and resourceful dictatorships that operate in the name of Islam.” Such statements make it clear that either he is too naïve to understand the reality of the world or he simply does not want to see it through an unbiased lens. It is well documented and beyond any iota of doubt that the Muslim countries in the Middle East and particularly the one which he mentioned by name – Saudi Arabia – are nothing but strong allies of either America or Britain, who wait to serve the western interests at the drop of a hat. The truth of the matter is that these countries are only habited mainly by Muslims but are ruled by Capitalist and traditional laws rather than being based on Islamic Law. Hence their foreign policy is made to favor the western states. Saudi Arabia is merely a pawn in the Global Politics and are made to bend and fold as their puppet masters see fit. It is a brutal dictatorship run by a fabulously wealthy family that has created, owns and controls the country to the whims and fancy of America. It is clear to see that Saudi has no sentiment for Muslims when it created one of the largest militant movements in Afghanistan, and that had no relation to Islam and rather was a part of the American foreign policy strategy to use the Muslims hatred towards atheistic communism to fight the Russian occupation in Afghanistan. We take any despotic ruler, be in Hosni Mubarak, King Abdullah, Bashar al-Assad or any ruler for that matter and one will not be surprised to find them in bed with their masters.

He makes another bizarre argument that “You cannot go to Ramlila Maidan to demonstrate or tweet your point of view. There is no news debate on what the ruler did wrong. You want change, pick up a gun.” The Middle East became a theatre of war even before the destruction of the Ottoman Empire. It was the western forces which were hell-bent to destroy the Ottoman Caliphate for their own ulterior motives. It was Britain and France who decided to divide the Ottoman lands under the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 and way before that they were working for it. Since the fall of the Ottomans, there were constant attempts to suppress the people and capitalist system was enforced upon them. During the Cold War, it became the theatre for proxy wars between US and USSR and afterwards the American domination continued to make the situation chaotic. It is because of such external influences that the Middle East suffers. Muslims are the ones who have been continuously and systematically being killed in millions. Right from Afghanistan, to Syria to Iraq to Beirut to Burma. In fact, 4 million Muslims have been killed in wars since 1990. The count is appalling, yet who cares.

In the end he gives an advice to the Muslims in India that they should “carve out a new identity and lobby to free other Muslims in oppressive regimes.” One may ask him what new identity he is talking about and how does democratic set-up of India help the Muslims where they are being killed merely on the suspicion of storing beef, where they are being killed in riots after riots, where they are languishing behind the bars in false terror cases, where they are being forced to eat cow dung and beaten like animals in public, yet no law and order comes to protect them and where they face discriminations at all levels.

Chetan has done nothing but a great disservice by writing such a biased viewpoint. It seems he put aside all the ethics of the profession on the one side and tried to jump on to the hate-Muslim bandwagon. Now, the only decent thing he can do is to scratch the surface, study Islam and Muslim society and the realpolitik around the globe sincerely and attempt to understand it in a better way before writing, until then he should do what he is best at, writing fiction.

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