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Muslim Geographers and Explorers

Ahmed M.A.

Introductory

Arabia being a barren peninsula, its inhabitants had always to depend on foreign supplies for the necessities of life, and hence they had to undertake business trips to distant countries like Egypt, Abyssinia, Syria, Persia, and Iraq. It was an Arab caravan which had brought Hazrat Yusuf (Prophet Joseph) to Egypt. Moreover, the fertile areas like Yemen, Oman, Bahrain, and Hadramaut were situated on the coast areas and the Arabs, being a seafaring people, had to take sea routes in order to reach these places for fulfilling their commercial enterprises.

The birth of Islam opened a new vista for their enterprises, and the vast conquests of the Arabs which swept the three then-known continents during the early decades of Islamic history procured a fresh stimulus for their adventurous spirits. The stories of the famous Arabian Nights, especially that of Sindbad the Sailor, give a glimpse of the adventures of those fearless Arabs. They provide a slightly colored account of the great voyages undertaken as early as the first century A.H. by the Arab mariners, who, undaunted by the perils en route, roamed about in stormy seas, reaching such distant lands as Ceylon, Zanzibar, Maldives, Malaya, Java, and Sumatra.

Pilgrimage to Mecca

The Hajj, or the holy pilgrimage to Mecca, was another factor which immensely added to their geographical and commercial knowledge by social contacts among Muslims of various countries visiting Mecca every year. This pilgrimage did not only provide vital means of promoting religious unity but also contributed to the strengthening of commercial ties among

Muslim countries. Moreover, it led to the exchange of views and news among people of the far-flung countries of the world. In fact, the Hajj, which procured an opportunity for a great international Assembly each year, paved the way also for explorational and geographical enterprises of Muslims.

The Mariner's Compass

The invention of the mariner's compass opened vast oceans for the enterprising voyagers. Mostly, European writers have credited the Chinese with its invention; but according to the famous orientalist George Sarton, the Arabs were the first to make practical use of it—a fact which has been admitted by the Chinese themselves. Another celebrated orientalist, Philip K. Hitti, has endorsed the views expressed by George Sarton. According to a statement of Sir R. F. Burton, it was Ibn Majid who was venerated in the past on the African coasts as the inventor of the compass. Anyway, the practical use of the compass contributed immensely to the undertaking of distant voyages by the Arab sailors, who came out into the open oceans and roamed about in the Atlantic as well as in the Pacific, circumambulated the African continent, and reached even the shores of the New World. Their former frail boats were replaced by large sailing ships, and with the help of the compass and other marine instruments, they braved the stormy seas. The use of the Mariner's Compass thus revolutionized the oceanic shipping carried on by Muslims in mediaeval times.

The golden period of Muslim geographers' travels and explorations runs from the 9th to the 14th century A.C., in which a vast amount of travel and geographical literature was produced in the world of Islam—a literature which ultimately paved the way for

later explorations and discoveries by the Christian West. Writing in *The Legacy of Islam*, J. H. Kramers says:

"Europe ought to look upon them (Muslims) as its cultural ancestors in the domain of geographical knowledge, discovery and world trade. The influence which Islam has exercised on our modern civilization in the spheres of action can be seen in the many terms of Arabic origin which are to be found in the vocabulary of Trade and Navigation. The measure of influence can only be proved by studying the historical development of the domain over which our actual geographical knowledge extends."

Theorists

Al-Khwarizmi

The works of Greek writers, especially the 'Almagest' written by Ptolemy, provided the starting ground for Arab geographers. Al-Khwarizmi, the eminent Arab scientist who flourished during the reign of the celebrated Mamun-ar-Rashid, incorporated some of the ideas of the Almagest into his geographical treatise: *Kitab Surat al-Ard*. This book has been preserved in Strasbourg and has been edited along with its Latin translation by Nallino. Under the guidance of Al-Khwarizmi, the measurement of the degree was undertaken in the Syrian desert, and he also determined the position of various places through latitudes and longitudes.

Ibn Khurdadbiḥ, Al-Yaḡubī, Ibn al-Faḡīḥ, Ibn Rusta

The simple geographical descriptions of numerous countries, including the physical features, climatic conditions, and the life of the people, formed the subject matter of treatises compiled by the early Muslim geographers. Ibn Khurdadbiḥ wrote the *Kitab al-Masalik wal-Mamalik*; Al-Yaḡubī compiled the 'Kitab ul-Buldan'; Ibn al-Faḡīḥ also wrote his 'Kitab ul-Buldan' and Ibn

Rusta made his original contribution. These books contained simple facts about the countries in order to satisfy the practical necessities of travelers visiting them.

Al-Balkhi

The foremost writer of such geographical treatises of the period was Abu Zaid Al-Balkhi, who was an eminent scholar in the court of the ruler of Khorasan. He has the distinction of being the author of as many as forty-three books, including his *Suwar al-Aqalim*, which was a geographical work of considerable value, though unfortunately not available at present. It guided later writers on the subject.

Al-Qazwini and Al-Bakri

Abu Yahya Zakariyya Ibn Muhammad al-Qazwini (1230-83) wrote the book entitled *Ajaib ul-Makhluqat wal-Gharaib ul-Maujudat*, which is a very systematic cosmographical work. According to M. Streck, it "must be deemed as a work of fundamental importance and is quite the most valuable book that the Arab Middle Ages have given us in the field". Al-Qazwini has dealt with the description of the earth together with its seven climatic regions in another geographical treatise, *Athar ul-Bilad wa-Akhbar ul-Ibad*. It also contains the climatic regions, the physical features, and the life and history of the people of the countries dealt with. The voluminous geographical work written by the Spanish author Al-Bakri (c. 1067) from which the African portion has been edited, contained a most elaborate knowledge of ports and coasts.

Hamdullah Mustawfi

Another geographer of repute is Hamdullah Mustawfi, the author of *Nuzhat ul-Qulub*, which deals with natural history, anthropology, and geography. It has helped Mr. G. Le Strange in writing his book entitled *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*.

Ibn Hauqal

Abul Qasim Ibn Hauqal is the first traveler of the tenth century A.C. worth mentioning. Starting from Baghdad in 943, he made an extensive tour of the Islamic countries, and on his return, he incorporated his experiences in his geographical treatise: *Kitab ul-Masalik wal-Mamalik*.

Al-Maqdisi

Another more famous traveler of the period is Shamsuddin Abu Abdullah Al-Maqdisi. Excepting Spain and Sind, he too toured the length and breadth of the Islamic world. He has put down his travel experiences in his celebrated geographical work: *Ahsan ut-Taqasim fi Ma'rifat il-Aqalim*—a rare book of its type. A. Sprenger has acclaimed him as “the greatest geographer of all ages”. The Asiatic Society of Bengal has published the English translation of his famous work in 4 volumes (1897-1910 A.C.).

Al-Mas'udi

Abul Hasan Ali Ibn al-Husain al-Mas'udi is one of the great and versatile figures of the Islamic world. He is a well-known writer and explorer of the East. He was still quite young when he travelled through Persia and stayed in Istakhr for about a year in 914 A.C. Starting from Baghdad, he went to India, visiting Multan and Mansura and reaching Persia, from where he again went to India. Travelling through Bambay, the Deccan, and Ceylon, he sailed to Indo-China and China along with some merchants. On his return trip, he visited Madagascar, Zanzibar, Oman, and Basra, where he settled afterwards and wrote his great work, *Muruj uz-Zahab* (Golden Meadows), in which he relates his rich experiences in a cheerful manner which amuses the readers. Mas'udi also visited the southern shore of the Caspian Sea and travelled through Central Asia and Turkestan. Retiring to Fustat (old Cairo), he wrote his voluminous work: *Mir'at*

uz-Zaman (Mirror of the Times), comprising thirty volumes, in which he has elaborately described the geography, history, and life of the people of the countries he had visited.

Explorers, Travelers, and Writers

Al-Mahri and Ibn Majid

Among the great mariners of the 10th and 11th centuries A.C., Suleiman al-Mahri and Shihabuddin Ibn Majid occupy outstanding positions. They not only covered the Indian, Pacific, and Atlantic Oceans, but also made a round of the African continent and probably touched even the shores of the New World. Suleiman reached as far as the Bering Strait and has penned his valuable experiences in a number of books, of which *Al-Umdat al-Mahriyyah fi Zabt il-Uloom il-Bahriyyah* is well known. The other mariner, Ibn Majid, was considered among the four sea lions of his time. Allamah Saiyyid Suleiman Nadvi, in his book entitled *The Navigation of the Arabs*, has enumerated fifteen books written by Ibn Majid on Navigation. According to a Western critic, Ibn Majid is one of the earliest writers of nautical guides, and his elaborate geographical account of the Red Sea could not be surpassed even up to the present day.

Ibn Fadlan

Ibn Fadlan was a traveler of the 10th century A.C. who led an embassy sent by the Abbasid Caliph Al-Muqtadir-Billah in 921 A.C. to the Bulgarian monarch, and incorporated his experience in his *Risalah*, which is one of the earliest regional accounts of Russia.

Al-Biruni

During the eleventh century A.C., Abu Raihan Al-Biruni, the celebrated thinker of Islam, visited India, stayed there for a number of years, learnt the Sanskrit language, and described the geography and the life of India in his memorable work *Kitab ul-Hind*.

Al-Hamdani and Al-Mazini

Regional geographies were also written during this period, famous among which was the description of the Arabian Peninsula by Al-Hamdani in his *Kitab al-Iklil*. The works of travelers like Ibn Jubair, Al-Mazini, and Ibn Battuta are storehouses of geographical knowledge. Al-Mazini (1060-1170), who visited Russia, wrote *Tuhfat ul-Albab* (تحفة الالباب).

Al-Idrisi

The most brilliant writer of the period is Al-Idrisi (1101-54), who was employed in the court of the Christian king of Sicily. His book *Nuzhat ul-Mushtaq* contained 70 maps and in the second abridged edition of Idrisi's books, one comes across eight instead of seven climates. The world map drawn by Idrisi is of the traditional round type, and the first translation of his book was published in Rome in 1619 A.C.

Yaqut Al-Hamawi

Yaqut al-Hamawi (1179-1229) compiled a big geographical dictionary named *Mu'jam ul-Buldan*, which contains all geographical names in alphabetical order. It was published in 6 volumes in Leipzig (Germany) between 1866-73 A.C. Writing in the *Introduction to the History of Science*, George Sarton remarks:

"The Mu'jam ul-Buldan is one of the most important works of Arabic literature. It is a storehouse of information not simply on geography but also on history, ethnography and natural history. It is preceded by an introduction dealing with mathematical, physical and political geography, the size of the earth, the seven climates, etc."

Ibn Jubair

The Spanish traveler Ibn Jubair visited Mecca and Iraq in 1183 A.C. He wrote his well-known book of travels entitled *Rihlat ul-Kin'ani*, which is a unique book of its type in

Arabic literature.

Ibn Battuta

Abu Abdullah Muhammad (1304-78), better known as Ibn Battuta, is the greatest Muslim traveler. Born in Tangier, he started his travels at the age of 20 and returned home at the age of 51. During these 31 years, he covered about 75,000 miles—a distance equivalent to three trips round the globe. No explorer or traveler during mediaeval times had traversed so many miles during his lifetime. Starting from Tangier, he toured Egypt, Abyssinia, and Northern and Eastern Africa, including Mombasa. He crossed the great Sahara Desert and reached Timbuktu. He describes an oasis of the Sahara Desert where people constructed houses of rock salt roofed with camel skins. In Europe, he visited Spain, Eastern Europe, and Southern Russia, and sailed in the Mediterranean and Black Seas. Hardly was there a Muslim country in Asia which Ibn Battuta had not seen. He made many tours of the Arab countries and performed the Hajj four times.

