

## Conclusion

It is hazardous to foretell the future of peoples, nations, and cultures. This is particularly true in a world torn asunder by ideological conflicts and constantly under the shadow of a total war. As it is, the fate of the whole human race is hanging in the balance and one spark of folly may set the whole world ablaze, thus falsifying all normal conjectures.

However, unless such an all-pervading calamity befalls mankind, one could make a guess about the future of Muslim culture and philosophical thought.

The trends we have traced in the life of different Muslim countries in Book Six should give us a fair idea as to what the future may have in store for Muslim thought and culture.

During the period of decadence the Muslims had lost their great tradition of original thinking on the one hand and moral stability and rectitude on the other. Renaissance in various Islamic countries throws into bold relief the need for educational and intellectual progress and the compelling necessity for moral reform on which depends not only the rise but also the very existence of a people's culture.

Luckily, the political and social upheaval in Muslim countries has often been accompanied by a zeal for religious, moral, and educational reform. The role of the various political and social reformers in different Islamic countries provides an ample proof of this healthy attitude.

As the reader of this work must have noticed, after the fall of Baghdad, Muslim thought took a new turn in philosophy and scientific inquiry. Philosophy took either the garb of poetry as in Rumi and Jami or that of theosophy as in the School of Ispahan, Mulla Sadra, and Mulla Hadi Sabziwari, but the scientific study of nature gradually ceased and its place was taken by the study of spiritual experience.

While Leonardo da Vinci, Copernicus, Brahe, Bruno, Galileo, Francis Bacon, Kepler, and Newton were engaged in unravelling the mysteries of nature, the thinkers of Islam were busy fathoming the depths of the spirit. In the empirical knowledge of the external world, the Muslims were left far behind the West.

Since the beginning of the fourteenth/twentieth century, however, they have directed their attention to it, but they have discovered that they cannot make any headway without becoming the veritable disciples

of the West. The West on its part has been paying the debt it owes to the Muslim East with compound interest.

There is hardly a Muslim thinker in this century who has not owed a deep debt of gratitude to Western thinkers. In fact, Muslim scholars have drunk so deep at the fountainhead of Western learning that many of them have lost the taste for appreciating the learning of their own ancestors. Thus, Muslim scholarship has been inspired by the urge to acquire new knowledge advanced by the West.

With the desire to receive higher education and have research degrees in the fields of arts, sciences, and humanities, thousands of Muslim students go to the universities of Europe, America, and the Soviet Union. On their return, most of them engage themselves in communicating their knowledge to their pupils in the universities of their respective countries.

There is a group of Muslim scholars who are trying to recapture their past heritage. This is being done by the collection, preservation, and publication of the classics of their ancestors. Cairo is the centre of this activity. Dairat al-Maarif of Hyderabad Deccan also did excellent work in this field up to the partition of the sub-continent of India in 1366/1947 when the organization ceased to exist.

Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey are also publishing translations of Arabic classics in their respective languages. In this connection the services of Munshi Newal Kishore, a Hindu by profession and a Muslim in spirit, cannot be ignored. He published Urdu versions of hundreds of Muslim classics and, thus, rendered invaluable service to the Urdu language.

The same desire to recapture the past has found expression in the celebration of Firdausi's and Ibn Sina's millenaries and Nasir al-Din Tusi's seventh centenary at Teheran in 1934, 1954, and 1955, respectively; the International Islamic Colloquium towards the end of 1957 at the University of the Panjab, Lahore, Pakistan; Masudi's millenary in 1958 in the Aligarh Muslim University, India; al-Ghazali's ninth centenary in March 1961 at Damascus.

There are ambitious programmes of development and reconstruction in countries like Pakistan, the United Arab Republic, Turkey, Iraq, and others. In the implementation of their programmes these countries are getting economic and technical aid from foreign powers and international agencies. Education is receiving special attention. New universities are being built in different Muslim lands. Academies, associations, and research institutes are working in the field of science, history, philosophy, fine arts, and literature in general.

There is no dearth of talent. In fact, the progress that Pakistan, Turkey, the United Arab Republic, and some other countries have made in the field of thought and education during the last one decade is remarkable.

In Pakistan, for instance, there were only two well-established universities at the time of the partition of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent in 1947. Now there are seven including one agricultural university and

the number is rapidly going up. There are plans to establish an engineering university in the near future. Some of the scholars have held professorships in universities considered to be amongst the best in Europe and America.

