

An Analytical Study Of Philosophical Thoughts Of Zafar Al-Hassan And That Of Burhān Aḥmad Fārūqī

Dr. Muhammad Riaz¹, Syed Toqeer Abbas², Ahsan Ul Haq³, Naimullah⁴, Rana Muhammad Idrees⁵

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Studies Lahore Garrison University, Lahore mriaz@lgu.edu.pk, prof.riaz786@gmail.com

²Ph.D Scholar, Govt. H/S Lakhodair Lahore Cantt. toqeerlakhodair@gmail.com

³Ph. D Research Scholar, Lahore Garrison University, Lahore ahsanulhaqest@gmail.com

⁴Ph. D Research Scholar, Lahore Garrison University, Lahore naeemchitralli8@gmail.com

⁵Lecturer Department of Islamic Studies, University of Lahore, Sargodha Campus. muhammad.Idrees@ais.uol.edu.pk ma.mubarak29@gmail.com

Abstract

Syed Zafar al-Hassan(1885-1949) was a prominent twentieth-century Pakistani Muslim philosopher and Dr. Burhan Ahmad Faruqi (1905-1996) was privileged to be his pupil during his education at Ali Garh. Dr. Burhan Ahmad Faruqi's master under whom he was brought up from a naive young man to a well versed philosopher; Dr. Zafar al-Hassan was also a master of epistemology, so it was quite natural for him to be impressed by this great man of letters. Dr. Zafar al Hassan was too much impressed by Kant and his philosophy; particularly as for as criticism is concerned he was the interpreter of the Kantian theory. Up to the criticism in philosophical methodology, he followed Kant and his master but on word he took religious conscious as a tool to devise methodologies and this proved a turning point in his philosophy. Burhān Aḥmad Fārūqī with his peculiar moral philosophy played a vital role to assure the Muslims about the originality of their morality derived from the holy Qurān. Only Islamic morality provides man with chastity and modesty, and through these characteristics he can reach the destination of exalted purification. According to Fārūqī the endorsement after this lofty morality is the exclusive belief of Islam; the Oneness of Allah Al-Mighty (Tauḥīd). This article presented an analytical study of the philosophical impacts of Zafar al-Hassan on Dr. Burhan Ahmad Faruqi's philosophical works.

Keywords: Burhān Aḥmad Fārūqī, Zafar al-Hassan, Kantian Theory, Tauḥīd, System of Morality, Moral Philosophy.

(A)

Fārūqī under the Kind Care of Dr. Zafar al-Hassan

Fārūqī's attachment with this great man can be assessed from the attribution of his well-known dissertation on Mojaddad's Concept of Tauḥīd in which he expressed his emotions for his respected teacher. "Dedicated to my revered teacher Dr. Zafar al-Hassan who watched my life with paternal concern and at whose feet I learnt to understand the fundamental problems in Philosophy and religion."¹ No doubt the people at Dev Smaj College; the teachers and

the student there were staunch Hindus and the young Fārūqī was by birth a Ṣūfī and a steadfast Muslim, but he was loved and praised by everybody over there because of his commitment as a student and respectfulness with his teachers. His teachers used to adore him because of his love for learning.

"The principal of Dev Smaj College wrote a letter for him to the Vice Chancellor of Aligarh University that in the manly efforts put forth by this student to complete his educational

ambition, we imparted our possible helps but now his fellow religious were bound to cooperate further with him.”²

After passing his intermediate, Fārūqī moved to Aligarh University and got admission in BA and now being a committed and an obedient student, he became an apple of Dr. Zafar al Hassan’s eyes. Fārūqī’s fecundity of heart and soul and his teacher’s ability to impart knowledge were matching to each other. It was Fārūqī’s ambition to understand the philosophical methodology of Dr. Zafar al Hassan and this methodology developed an interestedness in his mind and made him real time philosopher of his own unique methodology.