Besides the above, he travelled in Persia, Turkestan, Afghanistan, India, Maldives, Ceylon, Indonesia, Indo-China, and China. According to him, Aden was a great commercial center in those days and had a good system of water supply. He travelled as far as southern Siberia in order to see the shortness of summer nights and desired to travel in 'the land of darkness' (extreme north of Russia), but abandoned his visit due to certain reasons. He stayed for eight years in India, as the state Qazi of Muhammad Tughlaq in Delhi, but had to flee to the Deccan in order to be saved from the indignation of the Emperor. He took part in the conquest of Goa and visited the Maldives, where he was made the Qazi. He relates interesting stories about India. Hindus of those days used to drown themselves in the sacred waters of the Ganges in order to gain *Baikunth* (Paradise).

On his first sight of "Sati", he was so much overwhelmed with emotion that he almost fell down from his horse. He met a very old man in the Hindukush mountains who was said to be 350 years of age and who got a new set of teeth after every 100 years.

Achievements and Discoveries

Muslims contributed immensely to the exploration of vast oceans and the discoveries of far-off lands. It is, however, unfortunate that their achievements in this sphere of human activity are not generally known to the world. The largest collection of literary and artistic treasures accumulated during the five centuries of Islamic rule perished at the time of the fall of Baghdad. Invaluable manuscripts were consumed to ashes by Hulagu Khan and his Mongol hordes. The fruits of Muslim civilization met a similar fate in Spain at the hands of Christian conquerors. Modern research scholars have, however, succeeded in unearthing certain valuable materials, and it is through them only that we can assess the valuable contribution of Muslims.

"At a time when Europe believed in the flatness of the Earth", says Ameer Ali, "and was ready to burn any foolhardy person who thought otherwise, the Arabs taught geography by globes". Their progress in mathematical geography was no less remarkable. The works of Ibn Hauqal, Maqrizi, Istakhri, Mas'udi, Biruni, Idrisi, Qazwini, Al-Wardi, and Abul Fida contain a wealth of geographical knowledge, especially on this branch of science called by them Rasm ul-Ard.

Rotation of the Earth

The rotation and spherical shape of the earth have been discussed and proved by Muslim geographers of mediaeval times. The Kitab Kalimat ul-'Ain deals with the rotation of the earth which causes day and night. Muslim astronomers too have proved

that the earth is a sphere and has a shape like a peach. Globes were commonly used in Muslim schools of mediaeval times, which testifies to the contention of the roundness of the earth advanced by Muslims. Geography of the world was taught with the help of globes in Moorish Spain.

Knowledge of the Seas

Arab mariners and explorers had a very wide knowledge of seas and oceans. The greatest discovery of the Arabs is that the oceans are connected with one another and form a compact oceanic world. The first sea route stated by Suleiman al-Mahri started from the Indian Ocean and, passing through the Pacific Ocean, Bering Strait, Arctic Ocean, and Atlantic Ocean, entered the Mediterranean Sea through the Strait of Gibraltar. The other route was easier. Starting from the Indian Ocean and passing through the Abyssinian Sea and Mozambique Channel and encircling the Cape of Good Hope, it entered the Atlantic Ocean. Therefrom, passing through the Strait of Gibraltar, it entered the Mediterranean Sea. This was the route used by Vasco da Gama in 1498. This shows that the Arabs were the masters of the seas and possessed maps of seas and oceans which they freely used in their voyages.

Ibn Khaldun has stated the length of the Red Sea as 1,400 miles, while according to current maps it is 1,310 miles. It shows that the calculations of Arab geographers come very close to modern research.

Bering Strait

The Bering Sea and Strait were known to the Arabs. The route stated by Suleiman al-Mahri went from the Pacific Ocean to the Arctic Ocean, passing through the Bering Strait. The celebrated explorer Al-Mas'udi has also mentioned the Bering Sea in his works. Among the Arabs, it was known as the Warang Sea.

According to the American Encyclopaedia, knowledge of equatorial Africa and the source of the river Nile was known to the Arabs a very long time ago.

The Arab Pilot of Vasco da Gama

Vasco da Gama is said to have discovered a new route to India in 1498 A.C. by passing round the Cape of Good Hope. It is now a well-known fact that an Arab had piloted his ship to India. Writing in *The Legacy of Islam*, J. H. Kramers says:

“When Vasco da Gama, after his circumnavigation of Africa in 1498, had reached Malindi on the East Coast of Africa, it was an Arab pilot who showed him the way to India. According to Portuguese sources, this pilot (Ahmad Ibn Majid) was in possession of a very good sea map and of other maritime instruments.”

Reporting from Barros, a Portuguese who was a member of the party of Vasco da Gama, the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* states: “When Vasco da Gama reached Malindi, a Moor (Arab Muslim) called on him. Being much pleased in our company and with the idea of winning the favor of the king of Malindi, who was in search of a pilot for the Portuguese ship, he (the Arab Muslim) agreed to pilot our ship to India.” According to the learned author of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “a local hand had piloted the ship of Vasco da Gama to India.” He is either shy of associating the name of a Muslim with the much-advertised exploration of Vasco da Gama or is ignorant of such a vital fact, which may hardly be expected from such a scholar.

The Discovery of America

Modern research has proved beyond doubt that the Arabs had discovered America. Muslim geographers and astronomers believed in the roundness of the earth. The trigonometrical tables of Al-Khwarizmi were translated by Adelard of Bath, Gerard of

Cremona, and Roger Bacon. The famous book *Imago Mundi*, published in 1410 A.C., incorporated the 'Arim (or Ujjain) theory from the translation of Al-Khwarizmi. It was from this book that Columbus learnt that the earth was pear-shaped and that there must be some elevated part on the other side of it, which he decided to discover. **“This Islamic geographical theory”, observes J. H. Kramers, “may claim a share in the discovery of the New World”.**

The latest research on the subject has gone a step further and has established that the Arabs had discovered America five centuries before Columbus. The following news was published in leading Indian newspapers, including the *Delhi Express*, on 11th August 1952:

“A leading South African anthropologist says the Arabs, not Christopher Columbus discovered America. The Arabs scored a beat of nearly 500 years on Columbus, according to Dr. Jeffreys, senior lecturer of Social Anthropology at Witwatersrand University of Johannesburg, South Africa, Dr. Jeffreys based his claim on a discovery 18 months ago of Negro Hamitic skulls in the Rio Grande River.

“The professor said: ‘Puzzling things previously inexplicable suddenly made sense and fitted a jigsaw puzzle.’

“Dr. Jeffreys thinks that by 1,000 A.D., the Arabs already commanded the Mediterranean, were established on the west coast of Africa, and had settled in America. Columbus, too, found small colonies of Negroes in the Darien isthmus who, according to Dr. Jeffreys, were descendants of Arab slaves.

“He said the discovery of Hamitic skulls in caves in the Bahama Islands and African root-crops in the Caribbean lend credence to this theory.”

The Name Muhammad ﷺ and the Promised Messiah

Muhammad Azizullah

The name of 'Muhammad' was given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ by his grandfather Abdul Muttalib, while his mother Amina named him Ahmad. Both these names are held to be unique in the history of Arabia since no such names were in vogue prior to the advent of the Prophet ﷺ. Both names have been derived from the same root 'Hamd' which signifies praising. 'Muhammad' signifies 'the highly praised one' and 'Ahmad' 'one who praises in abundance'. These names are said to have been suggested to Abdul Muttalib and Amina in a vision. The word 'Muhammad' depicts that God Himself had chosen to praise the personality of the Prophet for his inherent qualities of head and heart, while the word Ahmad demonstrates the characteristic of the Prophet who praised God more than any other human being had ever done.

Names of The Other Prophets

Comparing these two names with the names of the other prophets, one is astounded at the excellence of even these names, leaving aside the beauty of his personality. For instance, the name of the first prophet Adam means 'wheat-colored', which had nothing to do with his inherent qualities but referred only to his complexion. Noah (Nooh) means 'giving solace' as he was a source of consolation to his father. Isaac (Ishaq) meant a person having a cheerful face. The word Jacob (Yaqub) signified the person who followed, as he was the twin brother of Esau and followed Esau while he was born. Moses (Moosa) meant being rescued from the water, as his mother had put him in a chest and floated it down the river Nile to save him from being killed by Pharaoh's people. The name John

(Yahya) reminded of the fact of his being born to his parents in an advanced age, as his parents had passed the age of bearing any children. Jesus (Isa) signified his being red-complexioned.

It is recorded in the most ancient chronicles that a prophet called 'Ahmad' or 'Muhammad' had for centuries been expected in Arabia, where the Gospels were widely read and understood. The prediction was, besides, fully appreciated by the heads of a considerable number of contemporary sects, and among them, the Gnostics, the Corinthians, the Montanists, and the Manicheans were expecting the promised Messiah. The Gospel of St. Barnabas is believed, upon very respectable authority, to have contained originally the word 'Periclytos', a Greek word meaning 'praised one' or 'illustrious', which is an equivalent of 'Muhammad' or 'Ahmad'. Our Doctors contend that this word was later altered to 'Pericklytos, or Comforter, avowedly to check the increasing number of claimants to divine inspiration whose pretensions were becoming troublesome and dangerous, but obviously to belittle the claim of our Muslim divines.

Prophecies in Christian Scriptures

Hastings, in his "Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics" (P. 621), says about Jesus as follows:

"The saviour refrained from all attempt to guide his followers by rule but gradually taught them... that their lives were to be quickened by the Holy Spirit whose indwelling was to be their strength and inspiration for all time. In view of this prospect, we can understand why his ethical

teaching was so suggestive but so paradoxical, so figurative and incomplete. It was designed not to save us from the trouble of thinking but to turn our thoughts to the Comforter whom he promised to send."

In St. John Chapter XIV Verse 16, Jesus affirms:

"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever."

In another place of the same book (Chapter XVI, Verses 12-14), he further explains:

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, would come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me."

"Another Comforter"

The words 'another comforter' clearly point out that Jesus could not have meant it for himself, but for another who would follow him. This is more explicitly stated in St. John Chapter XVI, Verse 7, where he asserts: *'If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you'. 'Abide with you forever'* foretells that the Promised Messiah's message will be everlasting and no change will be needed thereafter. How truly these prophecies apply to Muhammad ﷺ can be judged from the Qur'anic expressions *'Khatam-an-Nabiyyin'* (Last of the Prophets) and: *"This day have I completed your religion for you"*. The admission of Jesus that he had 'yet many things to say' confirms his message to be incomplete. As a matter of fact, according to himself, he was sent only to reform the 'lost sheep of Israel' (Matt. 15:24). Therefore, the need was for a message for the entire human race without any distinction of race, status, or wealth, and to bring the whole human race under one banner and to preach to them the real

truth. Who could be this Spirit of Truth? Explaining Muhammad's mission, the Qur'an says:

"Or do they say, 'he is possessed?' Nay, he has brought the Truth, but most of them hate the Truth" (XXIII-70).

