

THE QURAN EXTOLS INTELLECT

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THE FOURTH and last question in connection with our critical analysis of mysticism was: Is mysticism so simple and innocent as it appears from its theory or has it been the cause of mischief, corruption and exploitation in the human world under the guise of inner experience?

The theory of mysticism may appear innocent and charming, but in practice mysticism and the parapsychological powers claimed to be associated with it have been, and are, a potential reservoir of mischief in the human world. It is claimed that a mystic feels within himself a luminous fire which gives him powers of perception unknown to others. His range of vision, it is said, is extended beyond the place where he lives; he can foresee future events and can see souls in distant regions and in the land of the dead. Those who claim to have super-natural powers appear in the garb of diviners and sorcerers.

A diviner is said to possess secret knowledge concerning the past or the future derived from the observation of external signs and omens, like the flights of birds or from the spirits of the dead who are believed to give this knowledge to these men when they are in a state of trance. On the other hand, sorcerers are practitioners of magic who seek to utilise the occult power inherent in the unseen order for the benefit of men or for their harm.

Along side the diviners and sorcerers there are priestly people known as 'mashaikh' in our language who seek to win the favour of the divine powers for their fellow men. The office is usually hereditary, but may also arise from the so-called personal experience of possession by super-powers. The institution of 'pir-muridi' in our country is a well-known case in this respect. Where a pir acts in this capacity, he assumes the role of becoming a mouthpiece of unknown powers.

The experience of possession comes in a trance which may be induced by prolonged fasting practised in solitude. It carries with it the powers of healing, of prediction, of insight enabling the 'pir' to offer spiritual guidance to those who seek it. Among the 'faqirs' and 'sadhuis' of this Sub-Continent the greatest significance is attached to the experience of ecstasy and trance as a means of contact with the unseen. The occurrence of a man in trance is commonly held to emanate from the spirits of the dead. He acts as healer, a diviner and exorcist, purifying the house where death has occurred by driving away the ghost. He is not a mere medium, he sees the spirits and enters into communication with them. He is not their passive instrument, he is rather their master; he controls the powers through which he works.

If one goes into the details of 'karamata', miracles and all sorts of supernatural acts attributed to mystics and which run into thousands, one will find how far these acts are away from the Quranic teachings and how far away a cotery of parasites have taken people away from the dynamic way of life brought about by the Quran. Muslims started their national life as a life of constant struggle in the following of the last Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). The introduction of forged 'ahadith' and the mystic concepts into Islam turned them into an ease-loving people, everybody trying to achieve maximum with minimum effort. The process of achieving magic results by the utterances of Quranic words has become a common practice and it has come to be known as 'amal' (action). Ammal (magic actors) are spread all over the Muslim world, especially the Pak-Indian sub-continent. They are running a profitable business, not only amongst the illiterate, but also amongst a good number of so-called literate people, spreading inaction and superstitions all round.

Quran on poetry

POETRY AND MYSTICISM:
Most of the mystical expressions are in the poetic form which enhances imaginative trends. Poetry, like narcotics, suppresses the higher centres of human brain, such as of reason and judgment, which lose their control over the lower centres such as of imagination and speech. That is why the speech of a drunkard becomes fluent and the imagination of poets and mystics becomes unfettered. The holy Quran has placed poets, tunafes and soothsayers in the same category. There is a beautiful parallelism of these three, described in the verses 52: 29-30. The Quran also says "We have not instructed (Muhammad) in poetry (false, futile and imaginary descriptions). (36: 69).

IQBAL AND MYSTICISM:
Surprisingly, certain things have been said about Allama Muhammad Iqbal which, if true,

show how even some renowned Muslim intellectuals of great calibre have been infected by mysticism.

Yousaf Saleem Chishti says he once asked Allama Iqbal how can we prove the existence of God when the arguments based on intellect have failed to do so. The Allama replied that the existence of God can be proved by 'inner experience' and not by reason; the means to do it are based on 'ishq' (love) or what is known as 'wijdan' in the mystic sense and not on 'khlrad' (Intellect). (Rozgar-e-Faqr by Faqr Sayed Wahid-ud-Din, page-177). This very concept is the basis of mysticism. The same has been mentioned by the Allama in his lectures, especially the first and the seventh that 'Idrak-e-Haqiqat' cannot be achieved through knowledge and intellectual pursuits and that the inner experience can be gained only through direct vision, known as 'maarifat'. There is, however, no mention in the holy Quran of such 'inner experience'. Facts related to human life have been pointed out in the Quran which repeatedly lay emphasis on intellect to be the only means to realise them. Allama Iqbal has used the words 'dil', 'ishq' and 'nazar' for inner experience which, according to him are the opposites of knowledge and wisdom. In his poem 'Aql aur 'dil', in 'Bange-Dara', for example, 'dil' (love) addresses 'nql' (wisdom) in the following words:

"The height of knowledge is restlessness. I am the only remedy for this ailment. The knowledge originates from you and inner experience originates from me. You seek God and I show God".

