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Transformation of Muslim Civilization from Devoted Believer to Despotic: A Study of Islamic History after Prophet Muhammed's Death

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Abstract- The journey of Muslim civilization started from Arabian Peninsula during the 7th century AD. After a long age of inertia, an impetus o f regeneration thrived by which all kinds of racial and ethnic discrimination eliminated from Arab society. The founder of Islam prophet Muhammed disseminated the gospels of egalitarianism by counter ing century-old evil social order, challenged the dogma of violence, fostered education for women and slaves. Through the victory of Muslims over Mecca in 630 AD, the process of infant Islamic state began its shaping. Immediately, after the death of Muhammed his four legitimate heirs -Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique, Hazrat Uthman Gani, Hazrat Umar Faruq, Hazrat Ali is popularly known as the 'Rushidun Caliphate' by Sunni Islamic theology, continued the administration quietly based on prophetic doctrine. In the course of time, circumstances began to be altered with the hand of Umayyads and Abbasid Caliphate; few noticeable changes occurred, which turned the holy principles once abided by the four great Caliphs and Prophet himself.

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Transformation of Muslim Civilization from Devoted Believer to Despotic: A Study of Islamic History after Prophet Muhammed's Death

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Abstract- The journey of Muslim civilization started from Arabian Peninsula during the 7th century AD. After a long age of inertia, an impetus of regeneration thrived by which all kinds of racial and ethnic discrimination eliminated from Arab society. The founder of Islam prophet Muhammed disseminated the gospels of egalitarianism by countering century-old evil social order, challenged the dogma of violence, fostered education for women and slaves. Through the victory of Muslims over Mecca in 630 AD, the process of infant Islamic state began its shaping. Immediately, after the death of Muhammed his four legitimate heirs -Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique, Hazrat Uthman Gani, Hazrat Umar Faruq, Hazrat Ali is popularly known as the 'Rushidun Caliphate' by Sunni Islamic theology, continued the administration quietly based on prophetic doctrine. In the course of time, circumstances began to be altered with the hand of Umayyads and Abbasid Caliphate; few noticeable changes occurred, which turned the holy principles once abided by the four great Caliphs and Prophet himself. The Gradual expansion of Muslim civilization from one region to other region diverted the ideology of Muslims and on the eve of 10th, and 11th century AD, we have seen the rise of Sultanate, even on the other hand, birth of tribal identity among Muslims largely related to central Asia. Such types of factors dealt with the decay of the republican philosophy of Islam, simultaneously imparted a concept of despotism based on the monarchical approach and power of the sword.

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I. Introduction

The history of Islam witnessed the transformation of ideology among the Muslims towards the end of four 'Rushidun Caliphate'. Prophet Muhammed was the founder of Islam who introduced new principles of humanity based on equality, love, and brotherhood in contrary to existing socio-religious orders. In each of his policy he initiated a prospect of harmony, despite so many dissentions and clashes with the Jews, Christian and other primitive tribal communities those who had been hostile against the gospels, were treated cordially under his authority in Mecca. By implementing a dynamic nexus between religious and political institution, he became an example to the Arabian world. But, in the course of time power of Muslims handed over to Caliphates which remarkably led to considerable changes of prophetic philosophy, mostly taken place under the Umayyads and Abbasids.

Through the advent of the Umayyads it did not only bring a change of dynasty, it also meant the reversal of a principal and offspring of new factors that exercised the most potent influence on the fortunes of the empire and the development of nation[1]. During the age of Pious Caliphate, according to tradition, they were elected by a public vote, and that was fully supported by outside non-Arabian Muslims[2], But from the time of Muawiyah, the reigning ruler began to nominate his heir. Hence, this system hindered at the root of the Republican spirit of Islam. Bayat Al Mala, a provision of Muslim civilization had been considered as public treasury, on which there was no authority of any individuals or particular group, and every man of the commonwealth has similar right to it. Since the days of Caliph Muawiyah, it was transformed into a family property of the Umayyads[3]. Except for Umar bin Abdul Aziz, all other Umayyad Caliphs considered the Bayt al-Mal as their personal property and utilized it by their needs . In the days of the republican Caliphate, each Caliph was assisted by the council of elders, and all valuable matters were discussed publicly; even ordinary peoples had the right to participate in the government. Moreover, open claims and criticism of the authoritarian policy formulated the most remarkable features of this period[4]. But the Umayyads eliminated the council of elders, and free criticism of the government policy was not bearable. As it's a well familiar fact that during the days of Prophet socio-religious discrimination had been sternly prevented, it has been apparent from the Last Sermon:

> "You all descend from Adam, and Adam was created from dirt. The most noblest in the sight of God is the most pious. No Arab is superior to a non-Arab, except by their intimate consciousness of God"[5].