On another occasion, while throwing out the idols from the Ka'bah, the Prophet repeated the words: *"Truth has come and falsehood has vanished"* (XVII-81). Here again, the word 'Truth' has been used.

Again, the Bible says that this Prophet 'shall not speak of himself but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak'. For an elucidation of this, read the following Qur'anic verses:

"Nor does he say (aught) of his own desire. It is naught but Divine Revelation sent down to him. He was taught by One Mighty in Power".

Can there still be any doubt as to the identity of the Promised Messiah being Muhammad, who did not speak of himself but only what he was inspired by God?

Glorification of Jesus

Lastly, the Biblical prophecy is that this Prophet would glorify Jesus. Has not the Holy Qur'an denounced as utterly false all those calumnies which the Israelites attributed to Jesus and his mother (III:45 to 49; and XIX:22-33)

Other Biblical Prophecies

There are several other Biblical prophecies referring to the advent of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Some of them are quoted below:

(i) "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from Paran, and he came with ten thousand saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them." (Deuteronomy. XXXIII:2).

'Coming from Sinai' refers to the

appearance of Moses, while 'rising up from Seir' refers to the conquest of Seir by David. None of the Israelites, including Jesus himself, had anything to do with Paran. Hagar, with her son Ishmael, wandered in the wilderness of Paran (Gen. XXI, 21). Ishmael married an Egyptian woman and through his firstborn, Kedar, gave descent to the Arabs, who, from that time till now, are the dwellers of the wilderness of Paran. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was undoubtedly among the descendants of Ishmael and is the only Prophet of this line.

The words 'he came with ten thousand saints' point still more directly to the triumphal entry into Mecca of Muhammad ﷺ with his devoted and saintly 10,000 followers. The law he gave to the world is to this day known as 'Huda' or 'Shining', for it throws light on all matters—religious, moral, and social—for the welfare of mankind. Like fire, it lit the whole world and dispelled the darkness of ignorance. The Holy Qur'an says: "...so that it may bring from Darkness into Light those who believe and act righteously". (LXV:11).

(ii) *"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee (i.e., Moses) and will put My words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."* (Deuteronomy. XVIII:18)

None of the Israelite prophets that followed Moses down to Jesus ever claimed to be the Prophet foretold in this prophecy, and none of them brought a new law. It was only Muhammad ﷺ who, just like Moses, was a law-giver. The likeness of Muhammad ﷺ to Moses is emphasized in the Holy Qur'an as under:

"We have sent to you (O men!) an Apostle to be a witness concerning you, even as we sent an Apostle to Pharaoh." (LXXIII:15).

The similarity between the two prophets is again stated as follows:

"And a witness from among the children of Israel testified to its similarity". (XLVI:10)

The words 'from among their brethren' are a pointer to the fact that the Promised Prophet was to rise not among the Israelites but from among their brethren, i.e., the Ishmaelites.

(iii) *"This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear",* (Acts, 7:37).

This prophecy is a repetition of No. (ii) above.

(iv) *"And as John fulfilled his course, he said, whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose."* (Acts, 13:25).

The words 'after me' clearly indicate Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. It cannot refer to Jesus, as both John and Jesus were born almost at the same time (St. Luke 1:41) and were contemporaries.

There are several other similar prophecies by Israelite prophets such as David, Solomon, Habakkuk, Haggai, and others about the advent of the Last Prophet Muhammad ﷺ which are unnecessary to detail here. I shall, however, refer to one verse of the Holy Qur'an on this subject and conclude:

"And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: 'O Children of Israel! I am the Apostle of God (sent) to you, confirming the Law (which came) before me, and giving glad tidings of an Apostle to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad.'" (LXI:6).

The Intellectual Revolution of The Prophet ﷺ of Islam

Naila Ghazi

This revolution is a covenant to the entire mankind. It is a universal message which leaves its impact on every aspect of human life. It is moving towards its destination, taking the people of every age along in its revolutionary caravan.

The word 'revolution' is very commonly used in modern parlance. Many revolutions have taken place throughout the globe in various times but it can be said, without any doubt that if any strong, unprecedented, permanent, and stable revolution has ever taken place on the face of the earth, it was only the one brought about by our Holy Prophet ﷺ. The revolution did not only bring about changes in any one aspect of human life, but it changed all aspects of human thought and action. This revolution changed the basic thought of human life as well as its belief. From the customs of worship to the affairs of social life, from individual to congregation, from family to tribe, from society to state, and from economy to politics, it changed everything. This change was neither temporary nor merely political in nature, but it was a total and comprehensive change. Today we have to ask history as to where has gone the olden man and his collective system that existed before the revolution of Islam? And today one wonders to which heights has Islam brought these values of human life? The stability and firmness of this revolution is so strange that its durability has affected the entire human life in such a way that even the innumerable incidents of time were unable to divert this revolutionary process from its path.

Concept of Tauheed

The fundamental concept on the basis of which the Prophet of Islam ﷺ started this intellectual revolution is the concept of 'Tauheed', which is the common heritage of entire humanity. This concept existed on the

face of the earth even before the arrival of the Prophet ﷺ, but in a mutilated form. People had different methods and traditions of worship. They acknowledged God as their Creator, but there was no concept of the oneness of God. They had made partners with God; they used to worship meaningless things such as stones, water, the sun, etc.

In such an environment, polluted with idolatry and ignorance, the Prophet of Islam ﷺ invited his people towards the worship of only one God. He preached that there is only One, except whom none has the right to be worshiped. He is the Creator and the Sustainer of the universe. Him we should invoke and to Him we should pray. He is the owner and the guardian of the earth and its ultimate sovereign. This is the basic fundamental concept around which revolves the entire system of Islam governing all aspects of human life.

The concept of Tauheed is the basis which provides foundations for other components of this revolution. It has two parts. Firstly, God is the only one to be worshiped, and secondly, no one is like Him. Although humanity was familiar with the concept of 'Tauheed', they did not believe in the unity of God. The message which the Prophet of Islam ﷺ brought to humanity revolves around the concept of 'Tauheed'. The Qur'an explains it as follows:

"And thy Lord, do thou magnify!" (Al-Muddassir) "Say: He is Allah, the One;" (Al-Ikhlâs)

Clarion Call

The concept of 'Tauheed' provides the entire heritage that has spread the revolutionary message of Islam to every field of human life. It was due to the acceptance of this very message that a great revolution took place in human society, which fundamentally changed the whole system of life. The clarion call of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to the concept of 'Tauheed' opens many doors of thinking and contemplation from different aspects. The first thing is that the beginning of the revolutionary invitation from the concept of 'Tauheed' is an argument on the point that it neither aims at bringing any temporary change on the basis of any give-and-take formula, nor can it have any compromise with other societies. It just aims at bearing a revolution in human life; that's why it gives its first blow to false beliefs. Belief or faith is a very sensitive matter against which one cannot hear anything. So the beginning of this great revolution from touching the sensitive matter of belief shows that the person who enlightens mankind with the light of this revolutionary message is not the author of his concept and that the message is by someone else. Man is given freedom and energy to strive for the propagation of the message in the light of injunctions of his Master and according to the method ordained by Him. This philosophy leads to the second fundamental principle of this intellectual revolution, which is the concept of 'Risalat', i.e., every messenger of Allah continues his efforts with the message brought by the previous prophets. He does not bring a new or novel theory nor does he want any reward for his work. He just comes to remind humanity of the message of Allah which was given to the first human being created on this earth and which had been continuously reminded to the people belonging to various communities and societies in the past. Eventually, the

Prophet of Arabia ﷺ came to preach the same message to humanity, i.e.,

'O ye people! Worship your Guardian Lord, who created you and those before you so that ye may become righteous.' (Al-Baqarah)

The World Hereafter

Another important aspect of this intellectual revolution is that it is based on the concept of 'Akhirah', the ultimate responsibility in the hereafter. It is the third fundamental of this revolution, according to which man is answerable to God for all his deeds. He will be brought to life again someday when he will be resurrected to answer for what he had done in his worldly life. For materialist and superficial-minded people, it was difficult to leave their self-made gods and to believe in just one God. That is why the pagans of Makkah did their utmost in their opposition to the Prophet ﷺ and used every means to inflict cruelties on the followers of Tauheed.

In the same way, it is impossible for a cruel, treacherous, and unfaithful person to change himself without accepting the concept of resurrection because belief in this principle makes a person self-accountable. Without having belief in the concept of 'Akhirah', it is impossible that a person lives within his limits or remains faithful when there is no one to inspect him. He can abstain from stealing in the absence of any witness and refrain from oppression and violence when there is no one to forbid him, only when he believes in final accountability. It is the concept of Akhirah which has caused this revolution. It is such a marvelous and strange ground of faith that after accepting it, human society can reach such a high level of greatness of character which has not been surpassed by any other society in the history of mankind.

The Foundation

This great revolution of the Prophet ﷺ was based on a social and intellectual foundation. People voluntarily accepted this revolution like a wise community. They changed the entire system of their life in such a way that it was completely purged of the evils of the past. Thousands of idols completely vanished from temples and other places of worship, as well as from the hearts of the people, in such a way that even a single human being was not left to mourn their desolation. Human society was purified of class distinctions and all other social and moral impurities. This revolution is a very strange, unique and admirable revolution. It has been alive for centuries and splendid throughout the ages. It is stable, strong, and continuous. If any deadlock occurs, it is just for the time being. If there is any impurity, it is just temporary. If there is any hurdle in its way, it just proves to be a means to organize its rows and to

accelerate power.

This revolution is a covenant to the entire mankind. It is a universal message which leaves its impact on every aspect of human life. It is moving towards its destination, taking the people of every age along in its revolutionary caravan. Past centuries are shimmering with its sacred light. The anxieties and restlessness of the past are anxious to find rest in its lap. The future has no option except to come under the shelter of its mercy, giving up all temporary and partial revolutions so that the world may get rid of cruelties, oppressions, and hardships. The humanity may be able to break the chains of slavery and barbarism, and the servants of Allah may get up with the flag of equality and justice for the sake of Allah's pleasure, on the basis of their relationship with Him, and open the doors of His mercies for oppressed mankind.

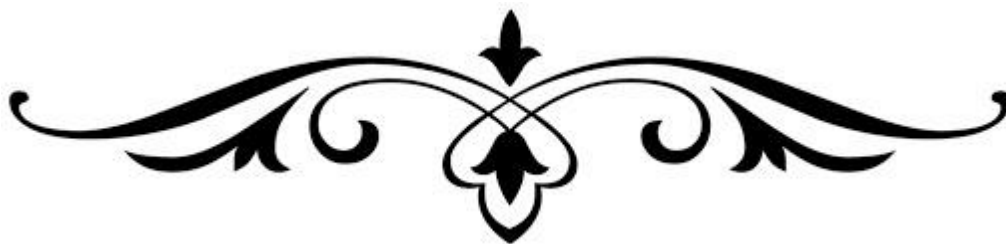
(Continued from page #. 18)

Muslim simply by recognizing the existence of God and all His revelations to man. But one can be a *mu'min* (the adjectival form of *iman* or faith) only if this is manifested in action in the Qur'an, Allah (subhanahu wa ta'ala) defines a believer as follows:

Believers are only they whose hearts tremble with awe whenever Allah is mentioned, and whose faith is strengthened whenever His messages are conveyed to them, and who in their Sustainer place their trust; those who are constant in prayer and spend on others out of what We provide for

them as sustenance: it is they who are truly believers! Theirs shall be great dignity in their Sustainer's sight, and forgiveness of sins, and a most excellent sustenance. (Surah al-Anfal, 8:2-4)

Faith is a response to the transcendent instincts implanted in our nature, as well as to an objective study of the universe. The mental and emotional outlook of the man or woman of faith protects against the totalitarian mentality that feeds on the arrogance of rationalism.