To quote a few instances, Dr. Ishtiyaq Husain Quraishi was for some time a Professor at Columbia University, and after finishing a brilliant ambassadorial career, Mr. Burke worked as Professor and Consultant in South Asian Studies at the University of Minnesota at Minneapolis in the United States of America. Dr. Abdus Salam, Professor of Mathematics at the Imperial College of Science, London, at a comparatively young age, has brought fame to his country.

Another young scholar Dr. Fazlur Rahman lectured for several years in Durham University, and has recently joined the Institute of Islamic Studies in McGill University, Canada, as an Associate Professor. Many scholars from other Muslim countries are also engaged in teaching in Western universities under exchange programmes.

Given zest for knowledge and peace for a couple of decades, the Muslims should be able to catch up with the advanced nations of the West. If the entire material resources of each Muslim country are pooled together, substantial progress can be made within a short period.

If one thousand promising scholars are sent abroad by a Muslim country for higher studies to the world's best universities and, what is no less important, are given on their return the facilities needed for carrying out research undisturbed, they should be able to raise to a very considerable extent the intellectual level of their fellow countrymen. The intellectual renaissance of Japan affords a remarkable example of such a phenomenal advance.

Muslims all over the world are now realizing the dire need for scientific studies, which were completely ignored for several centuries and the neglect of which was one of the main causes of their political downfall. Technological advance, no less than theoretical science, is invaluable for acquiring power over nature and, therefore, the present emphasis on it in every Muslim State is most welcome.

Conscious of the wide gap left between the highly advanced technological civilization of the West and their own countries, the Muslims now seem resolved to catch up with the West in the shortest possible time. The tempo of life has, therefore, considerably increased since the middle of this century.

But for the revival of a culture this is not enough. What is needed most is a sound ideology and the moulding of life in accordance with that ideology. About the soundness of Islamic ideology no Muslim has any doubt. All that is needed is to bring its moral values home to every mind through universal education.

Yet Islamic ideology is different from Islamic practice. One is an affair of the intellect, the other that of the will. An enlightened intellect is not necessarily a dedicated will. Today we see a yawning gulf between belief and practice throughout the Muslim world.

As the President of Pakistan has said in one of his speeches, “unless ways and means for the practical application of the Quranic injunctions were found out, the gulf between theoretical faith and its practical application in life would never be bridged.” Complete revival of Islamic culture depends mainly upon the bridging over of this gulf. Therefore it should have the very first priority in the reconstruction programme of every Muslim State.

It is comparatively easy to develop intellectually. What is really difficult to attain and lies at the root of real progress is the moral stamina of a people. It is not the intellect but a dedicated will that puts energy into life and leads people and nations to the heights of glory. It is qualities like faith, unity, discipline, justice, courage, industry, and cooperation that act as spurs in the race of life.

During the period of their downfall the Muslims lost these qualities. There is an ever-increasing desire in the Muslim world today to root out social and moral evils and build a new society on sound moral foundations, a new edifice that should withstand the shocks of time. But the desire is yet far from realization and the process of moral regeneration is much slower than that of an intellectual revival. It is much more difficult to mould the will of a nation than to mould its thought.

The character of the masses can be built better by example than by precept. This is truer of the Muslim masses that are at present mainly illiterate. Literacy campaigns undertaken by many Muslim States, if pursued sufficiently vigorously, can remedy illiteracy, but that alone will not improve character. If the leaders in different countries set a good example to others and create in them a sense of true worthiness, they can do well in moulding their characters and inspiring them to enrich personal and communal life. It is by imbibing basic human values that cultures arise and flourish, and it is without them that they fall and wither.

In the process of revival, however, one cannot lose sight of certain extremist tendencies that may adversely affect the solid progress, which is being aimed at in the Muslim world. In some Muslim countries there is a pronounced tendency to follow the Western pattern of life indiscriminately.

In others which are free from blind imitation there is a group of people who call themselves progressive but whose conception of westernization is again clouded by a restricted vision and who in their zeal for advancement can only imitate the superficial ways of Western life. This tendency is taken as a challenge by the conservative section of the people. Hence a rift between the two groups.

One group looks upon superficial imitation as a potent threat to their own cultural heritage and spiritual values. The other dubs this second group as reactionary and backward. Each of these groups assumes the role of reformers but while each stands for some ideals, each also unconsciously stands for some evils: the first for superficial mimicry, even irreligion and skepticism, the second for clinging to the stone-wall of conformism.

But if they want to advance the cause of Islam in any walk of life, both will have to modify their stands. The Quran describes the Muslims as people of the middle path (*ummat al-wusta*). Extremist tendencies

must be shed off to restore Islamic values to their original purity and pristine glory.

