

# Our intellectual dilemma

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Our intellectual dilemma is steeped in our major cultural traditions, which forbids freethinking and independent inquiry of truth. The intellectual tradition emanating from Islamic civilization and theology was quintessentially set to produce mere scholastic thinkers, commentators and teachers instead of genuine philosophers in the technical sense of the term. The initial traces of any intellectual movement in Islam are found in the two famous schools of thoughts, which are intrinsically fall in the domain of pure theology and in true sense do not qualify to become pure philosophical traditions; I am referring to Ash'arism and Mu'tazalism. In the later period, starting from 19<sup>th</sup> century, Al-Kindi (803-873 AD) and almost culminating in Ibn-e-Rushd (1126-1196 AD), roughly spanning over six centuries. Among these, only the names of Al-Ghazali and Abu Bakr Al-Razi stand out to claim for novelty and originality, the rest are either commentator or appear under the overwhelming influence of Greek philosophy or more precisely the neo-platonic philosophic tradition in one way or the other. Therefore, it can be safely pronounced that Islamic intellectual tradition is bereft of a genuine philosopher in technical sense of the term.

In Islamic tradition, a thinker is allowed to interpret the contemporary intellectual development of his time within already circumvented parameters of truth and absolute reality revealed in Holy Scripture. The fact that religion and philosophy make two very distinct realms with nearly an unbridgeable chasm between them, albeit, it is fanciful to harmonize or reconcile them and this penchant to ceremonies their mismatch marriage has been prevailed in the whole generations of Muslim scholars in entire history of Islam and Iqbal is no exception to that. In the preface of "Reconstruction", Allama Iqbal pronounces, "I have, tried to meet, even though partially, this urgent demand by attempting to reconstruct Muslim religious philosophy with due regard to the philosophical traditions of Islam and the more recent de-

try to find out whether the basic ingredients or premises of theory make a valid argument or not. We take our first premise, "The Indian Subcontinent was inhabited by two widely distinct nations i.e., Muslims and Hindu who were dissimilar with each other in every facet of life with no common grounds whatsoever". Suppose this is proposition P. Now we move to the next premise, "It is, therefore, perfectly natural that the Muslims of India get entitled to a separate state as their homeland". This is our proposition Q. Can any one logically prove that proposition Q validly flows from proposition P invoking any causal connection. By simply putting, "does P implies Q", is intrinsically an invalid conclusion from the standpoint of logic.

The universally popular and common slogans reflect upon the collective thinking of a people. The most popular slogan during the struggle of independence used to be "Pakistan ka Matlab Kia; La Ilaha Illallah". Again we reduce the contents into propositions and see whether any logical nexus emerges out of them. Our first proposition P reads, "What is the meaning of Pakistan or more precisely what is the *raison d'être* of Pakistan". And the second proposition Q reads, "There is no God but Allah". Does P necessarily flow into Q. It is simply baffling for common sense even. Then a question arises as a natural corollary that how could the struggle for an independent state and emergence of Pakistan be explained and the perennial question of the rationality of the creation of country be justified.

In my humble view, it was quintessentially the struggle for the achievement of a tract of land on modern nation-state theoretical concepts. Please recall the words of Allama Iqbal who is considered the dreamer of Pakistan. In his famous Allahabad Address delivered in 1930, he extensively dealt with the constitutional question of India and summed up his analysis in the end and quoted in verbatim.

"I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Balochistan amalgamated into a single state, self-government within the British Empire or with-



the more recent developments in the various domains of human knowledge". This tendency has been the most inhibitive factor, which has contributed the most in crippling the genuine and original development of intellect in Muslim Societies and culture.

Dr Pervez Hoodboy, in his book, "Muslims and Science", has made an in depth study of the past and present state of Science in Islamic civilization dilating on the subject in a very realistic, scholarly, and vivacious manner. He also tried to grapple with this difficult question why scientific revolution occurred only in western civilization and not in Islamic, Chinese etc who were also ripe at that period of history for similar transformations. He attributed the reason to the peculiar ingredients of Muslim civilisation enmeshed in religion, which prevented this to happen. He argues that in the whole history of Muslim education, it was taught to the students that Allah has revealed every thing in his Book.

