

# A Study of Feminist Ideals in Taslima Nasreen Works an Iconic Feminist

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## Abstract

Taslima Nasreen is a Bengali, Bangladeshi author, feminist human rights activist and secular humanist. Born in the middle class Muslim family in North of Bangladesh in 1962, she received liberal education. At the age of 23 she became a doctor and started working in the poorer parts of her country. She wrote extensively for periodicals when she came to the West's attention. She has won many awards including Ananda Puraskar, the Sakharov prize for freedom of thought from the European Parliament, the Kurt Tuckholsky award from Swedish PEN: a human rights prize from the French government, and a humanist Award from International Humanist and Ethical Union. Taslima Nasreen, after 18 years of exile, appeared in Delhi in public. Taslima is well aware that her battle is extremely significant, as fundamentalists would like to make everybody eat and wear and live with their straightjacket frame. It is opposed to fundamentalism because it refuses others the freedom to freely express their beliefs and cannot allow something that they consider to be unfaithful. "I do not accept that it is actually a disagreement between two sects – Christianity and Islam and Hinduism and Islam or Judaism and. In all religious traditions there are fundamentalists. The cancellation of her new Nirbasan book at the Kolkata Book Fair by Taslima Nasreen has shown that her controversy has become her second nature. Her dissertation focuses on women's rights as well as Islamic fundamentalist rights. Her right to freedom of speech has struggled. In an interview given in the Hindu "I want the government not to violate freedom of speech," she expresses her feelings of alienity to Bengal and Bangladesh". It is strange to know that it is not fundamentalists but the authorities that prevented Nirbasan from releasing him. In reality, Dwikhandito began to attack the fundamentalists. "Had they not banned the novel, the issues of attacks on me, setting my head price, deportation requirements and cancellation of my book launch would not have risen," says the author. She strongly believes" (The Hindu).

**Keywords:** *Feminist Ideals, Taslima Nasreen Works, Iconic Feminist, Feminist Human Rights.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Taslima has authored six novels, eight collections of poetry and four volumes of essays. The publishers and editors censored her books and columns. The publishers did not pay their royalties to ninety per cent. The three autobiography volumes of Amar Meyebela, Utal Hawa and Ka are her. The Dhaka court barred the first two volumes due to the defamation suit lodged by a renowned Bengali poet and romanticist, Syed Shamsal Haq. When she was targeted for her courageous criticism of the Qur'an and Islamic practises, he was the one who provided security in his home. Kolkata High Court was also barred from Dwikhandito (2002) the same book with additional chapters. The defamations of rupees of eleven crores have been submitted by Hasmad Jalal. It deals with Bangladesh's memory in the 1980s, when the military threw secularism out of Bangladesh. Since some Indians say it hurt their feelings, the book pulled contentious lines from the book. In 1994, because of the fatwa issued by Muslim religious leaders, she went to the West. They called for the execution of Taslima and it led to her arrest on blasphemy charges. This was because her book Lajja (Shame) was published in 1993. "I am sure you are tired of being referred to as the 'woman Salman Rushdie'..but please remember that there is a lot of people in many countries who work to protect you from those that will happily see you dead. In the West there are so many eloquent apologists who work to persuade people that women in Muslim countries are not discriminated against (Excerpt from an open letter from Salman Rushdie to Taslima Nasrin)

In the B. B.C. interview, she said that she had attempted to view them as human beings and justify herself by questioning why she was not expected to write about these significant personalities. However, she added that that is

a storey from her life and something else. In her reply, she clarified her interactions with senior writers and journalists.