Dr. Fārūqī used to say that he had pondered upon the methodology with which his master had solved the problems. When he found the method he put it into the problems and when the issues were resolved, Dr. Zafar al Hassan owned it and that was commonality in the results of the thoughts.³

Dr. Zafar al-Hassan was a very close friend of Allama Iqbāl and both of them were worried about the contemporary matters of Ummah particularly in the Indian Subcontinent. Akbar’s seedling and interpolation of the falsified faith and polytheistic beliefs of other religions specifically that of non-semitic religion, were rising insurgency against the survival of Islām and that of the Muslims in India and these were the after effects of Akbar’s Deen e Ilahi. Allama Muḥammad Iqbāl visualized that all the interests of All India Congress lied in the united India and one of the main obstacles in roadmap of the united India was the Two Nation Theory and the Two Nation Theory could only be deviated by the amalgamated concept of all the religion and the expression of which was the theory of Wahdat al-Wojūd. Allama was feeling very earnestly the need of Mojaddad’s pure concept of Touḥīd to be highlighted on the modern but philosophical grounds. In the earlier

thirties of the twentieth century, it was felt by the Muslim leaders like Iqbāl very earnestly that the Hindus could do a very trouble on the intellectual ground as it had been done in the Mughal era particularly in the reign of Akbar. Wahdat al-Wojūd had been wrongly interpreted by even the so-called Muslim scholars just to please the king. A lot of Muslim religious scholars were in All India National Congress and were opposing the interests of the Muslims of the subcontinent. So, Allama Muḥammad Iqbāl approached Dr. Syed Zafar al-Hassan for the research on the Mojaddad’s conception of Tauḥīd, a quite opposite concept of Tauhid to that of Wahdat al-Wojūd. This arduous task was assigned to Burhān Ahamad and it was meant that his intellectual approaches could be trusted by the two great men of the time; Dr. Zafar al-Hassan and Allama Muḥammad Iqbāl.

“When Dr. Fārūqī passed his MA in Philosophy, in 1931 Allama Iqbāl wrote to Dr. Zafar al Hassan that he feared that Congress would use the concept of Wahdat al-Wojūd to demolish the national identity of the Muslims as Akbar had done to propagate his Deen e Ilahi.⁴

Allama Muḥammad Iqbāl visualized that the protagonists of Hindu-Malim Unity could target the the two nation theory and could do the same that was done by Akbar in the form of Din-e-Ilahi. To stop the emergence of the new something like Din-e-Ilahi, Allama Muḥammad Iqbal was anxious to do something on Mujaddad’s conception of Tauḥeed.

“So the research on Mojaddad’s concept of Oneness of Allah should be conducted on a higher level and for the purpose you should prepare someone among your students. So, with the suggestion of Allama Iqbāl, Dr. Zafar al Hassan appointed Burhān Aḥmad Fārūqī for this arduous task and importance of

the task is not difficult to calculate as the survival of the national identity of Muslims of the sub-continent depended upon it.”⁵

The importance of the Mojaddad’s Conception of Tauheed can be judged by the fact that both of the greatest philosophers; Allama Muḥammad Iqbāl and Zafar al-Hassan were behind this task and Burhān Aḥmad proved him the most suitable choice for it. This masterpiece of research was adored and praised even by the Hindu men of letters as Burhān Aḥmad proved himself that he was only to do it. Allama Iqbāl could not see the dissertation before him as he passed away before its completion, but he was very hopeful in this respect.

(B) Dr. Zafar’s Philosophy as Foundation Stone of Fārūqī’s Thoughts

According to Dr. Zafar al-Hassan a lot of questions are there that are raised even for the philosophy, but cannot be answered by it. Like what the purpose of man’s creation is and what the position of man is there in the universe and many other questions like these, are there that are to be answered and Dr. Zafar al-Hassan is of the opinion that to answer these questions is beyond the reach of the philosophy.

“Philosophy has failed to answer the theoretical question it propounded. It has consequently failed to answer the practical question it raised. It could not tell us what its will is, with regard to us—what exactly it wants us to be, what our function in this universe is, what mode of life we ought to pursue; in a word, it could not give us guidance. The inevitable outcome of our inquiry therefore is that “Philosophy and ratiocination give not truth, nor Guidance”.⁶

Dr. Fārūqī’s thoughts about philosophy are based upon that of his teacher’s thoughts; Dr. Zafar al-Hassan, as he was of the view of the limitations of the philosophy so is Dr. Fārūqī. The very basic questions raised by the philosophers and their answers of these questions could not satisfy Dr. Fārūqī and he took the road that led him to Minhāj al-Qurān and thus he propounded his own unique philosophy