The Search for Justice And the Quest for Virtue: The Two Basics of Islamic Law

Dr. Robert Dickson Crane

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Editor

The Search for Justice

All of the world's major religions agree on the essential spiritual truths, of course with dissenting factions within each one, and on the moral verities that underlie the formation of character. Each religion, however, has its own unique paradigm of thought and can be understood only within its own frame of reference.

In Islam, this paradigm is the Shari'ah or Islamic law, just as in Judaism the paradigm is the Torah and for most Jews also the Talmud.

The earliest jurists, even at the time of the Prophet himself, followed the holistic approach for which Islamic scholarship became famous, even though they had no terms to describe their techniques. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ used to gather selected sahaba for instruction and ask each of them to decide a case that he would present for judgment. He was not so much interested in their specific conclusions as in their rationales for judgment. The Prophet's favorite student, 'Ali (RA), excelled all others in relating his judgment back to basic underlying principles.

Since Islamic law is above all a body of wisdom, nothing could escape its purview. Islamic law is the application of divine

revelation, and the Revelation of the Qur'an was designed by Allah to be applied to every human act and situation until the end of time.

The holistic approach inherent in the Qur'an was developed as a system of thought by Imam Ja'far [699-765], but Imam Shafi'i [767-820] was the first scholar consciously to expand it into an art form. It was finally codified by the universal genius, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali [1058-1111]. The classical Shari'ah reached its high point of systemic development in the 30 volumes of Ibn Taymiyyah [1263-1328] and in the writings of his contemporaries, Ibn Qayyim.

Premises

Islamic law in this systemic sense can best be approached by examining its premises and purposes. The first premise or basis of Shari'ah is its holistic ontology. Allah is One, therefore, the entire created order exists in unitary harmony. The things and forces we can observe are real, but their reality is derivative from Allah (subhanahu wa ta'ala). They do not exist independently of His purpose in their creation. This ontological principle, known as Tawhid, is critically important in Islamic law because it means that the whole precedes and is greater than the parts.

The second premise of the Shari'ah is its aesthetic. The nature of transcendent reality, and of all being, is Beauty, which precedes and is independent of cognition. The flower in the desert is beautiful even if no person ever sees it. Beauty consists of unity, symmetry, harmony, depth of meaning, and breadth of applicability. The greatest beauty is the unitive principle of Tawhid itself, because without it there could be no science and no human thought at all. This is of controlling importance in the Shari'ah, because it means that the ideal system of law should be simple, symmetrical, deep, and comprehensive.

The third premise is epistemological. All knowledge is merely a derivative and an affirmation of the unitary harmony inherent in everything that comes from Allah (subhanahu wa ta'ala). All creation worships Allah because He is One.

To this end, everything in creation is a sign, an *ayah*, of Allah (subhanahu wa ta'ala) designed to manifest the beauty and perfection of His Will for our instruction. For example, the constant movement of the clouds shows the nature of the universe as a flux of state of constant change, so that we will seek the stability of peace only in Allah and in the permanent elements of existence that reform the spiritual life.

This epistemological premise reinforces the first two, because it indicates that Islamic law serves to give meaning to everything man can observe. And meaning comes from Allah (subhanahu wa ta'ala), Who gives purpose to everything He has created.

The fourth and final premise of Islamic law is its normative or purposive, goal-oriented nature. Above all, it is an educational tool designed to provide guidance.

Purposes

A second way to understand the Shari'ah as a holistic guide to the rule of law is to

analyze this fourth premise, namely its practical purposes. The purposive nature of law in Islam differs radically from the static nature of law in Indo-European cultures, where law serves to maintain order, continuity, and stability, and where law by definition exists only where it is enforced. This radical difference in nature is evident in the very concept of Being.

By contrast, in Semitic thought dominant in Judaism and Islam, and also in traditionalist Christianity, being is defined by the word *Kun* in the sense of God's command to the universe, "Be!" and it was. All of creation arose by personal command with a divine purpose, and it is the task of man to find this purpose as best as he can. In the cosmology of the stars, the pattern of divinely guided evolution, and in his own nature, and to transform both himself as a person and the surrounding universe in accordance with it.

The highest purposes of the Shari'ah are six in number, though some scholars in the early centuries, like Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, identified only five. Each of these six universals (كليات) or essentials (ضروريات) or goals (مقاصد) of the Shari'ah provides guidance in identifying and addressing the issues of conscience in any society.

Since the problems of human society are basically the same all over the world, the essential meaning of Islamic law would not vary among countries, though the means of enforcement would depend on the extent to which the people felt themselves bound by this higher law. No one is bound by Islamic law unless he or she accepts its binding nature. As a system of guidance, what would apply in America would apply with minor adaptations in Iran, Nigeria, Egypt, Tajikistan, Sinkiang, and Indonesia.

The first three of these six highest purposes deal with what is essential for survival:

1) Life

The first is known as *haqq al-haya*, the responsibility to respect or protect life, or as *haqq al-nafs*, the duty to respect the inherent dignity of the human individual.

This *haqq al-haya* gives special meaning to the new agenda of the global environment, which is so heavily emphasized in the Qur'an and hadith, and now is threatened by a materialistic indifference to man's responsibility both to the Creator (subhanahu wa ta'ala) and to His creation.

Haqq al-haya includes many issues of national defense and foreign policy, including the worldwide problem of refugees, most of them Muslims. All of these foreign policy issues are rooted in the fundamental Islamic principle that peace comes most basically not from efforts to maintain stability through power but from pursuing justice.

2) Community

The second basic responsibility, *haqq al-nasl*, is the duty to respect the family and community. This brings our moral focus onto the problems of divorce, the care of children, and family life programs.

This second principle of Islamic law is important because it can introduce the concept of community rights into international law. Western international law, developed by the world's leading colonial powers, recognizes only the rights of individuals and of states, a state being defined as whatever power can exercise control over a given territory. In international law, this is why Israel is recognized as a sovereign power and the Palestinians are not.

3) Property

The third *daruriyah* (ضروريات) or essential goal of the path and pattern of perfection known as the Shari'ah is *haqq al-mal*, which

most simply is the duty to protect and promote private ownership of the means of production as a fundamental human right.

This human right and responsibility is based on the fundamental virtue and moral principle of *infaq*, which is the habitual inclination to give rather than take in life. *Infaq* is the basis of charity, that is, of zakah and sadaqah which form one of the five pillars of Islamic action, but it requires much more than merely redistributing wealth to the marginalized and helpless in the community. *Haqq al-mal*, and the principle of *infaq* on which it is based, require everyone to try to multiply the material bounties of Allah (subhanahu wa ta'ala). Allah has revealed in the Qur'an that there can be no shortage of natural resources, because Allah has provided all the resources we will ever need, including our own intelligence to develop them. Therefore, we should fight poverty not directly by redistributing existing wealth but indirectly by helping every person and every community build prosperity through entrepreneurial action.

The great evil identified in Islamic economics, according to the holistic perspective of the classical Shari'ah, is not interest-burdened finance, as most scholars would have us believe, but the underlying evil of concentrated wealth in society, to which financing through loans rather than equity investment contributes.

The model of Islamic finance is the employee-ownership program instituted by the Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwan al-Muslimun) of Egypt. The early Islamists condemned the basic Marxist principle that wealth is created by labor and that therefore the ownership of machines should be turned over to the State. The Ikhwan or Brotherhood contended that in capitalist society wealth is produced primarily by machines, so the key issue of justice is how

to broaden capital ownership. Their solution was to develop an embryo of what is now known as the creative credit revolution through the ESOP or Employee Stock Ownership Program in America, whereby employees leverage the assets of the companies where they work to obtain outside financing so they can purchase stock in these companies, to be paid back out of the future profits produced by the machines the employees now own.

These pioneers of Islamic economics in the modern age of capital-intensive economies developed 70 employee-owned companies. These were so highly successful that Nasser immediately nationalized them when he took power and either executed or exiled all the business executives.

Many Western economists are fully aware that Islamic principles of economics, if ever permitted to be applied, would undermine the basic premise of American development economics and development politics, namely, that decision-making power must be concentrated at the top.

The last three of the six essentials of Islamic law concern quality of life.

4) Self-Determination

The first of these three qualitative essentials of the just society, *haqq al-hurriyah*, is the right of responsible political freedom, and the corresponding duty for all persons and every interest group to help determine the directions and priorities of the polity in which they choose to live. This is Islamic self-determination. Unfortunately, this aspect of the Islamic heritage has been observed primarily in the breach and therefore is not well known among most of the Muslims in the world today.

All the great scholars of Islam throughout the past 1,380 years have been imprisoned, often for decades, for teaching the three basic principles of Islamic political thought.

These are: 1) *Khilafah*, which is the responsibility of the rulers, as well as of the ruled, to Allah (subhanahu wa ta'ala); 2) *shura*, which is the responsiveness of the ruler to the ruled and the duty of the entire polity, both rulers and ruled, to establish formal political structures by which this *shura* can be reliably maintained; and 3) *ijma*, or consensus, which requires all the members of the community, especially the opinion leaders, to develop a political consensus adequate to sustain the first two elements of the just polity, namely, *Khilafah* and *shura*.

To these three political elements of the free society in the practice of the Prophet ﷺ and in classical Islamic thought is a fourth, which has always been simply assumed and therefore has often been ignored but never attacked. This is the Shari'ah itself and an independent judiciary to protect and apply it in order to sustain the integrity of the executive and legislative process.

This last element of the fourth goal or purpose in Islamic law is what distinguishes the American Revolution from the French Revolution, because the American revolutionaries all agreed that our basic rights and duties come not from collective man, elevated to the status of a false god, but from our Creator (subhanahu wa ta'ala), Who sustains each one of us individually and is the only source and purpose of our liberty, equality, and brotherhood, and Who alone is the ultimate and true Legislator.

5) Dignity

Fifth of the (ضروريات) *dururiyat* or essentials of the Shari'ah is *haqq al-karama*, which is the duty to promote the dignity of the person and of the moral community. In Islamic thought, freedom of religion and freedom of thought and expression derive not from the principle of freedom itself but from the dignity inherent in the human soul and its power to respond to the love of Allah

(subhanahu wa ta'ala). Freedom to pursue truth and to worship Allah of course, can never be taken away, even in a concentration camp. The social and political duty of *haqq al-karama* is to facilitate maximum freedom to practice those two highest duties of man, namely, the pursuit of truth and the worship of our Creator and Sustainer (subhanahu wa ta'ala).

6) Knowledge

The biggest issue within the area of *haqq al-karama* is the sixth *kulliyah*, namely, *haqq al-ilm*, which is the universal right and duty freely and responsibly to educate oneself and one's children. This issue demands our highest priority, because whenever any people lose control of either their own or their children's education, they have truly lost the future of all succeeding generations.

The format of these six basic principles of the Shari'ah represents the best thinking of the combined Islamic community throughout the world over the past fourteen centuries. Applying these guidelines to the issues that confront people in any society, whether it is governed by Muslims or not, is the challenge envisioned by all thinking Muslims and, Muslims would say, is the challenge to all Christians and Jews, and members of every other religion as well.