Taslima explored the horrible lives of many women of the country. She criticised the religion because it gave women a very marginal role in the society. Even if her husband tortures her, she has no right to say anything. This is also the part of the religious teaching. Women are widely discouraged to go to school. It is widely understood that they are born to cook and bear children. A man can marry up to four women, but a woman does not even have the right to choose her own husband. The family would decide her marital fate. Taslima's life is a live example of male chauvinism. She married three times and got divorced because those men wanted to control her. She wanted to do things on her own but none of them allowed her to do so. Syed Shamsul Haq, her editor husband did not show much interest in publishing her works. He started giving her advice on what to write and what not to write. After divorcing him, when she was living in the apartment, her father and brother visited her. She was surprised at their visit. They neither ate dinner nor went to sleep. They spent the whole night sitting in chairs. She did not know what the matter was with them. Next day morning when she was about to go to work, her father stopped her and said she need not go to the hospital. When she replied that the patients would be waiting for her, her father immediately pushed her down to the floor and kicked her in the stomach. While she managed to stand up, she got another push and a kick in the back. She fell on the refrigerator and cut her lips. Her brother threw a tabloid on her face. Taslima's physical abuse by her own father and brother is only due to her writings which criticised the Islamic fundamentalists and her three marriages which made them to hurt their prestige. She was forced to go to Maymonshigh and was locked in a room, where she was given food and a portable commode to respond to the nature calls. One morning when her mother brought her breakfast in, there was a sudden noise in the kitchen. Her mother ran to the kitchen forgetting to lock the room. Taslima got a chance to run out of the house. She took a detour to go to the Dhaka city. She did not know what to do and where to go. Her father gave up the apartment she rented, and her furniture was taken to Maymonshigh. She hardly found place to sleep. An editor gave her shelter and later married him. She did not actually wanted to marry him but she had no where to stay. Later on it was this editor who used to come home late in a drunken form and beat her up. Once he pushed her out of the door and locked it from inside. Taslima thought that it was enough. She decided once for all not to stay with him anymore. Besides her life, in this biographical novel, she discussed the women's problems in the society, the political unrest and the religious suppression. The socio economic situation and the uprising of the Muslim fundamentalism were also been illustrated. She wrote that religion is such a destroyer, even when it is not believed; the people are bounded by it. It is almost like a cancer that has no medicine. The government seized her passport and asked to get the government's approval if she had to publish anything. The authority told that every government employee had to go through the censorship. So she quit the hospital job and became a full time writer. Very soon Mullahs declared 50000taka for beheading her. They found fault with her for writing against Muhammad and Koran. There were rallies against her in every city demanding her death sentence. She was continuously being threatened over the phone. She wrote that she was staying at home holding her life in hand. The International Writers Groups, PEN and the Amnesty International kept on pressurising the government for her safety. Finally her passport was given back to her and she was thrown out to Europe in 1994. She stayed in the U.S where she pursued a fellowship at Harward on the possibility of secularism in the Islamic countries. She illustrated the darkness of the society.

Taslima remembers the custom of wearing burqa as meat protection in her essay "To keep meat safe." She heard from her mother that burki keep the meat safe and also follow Allah. She had several concerns about burqa and asked questions such as if her mother felt breathless if she was wrathful and threatened her.

"Don't tell the faithful women to keep their gaze on the ground, and to display their beauty and jewels, they must cover their breasts behind the purdach, not expose their beauty to anyone but their husbands, siblings, nephews, folk mothers, servants and eunuch employees and children.

In book 026 No. 5397, Bukhari Hadis, Taslima criticises the lines 33 and 59. She asks why did Allah not launch men's purdah? Allah is not comparable between men and women. Otherwise purdah will be there for both! The males are higher than the females. Therefore women have to go to prisons and men will pretend to be free birds. Ask why women are protected. Taslima issues It's all because it's sex objects. And they're excited when men see them. Why should women be blamed for sexual difficulties for men? There is sexual urgency also for women. However, for this, men are not protected. In no religion developed by men or women who are considered different from men, or as people who have separate desires and opinions. Not only modest women but also men are ruling purdah. She asks Shabana and her followers who believe that the Quran doesn't say anything about purdah. Taslima argues if

women should use purdah if the Qur'an recommends. She said she was going to say no personally. No matter which book it is written, who advises, who directs, women are not supposed to have purdah, no veil, no chador, no hijab. According to her, women should not use all of the above because they are all disrespectful resources. These are manifestations of the oppression of women to her. Women are told by them that they are merely men's property. For their use, artefacts. She claims this coverage is used to keep women passive and submissive. Women must wear it so that with their own self-respect, dignity, trust, separate identity, they cannot exist. Taslima eventually says that it means to cover a woman's head, cover her brain and make certain it does not work. If women's minds functioned properly, a religious and patriarchal system would have long ago thrown off these veils and burqas. It courageously communicates the message of protesting this injustice to Islamic women. They should declare a war against their hundreds of years of wrong and ill-treatment. The freedom and rights of men should be snatched. She's telling you to burn the burqas. The CPM, which claims to protect the principles of secularity, wants to keep it from the Kolkata, supported the right to freedom of speech, like BJP. Support for Taslima can lead to a loss in Western Bengal of Muslim votes. Both secular minds have every justification to endorse the appeal for citizenship of Taslima. Administration as a human being and a competent writer should uphold its rights. The Tasleema residence in India is assisted by Khushwant Singh, Arundati Roy, Leela Seth, Kuldeep Nayyar, Vijay Tendulkar, Arun Roy, Shyam Benagal, Girish Karnad, Saeed Naqui, Y.P. Chibb. You upheld your right to make it clear that it is your fundamental right to speak immediately about any subject, including the burqa.