Islam has given to its followers the right of personal inquiry (*ijtihad*) and the right to reinterpret the problems of life and religion in the light of changed circumstances and environments. Religious and social reformers in recent times have rightly emphasized the doctrines of free-will and personal inquiry, i.e., the rational nature of Islam, and, disgusted with rigid formalism, they have been preoccupied with the problems of reorientating religious and cultural values in accordance with the requirements of the present age. Iqbal's English work, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, is a splendid contribution to this reorientation.

In this scientific age, attention is focused all over the world on science and technology and there is a general tendency to relegate philosophical studies to the background. But as full appreciation of true spiritual values and an overall view of life are as essential for a healthy society as science and technology, conscious effort is being made in certain quarters to counteract this unhealthy tendency.

In Turkey, this effort has been made by the Philosophical Society which was established in 1347/1928, and in Egypt by the Philosophical Society of Egypt of which Mustafa Abd al-Raziq was elected President in 1364/1945. In Iran, the followers of Mulla Sadra and Mulla Hadi Sabziwari are very active.

In Pakistan, this work is being done by the Pakistan Philosophical Congress, which is a very active body in the fields of philosophy, psychology, sociology, and education. It holds its sessions annually at different university centres. These sessions are attended by scholars from many countries of the East and the West. The Congress is affiliated to the Federation Internationale des Societes de Philosophie. Its President is a member of the Committee of Directors of that international body; he is also a programme member of the East-West Philosophers' Conference, Hawaii, U.S.A. and a foundation member of the International Academy of Philosophy, Ahmedabad, India.

The Congress publishes a quarterly journal and at least two philosophical works every year in the English language. Its most important publication has been the English translation of al-Ghazali's *Tahafut al-Falasifah*. In a recent work, *Philosophical Activity in Pakistan*, a Belgian scholar writes: "By its annual sessions, its publications, its suggestions to the Government and Universities, and its delegations to Conferences held in foreign countries, this organisation has contributed to no small extent towards enlivening philosophical activity and re-establishing the importance accorded to Philosophy in the country's Universities."

The common leader of thought in the Muslim world today is Iqbal, the poet-philosopher of Pakistan. His poetical works composed in Urdu and Persian are being translated into the languages of Muslim countries, like Arabic and Turkish, and are inspiring Muslim readers with a sense of dignity, self confidence, and creative activity. This reception of Iqbal's works shows a reawakening of interest in Islamic thought and a reorientation of our spiritual and religious values.

Some of Iqbal's works have also been translated into a number of European languages. The works of

the late Professor Nicholson and his successor Professor Arberry in England, Professor Baussani in Italy, and Dr. Schimmel in Germany are notable in this connection.

Owing to the developed means of communication, ideas travel easily nowadays from one place to another, but they always require time to take root in a new soil. The two recent Western philosophies, Existentialism and Logical Positivism, have come to the East, but it will be some time before they penetrate deeply into the Muslim mind. But when they do penetrate the Muslim mind they are likely to take, to a certain extent, a different shade.

“Nothingness” may be taken to be a category of thought or imagination but not of reality, and “dread” may lose the significance that Existentialism has assigned to it. The range of experience might be so broadened as to include extra-sensory perception and, consequently, “it is the case that” might be differently interpreted.

Some importance may be given to the entity, the individual self, that deduces tautologies from tautologies and apprehends and empirically verifies facts. The freedom of man may be interpreted differently from the freedom assigned to the free wheel of a bicycle or any other machine.

It is very doubtful whether the ideas of social history prevailing in the West will ever be accepted in the East, especially in the Muslim East. In the concluding remarks of part “E” of the Introduction we delineated the philosophy of history to which our study lends support. There we said that it has a negative as well as a positive aspect. Negatively, it is non-organismic, non-cyclic, and non-linear; and, positively, it involves belief in social dynamics, in progress in human society through the ages by rises and falls, in the importance of the role of ethical values in social advance, in the possibility of cultural regeneration, in the environmental obstacles as stimuli to human action, in freedom and purpose as the ultimate sources of change, and in mechanical determinism as an instrument in divine and human hands.

This philosophy is as distinct from the philosophy of history advanced in Europe and the United States as from that which is accepted in the Soviet Union. We consider this philosophy in consonance with the teachings of Islam. We believe, it is this ideology in which lies the salvation of the world and not in the ideologies hotly defended and followed in the Western world.

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