Again it is said in 'Bange-Dara':

"The intellect possesses nothing but information. On the other hand, your remedy lies in 'direct vision' only.

It is said further:

"Inner experience is entirely a manifestation. Perceptual knowledge is entirely a secret affair".

"People consider intellect as the torch of guidance. They are unaware that 'insanity' also possesses sense of perception".

He even said;

"The old conflict has been refreshed in my mind, the love representing Muhammad and the intellect representing Abu Lahab".

Let us see what the holy Quran says:

"Many are (amongst) the people (both) uncivilised and civilised. We have made for hell. They have minds where with they understand not, eyes

where with they see not and ears where with they hear not. They are like cattle, nay more confused, for they are heedless (of warning)". (7:179).

The holy Quran also gives a vivid picture of those who do use their intellect, in the following words:

"In the creation of the heavens and earth and the alternation of day and night, there are indeed signs for men who think over it, men who keep before themselves the divine laws, standing, sitting and lying down on their sides and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (with the thought) over. Lord! Thou hast not created all this without purpose. Praise be to Thee Give us knowledge to discover the laws of nature to save our selves from destruction," (3: 190-191).

God's knowledge

Thus, according to the holy Quran one knows God only through His 'signs' which lie scattered all over the universe. It is only through intellect and wisdom that one can discover these 'signs' and reach the conclusion that there is a Supreme power with constructive designs behind it. Such words are often repeated in the holy Quran as "Why do you not exercise your vision?" or "Why do they not use their intellect."

It is said that Allama Iqbal also believed in 'Wird Wazifa' (magic effect of Quranic verses) as the means of achieving material ends. A story runs as follows: Allama Iqbal recited 'Aya Karima' for the success of his nephew, Sheikh Ijaz Ahmad, when he appeared in his B.A. examination. After doing so, he wrote to Ijaz's father, "Ijaz is now sure to get through."

There is another story about Allama Iqbal which the author of *Rozgar-e-Faqir* learnt from his father. The story, in brief, runs as follows:

Allama Iqbal once said to Faqir Sayed Najmuddin (the father of the author) that he had learnt about the presence of an enlightened Faqir at the tomb of Data Ganj Bakhsh and that both of them should go together to meet him and ask him the question when Allah has promised success and glory to the Muslim world, why Muslims are backward and miserable round. Thus, a time was appointed to go and meet him the next morning. But when Faqir Sayed Najmuddin in the Allama at the appointed time to accompany him to

tomb of Data Ganj Bakhsh, he found him very much upset, as if some tragic event had occurred. Asked about the state of affairs, the Allama said: "Look! what happened here. This morning when I was sitting inside my room, Ali Bakhsh (the Allama's servant) told me that a person who from his appearance looked like a 'darvesh' (mystic) wanted to see me. On my permission, the visitor

came in and I asked him the purpose of his visit. The 'darvesh' said that I (Allama) wanted to ask him a certain question and that he had come here personally to answer it. After this the darvesh read the following verse from 'Masnavi' Maulana Rumi—

"Guf Rumi her binā-kohna ka badan kunand."

"Mei nadani awal aun puned ra wiran kunand" I was absolutely stunned on hearing this and when I raised my head to have a look at him, the old man had already disappeared. I sent Ali Bakht

all round but the darvesh was nowhere to be found." (Rozgar-e-Faqr by Faqr Sayed Waheedud Din page 32).

POETRY AND PROPHETHOOD

Allama Iqbal also said: "The occurrence of poetical ideas is a periodic inspiration and at the end of each bout I got tired, depressed and dismayed."

A patient of epilepsy feels the same at the end of each epileptic fit. The Allama states further that when the well-known German poet Goethe read the German translation of the Quran, he told some of his friends. "When I read this book I feel tremors in my body." The Allama said that, as a matter of fact, a poet gets a sort of 'ilham'. Therefore when he reads a revealed book he finds his soul congruent with its purport and he feels swinging with bliss which is not the lot of other people. (Rozgar-e-Faqr p-40)

At yet another place a verse of Allama Iqbal is quoted as follows:

"Poetry is a part of prophethood." (Rozgar-e-Faqr, page

158).

I wonder if the above-said stories about Allama Iqbal are true. If they are, then the only thing one can say is that such flights of imagination are possible under poetical narcosis. The Allama was indeed a most distinguished personality on account of his outstanding contribution to the exposition of the Quranic teachings and his constant endeavour to rouse the Muslims of his age from slumber. He fought valiantly against the concepts that are averse to Islam, such as secularism, materialism, capitalism and its progeny communism, and also against Western democracy which is a negation of Allah's sovereignty in human affairs. He also described the Quranic truth when he said: "A life of heaven or of hell is the outcome of one's own actions." But if even then he had mystical tendencies, then these bring him down to a level far below the one achieved by him as being an exponent of Quranic teachings.

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