Muslim leaders perceive a responsibility wherever they are to develop a "traditionalist movement" of like-minded people in order to transform themselves and the world together through action, spiritual, social, and political.

Muslims believe that this is why Allah (subhanahu wa ta'ala) revealed to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ:

The message of Allah is perfected in truth and justice (Surah al-An'am, 6:115)

and

O you who believe! Be ever steadfast in your devotion to Allah, bearing witness to

the truth in all equity; and never let hatred of others lead you into the sin of deviating from justice! Be just: this is closest to being conscious of Allah. And remain conscious of Allah. Verily, Allah is aware of all that you do. (Surah al-Maedah, 5:8)

The Quest for Virtue

More important in any religion than mere knowledge ('ilm) of what is right and wrong is the practice of virtue (*akhlaq*). This is why Islamic law is not primarily a system of negative constraints and punishments, but rather of positive guidelines on how to do what is best for the happiness of oneself and others. In Islam, faith without action is a contradiction in terms. Faith is measured only by action. This is true especially in the orthodox Sufi orders. The leader of the Naqshbandi Owaisia order in Central Asia, for example, says that the only criterion for a good Sufi is whether he does his daily job better than anyone else. Muslims, therefore, distinguish sharply between knowledge and virtue. *Akhlaq* or virtue is the praxeology of applying truth in one's own life as a person and as a member of one's community, starting with the family and reaching out to the community of mankind.

This praxeology is expressed in the articles and pillars of faith, which Muslims, Jews, and Christians share to a remarkable degree. Underlying these articles and pillars of faith is a commonality of belief in the nature of faith itself.

Faith, from the Islamic perspective, might be summarized as an openness to God, and even as a suspension of the intellectual process in order to be more conscious of God and more responsive to His personal inspiration as guidance for one's own life, as well as an emotional commitment to submit one's life to Him out of complete trust in His love.

One may be a (Continued on page # 13)

Muhammad and Charlemagne

Being some remarks on the view of Prof. Henri Pirenne

Muhammad Natsir

Ex-Premier of Indonesia

Amidst various kinds of disgracing criticisms and accusations hurled against Islam and its prophet Muhammad ﷺ by those who cherished a fanatical and narrow-minded view of Islam and the prophet Muhammad ﷺ, we heard a different voice from an unexpected quarter. Not only was the voice different, but it was totally in opposition to what the Muslims usually heard of late from historians and those who advocated the so-called neutral religion. The voice that we mentioned above did not spring from a heart infected by jealousy and hatred, nor influenced by religious fanaticism; but from the results of a long, careful, and just investigation, accompanied by the courage to oppose or to uproot any opinion which is held by the majority as being scientifically founded and of which no comparison is needed. This voice came from a person who was entitled to call himself an expert, and furthermore, was recognized as such. This person was Professor Henri Pirenne, formerly professor at the University of Ghent and member of the Royal Academy of Belgium. He expressed his opinion in his book "Mohamet et Charlemagne". With adequate historical proofs and a courage to present the truth, Professor Pirenne compared the lives of two heroes whose existence had engraved a lasting imprint on the history of the world. These two heroes were Muhammad and Charlemagne.

The Beginning of the Middle Ages

The beginning of the Middle Ages is a matter of controversy. As we all know, it is the general opinion that the Middle Ages started when the Roman Empire fell into the hands of the Germans in the 5th century A.D. The consensus of all historians,

together with what we learned in school, all established the same above view.

Henri Pirenne uprooted this very view that the Middle Ages started with the fall of the Roman Empire. He began his attack by asking the following questions: What exactly is the criterion by which we can decide the beginning of the Middle Ages and the end of antiquity? He outlined clearly that the fall of the Roman Empire in the West into the hands of the Germans did not cause any important changes. It was true that the Germans replaced the rulers of Rome, but there was nothing more than this change of persons sitting on the throne. Trade and economic life, art, culture, religion—all these were not affected. They remained the same as before.

Professor Pirenne aptly compared the rise of the Germans with that of the Arabs. After the Germans had seated themselves on the throne of Rome, and following the end of conflict and warfare, the German conquerors exchanged their culture and characteristics for those of the vanquished Romans. They gradually lost their traits as a people as though they were engulfed by Roman society. It resulted in their continuing and furthering the culture of Rome.

"The German, wrote Professor Pirenne, "became Roman from the moment he entered Rome. In contradiction to this, the Roman became Arab from the moment he was conquered by Islam". (*Le Germain se romanise dès qu'il entre dans La Romania. Le Romain au contraire s'arabisera dès qu'il est conquis par l'Islam*).

Thus was the brief but to the point

comparison made by a scholar of history concerning the nature of the two conquests.

Professor Pirenne further wrote that with the coming of Islam, a new world was created around the Mediterranean Sea, a world which formerly looked upon the city of Rome as its source of civilization and culture. Up to the present, the break which was caused by the coming of Islam into southern Europe still existed. It was from that moment that the Mediterranean Sea became the meeting ground of two different and opposing civilizations, like the confrontation of two conflicting garrisons on the battlefield. Such was the view of Professor Pirenne.

Religion and Faith as a Fortress

There is yet another aspect concerning this that deserves a more thorough investigation from us. The Germans who invaded Rome, despite their superiority in manpower and other material sources as compared to those of the Muslims who conquered Rome later, did not succeed in subjugating the spirit of Rome. But on the contrary, as we have mentioned just now, it was the German conquerors that were culturally subdued by the vanquished Romans.

In the case of the Arabs who came with the Islamic religion and were confronted by the might of Rome, why did they not suffer the same fate as that of the Germans? There is, however, only one answer to this question, that is, that the Germans conquered Rome merely with the point of the sword and the power of material forces, whereas the followers of Islam conquered Rome with the strength of the spirit as well as physical power. For the followers of Islam, the holy struggle for the dissemination of the faith begins when the conflicts for material power end. The war of the spirit (*Jihad ruhani*) has its own special weapon, its own method, and its own tactics and strategy.

A people who does not possess this

weapon of the spirit shall not be victorious even if they are already seated on the thrones of their enemies. Professor Pirenne wrote that the Germans had not a single weapon to counteract the blow inflicted upon them by the Christianity of Rome, but the Arabs had a burning spirit inflamed by a new faith. For the people of the East, it is this spiritual weapon that prevented them from being culturally destroyed by the domination of the West, powerful though it may be.

But the people of the West at present possess also both the physical as well as the spiritual weapon, the latter in the form of religion. A nation without ready physical power shall suffer a greater annihilation if it loses also the strength of spiritual resistance, as was the case with the absorption of the Germans by the Romans.

With a bit of humour, we could express ourselves in the same way as Professor Snouck Hurgronje did towards us in his book "The Netherlands and Islam". We shall say to them: Christianity has the slogan "Preach the faith to all the nations". But that alone is not enough for them. What they really hoped for was that after the teaching had been spread comes the real domination. It is not necessary for us to look at Rome. Look at what happened in central Sulawesi. Amongst the Protestant missionaries, the name of Mrs. Albertine Holle-Stolk is well known. She is regarded as a very active worker, together with her husband, in spreading the Christian faith and not less for the "pacification of these areas". This is a reflection of history which is real and immediate.

Charlemagne

Wherein lies the greatness of Charlemagne? The greatness of Charlemagne lies in the fact that this great monarch understood that a spiritual weapon cannot be conquered by a sword which is

drawn out of its scabbard, but ought to be fought also with a spiritual one. With his troops, he defended Europe against Islam. But this defense against Islam was not only on the battlefields but also in his own domain. He established Christian missionary organizations and educational institutions. He commanded his subjects to embrace Christianity immediately, and if necessary, even with compulsion.

Ever since that moment, we could say that there existed in the European world a great

change, and it is from that instant that Pirenne believed the Middle Ages to have begun. He concluded his views by stating the following: "Thus it is absolutely right to say that without Mahomet, Charlemagne is inconceivable."

A view which is based on honest research and sufficient courage, such as the one advocated by a historian like Henri Pirenne, is quite different from those we heard until now from other historians.

(Continued from page #. 21)

permitted except on the ground of reasonable and intelligible classification. Such classification in our society permits, for the present, the establishment of educational and professional institutions exclusively for females or exclusively for males. However, where co-education is permitted and the institution is not reserved for one sex alone, the fixation of a number on the ground of sex will be directly opposed to the requirement of Article 25 (2) unless it is justified as a protective measure for women and children under Article 25 (3). In other words, the number of girl students can be fixed as the minimum but not as the maximum, particularly so where on merit they are likely to get more than the fixed number of seats. The Constitution assumes that the women and children in our society need protection and not the males, and as long as the Constitution maintains that assumption and basis, we cannot reverse it by affording protection to males and adults at the cost of women and children. That would be opposed to the very fundamental mandate of the Constitution."

The conclusion was expressed thus:

"In view of the discussion that has

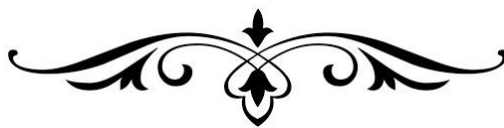
proceeded on merits, the claim of the girl students merited acceptance on the ground that they have been discriminated against in the matter of admission to co-educational medical colleges by suppressing their merit as against the boys admitted thereto."

And admission to co-educational medical colleges was allowed strictly on merit, while maintaining the right of girls to exclusive admission to the girls' medical college (like Fatima Jinnah Medical College for Girls) (*Shirin Munir Vs Government of the Punjab* PLD 1990 S.C. 295).

To further safeguard the position of women, it would be advantageous to take guidance from the Holy Qur'an. In Surah Al-Talaq, verse 1, it is said:

"O Prophet, when you divorce women, divorce them for their prescribed period and calculate the period, and keep your duty to Allah, your Nourisher. Do not turn them out of their houses, nor should they themselves do that."

The rights given to women in Islam are, therefore, not only available to women in Pakistan but are also being duly enforced by Courts of Law.



Rights of Women Under Islamic Law: The Pakistan Experience

*Justice Dr. Nasim Hasan Shah
Retd. Chief Justice of Pakistan*

Males and females under Islam have equal rights, but perform complementary functions. The male is the protector and maintainer of the females (and the children) and works mainly outside the home; the female is in charge of the home, taking care of the needs of her husband and looking after the upbringing of the children, devoting herself mainly to the home. But the Sharia has given her legal rights commensurate with her responsibilities and requirements. Although a son has two shares in the property of his father as against one share given to the daughters, she has no responsibility for maintaining and satisfying the financial needs of the family. Moreover, she inherits a 1/8th or 1/4th share in the property of her husband on his demise. Despite the fact that her main responsibility is in the management of the home and in the bringing up of children, she can engage in business and in commercial activity. She is the full owner of her property, over which she has complete dominion, and enjoys an independent legal status.

In matters of marriage, she has full freedom. After attaining the age of puberty, she can marry whoever she pleases, as marriage in Islam is a contract. In matters of divorce, the husband enjoys more power to divorce his wife. This freedom is greatly circumscribed by the fact that this act of divorce is considered highly reprehensible in Islam, is greatly discouraged through social and family pressures, and is rarely resorted to.

Women are free to go out in public for the performance of their daily chores, but while doing so they should observe hijab, i.e., modesty, and cover their hair and not

expose the sensuous parts of their body.

