BOOK REVIEW


Syed Shabbir Hussain, a reputed journalist and scholar, has ably edited the writings of Allama Inayat Ullah Khan Al-Mashriqi, the founder of *Khaksar* movement, which was based on his own political and intellectual thought. The *Khaksar* movement played a significant role in the politics of Muslim India during the fourth decade of the twentieth century.

By presenting Allama Mashriqi’s revolutionary ideas the editor strives to extricate the rhetoric-stricken Muslim from the morass of intellectual torpor and indolence. He wants to acquaint them with the stirring message of the Holy Qur’ān in order to create among them a new faith in the abiding relationship between human intellect and religious values. By doing this, he wants to remove all notional anamolies that characterise various strands of Muslim thought today.

The author remarks with regret that intellectual backwardness of Muslims is the biggest handicap in their progress. As a result, people all over the Muslim world are deprived of the beauty and grandeur of human life. The Muslims were the pioneers in laying the foundation of empirical knowledge and science but now they are intellectually impoverished. Today, their mainstay is slogan-mongering and they mistake empty “ritualism” for “resurgence of Islam”. The Muslim rulers are squandering their huge wealth on the construction of palatial buildings, acquisition of luxury cars and pursuit of sensuous pleasures. These are all signs of decay and degeneration.

Allama Mashriqi maintains that the conflict between various religions is the outcome of sheer ignorance, petty-mindedness and narrow outlook. The followers of different faiths lose sight of the pristine teachings and thus go astray. They lose sense of balance and propriety. In reality, there is no
conflict between Knowledge and Revelation. Knowledge has many virtues and it leads man to unity and consensus, security and peace, struggle and action. When knowledge in the real sense is obtained, conflict is removed from the society and a sense of harmony prevails all around. It is Mashriqi’s firm belief that if all faiths are examined on the touchstone of true knowledge and if their messages, too, are properly explained mankind can become fully integrated and unified.

Mashriqi is convinced that man is perpetually subjected to the eternal process of evolution. The man of today, having evolved out of his primitive ancestor, decidedly represents an improved version. The ultimate stage of this improvement is to create the conditions that would preclude evil, suffering, pain, selfishness and cruelty.

It is a universally acknowledged fact that man is endowed with the qualities of inquisitiveness, reflection, reasoning, common sense, discernment of good and evil, and freedom of choice. In order to integrate humanity at large, we must devise a unifying programme which is simple but has a universal appeal. Again, in order to promote amity and friendship between various communities, we must avoid touching issues which hurt the susceptibilities of various faiths. Our aim should be to prepare people to fight evil with full determination. We refuse to believe that things cannot improve. We must create a new vision, a new outlook a new version of things around us. Our basic emphasis should be on exploring the mysteries of Nature and we should not depend on conventions or blind traditions. We must extricate ourselves from narrow grooves of mundane considerations and build a happier world.

Allama Mashriqi holds that a scientist, if he really wants to serve mankind, must level up all barriers of race, religion, caste and colour. He must strive for bringing about a social order that is based on justice and fairplay and is free from all forms of exploitation. He must strive to mould the human mind to harmonise it with the concept of the ununiversal fraternity of man. Exploitation of man by man should disappear and human politics should be viewed from the perspective of the stern dispensation of Nature. All scientists, being custodians of One Truth the world over, must necessarily hold out the One Truth of justice and fairplay, based on the dire exigencies of Nature alone.

Mashriqi convincingly brings out that the aim of the ultimate union of the supreme intelligence with man is the only scientific and true purpose which is writ large on the face of Nature itself and which must give endless energy to Man in his future endeavour. The aim itself is bound to evolve into reality by its mere dynamism. It is bound to be backed up by Nature
once it is put into action. It is the essence of all human progress, the climax of all human emotions, the verdict of the greatest seers, and the final watchword of the purposeful universe.

The author sums up with remarks that nothing should deter the scientist from upholding the Truth. All falsehood must disappear before the torch of light. It is the courage of his convictions, his unassailable character and his capacity to efface falsehood that will bring man successfully to the Ultimate Destiny. Once the determination of the scientist to rule the world is unanimously announced, the world will enthusiastically support him.

Syed Shabbir Hussain has quite convincingly conveyed Allama Mashriqi’s revolutionary message to humanity in general and Muslims in particular. His main advice to the Muslim youth is to acquire the knowledge of science and thereby gain a respectable place in the comity of nations.

Ghulam Sarwar