



MAKE BLASPHEMY LAWS HUMANE

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In his presidential address to the nation on 11th August 1947, Quaid-e-Azam, the founder of Pakistan, remarked:

“You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the State.”

What should have been the constitutional pattern of Pakistan is clearly set by Jinnah in this speech. Later on the complex constitutional glitches like, Hadood Ordinance, Honour Killings Laws, and Blasphemy Laws paved the way for violation of human rights under the cover of these laws and the minority groups remained most affected one. The current waves of worst

inhumane suicidal and terrorist attacks in Pakistan can be traced to ignoring this basic constitutional lesson of Quaid-e-Azam.

Blasphemy laws are construction of military mind of dictator Zia-ul-Haq which he introduced to lengthen his regime in the name of Islam as he found it the easiest way to play with the people's emotions. These laws are in fact sections 295-B and 295-C dealing with sentence regarding desecration of Quran and anyone defaming the name of prophet Muhammad (PBHU). The proposed sentence comprised of life imprisonment or death, but unfortunately, these laws have become source of violence and discrimination. Blasphemy laws have been used not only for political motives but also for quenching the thrust of personal vindictive feelings. Several peoples have been killed and houses set on fire under the protective cover of blasphemy laws. In those areas marked with majority of minority forced conversions is done under the protecting cover of blasphemy laws. Hindus and Christian girls are either killed or entrapped in false charges and cases on so-called contempt of religious principles of Islam under this law.

Misconstruction of religious principles by those with vested interests is the easiest task in a society stricken with demon of illiteracy and underdevelopment. Under such situation, some religious gimmicks prove successful to seek political benefits. Have we not seen the incidents of religious bigotries in Indian Gujarat and Ahmed Abad committed solely for political gains? When

analysed deeply, the system of Islamic punishment is misconstrued and in most Islamic countries, it is carried on without taking into account the ground realities. On 20th November 2009 in Somalia, a twenty years girl was stoned to death at the hands of Somalia extremists as she was found guilty of having sexual relations. Somalia is undergoing civil war, worst poverty and underdevelopment where ones may have recourse to theft, robbery and other criminal activities to have their basic needs of life fulfilled. Why here we forget that application of Islamic punishments becomes null and void under such circumstances. The point for reference here is the partial suspension of some of the parts of Islamic punishment for theft by great Pious Caliph Hazrat Umar during the period when famine broke out in Mecca.

The distressing side of the issue is the unwillingness of the large number of people to bring about any change in these laws because most the people are unaware of the true spirit of Quran and Hadiths (Sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBHH)). The religious parties particularly Jammah-e-Islami vociferously resist any move directed towards repealing these laws. We try to forget the very common and sensible phenomenon that both political and religious parties in Pakistan implicitly flouting Islamic Laws whether relating to Quran directly or to some other source. Is it not against the teaching of Prophet Muhammad (PBHU) to deprive the common peoples of basic necessities of life like sugar and flour? In a wake of current suicidal attacks and bomb clashes, the educational institutions remains closed and it is tantamount to

snatching the right to seeking knowledge by each man and woman which is expressly stated by the Holy Prophet. The current poverty and absence of sugar, flour, electricity and gas are the crimes being committed by the government and all goes against Islam and it is the severest insult and desecration of Islamic teachings.

What to call the incident of slaughtering three months baby child in Korangi No.6 at Karachi; reported on 11th January 2010 in daily Urdu paper Jang; the case in which parents slaughtered their baby child on the instructions of local religious preacher (Jahil molvi/ignorant minister of religion). Is it not the contempt and insult of the Quranic teaching? Has the molvi not read the rights of child in Quran and Hadiths; why he asked the parents to slaughter their child? Under which laws the government and the people around will charge the culprits of this heinous crime? To me, it is explicit insult to the teachings of Holy Quran and sayings of the Holy Prophet. This brutal incident portrays the fact that any illiterate person can be made easy tool to gain some specific interests under the guise of religion. The suicidal attacks in the name of Islam are result of misconstrued religious teaching presented before ignorant peoples who don't hesitate to commit any inhumane act on the name of religion. Same is the case with the supporters of blasphemy laws who see their interests shattering in the amendments of these laws.

Islamic history is replete with such examples showing the utter insult of Islam at the hands of infidels but the Holy Prophet

Muhammad (PBUH) displayed tremendous clemency and kindness to such peoples. Was it not the insult of the Prophet of Allah by the old women who used to throw animals entrails upon the Prophet Muhammad (PBHU)? But when she fell ill, the Prophet Muhammad himself visited her house to know about her health and safety. Why we forget the Sulla-e-Huddabiya (Huddabiya Accord 6 Hijrah) between the Muslims and the non-Muslim of Quraish tribe. When Sohail bin Umro, leader of the Quraish objected over the name Rasool-ul-Allah with Muhammad at the end of the agreement, the holy prophet asked Hazrat Ali to stamp out the words Rasool-ul-Allah; but on refusal by Hazrat Ali, the holy prophet himself effaced the words Rasool-ul-Allah leaving the name Muhammad ibne Abdullah only. It's the supreme expression of liberality and tolerance by the Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH). Sectarianism is another phenomenon openly denouncing the principles of the Holy Quran. No one can deny the fact that the followers of one sect hesitate to offer the prayer behind the Imam of the other sects; they even hate going to each other mosques. During the lifetime of Holy Prophet non-Muslims including Christians used to come to the Mosque of Nabvi (Masjedi Nabvi) to seek knowledge and information about Islam, but he never forbade anyone from entering into the mosque.

Today the behaviour and attitude of the Muslims runs counter to the true spirit of Islam and the Holy Quran. This whole mess-up is the result of ignorance of the masses about its actuality and essence of teaching. Ironically the *puritanical ulemas* has closed

the door of Ijtehad (exercise of independent judgement) and their large number is bent upon imposing such version of Islam plagued with conventional, traditional and tribal norms and values. It is time that all religious scholars both modern and traditional sit together and carve out such strategy to counter the negative propaganda against Islam. Its possibility lies only when they succeed in presenting the tolerant and liberal image of Islam before the world.

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