As for the matter of their weight of evidence before courts, it is true that it is only the evidence of adult male truthful Muslims which is accepted in cases involving a Hadd sentence, i.e., penalties ordained in the Holy Quran, but these sentences are very rarely imposed, and the overwhelming number of cases in practice are decided in which sentences are imposed according to those prescribed by laws framed by the State (*tazir*). Here, their testimony is accepted and given full weight.

It is true that traditionally in Islamic societies, women have been mostly confined to their homes, and their property and their affairs have generally been managed by males, which has given rise to the impression that women enjoy an inferior status to men in Islam and that they are being exploited by them. To correct this impression and ameliorate this situation, effective steps are being taken in Pakistan both by legislation as well as by decisions of the Courts.

At the outset, it should be stated that consistent with the provisions of our Constitution whereby all laws that are repugnant to the Qur'an and the Sunnah will be invalid and that henceforth decisions of Courts are to be based on the Injunctions of Islam, Islamic law has become the rule of decision practically in all matters.

As far as the Islamization of laws is concerned, all customary laws which denied the rights of inheritance to females in respect of agricultural property have been repealed, with the result that now every heir,

male or female, is entitled to his or her share as fixed by the Shariat with absolute property rights therein vesting in them including complete right of depositing it. Considering that 75% of our population lives in rural areas and was being governed by customary laws, this is indeed a revolutionary change.

A remarkable example of this revolutionary change is manifest from how these matters are now being viewed by the Courts.

Thus, in the case of *Sardar Ali Vs Ghulam Sarwar* (PLD 1990 S.C. 1) decided recently by the Supreme Court, the facts were that the brothers had been in possession of the land of their sister and had excluded her completely from it. Later on, they claimed that they had become owners of the land through adverse possession. This claim was negated by the Supreme Court in a landmark ruling wherein the rights of women and their status in an Islamic society were discussed in great detail and it was held, relying on the Qur'anic verse in Surah IV, Verse 34, declaring men as "protectors and maintainers", that the petitioners, being the brothers of the respondent, were required by Islamic law to protect the property rights of their sister if ever they came into possession of her land in any capacity. The Court went on to observe that "one who is enjoined with the protection of the other's property cannot lay claim adverse to the interests and rights of that other one who owns it". No brother can now usurp the share of his sister on the ground that she has relinquished it in his favor or that he has become its owner through adverse possession.

Again, differing from the earlier view held by the Courts in pre-partition India that a wife is entitled to claim dissolution of marriage only if she has been treated with cruelty by her husband, or she has not been maintained by him for two years, or that his

whereabouts have become unknown, or that he is impotent; it has now been held by Courts in Pakistan that "in case of dislike by the wife of her husband, Islam concedes the right to the wife, in circumstances of extreme discord and where life becomes a torture for both, on account of the fixed aversion on the part of the spouses to seek dissolution of marriage on the ground of Khula".

Accordingly, the Court can order separation by Khula even if the husband is not agreeable to that course. (*Abdul Rahim Vs Mst. Shahida Khan* — PLD 1984 S.C. 329). In the same strain, our Courts have declared that if there is disagreement between a husband and a wife who is *sui juris*, she cannot be forced to live with her husband and is entitled to live separately from him (*Mst. Sahi Bibi Vs Khalid Hussain* 1977 S.C.M.R. 577).

In addition to the rights accruing to women by the Islamization of Laws, the attempt to secure a status of equality for them has also been fortified by Article 25 of the Constitution. This provides that—

"All citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of law."

And goes on to add that—

"There shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex alone."

And to further safeguard the rights of women and children, it provided that—

"Nothing in this Article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the protection of women and children."

The Supreme Court has explained the scope and intent of this Article in a recent case relating to the admission of girls to medical colleges as follows:

"No discrimination on the ground of sex alone can be (Continued on page #. 23)

Hazrat Maulana Ahmad Raza Khan Bareilvi رحمه الله

Hazrat Maulana Ahmad Raza Khan Bareilvi is a well-known Religious Head and a Great Reformer of the present century whose anniversary or Urs is celebrated in the Subcontinent of Indo-Pakistan and in many other Islamic countries with great reverence.

The reputation of an artist or a scholar requires a suitable environment, as recognition and proper publicity are essential for the flowering of talent. A genius or a learned man of today cannot rise to the pinnacle of glory unless the prevailing values of society and the customs of the age lend him their support. However, those enlightened souls who have attained self-knowledge and the knowledge of God, and who understand how to deal wisely with their surroundings and circumstances, possess the ability not only to arrest decline but also to transform ideals into living realities. Such personalities command influences even in the wilderness, despite having no access to worldly display or ostentation.

Among these sovereigns of the spiritual realm stands the illustrious name of Aala Hazrat Maulana Ahmad Raza Khan Bareilvi. Detached from the transient distinctions and false publicity of worldly life, he spent his days in the quiet corner of Bareilly (India), immersed in the company of books, pens, and inkpots. His own verses eloquently reflect his outlook on life and his approach to its challenges:

"Neither I feel happy at the appreciation from the people nor do I feel upset at aspersions from them. Neither do my ears wait to hear eulogies and admirations nor do I have the leisure to hear my insults and hatred. I lead an anonymous and unknown life in which I have nothing about me except my book, my pen and my inkpot."

Birth

Hazrat Maulana Ahmad Raza Khan (RA) came into this world on the 10th of Shawwal, 1272 Hijri; i.e., 14th of June 1856, in a respectable family of learned men, in Bareilly. His respected father Hazrat Maulana Naqi Ali Khan Bareilvi and his great-grandfather Hazrat Maulana Shah Raza Ali Khan Bareilvi were famous for their learning and knowledge in the whole of India. Before his birth, his father had a pleasant dream which he interpreted to mean that a son would be born to him whose reputation as a Scholar would spread through the whole of the Islamic world.

Education

Since his early childhood, he demonstrated his intelligence and brightness of soul. He finished the Holy Qur'an at the early age of four years. He acquired proficiency in the elementary education of books in Urdu, Arabic, and Persian at the hands of the Late Mirza Ghulam Qadir Beg Bareilvi. The rest of his religious knowledge and its completion he acquired under the guidance of Hazrat Maulana Naqi Ali Khan Bareilvi. He picked up some of the principles of syntax in Sarf and Nahv from Hazrat Maulana Abdul Ali. He received his education from the famous saint Hazrat Syed Shah Aal-i-Rasool Mahrarvi of the Khanqah of Mahrara Sharif. He was one of the beloved Caliphs of Hazrat Mahrarvi and was a disciple and Caliph of the Qadiriyya Order.

Religious and National Achievements

Maulana Ahmad Raza Khan Bareilvi (RA) started to serve Islam and the Muslims at the age of 14 years and devoted himself to it. In those days, the British had occupied India and thereafter started misleading and corrupting the minds and the souls of the

Muslims by their artifice and tricks. They did their utmost to influence them. With the cooperation of some Muslim traitors, they were able to create certain controversial problems and had thus succeeded in creating factions amongst the Muslims. Conspiracies put an end to the sacred relationship and faith of the Muslims in the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Under such adverse circumstances, Hazrat Maulana Ahmad Raza Khan Bareilvi performed, in letter and spirit, his duties to Religion and the Nation. He carried on the work of reform through his preaching and missionary work and thus achieved marvelous results. He wrote about one thousand books and pamphlets. Some of his great publications are:

- Fatawa Razvia
- Ahkam-i-Shariat
- Fatawa Africa
- Husamul Haramain
- Al-Aman Wal-ula
- Ad-daulatul Makkia
- Hadaiq-e-Bakhshish, and
- Kanz-ul-Iman (The Urdu Translation of the Holy Qur'an, which was the most popular of them all).

Hazrat Maulana Ahmad Raza Khan Bareilvi tore away the veils of falsehood fabricated by the leaders of different sects. In this way, he did a lot to weed out the un-Islamic views and rites that had taken root in the body politic of Islam and sternly stopped un-Islamic ways of life. Some of his publications and writings give evidence of his great and creative thinking.

Generally, the adversaries of the Ahl-e-Sunnah called Maulana Ahmad Raza Khan Bareilvi (RA) and the Bareilvi followers of the Sunnah worshippers of graves. But this is not true, for Ahmad Raza Khan Bareilvi (RA) not only forbade worship of graves or

prostration before it but also published journals in support of his preaching. He writes that even reverential prostration is unwarranted, and says:

"Oh Muslims, know in accordance with the commandments of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and know it for certain that prostration before anyone except God is disallowed. Prostration for worship is the greatest infidelity and an open disbelief. Prostration, therefore, is illegal and the greatest sin."

Learned Preachers have put down different Ahadith; by God's grace, we write down here the Hadith about prostration before those objects which are not God. As mentioned in Sahih Muslim by Ibn-i-Jandab and in Ma'jam Tibrani by Ka'ab ibn Malik (RA): I heard the Holy Prophet ﷺ say a few days before his demise, "*Your predecessors used to prostrate themselves before the tombs of their prophets and saints. Beware, you must never do so. I forbid you strongly from adopting such a course of action.*" (Al-Zubdatu-Zakia)

Construction of Lofty Graves

He writes under above caption that it is against the Sunnah. He says: "The graves of my respected father, mother, and brother must not be higher than a span (9 inches)." (Al-Malfoozat, part 3, page 102)

Ladies' Visits to the Shrines

He writes: "ladies are forbidden to visit shrines of saints and the tombs of common people." (Ahkam-i-Shariat, part II, page 155)

Long Tuft of Hair on the Heads of Children

He writes: "It is a custom amongst some ignorant and illiterate ladies that in the name of some saint they grow a long tuft of hair on the heads of their children for a period of time. During this period, this tuft of hair never receives a cut though the remaining part of

the head may be shaven or the hair on it may be cut. The tuft of hair remains intact. After the expiry of the fixed time, they take the child to the shrine of the particular saint to get the tuft of hair cut along with the rest of the hair. This is strictly forbidden and is merely customary." (Fatawa Africa, page 68)

Tying of Imam Zaman

He says about the tying of the Penny of Imam Zaman: "It is baseless." (Al-Malfoozat, Part III, Page 518)

Observation of Purdah from the Pir

He writes: "Observation of Purdah from the Pir is allowed." (Ahkam-i-Shariat, part II, page 101)

Prohibitions at the Shrines of Saints

He says: "At the shrines of Saints many forbidden practices are carried on and this torments the soul of the Saints. It is chiefly due to this that the blessings have disappeared." (Al-Malfoozat, part I, page 48)

Moving Round the Graves and Kissing Them

He says: "No doubt, going round the shrines with the exception of Kaaba Muazzama is unwarranted, and prostration before objects other than God is strictly forbidden in the Code of our Shariat. About kissing the graves, the Divines have differed. It is better not to kiss. Particularly about the shrines of saints, scholars have explained that one should stand at a distance of at least one yard away from the shrine. Thus they consider it to be a mark of respect. The thought of kissing, therefore, should not come into the mind." (Al-Malfoozat, part III, page 102)

Qawwali and Enjoyment of its Music

About Qawwali along with musical instruments, he answers a question and says: "Such a Qawwali is strictly forbidden.