## 2. AN ICONIC FEMINIST

Just two days after the Center announced that it would continue to shelter the exiled author but she had to abstain from harming religious feelings, Taslima Nasreen has deleted controversial lines from her autobiographical book *Dwikhandito*. She said she'd take out of her book *Dwikhandito* the contentious lines. In 2002, this book was written on the basis of her Bangladeshi memories in the 1980s, which excluded secularism from the Bangladesh Constitution. She said she admired laicism and she wanted to keep secularism in Bangladesh. It was not because the Muslim unhappy with this book that the West Bengal administration banned the third volume of her autobiography, *Dwikhandito*, that No Muslim requested the prohibition. The point of the government was that anything could happen. South Asian scientists condemned the attacks on Bangladesh and Indian governments to defend Taslima's reputation and freedom of speech, in order not to become a pawn between the Hindu and the Muslim chauvinist powers in an ugly stalemate. So many people have sponsored her from Cambridge University. More than 100 people have also sponsored candlelight to share their disappointment about Taslima Nasreen's hasty transportation from western Bengal. The demonstrators at the vigil thought free speech should be regardless of race, sex or religion. The foundation for a democratic society is to express oneself or oneself. The BJP has emerged in its defence as Taslima based its writings on Islam and Prophet Mohammad. They tried to improve their anti-Muslim status and thus consolidate the Hindu voting bank. In an interview with *Out Look*, she said that she was not a religious expert but in the name of faith she could not accept inhumanity. She wrote about the rights of women and, also, the fundamentalist's women's rights, as well as the rights of women and fundamentalism cannot coincide in her interview with Sheela Reddy in Rajasthan *Tasleema*. It is unfortunate that, every year until 2004, she began her tourism in West Bengal. In Kolkata, she loves to be. Even though she was better off overseas, she feels that she is outsider. She loves to linger in India—a Bengali, a Rajasthani, a Malayan, and everything. She says her writing is become political, because even without reading the stuff in the shops of Kolkata was burned up.

When asked whether she was opposed to Islam she answered that women were suffering from religious and cultural laws and customs. It is not her intention to injure the feelings of anyone. Religiosity and otherwise, as she firmly believed in democracy and freedom of speech, yet to protect human rights and secular humanity. Her books also deal with the rights of women and women. She spoke about religious rules and customs in just a few pages. She had to write about religion when human rights are abused in the name of religion. She says religion is not her subject, and she is not an expert in religion. Her indignation at being labelled anti-Islam is a matter of disgust. She couldn't picture the events of liberal democracy India in Bangladesh. It would be normal, but not in India, if it happened in Saudi Arabia or Iran. She founded and educated them against fundamentalism a secular Muslim organisation in Kolkata.

She talked about feminism in South Asia, which is not strong, at *The Hindu* interview on February 12, 2012. After all, women didn't even struggle in India for their rights. She thinks it is important to take problems more seriously in relation to women's atrocities:



"Such as their counterparts in the West, they did not have to combat voting rights. It was men who were fighting for women, educating them to prohibit Sati, to avoid child wedlock, to rematch widows, etc. It says India is the most dangerous place for women, and that women are rapidly fettered or murdered, the exploitation of women, sexual slavery and domestic abuse. Indeed, it's war on women (The Hindu one).