Most regrettably, the Umayyad Khalifah regenerated the tribal jealousies to serve their own purpose by creating conflict among the tribes. As for an instance, the racial antagonism between the Mudarites and the Himyarties weakened the strength of empire which was became a causative factor behind the decay of Umayyad dynasty. Indeed, the government functionaries under the Umayyads had totally ignored

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the true spirit of Islam, unfair and oppressive acts were the order of the days. As instance, Hajjaj Bin Yusuf, as said by historian Masoodi, killed no less than 125000 innocent persons. Yet Abdul Malik bin Marwan who was wise and astute ruler connived at the misdeeds of Hajjaj. He looked upon the oppressive acts of Hajjaj to be useful for the consolidation of his despotic ruler. The philosophy of Islam widely based on simplicity and austerity, the prophet and pious Caliphs set an example of this livelihood. The great Caliph Umar used to wander at night to observe the condition of his subjects without any guard. Many of them had been assassinated, despite they didn't felt the necessity to appoint bodyguards for individual safty[6].On the contrary, the Umayyads lived in pompous palace and castles and drinking, gambling, racing became the formal practice of society.

As like as the Umayyads the advent of Abbasids introduced a remarkable change. The new characteristic of this period were that the caliphate no longer connected with the bound of Islam. The supremacy of the new dynasty was never considered in Spain while in east independent dynasties emerged. The Arab nation following the attitudes of new dynasty lost martial value. It having been commonly stated "to their hardy life and martial fire were mainly due to the first spread of Islam, and material prosperity of the Khalifate. But the race by this time lost much of its early hardihood"[7]. Moreover.. Persian influence for the first-time occurred in Caliphate court by which Arab life has been softened. The pillage of occupied people had gradually weakened their great virtue, and they settled down with well field Harem. Thus, the age of conquest had concluded with the assimilation of rejoicing in material life. The transformation of Capital from Syria to Iraq escheated the sway of Syrian in Abbasid court, who were the intimate supporter of Umayyads. Hence, it created discontent through the regional and ethnic lines. In this period, a noticeable alteration appeared in government post, i.e. 'Wazir', who was the representative of Caliph, and this post did not existed at the time of Umayyds[8]. The Caliphate was left in name; the office of a minister also became a commercial commodity. The High amount of bribery was provided to obtain an office of ministers. The appointment order for a ministerial post were issued from the central secretariat of caliphate for a candidate who offered the maximum amount of gratification. In the 4th century, AH Ibn-e-Maqlah obtained the office of a minister after payment of 500000 Dinars to Raazi Billah, the then Abbasid Caliph. The abominable jobs of a ministers, named Khaqani had been apparent from the writing of a contemporary poet:

> "He is such a minister who is never tired of writing letters of appointment. He appoints a man and, after an hour, terminates his service. Persons who are quick in giving him illegal gratification, they become his close associates. But the persons who try to get jobs by recommendation, they are not allowed to approach him. When persons willing to bribe him to come to his audience, the richest among them is successful in getting an appointment from minister Khaqani"[9].

During the Caliphate of Raazi Billah his rule was confined to Baghdad and its near suburbs. He died in 329 AH. After his death, as many as sixteen Caliphs came upon the throne. But the downfall which had strayed in the fabric of the caliphate went on increasing. In between, if a caliph had personal goodness and virtues, he could not bring about any great improvement in the body politic of the Caliphate, which had become fallen. No caliph of this last dying period had any de-facto authority. At long last, in the year of 654 AH, the so-called Caliphate came to its logical end. The last Caliph, Motasim Billah was mercilessly killed by the Tartars through the conspiracy of his minister, Alqami. Truly, the condition of Abbasid period was neither Islamic nor un-Islamic, as narrated by Maulana Shibli Nomani, a great scholar, and theologian. Therefore, this period had nothing to offer, of which the Muslims could be proud as 'golden age of Islam'[10].