All knowledge of this worldly life and the life hereafter is contained in Quran. Then the only task is left for a researcher to discover that 'concealed' or 'hidden' truth' and not to invent new thing or idea. The emphasis is remained on rote and cramming, though it was imperative in the sphere of religious education for obvious reasons, but because of the non-separation of religious education from the so called worldly education, this approach had gradually congealed into the basic trait in education philosophy of Islam which caused it a colossal damage for centuries. This phenomenon had infected nearly all Muslim countries now existing on the globe.

Apart from all these blemishes, however, the serious one is the lack of human resource development - a vital factor to make politico-economic headway in the comity of nations. Absence of trained and skilled labor force which serves as sinews in the body economic of a country. Non-availability of genuine researchers, scientists and thinkers which lead the nation from the front on spheres of intellect and knowledge. Absence of budding, nurturing and sustaining of any tradition of mature political, religious or literary dialogue within the social fabric of the society through enlightenment and strengthening of social society.

We are told that on 14 August 1947, a country named Pakistan took birth very similar to that of a child but nations do not come into being in this way. Therefore, a serious dilemma confronted our so-called intelligentsia pertaining to the historical roots and genesis of the country. Consequently they were compelled to invent a logically flawed, politically controversial and philosophically weak theory known as 'Two-Nation' theory, the debate on which has been a recurring and undying feature in this country.

Instead of unraveling the cascade of political events, forces and personalities that were intertwined and at work during the long phase of the history of struggle for independence because a heap of material is already existing on that. On the other hand, we make an attempt to analyze this theory in a pure logical method, and

ment within the British Empire or without the British Empire" ... "The formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim state appears to me to be the last final destiny of the Muslims, at least of North-West of India"

Suggesting that the whole focus of our struggle of independence remained on getting a geographically, I repeat geographically contiguous tract of land because within its proposed territorial boundaries, a single community was inhabiting with numerical majority. For that reason, at best, it could be termed as movement for right of self determination waged only for northern part of British India. Prima facie, it was the communal solution to the constitutional problem of India, but essentially it ended up in a matter of territorial readjustments. It would be more relevant, correct and clear interpretation of this phenomenon for the students of modern politics, if we want to explain the ideology of Pakistan on modern political notions of nation-state rather than on the ambiguous props of Two Nation theory. It is then perfectly justified that there is a dire need to re-write our history with a view to eliminating its truncated and mutilated parts entrenched in our textbooks.

We have to turn to people like Dr Mubarak Ali an indefatigable warrior in his war to challenge the vested interests wantonly propagating false notions and ideology particularly in the field of writing history. He has created ripples in the otherwise stagnant waters of sluggish set of beliefs of our so called historians and pedagogues. In one of his many books, "Tareekh Aur Nisabi Kutb", he has also made critical analysis of the distorted textbooks of history taught in India and Pakistan. Although, many of his ideas may be debated upon, not agreed to, yet his poignant narrations of some aspects of our taken-for-granted beliefs about history are real eye-opener.

The book in hand has it that an impression was imbedded in young generations of Pakistan that it was created for Islam. By taking advantage of this, many a time different elements raised demands to implement Shariat or Nizam-e-Mustafa, due to which political consciousness of the society was put on the backburner caving into religious intolerance and extremism". Therefore we were bequeathed with a regimented society bereft of any spirit of free and liberal thinking.

Finally I would suggest that in a bid to break the intellectual stagnancy of our society, we have to rewrite our entire syllabi in the first place equipping with an iconoclastic zeal and anti-dogmatic approach. Secondly we have to establish model universities in line with Ali Garh, Al-Azhar, Oxford, Harvard, Cambridge. Lastly in order to bring about a genuine revolution in the intellectual domain, the separation of state from the religion is a necessary imperative. It became possible for West only after the Reformation and Protestant movements beside rise of science and industrial revolution to produce genuine philosophical tradition otherwise, they too would have been groping in the dark.

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