

Allama Mashriqi's Warnings - The Time Has Come To Wake-up

By Nasim Yousaf

Allama Mashriqi, a great thinker and visionary, issued multiple warnings during his time (1940s-1950s) based on his observations of the prevailing political conditions. Mashriqi's predictions surrounded the fate of the Indian sub-continent at various time periods. Yet instead of listening to a man who fought for their freedom until the end, the leadership of Pakistan turned on him. With time, it became evident that Mashriqi had great vision and what he had foreseen indeed came true!

In 1942, Mashriqi made the following prediction to Quaid-e-Azam M.A. Jinnah regarding the partition plan: "I told him in 1942 that his present Pakistan of the two provinces 1400 miles apart could not last and this [partition] would result in the ruin of one crore Muslims and the complete decimation of five crore Muslims of remaining India." In addition, Mashriqi had repeatedly warned the All-India Muslim League (AIML) that division of the country into Pakistan and India would bring human devastation and create two hostile neighbors. He warned that the spread of communalism was dangerous and that it was important to stop spreading Islam in danger in united India for political ends. Based on what Mashriqi had been observing regarding the misleading and self-centered policies of the AIML, Mashriqi's weekly *Al-Islah* in 1946 gave a detailed account of the Muslim League's flawed and detrimental politics in its various volumes.

Mashriqi's final and momentous warning came on May 14, 1947. Addressing a gathering of 50,000 people in Patna, Mashriqi stated:

"...transfer of power handed over to men who have been trained in British way of thinking will bring nothing but worse form of British Raj again. This Raj will be ten times more tyrannical, more deformed, more ghastly, more imperialistic and non-Indian than even the worst form of British Raj. It will, in fact, be a travesty of all truths and a parody of every good or bad thing that the British have given to India during the past 100 years. It will be, in fact, an anarchy in order, a stereo-typed tyranny, and a confusion worst confounded. It will be a perpetual reign of Atom Bomb and Rule of Terror.

It will be regaled genocide and state killings. It will justify murder of children in mothers' wombs, wholesale destruction of all cultures, suppression of all true History, murder of Philosophy, total wiping out of honourable traditions, and wholesale slaughter of ideas. Handing over power to one or many political parties in India would mean a rule of worse imperialism, worse capitalism, worse halakism than all the History has yet produced. It will, in fact, be British Raj without British traditions. It will be a reign of 'Hell on Earth'. It will decimate the beautiful culture of Asia, the beautiful code of Asiatic Moral Laws, the beautiful philosophy of Peace and Tolerance, in fact the beautiful Fundamental Truths that Asia has ever given to Mankind during the last 5000 years...The present plan of transfer of power, to my mind, is the Diabolical Plan of the relentless rule of Birla, Brahmin and Khan Bahadur Raj where arrogance, money and tyranny will rule rather than human beings. ("*Al-Islah*" dated May 23, 1947)

Yet no lesson was learned from Mashriqi's above timely warning and the situation that followed continued to deteriorate. The following provides background on the circumstances that took place post-partition.

In 1947, against the wishes of all Muslim political parties (except Muslim League), united India was divided for political reasons; Muslims lost their homeland to which they had ruled for almost 1,000 years. Devastation and hostility followed and the seeds of hatred between Muslims and Hindus, who had lived amicably for centuries, were sown.

Quaid-e-Azam M.A. Jinnah became the first Governor General of Pakistan against the desire of Lord Mountbatten, who wanted the slot for himself (Mountbatten took revenge and a border line was drawn in favor of India; in addition, Mountbatten as Governor General of India sent the Indian Army to Kashmir in October 1947). Jinnah wanted all power to reside with him. As such, he also took over as the President of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan (CAP) while maintaining the office of the President of the Muslim League. Furthermore, Jinnah did not declare the judiciary independ-

ent and did not present a constitution for the newly formed country. To keep the feudal lords happy, Jinnah did not demolish the feudal system; in addition, he did not develop an education policy, which was desperately needed to steer the country in the right direction (the feudal lords wanted no such policy in order to maintain their rule over the impoverished and uneducated). Corruption escalated and the Government failed to form a policy to control it. Moreover, Jinnah continued to maintain his luxurious lifestyle, when Pakistan had no money even to purchase paper and pencils. Unfortunately, Jinnah's mistakes did not end there. Instead of giving free space to the opposition and taking steps to create institutions to lay the foundation for a strong country, he issued signals to suppress all political opponents. Mashriqi was among the most prominent victims of this policy. Harassment of Mashriqi and his family began, and his followers were intimidated and physically beaten by pro-Muslim Leaguers, police and intelligence agencies. To deny Mashriqi's pivotal role in the freedom movement and to distort the facts, raids were conducted at Mashriqi and his followers' premises and the Khaksar Tehrik's extensive background material was confiscated; no one knows where that material is. To prohibit political activity, the doors of the media to Mashriqi were virtually closed; if needed, only censored versions were allowed.

