

NUBOWWAH AND KINGDOM

Everything in this world has an appearance and an essence. Man, for example, has a unique appearance. Added to this appearance, man has certain qualities that he shares with no other species in the animal kingdom. These qualities comprise his essence and reality. Human appearance and essence are imperative for classification as a human being. Hence, apes are not humans. Although they look like humans, they lack the characteristics that constitute the essence of man. Conversely, a human being whose human qualities (or some of them) are deficient is considered a deficient human being. Thus, a fool is often called a donkey. Inability to think intelligently indicates deficiency in his human essence.

Nevertheless, the essence is more important than the appearance. Therefore, deficiency in human appearance does not affect classification as a human being if the essential human characteristics are present. Accordingly, a deaf, dumb and blind man is still a human being. On the contrary, perfection in human appearance is meaningless in the absence of essential human characteristics. Hence, Barbie dolls, teddy bears and statues are not humans. Children's laptops are the

same. Outwardly, they look like laptops, but in reality, they are simply toys.

Kingdom

Similarly, kingdom also has an outer appearance and an inner reality. Possession of a throne, crown, palace, treasury and an army constitutes the outer appearance of a king. Extravagance, pomp and haughtiness are also among its external components. The reality entails socio-economic and civil development, internal and external defence and education of the masses. Determination, courage, justice, compassion and generosity fall under this category.

Possession of a throne, crown and a palace without the inner aspects of kingdom do not qualify one as a king. (Thus, in the modern context, some countries have ceremonial kings and queens. Such monarchs have no constitutional powers. Their countries are governed by presidents, prime ministers and parliaments.) Likewise, possession of the inner aspects of kingdom without its outer aspects is also not kingdom. Nevertheless, if we compare possessors of the outer aspects without the inner aspects to possessors of the inner aspects without the outer aspects, we observe that the former rule people (their bodies) but not their hearts. Thus, their subjects often curse them. In contrast, the latter do not physically rule anybody. People, however, revere them to the extent that it seems that they rule their hearts.

This is Kingdom

Have you not heard what Haroon Rasheed's slave-girl said about his kingdom when Abdullah bin Mubaarak (ra) arrived in Raqqa? A massive crowd of people thronged around Abdullah causing a large cloud of dust and a huge commotion. Observing the entire incident, the slave-girl remarked, "By Allah, this is kingdom, not the kingdom of Haroon that does not assemble people without police and helpers."

The issue now is that if this was the condition of an '*aalim* who was not even a *sahaabi*, imagine how much more it applies to the *ambiyaa*, especially Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*. Driving home the same point, Qari Tayyib (ra) observes that the rank of the *sahaabah* is not as high as the *ambiyaa*, yet this applied to them also. There were many other pious people after the *sahaabah*. Their status is even lower than that of the *sahaabah*. However, this was their condition too. They all ruled the hearts of the people. In fact, even after their death they continue ruling the hearts of the people.

Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*

Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* led a simple way of life. He ate simple food and wore simple clothes. Possessing no throne or crown, his house was a far cry from being a palace. The epitome of humility, newcomers to Madinah were unable to distinguish him from his companions. There was certainly no outer appearance of kingdom. Nevertheless, Allah had blessed

him with more awe and magnificence than any worldly king. Thus, the Disbelievers would fear him from a distance of one month. However, he possessed all the inner components of kingdom. The books of *hadith* and *seerah* contain many narrations regarding his determination, courage, justice, and compassion. (Narrating them here would make this article longer than intended.) The books of *hadith* and *fiqh* outline his outstanding approach to socio-economic and civil issues. His concern for the guidance of his people and mankind at large reached such proportions that Allah Ta'aala said to him:

لَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَفْسِكَ أَلَّا يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ

You are killing yourself because they do not believe.¹

By the time of Hudaibiyah, he had left such an impression on the *sahaabah* that when the envoy of the Quraish, Urwah bin Mas'ood, returned to Makkah, he described what he observed in the Muslim camp saying:

"I attended the courts of the emperors of Abyssinia, Constantinople and Persia. However, I never saw a monarch who was revered by his courtiers more than Muhammad is revered by his companions. There is absolute silence when he speaks. If he spits, his companions rush to catch his saliva before it falls on the ground and then wipe it on their faces. When he issues a command, they hasten in fulfilling it. They

¹ Surah Shu'araa, Aayah 3

respect him so much that raising one's gaze in his court is impossible."²

Considering the absence of an outer appearance of kingdom, history has not included him among the kings of the world. Yet, if we consider the inner dimensions of kingdom, it cannot be denied that he was a king.

Nubuwwah and Kingdom: Another Link

There are two types of *ni'mats* (blessings) in the worldly life.