The documentary novel *Lajja* (Shame) is a documentary on the precarious presence in Bangladesh of the Hindu minority following the destruction by Hindu fundamentalist citizens on 6 December 1992 of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya, India. The Bangladeshi Muslim crowds took vengeance on the Hindu minority. In 1993 it was prohibited for disrupting social peace. A criminal case was filed in 1994 by the Bangladeshi government. For a time, fundamentalists assaulted her violently, knocked to the ground and ripped clothing, at the National Library Fair in Bangladesh. However, in defence of her many secular philosophers, literally they saved her life. In the countries that wrote many article supporting her in their papers, she also had the support of many Muslims. There came to her defence Iranian feminists. Taslima likes speaking openly and frankly without something being concealed. Tactics are not her religion. She's not a politician or a diplomat. Whatever she thinks she tells. The statistical accuracy of Muslims' communal atrocities against Hindus of Bangladesh has been reported. The entire novel concerns a family that had been confronted by violence in Bangladesh in 1992 by some Hindus. During this time, the author wrote of the accidents. Enlistment of Hindu women and more and more. Over 200 temples have been confirmed to be demolished and over 1000 Hindus have been targeted and made homeless. This roman demonstrates the protest of the case by Taslima. She tells the storey of a fictional family during the violence. She says she doesn't think that Hindus are good and in any way that Muslims are evil. She claims the book has studied the psychological and relationship consequences of abuse and oppression. The injustice seems to pollute both sides. In her book she has provided numerous accurate accounts of the Hindu minority's discretion and destruction. The answer was serious. This book. After the book was released, Islamic fundamentalists gave her a large cash prize. Her integrity, intense intellect and bravery are moving readers. The book will show you to look again at yourself and the world in which you work. It tells the reader how he thinks that all abuses and injustices are coming to an end in the world. The book is the worldwide storey of minority persecution. For all young people, she thinks it should be compulsory reading. It addresses genocide and describes a minority genocide which fully removes its presence. Taslima Nasreen shares her thoughts about her novels and her life as a filmmaker. She says no filmmaker is permitted to film in West Bengal based on her novel or on the life of her cat. "I'm never going to be silenced. until my death I shall continue my fight for fairness and equality" (The Hindu, Aug 31, 2012).

### 3. APPROPRIATION OF HER WORK

Whereas Nasrin has continued to condemn Islam, some have mistakenly taken her job of portraying Islam and Muslims in a neo-orientalistic way. For eg, the highly critical Bangladeshi Muslims *Lajja* (Nasrin, 1994[1993]) had initially six Chapters but its Indian edition was increased to 13 (Deen, 2006: 94), and the BJP distributed it free in India after "sections not in the original novel" (Siddiqi, 2009: 32). The American version of *Lajja* is subtitle 'The Provocative Book Unleashing a Tempest in the Muslim World' (Zafar 2005: 416), an interpolation which contains, on the basis of a context-specific, localised, and controversial book, a deliberate vilification of the Muslim world. Islam, apart from the life of her marginalised mother, is visibly absent in Nasrin's *Amar Meyebela*. However, it has been ideal to incite and enforce biases against Islam and Muslims in the American edition of its English version. While *Amar Meyebela* (SpainEnglish )'s translation is 'My Girlhood,' the American edition puilt on the post-11 semester is titled *Meyebela: My Bengali Girlhood — A Memoir to Grow Female in Muslim World*. While the book's English translations are 'My Girlhood.' In a synopsis of neo-orientalist paternalism, Amazon electronic book seller uses outdated colonial tropes and states;

What Amazon seems to insinuate, is that while the world is moving about and rid of injustice and cultural myths, the imaginary Muslim world remains backwards and anachronistic throughout primitive times, and in places such as Bangladesh. This emphasises that while social practises differ throughout the Islamic world, Westerners often define Islam, and especially the role of women in Islam, as static and set. In this regard, Tax (2002: 1), when she states with reference to America that "[in a society which know little about any kind of islam, Nasrin's dark image can be universalized and received too eagerly," expresses relevant concern about the distorted English rendering. The false name of the American edition of *Amar Meyebela* can be seen as a hype for sales, but it frustrates another admirable point and the supposed symbolic revolt by the Nasrin against the linguistic Bangla orders, which usually covered girlhood (*meyebela*), and subsumed by the word boyhood (*chelebel*). Perhaps Nasrin wanted to transmit a significant message by parodying Tagore's (1940) *Chelebel*, that although the term girlhood is overshadowed in

English by boyhood, life for the girl is equally important in recording and also worthy of narrativisation. Sadly, the distorted title and description of the book frustrates this message and neglect the fact that in Bangladesh in the meantime much of it has changed. Surprisingly, it is not known that the open-minded and clear Nasrin opposed these distortions. She can further confirm this silence and her involvement in vilifying Islam, Islamic symbols and Bangladesh.