Following the expansionist policy of Umayyads, and Abbasids the territory of the Islamic world exempted from the boundary of Arabs and it reached too far Spain also directed in central Asian region, by which no doubt Significant changes occurred in the nature of Muslim civilization. We have seen the actions of scattered Caliphate in this period immediately after the decay of two great caliph house. It has been apparent during the last days of Banu Umayyads rule in Spain the country was wrapped in complete anarchy. The Arabs, the Barbars and the Mawalis were divided into different sects and these heterogenous elements began to rule over all such parts of the country where they could lay their hands .They, also had the covet to assume the Caliphate titles like "Motazid", "Mamoon"," Mustaeen", "Muqtadir", "Motasim","Motamid", "Motawakkil" and "Motawaqif". A poet of that time annoyed these childish assumption of titles and he alluded

> "My hatred for the land of Andolusia and the reason of my leaving that country for good was that the timely rulers had assumed title of former dignified Caliph like "Muqtadir" and "Motazid". These titles were now misnomers and ill-suited and looked like cat expanding herself to imitate a lion"[11].

The perspective of regional and tribal-ethnographic identity too shaped the ideas of autocracy and anarchy in Muslim world. Several factors and actions we can assess from central Asian continent in Early medieval and medieval period which foments the gradual growth of antagonism among various Muslim

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Ethnicity. The reasons supposed to have discernable on account of the priority over tribal and ethnical character rather than so called accepted "Islamic" dogma.

The Samanid state was a provincially succeeded kingdom of Abbasid caliphate centred on Iraq. As was almost universal in the Islamic world at this time, society was hierarchical, with the caliph-imams being, in theory at least, the delegators of all authority, so that the Samanid amirs were their representative. In practice, the amirs enjoyed virtual independence but were careful to pay lip-service to the caliphate ideal. This ideal was one of a hierarchical, socially static society under a ruler governing with the ultimate authority of God and the divinely ordained shariah and exercising power in the Sunni Islamic tradition[12]. In the ninth and tenth centuries, the Sunni form of orthodox Islam became firmly established in the eastern lands. even though Islam was generally accepted as the state religion and had spread to almost all parts of Central Asia but there continued to exist vestigial communities of Zoroastrians, Manichaeans and Christians. In the first half of the tenth century, the propaganda of Ismailism achieved a foothold in Central Asia. The movement was initially led by the Samanid commander Husayn Ali Marwazi. In an attempt to turn it to his advantage, he quickly provoked an uprising but was defeated and captured[13]. Leadership next passed to the Ismaili fighter Muhammad bin Ahmad Nakhshabi, whose activities were at first highly successful. Many eminent dignitaries converted to Ismailism and the movement gained strength, particularly during the reign of Samanid king Nasr II who said to have accepted its teachings. This incensed the orthodox Sunni Muslim religious classes, who conspired against Nasr II with representatives of the Turkish palace guard. Even though the plot was discovered, Nasr II was obliged to renounce the throne in favour of his son Nuh I (943–54). Nuh organized the extermination of Ismaili supporter and the execution of the leaders of the movement of Muhammad Nakhshabi. The doctrine survived in Transoxiana only as a clandestine tendency, although in Bukhara a secret organization of supporters of the heresy may have been active. One thing should be earmarked here in early Islamic times, there were a number of Iranian peoples in Khurasan and Transoxiana. The Zarafshan valley, the Kashka Darya oasis and Usrushana were occupied by Sogdians. The upper Oxus basin and its tributaries by the Bactrian-Tukharian population, the basin of the lower Oxus by the Khwarazmians, the Ferghana valley by the Iranian Ferghanans,the southwestern oases of Central Asia by the Iranian Khurasanians, and the Pamir mountains and their foothills, and the mountains surrounding the Ferghana valley, by the remnants of Saka and other early Iranian peoples. All these peoples were ethnically related and spoke languages and dialects of the Middle Iranian and New Persian language groups they were the pioneer for the emergence and gradual consolidation of what became an Eastern Persian-Tajik ethnic identity[14].