All those present are sinners. The managers of such an Urs and the Qawwals also are guilty of the Sin of Qawwali as mentioned by Khawaja Nizamuddin Aulia Mehboob-i-Ilahi (RA)." (Fawaidul Fawaid). "The use of musical instruments is condemned." (Ahkam-i-Shariat, part I, page 40)

In the light of the above-mentioned extracts, some readers will think that when the exalted Maulana Ahmad Raza Khan Bareilvi was against such rites, why are they being observed at present. It appears that most of the Ahl-e-Sunnah Ulema have not preached well the principles taught by Maulana Ahmad Raza, and they have allegedly taken a very lenient view of the practice of the Sunnah and of the scrupulous interpretations of the ancient Divines. Though they dislike certain things from the bottom of their heart, they still accept them. They ought to be mindful of this weakness of theirs, chiefly on account of the fact that they are amongst the Ulema and these leaders of the Ahl-e-Sunnah School of Thought, the followers of which are in large majority.

Maulana Ahmad Raza Khan Bareilvi (RA) is one of those distinguished personalities who had a thorough knowledge of religion and worldly affairs. They also manifested sound knowledge of their corollaries.

Late Dr. Sir Zia-ud-Din, Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University, was an eminent mathematician of his time. Having received his education in the subcontinent (Pakistan and India), he left for European Universities to get higher education. He was puzzled over a sum and failed to find out its solution, he decided even to go to Germany to get it resolved. Per chance, Professor Syed Sulaiman Ashraf Bihari (R.A.) (Caliph Aala Hazrat) introduced him to Hazrat Ahmad Raza Bareilvi. Dr. Zia-ud-Din presented his problem about the equation and showed it to Ala Hazrat. To his great astonishment,

Aala Hazrat solved the sum then and there, and that too to the full satisfaction of the Doctor. He immediately said, "I used to hear that Natural Knowledge (Ilm-e-Ladunni) is something, today I have seen it personally." Besides, in 1919, Hazrat Bareilvi proved the futility of the forecast of Professor Albert, an American Scientist, by means of science and math.

The most eminent Muslim Poet and thinker of this century, Allama Muhammad Iqbal, was among his admirers. The dominant personality and the meritorious religious services of Aala Hazrat impressed Dr. Iqbal so much that he plainly admitted and said:

"India has not witnessed, such a brilliant and eminent philosopher and thinker as Aala Hazrat Bareilvi. After going through the Fatawas, it is my conclusion that Maulana sticks to his decision like a rock. Certainly, he gives his opinion after a long consideration. Therefore, he does not find any necessity to change or review his religious decisions and Fatawas."

Hazrat Ahmad Raza Khan Bareilvi (RA) died on Friday, the 25th of Safar, 1340. He was buried in Bareilly. No doubt, he is no longer among us, but his name is alive and shines brightly a great exponent of Din-i-Islam and a great devotee of the Prophet ﷺ.

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Kanz-ul-Iman — A Fine Fountain of Faith

Saleem Ullah Jundran

Kanz-ul-Iman is a famous and highly respected Urdu translation of the Holy Qur'an by Imam Ahmad Raza Khan (1856–1921), also known as Ala Hazrat.

It is known for its eloquent, devotional, and respectful style, especially in how it expresses the مقام (status) of the Prophets, particularly the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Unlike more literal translations, **Kanz-ul-Iman** emphasizes interpretation (tafseer-based translation), making the meanings clearer while maintaining deep reverence. [EDITOR]

Among the Urdu Translation of the Holy Quran,
The fine fountain of faith is, indeed, *Kanz-ul-Iman*.

In 1911, it was completed by Imam Ahmad Raza Khan,
It was entirely consistent with the authentic tafaseer of Quran.

One whole country has passed since its release,
Despite that its demands is on the increase.

It has proved to be nearest to the original text,
Its each and every word looks concise and exact.

Its language is free from the words absurd, awkward or odd,
Its readers feel high sense of reverence for Almighty God.

Respectful epithets for the Prophet ﷺ have been used,
Thoroughly, true love for him ﷺ has been, fervently, infused.

Its beauty of diction and eloquence of style does capture
Readers' eyes obsessed with this translation literature.

The right and sound religious vision, *Kanz-ul-Iman* project,
Rightly, through its apt linguistic and semantic aspect.

Its centenary celebrations in the country and town
Inspired me to deem this theme to pen down.



خیر و بھلائی ہے۔ ایسا مومن کے علاوہ کسی دوسرے کے لئے نہیں ہے۔ اگر اسے کوئی بھلائی پہنچتی ہے تو وہ رب کا شکر ادا کرتا جس میں اس کے لئے بھلائی ہے اور اگر اس کو کوئی نقصان (ناکامی) پہنچے تو اس پر وہ صبر کرتا ہے جس میں اس کے لئے بھلائی ہے۔ "(مسلم)۔ اس طرح مومن کبھی مایوس نہیں ہوتا بلکہ صحت و مرض، غناء و فقر، کامیابی و ناکامی، خوشی و غم اور نفع و نقصان الغرض زندگی کے تمام احوال میں وہ رب العزت کا شکر ادا کرتا ہے اور اس کی رضا حاصل کرتا ہے جو مومن کی زندگی کا مقصد حقیقی و نصب العین ہے۔

دنیاوی اعتبار سے بھی ناکامی کامیابی کا پیش خیمہ ثابت ہوتی ہے۔ انسان اپنی خامیوں اور کوتاہیوں کا ادراک کر لیتا ہے۔ غلطی جان لینے کے بعد اسے دہرانا یہ مومن کی شان کے خلاف ہے۔ "لا یلدغ المومن من جحر واحد مرتین"۔ یعنی مومن ایک سوراخ سے دوبار نہیں ڈسا جاتا۔ وہ نہ صرف اپنی غلطیوں بلکہ دوسروں کی غلطیوں سے بھی سبق سیکھتا ہے اور ان کا تدارک کرنے کی کوشش کرتا ہے۔

ثانیاً وہ یہ بات جان لیتا ہے کہ اس مقصد کے حصول کے لئے کوئی دوسرا راستہ تلاش کرنا ہو گا۔ جس کی تلاش میں کچھ دوسری راہیں اس پر روشن ہو جاتی ہیں جو انسان کو کامیابی کی شاہراہ پر گامزن

کر دیتی ہیں۔ جب وہ ایک نئے عزم کے ساتھ دوبارہ کوشش کرے گا تو کم از کم ان غلطیوں کو نہیں دہرائے گا جن کی وجہ سے اسے ناکامی کا سامنا کرنا پڑا۔ بہر حال انسان کو کبھی بھی مایوس، مضطرب، پر مژدہ نہ ہونا چاہئے۔

نہ ہو مضطرب میرے ہم سفر، تجھے شاید نہیں اس کی خبر ان ہی ظلمتوں کے دوش پر ابھی کاروان سحر بھی ہے عظیم مقاصد کے حامل افراد اگر اپنے مقصد عظیم میں کامیاب نہ بھی ہوں تو چھوٹے چھوٹے کئی فوائد ضرور حاصل کر لیتے ہیں۔ مثلاً پھل دار درخت لگانے والا اگر اس درخت سے سے پھل نہ بھی حاصل کر پائے پھر بھی اس کے سایہ سے محروم نہ ہو گا اور ماحولیاتی آلودگی میں ضرور کمی کا باعث بنے گا۔ یا علم کی فضیلت جاننے والا اگر علم کی بڑی بڑی قد بلیں روشن کرنے کی کوشش کرے۔ اس کے لئے اپنی مکمل زندگی صرف کر دے اگر اس میں اسے کامیابی نہ بھی حاصل ہوئی مکمل معاشرہ علم کے نور سے روشن نہ بھی ہو تو اس سے مستفید طبقہ کچھ علم کے نور سے تو مستفیض ہو گا اور اس طرح وہ اپنے بجھنے سے پہلے کچھ شمعیں تو جلانے میں بہر حال کامیاب ہو ہی جائے گا۔

عمر بھر جلنے کا اتنا تو صلہ پائیں گے ہم بجھتے بجھتے چند شمعیں تو جلا جائیں گے ہم

Step out of your own self and keep your distance from it. Practice detachment from your possessiveness, and surrender everything to Allah. Become His doorman at the door of your heart, obeying His command by admitting those He instructs you to admit, and respecting His prohibition by shutting out those He instructs you to turn away, so that you do not let passion back into your heart once it has been evicted.

Shaykh Abd Al Qadir Al Jilani (RA); Seventh Discourse from Futuh al-Ghaib - On removing the cares of the heart [qalb]

پر بغیر ساز و سامان بارہ ہزار کی قلیل فوج کے ساتھ حملہ کیا تو زنگ آلود تلواروں والی قلیل فوج نے دیار غیر میں بہادری کی وہ لازوال داستانیں رقم کیں اور اس بے جگری سے دشمن پر وار کیا کہ ایک لاکھ مسلح دشمن کی فوج ان کے سامنے نہ ٹھہر سکی اور میدان بدر ہو گئی۔ یہ ٹوٹی تلوار والے ایک لاکھ کے مسلح لشکر پر غالب آ گئے۔

کپڑوں پر پیوند لگے ہیں تلواریں بھی ٹوٹی ہیں
پھر بھی دشمن کانپ رہے ہیں آخر لشکر کس کا ہے

زخموں کے نشان بدن پر سجانے والے مجاہدین جنہوں نے میدان جنگ میں دشمنوں کا مردانہ وار مقابلہ کیا، اگر یہ شکست بھی کھا جاتے تو بھی انہیں مورد الزام نہ ٹھہرایا جاتا کیونکہ انہوں نے جس ہمت و جرأت کا مظاہرہ کیا وہ بہر حال قابل قدر و ستائش تھا۔ اس کے برخلاف پر تعیش محلوں کے وہ باسی جنہوں نے مقابلے کی ہی ہمت ہی نہ کی اور بغیر جنگ لڑے اپنا مال، جان اور عزت دشمن کے حوالے کر دی۔ جیسا کہ خلیفہ مستعصم جس نے تین لاکھ کی فوج اور جلال الدین خوارزم کی دعوت کے باوجود صرف اس خوف سے تاتاریوں کے خلاف جنگ میں حصہ نہ لیا کہ شکست کی صورت میں بغداد کو نقصان پہنچے گا۔ تاریخ شاہد ہے کہ بالآخر ہلاکو خان نے ارد گرد کے تمام مسلم علاقوں پر فتح حاصل کرنے کے بعد بغداد پر نہ صرف حملہ کیا بلکہ اسے مکمل تباہ و برباد کر دیا اور بیس لاکھ کی آبادی والے شہر سے صرف چار لاکھ افراد ہی زندہ فرار ہو سکے، خلیفہ وقت بھی مارے جانے والے لوگوں میں شامل تھا اور کئی دن تک دجلہ فرات میں پانی کی بجائے لاکھوں مسلمانوں کا خون اور لاکھوں نادر و نایاب کتابوں کی سیاہی بہتی رہی۔ اور ان کی مثال اس شخص کی طرح تھی جس نے آگ لگ جانے کے بعد اس خوف سے ہاتھ پاؤں تک نہ مارے کہ

باوجود کوشش وہ جل کر مر جائے گا۔ تو یقیناً اس ہلاکت کا سبب اس کی اپنی کوتاہی اور سستی ہے۔

کتنے معصوم ہیں انساں کہ جل جاتے ہیں
اپنی کوتاہی کو دے کر غم و آلام کا نام

ناکامی پر افسوس!