#### 4. CRITIQUING NASRIN'S FEMINIST STRATEGY OF DEPRECATING ISLAM

Nasrin's omnipresent vituperations against Islam supposedly represent women's rights, while they are targeting millions of Muslims who love their mothers, wives, daughters and other women, because Islam has given them orders to do that. The whole topic of freedom of expression may be troublesome by promoting such inflammatory comments for free speech (Hasan, 2010). These comments harm the psyche of Muslims and unnecessarily cause social disputes and unrest. For example, during the 1994 Bangladesh anti-Nasrin camp, they prompted the killing of two young boys and at the beginning of March, they also killed 2 more people in Karnataka in India (Hasan, 2010: 549). In addition, opponents of Nasrin claim that a front-line war against Islam is detrimental to the noble cause of Bangladesh's women's rights movement. It's just confrontational rather than engaging constructively with the "other." Since Nasrin is known as a feminist, ordinary people are ready to associate it – and, in reality, the usual hatred of the Islam – with feminism which ultimately makes it hard to achieve the rights of women in a Muslim society. "Nasrin went for the jugular, and we are not ready for that," a social worker, who promotes women's rights in Bangladesh's remote countryside (cited in Hashmi, 2000: 203), says. Too much is involved, simply. You must learn how to manage the situation... and Nasrin never realised it. Tax (2002: 4) claims, rightly, that Nasrin 'was misgenerating about Islam in the variant she had in Bangladesh, and that by targeting it explicitly you cannot change culture anyway.' But, as cited in Tax (2002: 5) she reiterates, Nasrin is not persuaded,

"I always get advised that tactics are a matter...but I don't think tactics... It takes too long to use tactics; to make secularism this way takes too long. What I want is a revolution - for women's rights, for humanism and to expel things like religion that are not important."

Begum Rokeya, who is highly respected by most Bangladeshis, also participated in discussions on the role of women in Islam. She has questioned and re-examined, as a committed advocate of reform (Hossain 1992, I). She has uncritically taken the persistence of the patriarchal notions of Islam as a norm and clearly denigrates faith in the light of gender justice. While Nasrin refers in her writing to Rokeya in several places, possibly to gain credibility in Bangladesh, she is not pursuing her strategy as a feminist. At the time when women were literally and metaphorically segregated in the home, Rokeya fought for the women's right in Bengal, officially denied education and absolutely invisible in public life as their freedom was limited by the principle of intense seclusion (*pardah*). Rokeya trod carefully and clearly Islam, gaining her a much needed support network, from cultural traditions. Thus, while Rokeya had critics, both liberal and religious groups in society overthrew her opposition and helped her make substantial strides in the development of women's rights. Their number was also highly influential. Today Rokeya has a good credit for her relentless battle to raise consciousness among women's rights, while her scholarly work, education movement and political activism have genuinely sprung from Muslim Bengal's women's movement. On the other hand, despite its regional and international recognition, Nasrin's work has done little in the feminist struggle of Bangladeshi women, despite its prolificity as a writer. The relationships between Nasrin and most other Bangladeshi women are impermeable and polarised. This perhaps is because Nasrin was incapable of recognising the systemic and profound causes of Bangladeshi women's oppression and her dubious diagnosis of gender relations in Bangladesh. In comparison, Rokeya correctly defined and strategically successful tackled the apparent and latent causes of women's suffering in society and not in religion itself. Whilststead of using pseudo-Islim claims to monitor and marginalise the women's movement, Rokeya has not launched a head-on attack on Islam. The women are detractors of educational, economic and legal rights. Instead, she stressed and emphasised gender equality in her faith and used it as a foundation for her women's rights movement.

