



## A Blind Vision

### News:

The man who may soon be king of Saudi Arabia is charting a new, more modern course for a country so conservative that for decades there were no concerts or film screenings and women who attempted to drive were arrested. (AP: 29/10/2017)

### Comment:

Presenting his Vision for 2030, Mohammed bin Salman made reference to returning to 'moderate' Islam. He highlighted different economic challenges facing Saudi and the need to use social reforms to meet these. He mentioned the strict interpretation of Islam that has plagued Saudi for the last 30 years and according to him is not how Saudi used to be. So, with this in mind the soon to be appointed King, made his plans for modernization. Ironically stating that he wants to return to the 'moderate' Islam of the past, his vision is actually not to return to any version of Islam but rather like all the Muslim countries who say they strive for modernity, he wants to fully embrace the Western vision of progress and modernization whilst ensuring the House of Saud still keeps its grip on power.

Reports state, 'There are plans to build a Six Flags theme park and a semi-autonomous Red Sea tourist destination where the strict rules on women's dress will likely not apply. Females will have greater access to sports, the powers of the once-feared religious police have been curtailed and restrictions on gender segregation are being eased.'

Distractions and gestures towards the role of women in society are meant to bring back an acceptable version of Islam-according to this vision. What is actually very clear is that the House of Saud has never ruled by Islam but is a monarchy and is currently struggling to find its place in the Democratic Capitalist world. To fit in, the Prince is struggling to present a version of Islam that is acceptable to Washington, the real Qibla of the Saudi Royal Family.

In the past Saudi enforced a 'strict' version of Islam- Wahabism. This was a tool used by colonialist Britain to control the wealth of the land and keep its people in submission. Now living in a global village with a young population that has mixed values and ideals the glue that kept people together is no longer holding. This is a real challenge in all Muslim societies. With Islam reduced to the rituals and personal life alone, how do societies become coherent and what way can they organize relationships? External pressure from the West, which only seeks to exploit resources and maintain its hegemony means that newer hybrids of Islam are needed.

The only version of Islam that will bring dignity to this land is the one that came from Allah (swt) and was implemented on this land by RasulAllah (saw). It was stated profoundly by Umar bin Al Khattab (ra), **"We were the most humiliated people on earth and Allah gave us honour through Islam. If we ever seek honour through anything else, Allah will humiliate us again."**

Instead of thinking of how to please his Western masters, and adapting Islam in a way that provides acceptance from the Western view of modernity, the Saudi Prince's real challenge is that the Ummah as a whole is gaining awareness and realizing that these rulers are stooges and agents who will twist and change Islam to suit their own agendas and secure their own thrones or seats of power.

Changing education curricula, imposing acceptable khutbas, restricting the voices of opposition and plying the masses with Western culture through music, movies, tourism and sports activities exposes the weakness of this failed state. Holding the hand of America, Muhammad bin Salman is once again showing us that Saudi has no real vision or self-worth.

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