After Jinnah's death, the late Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan not only continued with an anti-Mashriqi policy, but rather adopted even more repressive measures. On October 03, 1950, Mashriqi was arrested (along with his two sons); he was released on bail, however, on January 11, 1951, he was again arrested (prior to elections) without legitimate reasons. After Liaquat Ali's death (October 16, 1951), the Government remained hostile. Despite country-wide protests, Mashriqi was kept imprisoned without trial for almost 2 years (released on July 09, 1952), while his followers throughout were subjected to cruelties and suppression.

Such vindictive behavior towards Mashriqi and other political opponents was being watched by people across the country, and the Muslim League began to collapse. As a result, in

the first election in East Pakistan in 1954, the public gave its verdict and the Muslim League lost the election miserably; thereafter, it could not survive for long and in the next few years, it was completely wiped out. (With the failure of the League in the said election, Allama Mashriqi, Abul Kalam Azad and others' claim, that the Muslim League's victory in the 1946 elections was on the crutches of the powerful bureaucracy of British India, became evident to the people).

Again the non-Khaksar leadership sought no lesson from this failure in the elections. Viewing the alarming state of affairs, Mashriqi issued another monumental warning at a public gathering at Minto Park (now Iqbal Park) in 1956.

"Ye Muslims! Today from this platform I sound you a warning. Listen carefully and ponder. Sometime in the future, probably in 1970, you will be confronted with a perilous situation. In 1970-I see it clearly-the nation will be stormed from all sides. The internal situation would have deteriorated gravely. A panic of widespread bloodshed will sweep the nation. The frenzy of racial and provincial prejudices will grip the whole country. Zindabad and murdabad will deafen your ears. Plans will be initiated to dismember the country. Take it from me that in 1970, Pakistan will be plagued with a grave threat to its sovereignty. You might actually lose it if the reigns of the country were not in the hands of courageous and unrelenting leadership...I warn you to prepare from now to face the situation which will emerge in that year."

Indeed, Mashriqi's calculation turned out to be true, and in 1971, East Pakistan sought independence and Bangladesh emerged. The above are just some of his predictions that have come true.

Instead of seeking guidance from Mashriqi's timely caution, the rulers decided to silence Mashriqi forever, and in 1958, Mashriqi was treacherously implicated in a murder case of an ex-Chief Minister of West Pakistan. Mashriqi was arrested and brought to court handcuffed. In jail, he was maltreated, and every effort was made to force him to confess his involvement in the murder, so that he could be convicted and taken to the gallows. Fraud witnesses of the prosecution failed

and the Judge had to acquit Mashriqi. Even after acquittal, his life was made difficult by keeping him under house arrest and through harassment by intelligence agencies until he died in 1963. By implicating him in a fabricated case and making his life difficult since independence (of the sub-continent), an unpardonable crime was committed toward a statesman who had fought for the freedom of the Indian sub-continent and did not rest until his people were liberated.

A methodical campaign to distort Mashriqi's image and deny his role in the freedom movement has continued since 1947 and still prevails. No efforts are being made to enlighten the public of his major role in bringing freedom. Works continue to be published from the perspective of the All-India Muslim League and glorification of the AIML leadership prevails. Blatant lies and twisted facts have been spoken and produced in many works, including those by well-known historians and intellectuals, and the public is being forced to read and listen to the AIML's side of the story.

To conclude, what Pakistan is paying today is the cost of what was sowed in the initial years; the lack of governance and the vindictive and selfish attitudes of the early leadership in fact laid down the principles for the future management of the country. Newspapers and television channels are still not realizing that the public's destiny is more important than personalities and that the public is entitled to know why Mashriqi and all Muslim leadership (except for the AIML) were against the division of India.

But, time has come now for change. In times of hopelessness and grave circumstances, Pakistanis can still learn from Mashriqi's vision and life and times. They need to elect selfless leaders like the great Allama, but if the people fail to wake-up still, then I foresee another break-up of Pakistan.

Remember! Those nations perish which ignore the by-gones and seek no lessons from history.

Nasim Yousaf is a scholar and historian who has presented papers at U.S. conferences and written many articles and books. His forthcoming book entitled, "Mahatma Gandhi & My Grandfather, Allama Mashriqi", shall also uncover many hidden realities.

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