Conversely, while gender oppressors are irreligious in Nasrin's autobiography, she seeks to ridicule and denigrate Islam for gender inequality, thus losing public help. The approach of Rokeya evidently consisted of poles except Nasrin. While most of the adversaries in their society were religious, Rokeya did not want to target Islam because she misunderstood her teachings. The patriarchal institution, for example, opposed the women's education campaign in Rokeya. There were flimsy excuses, such as the plea that women were disobedient once educated. Rokeya used Islamic religious texts in those cases to address the resistance of her society to women's education. Rokeya claimed

that "it is the duty of all Muslim men and women to acquire knowledge, in no small measure, by referring to our great prophet." However, our brothers would not make us properly interested in education' (Hossain, 2006 [1927]: 491). Such a style of argumentation legitimised the feminist movement of Rokeya in a Muslim culture and made it intellectually and religiously defenceless to the Muslim patriarchal development. Though she argued 'for a change in men's views of women and women, she was anxious not to lose her Muslim identity' (Hossain, 1992: 1). On the other hand, Nasrin typically punishes Muslims for believing in Islam because of her rejection of religion per se. Nasrin also opted for blasphemous remarks about the Prophet. The protracted invective that has spread during her work against the Prophet does not contribute to the empowerment of women. Instead it generated reactions among the Muslim community's rank and file and led to violent protests. In contrast with Nasrin, Rokeya paid the Prophet the highest tribute to the prophet.

Regarding the strategy of feminism, Kandiyoti (1996: 9) argues that in Muslim culture, feminist debate can "legitimately proceed in just two directions: either deny that Islamic practises are necessarily suppressive or argue that oppression is not necessarily Islamic." The second approach is taken by most Islamic feminists. While Islamic Feminism has been used only since the nineties (Samiuddin & Khanam, 2002: v), particularly in the sense of the struggle of Muslim women for education & social justice in South Asia, 'Intellectual encounters with feminism date back to the early twentieth century.' Islamic feminism questions socio-cultural gender stereotypes and illustrates Islamic gender formulations. Islamic feminists 'criticise false interpretations and use the spectrum of interpretations offered by the text... to create a dialogue... to free them from God and to escape masochistic imagination of either the east or the west' (Ramadan, 2004: 141–2). Islam 'places two sexes on a level playing field before God, even though women have been subordinated in social terms to men' (Ray, 2002: 43). Through treatment of women in the Qur'an they have a solid theoretical base because they think that the real emancipation of women lies in the right interpretation of Islam, not in their absence. Islamic feminism is indigenous and has its own system for tackling patronage; Western ideas regarding women's rights are not completely respected.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Reposing western perceptions of women's rights in general helps to lift so-called Islamism and subsequent street protests without appreciating local truths. In the various manifestations in 1997, 2008 and 2011, for example, the National Women's Development Policy (Jatiya Nari Unnayan Niti), especially in the Islamic communities, was a great uproar, as this policy was supposed to grant women equal inheritance rights, explicitly contradicting the Qur'anic verse (4: 11). Although the scope of this Article fails to offer thorough discussion on the heritage of women, the Nasrin affair has revealed here that aggressive focus on contested matters, such as legacy, polygamy, same-sex marriage and the promotion of anti-Islamic legislation may do more harm than good to the wider objective of improving the situation of women and men. Moreover, in view of the status of the great majority of women in Bengal there are more important and urgent issues on the agenda than these controversial ones, including 'education, harassment of wives, humane treatment of women and so on (Bullock, 2002: xXVIIii). On a final note, Nasrins has been unable to recognise and to contribute meaningfully to the continuing struggles to eradicate the legal and social disabilities of women in Bangladesh, considering its international visibility and global recognition. In Bangladesh's culture, she generated a strong sense of distrust of feminism and different noble attempts to build and improve women's rights among ordinary people. The enthusiastic international acknowledgement of Nasrin complicates the link between modernity's metanarratives and conventional western feminism and the fundamental reality of Bangladesh's status as a woman. Moreover, a block on collective feminist consciousness around the world may be the appropriation of Nasrin's context-specific work to discredit Islam and the Muslim world in the post-9/21 period. This does not mean that today, in Bangladesh, academic debate about the role of women in Islam or political debates about the status of women should be discouraged. However, Nasrin did not choose the right way to do so, as this article showed. Indeed, their anti-religious stance stirs the fire of those who want to say that today's pluralist visions of Bangladesh based on respect for nationalism, democracy and socialism, and respect for all religions under the label of secularism, which is much misunderstood, are an hour. There is no inherently reciprocal exclusion between worthy political causes, including women's and other oppressed groups' rights and devotion to Islam. This study thus reinforces Bangladesh's increasing realisation that militant anti-religious secularism of the sort that Taslima Nasrin is pursuing does not provide an adequate structure to resolve gender issues in the unique Bangladeshi socio-cultural context.



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