1. The first type of *ni'mat* is physical and material. They include food, clothes, shelter, transport, appearances and ability to benefit from them.
 - There are *ni'mats* to gratify each of the five senses.
 - These *ni'mats* multiply constantly: newer recipes to indulge the taste buds, innovative designs to delight the eyes and inventions to easen household chores, production and a variety of other manual activities.
 - The highest form of this type of *ni'mat* is kingdom: the doorway to achievement of all physical and material *ni'mats*.
2. The second type of *ni'mat* is abstract and spiritual. Virtuous actions, respectable disposition, knowledge and intellectual contribution fall under this category.

² Zaad-ul-Ma'aad V.3 Pg.212 (Dar-ul-Kutub Al-'Ilmiyyah 1998 -1419)

- The outcome of these *ni'mats* is spiritual contentment and satisfaction which exceed the benefits of all physical and material *ni'mats* – to the extent that they lose their significance altogether.
- The epitome of this type of *ni'mat* is *nubuwwah*.

In short, another link between *nubuwwah* and kingdom is that one is the peak of physical *ni'mat* and the other is the pinnacle of spiritual *ni'mat*.

The Difference

We have already alluded to one difference between kingdom and *nubuwwah*. Kings rule bodies whereas *ambiyaa* rule hearts. The reason for this is that kings rule with force while *ambiyaa* rule with love. Thus, the subjects of a king respect him in his presence but often criticise and curse him behind his back. *Their limbs respect him but their hearts hate him*. On the contrary, *ambiyaa* are revered in their presence and absence. Their followers venerate them even after their demise. This is why Muslims are enraged when Disbelievers ridicule Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*.

Another difference between the two is in their temperament. The Qur'aan encapsulates the temperament of kings in the words of Bilqees, the Queen of Sabaa (Sheba):

إن الملوك إذا دخلوا قرية أفسدوها و جعلوا أعزة أهلها أذلة

*When kings enter a city they ruin it and humiliate its noble inhabitants.*³

Quite the opposite, Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* displayed unparalleled forgiveness on the occasion of The Conquest. Before entering Makkah, he announced: "Whoever enters the house of Abu Sufyaan is safe. Whoever enters the Sanctified Masjid is safe. Whoever (enters his house and) locks his door is safe."⁴ After taking the city, he proclaimed to its citizens:

اذهبوا فأنتم الطلقاء

Go, you are free!

Equally amazing is his treatment of 'Uthman bin Talha (ra), the doorkeeper of the *ka'bah* at the time. Prior to *hijrah*, 'Uthman prevented Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* from entering the *ka'bah* to perform just two *rak'aat* of *salaah*. At the time of The Conquest, Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* sent 'Ali (ra) to take the key of the *ka'bah* from 'Uthman – who was not yet a Muslim – so that he could now enter and perform two *rak'aat* of *salaah*. Once again 'Uthman refused saying that if he believed that Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* was actually a Rasul, he would have never deprived him in the past. Thus, Ali (ra) forcefully took the key from him and opened the *ka'bah* for

³ Surah An-Naml, Aayah 34

⁴ Seerah Ibn Hishaam V.4 Pg.157

Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* to enter. However, having performed *salaah* in the *ka'bah*, Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* called for 'Uthman, returned the key to him and promised that the key would remain in his custody forever. Amazed, 'Uthman accepted Islam and was blessed with the honour of being a *sahaabi*. The aim in relating this incident is to demonstrate the difference between *nubuwwah* and kingdom. If Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* was a king, he would have never returned the key of the *ka'bah* to 'Uthman (ra). Custody of the key of the *ka'bah* is an honour. Worldly kings dishonour conquered people. Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* was not a worldly king. Thus, he did not dishonour 'Uthman bin Talha (ra) and the rest of the citizens of Makkah. To summarise, the temperament of kings is predominantly oppressive whereas *ambiyaa* are merciful and compassionate. After all, Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* was a mercy unto all the worlds.

و ما أرسلناك إلا رحمة للعالمين

*We did not send you but as a mercy unto all the worlds.*⁵

Likewise we observe that while kings crush opposition and suppress the weak, *ambiyaa* guide their opposition and promote the weak. In fact, they show more compassion to the weak. The numerous *ahaadith* regarding the rights of women, orphans and the slaves are glaring testimony in this regard.

⁵ Seerah Ibn Hishaam V.4 Pg.171

Another Difference

Another difference between kings and the *ambiyaa* is that the former behave as if they have unconditional possession of their wealth. Thus, they appear self-centred in every sphere of life. *It's my kingdom, my wealth and my law.* On the other hand, constant consciousness of Allah and the Hereafter among the *ambiyaa* result in selflessness. Accordingly, they regard nothing (neither kingdom nor wealth and law) as theirs. *It's Allah's land, Allah's treasure and Allah's law.* In the final analysis, the Nabi regards himself as nothing more than a *khaleefah* of Allah.

Conclusion

Ambiyaa enjoy greater kingdom than any worldly king and Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* was the greatest Nabi. Hence, Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* was greater than all worldly kings. There never was and there will never be a worldly leader – king, president or otherwise – greater than Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*.

و آخر دعوانا أن الحمد لله رب العالمين

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