عظیم اور کامیاب ترین افراد کی بھی ہر کوشش کا کامیابی سے ہمکنار ہونا ضروری نہیں۔ بعض اوقات ناکامی کا بھی سامنا کرنا پڑ سکتا ہے۔ جیسا کہ مشہور سائنسدان اور موجد تھامس ایڈیسن (1847) کا شہرہ آفاق قول ہے کہ بلب کی ایجاد سے پہلے مجھے تقریباً تین سو بار ناکامی کا منہ دیکھنا پڑا لیکن اس سے میں نے تین سو ایسے طریقے بھی دریافت کئے جن سے بلب نہیں بجتے اور اسی وجہ سے وہ صرف ایک بلب کی ایجاد تک محدود نہ رہا بلکہ اس نے اپنی زندگی میں تیرہ سو ایجادات رجسٹرڈ کرائیں اور آنے والوں کے لئے کئی ایسے راستے روشن کر گیا جن کے مرہون منت ہی آج سائنس و ٹیکنالوجی کی ترقی ممکن ہوئی۔

لہذا اگر محنت و جدوجہد اور بہترین حکمت عملی کے باوجود بھی شکست ہو جائے تو پھر ناکامی پر افسوس و ندامت نہیں ہونا چاہئے کیونکہ کسی بھی کام کے نتائج کے اظہار کی دو صورتیں ہیں۔ دنیاوی اور اخروی، عارضی اور قطعی، وقتی اور ابدی۔ اس وسیع تر تناظر میں دیکھا جائے تو حقیقت یہی ہے کہ: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ" اللہ سبحانہ و تعالیٰ نیکی کرنے والوں کے اجر ضائع نہیں کرتا (التوبہ: ۱۲۰)۔ اور حدیث مبارکہ: "عجبا لامر المؤمن ان امره كله له خير وليس ذالك لاحد الا للمؤمن۔ ان اصابته سراء شكر فكان خيرا له وان اصابته ضراء صبر فكان خيرا له۔" مومن کا معاملہ حیرت انگیز ہے۔ اس کے ہر معاملے میں

یہاں ذہنوں میں ایک سوال پیدا ہوتا ہے کہ کسی بھی کام کے آغاز کا بہترین وقت کیا ہے؟ تو اس کا جواب یہ ہے کہ موجودہ لمحہ ہی سب سے زیادہ اہم ہے جب ہم کسی بھی طور پر کسی کام کا آغاز کر سکتے ہیں۔ کیونکہ اسی لمحہ ہم میں قوت موجود ہے کچھ کرنے کی اور جب ایک بار کام کے عواقب و نتائج سے بہرہ مند ہو گئے اور جان لیا کہ وہ ناممکن العمل نہیں یعنی آسمان سے تارے توڑنے کے مترادف نہیں اور انسانی بساط میں ممکن ہے پھر خواہ چاند پر جانے ہی کا کام کیوں نہ ہو اور وہ اپنی قوت، طاقت، استطاعت، صلاحیت، قابلیت، لیاقت، دلچسپیوں کو مد نظر رکھتے ہوئے اس کام کا ارادہ کر چکا ہے تو پھر کسی بھی طور پیچھے مڑ کر نہ دیکھے۔ نہ ہی ناکامی کے خوف سے اپنی جدوجہد ترک کرے بلکہ ناکامی کا شائبہ تک دل میں نہ لائے۔ بہترین منصوبہ بندی اور حکمت عملی اختیار کرنے کے بعد دلچسپی، لگن، دلجمعی، یکسوئی اور خلوص کے ساتھ سخت کوشش و محنت کرے اور نتیجہ اللہ رب العزت پر چھوڑ دے۔ اس عمل سے اس کے اعتماد میں اضافہ اور کام میں حسن و نکھار پیدا ہوگا۔ قابل تعریف ہیں وہ افراد جو خواب دیکھنے کے بجائے عملی اقدامات کرتے ہیں۔ خالی بیٹھنے کے بجائے دوسروں کی خاطر کام کرنا پسند کرتے ہیں۔ عیسے شہد کی مکھی جو ہمہ وقت دوسروں کو شہد کی مٹھاس و چاشنی دینے کے لئے مصروف عمل رہتی ہے اور اللہ رب العزت نے اسے یہ اعزاز بخشا کہ قرآن مجید کی ایک سورت اس کے نام سے موسوم کر دی۔

نتائج: انسانی کوشش کے نتائج کی تین صورتیں ہیں۔ مکمل کامیابی، جزوی کامیابی اور ناکامی۔ اگر سوچ مثبت ہو تو تینوں صورتیں ہی سودمند ہیں۔

مکمل کامیابی: کامیابی تو بہر کیف ہے ہی کامیابی کہ انسان نے اپنی

منزل مقصود حاصل کر لی۔

جزوی کامیابی: بعض اوقات انسان کو مکمل کامیابی کے بجائے جزوی کامیابی حاصل ہوتی ہے۔ آدھا گلاس بھرے ہونے کی صورت میں مثبت سوچ رکھنے والا غم کے بجائے خوشی کا اظہار کرے گا۔ جیسا کہ انگریزی محاورہ ہے (Half a loaf is better than none) "بالکل نہ ہونے سے کچھ ہونا بہتر ہے۔"

مکمل ناکامی: بہترین منصوبہ بندی اور کوشش کے باوجود بھی اگر ناکامی ہوئی تو اس کا افسوس نہیں کرنا چاہئے اور انسان کو اپنی سوچ مثبت رکھنی چاہئے۔ کیونکہ مقابلہ کرنے والا ہی کامیاب اور ناکام ہوتا ہے۔ شہسواری کرنے والا ہی گھوڑے سے گرتا ہے ورنہ گھٹنوں کے بل چلنے والا شیر خوار طفل کہاں گرے گا۔

گرتے ہیں شہسواری میدان جنگ میں
وہ طفل کیا گرے گا جو گھٹنوں کے بل چلے گا

فلسفہ ناکامی:

خواہ معاملات انفرادی ہوں یا اجتماعی ناکامی اسباب اور وسائل کی کمی سے نہیں بلکہ ذہنی اضمحلال، قوت فیصلہ کے فقدان اور جذبات کی کمی سے واقع ہوتی ہے اور ہاتھ پر ہاتھ رکھ کر بیٹھے رہنے کا صرف اور صرف ایک ہی نتیجہ ہے ناکامی، ذلت و رسوائی۔ تاریخ میں کامیاب اور ناکام دونوں کرداروں کی بے شمار مثالیں ہیں جب کوئی قوم لڑائی اور نقصان کے خوف سے بغیر لڑے جنگ ہار گئی اور عبرتناک انجام سے دوچار ہوئی یا قلیل فوج نے ساز و سامان کی پرواہ کئے بغیر بڑی فوج کو ہزیمت اور شکست سے دوچار کیا۔

طارق بن زیاد نے کشتیاں جلانے، فرار کے راستے مسدود کرنے اور ناکامی کا خوف اپنی فوج کے دل سے نکالنے کے بعد جب اندلس

تندی باد مخالف سے نہ گھبرا اے عقاب

ابو عبد القدوس محمد یحییٰ

وہی کچھ حاصل ہوتا ہے جس کی وہ کوشش کرے (النجم: ۳۹)۔
دارالعمل میں کامیابی رنگین خیالات، تخیل، سہانے خواب دیکھنے
سے نہیں بلکہ عمل، جدوجہد اور کوشش سے ملتی ہے۔ بقول شاعر
ہے عمل لازم تکمیل تمنا کے لئے
ورنہ رنگین خیالات سے کیا ہوتا ہے

اسی خیال کو انگریزی میں شاعران الفاظ میں بیان کرتا ہے:

Action is man's mirror, words don't ever count;
In his work appears the extent of his mind;

لہذا ضرورت اس امر کی ہے کہ خواہشات کے اس سیلاب کو عملی
دھارے کا رخ دیا جائے۔ جب کسی کام کی ابتداء مقصود ہو تو پہلے
اچھی طرح اس کے عملی خاکہ، عواقب و نتائج پر غور و فکر کر لیا جائے
اور بہتر ہے کہ استخارہ بھی کر لے۔ استخارہ کے معنی ہی بھلائی طلب
کرنا ہے۔ لہذا اگر کوئی اہم کام شروع کرنے سے پہلے استخارہ کرتا
ہے تو اگر اس کام میں انسان کے لئے بھلائی ہے تو اللہ رب العزت
اس کام کو آسان بنا دیتا ہے اور ایسے اسباب مہیا ہو جاتے ہیں جن کی
مدد سے وہ کام پایہ تکمیل پہنچ جائے۔ جیسا کہ قرآن مجید میں ہے:
فسنيسره لليسرى: (اللیل: ۷) اس کو ہم آسان راستے کے
لئے سہولت دیں گے۔ یعنی بھلائی اور اچھائی کے راستے پر چلنا اس
کے لئے آسان بنا دیں گے اور اس کے لئے اچھے کام ہی آسان
بنا دیئے جائیں گے۔ اگر وہ کام دنیا و آخرت کے خسارہ کا باعث ہے تو
اس کام میں مشکلات پیدا ہو جائیں گی۔ اس طرح اس کام کو نہ کرنے
کا خیال اس کے دل میں جاگزیں ہو جاتا ہے۔

ابتدائے آفرینش سے انسان خواہشات، تمناؤں، آرزوؤں کا مجسمہ
ہے۔ وہ سارے جہاں کو اپنے تصرف میں لینا چاہتا ہے، ہر
خوبصورت چیز کو اپنا بنانا اور ہر قیمتی چیز کا مالک بننا چاہتا ہے بلکہ مثل
پارس چاہتا ہے کہ جس چیز کو بھی ہاتھ لگائے وہ سونا بن جائے۔
الغرض خواہشات کا ایک نہ رکنے والا سیلاب ہے اور حدیث کی رو
سے، لمن يملأ فاه الا التراب۔ "انسان کے منہ کو صرف قبر
کی مٹی ہی بھر سکتی ہے" (متفق علیہ)۔ یعنی اس کی خواہشات کو
صرف موت ہی لگام دے سکتی ہے۔

اس حدیث میں خواہشات کی مکمل نفی نہیں کی گئی بلکہ یہاں نفس
کے سرکش گھوڑے کو لگام دینا مقصود ہے۔ خواہشات کا ابھرناتو
فطری امر ہے اور خوب سے خوب تر کی جستجو و آرزو ہی ترقی
و کامیابی کے لئے مہیز و محرک ہیں۔ جائز خواہشات کی تکمیل اور
کامیابی کی تمنا کرنے میں کوئی عیب نہیں۔ ہر شخص فطری طور پر
کامیابی کا متمنی ہے۔ ناکامی تو ناکامی، شکست خوردہ انسان کو بھی کوئی
گلے لگانے کے لئے تیار نہیں ہوتا لیکن جب جدوجہد اور عملی
کوشش کی بات کی جائے تو کامیابی کے عملی اقدامات بہت کم افراد
کرتے ہیں۔ اکثر بلا سعی و عمل ہی کامیابی کے آرزو مند ہوتے
ہیں۔ اور اپنے قدم تو درکنار اپنی پلکوں تک کو جنبش دیئے بغیر عنقاء
پرندے ہمارے منتظر رہتے ہیں اور کامیابی کے خواہاں ہوتے ہیں۔
وہ قرآن مجید میں بیان کردہ اس حقیقت کو فراموش کر دیتے ہیں:
وان ليس للانسان الا ما سعى۔ اور بے شک انسان کو