let us analyse the emergence of Turkish ethnicity as a powerful monarchical group. In accordance with historical chronology, after the murder of Caliph Mutawakkil, the de-facto authority of Khalifat came into the hands of Turkish slaves who gave the throne of Khalifat to an Abbasid of their own choice. But, in course of time Turkish slaves were dissatisfied towards the behaviour of Abbasids and gradually controlled the paramountcy of which made them to act as 'power behind the throne'. Not only that, later they went to extent of killing the caliphs after tormenting them in various ways. Most of the Banu Abbasid Caliphs precisely after Mutawakkil were the victims of the Turkish slaves. Even Mutawakkil was killed by these slaves at the instance of his son Muntasir. Likewise, these Turkish slaves kept the caliph Mustaseen Billah as a captive for some days and then beheaded him in 252 AH[15]. Immediately after the rise of Ghaznavid and Ghorid house in central Asia the dominance of Turkish vehemently augmented. The Centralization of political authority and bureaucratization of the army, for instance, were essential features of the Sultanate polity under the Ghaznavid Sultans. All officers and soldiers were paid in cash, revenue assignment in lieu of the cash salary to army personnel. Mahmud, the most dynamic of all Ghaznavid sultans, also made compromise with the religious leadership over the division of power. The Sultan became the fountainhead of political power and could use his discretionary power in dealing with offenders against him or the state[16]. Such cases were not generally referred to the qazi's court. In the same vein, the Saljuqs left a tradition of their own with regard to the polity and the governing class. Though inspired by the political system of the Ghaznavid, Tughril, the founder of the Saljuq dynasty, had to respect the concept of equality among his tribesmen as they were originally nomads. Therefore, the Saljuq polity was guided by the principle of shared sovereignty and diffusion of authority among the princes and the tribal chiefs was a common feature. After the fall of the Ghaznavid and the Saljuqs emerged the kingdoms of their respective vassals in Ghur and Khwarazm. The models of government left by their overlords served as example for the ruling elites of these dynasties[17]. Since the Ghorid were associated with the Ghaznavid court, they acquired a higher level of urban culture of the Ghaznavid ruling class. Wherever they went, they attempted to produce a replica of the governance model of their former master[18]. When they came to India, they brought with them the Abbasid polity deeply soaked in Persian culture and Ghaznavid polity. Most interestingly, Muslim political thinkers widely contributed to the evolution of a system of despotic governance under the Turkish through their theological explanations. Imam Al-Gazzali, a great scholar of medieval central Asia, he

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thought about the state as a living organism and compared it to the human body. In working out the details of the analogy, he called the Sultan the heart of the system. He has to guide the affairs of mankind and cleanse the world of anarchy. Very great was his responsibility for he will be questioned on the Day of Judgment regarding the condition of the people and about all the acts of justice and injustice committed by him. Great too was the reward of a righteous king for he will find place under the banner of Prophet on the Day of Reckoning. Later writers also insisted that the righteous monarch was the 'vicegerent of God' and 'His shadow on the Earth'[19]. Therefore, by the time Islam reached India the monarchy had assumed a despotic and autocratic character with the Sultan presiding over a grand durbar, well-structured nobility and powerful army.

Rightly pointed out by Prof. K.M. Ashraf "the teaching of Quran appear to have worked more or less satisfactory in the tribal surroundings and the strong democratic traditions of Madina. But as soon as Islam began to expand beyond the limits of a city state, the 'inspired word of God 'failed to be elaborated for the working of a more extensive political structure …."[20]. The fact which I must explain here that through the territorial and political expansion, in course of time, Islam occupied a vast part of whole world, Muslims lost their value of life, it was, therefore essential to them to organize the fragmented nation under a strong ground of ruling government. Intimate support of the Muslim thinker of that time felt a necessary injunction to philosophically ideate the rise of kingship even only to maintain peace and order. They never dared to abstain from strict "Shariate" law which never fostered the concept of "monarchy" based on power mongerness. It has been manifested from their dissemination, to prevent anarchy and inequities in that circumstance the inevitable step was to stand on behalf of kingship, to them an autocratic and unlawful Sultan was more endurable than that of unrightful freedom. Indeed, Muslims in this period became much confused that what to choose Monarchy or anarchy, being prudent with time they probably compelled to opted the first one. Thus, we have seen the growth of regional rites and customs gradually combined with the Muslims which were beyond the favour of Islam and ultimately led to the growth of territorial, ethnical and regional identity. Thus, so called "universal brotherhood" and "republican Islam" eliminated with the offspring of despotism.

II. Conclusion

Historically we have witnessed that geographical, territorial and ethnical identities are much important rather than religious belief. When Islam spreads into different parts of the world Islam became regionalized and formalized with existing customs of special territory. In Persia, racial superiority accomplished much priority to form a strong monarchy, the same characteristic goes towards the nature of Delhi Sultans and the Mughals of Hindustan who felt auspicious for being the descendants of Afrisian, Turkish, and Timurids. When despotic tendency appeared among a particular section of Muslims it generated casteism and sectarian rivalry, in medieval period adequate numbers of incidents are available in this regard.

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