(C) Origin of Dr. Zafar’s Thoughts

Man is a social being and cannot live within himself without the cooperation of his other fellow beings as he is bound to live within a society. So, within a society he is bound to follow some values that are the morality of that society and can be termed as the guidance of the life within a society. Moreover a lot of questions are there that are to be answered by the intellectuals. According to Dr. Zafar al-Hassan philosophy has nothing to do with these questions and Dr. Zafar’s philosophy revolves round a hypothesis that is as under:

“Philosophy cannot positively determine the function of man in the universe and construct a sure code of morality, or of guidance in life for him. On the basis of the arguments of the author philosophy must be considered as an unproductive exercise of the mind that seeks to find, in human knowledge, reliable foundation for obtaining guidance concerning one’s duty here below.”⁷

The position of man could not be determined by the philosophers and even the origin of man and its objective of creation could not be determined by the philosophical efforts, yet its logic and reasoning can be put into positive activities.

It appears that the author was persuaded to believe that human mind ought not to be satisfied with tentative and

provisional views which it is all capable of yielding; concerning nature and purpose of human life.”⁸

The philosophy is not a useless discipline of knowledge and it can be used and employed on many issues to seek the solution, but it shows its limitations and weakness in a lot of questions like: What is a man? What is its role in the universe? What is his status in the universe? And many questions are there that are to be addressed but for the purpose philosophy is just a white elephant and to seek solutions for these issues is to beat the air.

“The author had in fact planned to move on from negative conclusions of philosophy to philosophy of religion which he calls “Theistics” and thereafter to deal with philosophy of Islām which he calls as “Islāmics”.⁹

Philosophy is not useless, but like the excessive usage of everything in everywhere may cause damage, so philosophy should be there but in a limited way the theistic sciences could be involved with philosophy, but it is not all.

“According to a note found in his miscellaneous papers, it appears that he was convinced that his understanding would resolve many complicated questions touching and concerning what man has to do in his life. According to him: “the proposed Islāmics will be a detailed application of Theistics”. He was convinced that Islām is the only religion in which it can be done because Islām is the only historic religion whose scripture is intact”.¹⁰

Dr. Zafar al-Hassan is of the opinion that the philosophy has inferred a lot of conclusions that are not sagacious and based on reality, so it needed revolutionary changes to make it a useful subject. Dr. Zafar al-Hassan wanted to

work upon the basic issues of the philosophy that were not handled properly and scholastically. He was also of the view that only Islam is there that can properly resolve all the issues related to man.

(D) Dr. Zafar’s Concept of Knowledge

Dr. Zafar al-Hassan is of the view that the most of the philosophers are not at right when they think that it is all that is known by man with his senses and experiences. For the comprehension of the issue he presented the theory of duality; the subject and the object are two different phenomena, or to make it easier we can say that the knowledge and the knowing are two different concepts.

“It is true that it is the duality of relation posited in a logical proposition, affirmatively or negatively which provides for the possibility of knowledge. Neither is knowledge a fusion of knower known nor it is at all explained by being regarded as a kind of immediate contact between the knowing subject and the object known.”¹¹

Between the knowledge and the knowing or between the subject or the object there exists a relationship of logic; these parameter may be interconnected affirmatively or negatively and all these conditions belong to knowledge. According to Dr. Zafar al-Hassan the conglomeration of some facts, for or against an issue is knowledge.

(E) The Issues before Dr. Zafar

The philosophy of Dr. Syed Zafar al-Hassan is subject oriented and is contrary to that of the people that are very general in philosophy who research about the objects other than their own self; the subject and they start thinking about the universe, the objective and the cause of the creation of the universe. But on quite diametric to it the philosophy of Dr. Zafar al-Hassan is subjective as he relates man to the entire

universe and all beings present in it with the central cause; the man. The issue before Zafar al-Hassan is the location of man's position in the universe.

“What is it all, and what is my position in it? What is the universe, and what is my relation to it? What is the nature of the world, and what is my function in it- how am I to act and behave here? Is the world only a conglomerate of material object? Has its movement, any direction and any end? Or is it only a savage dance of ghastly atoms or the senseless urge of a blind élan vital?—And further, am I a flickering flame of a chance production and ephemeral duration--- a mere transition from total nothingness to total extinction?”¹²

To Dr. Zafar al-Hassan the sole purpose of the philosophy must be to answer these questions and the order of the study or the research should be from subject to the object. “This is the question to which philosophy would give an answer: This is the problem of philosophy: This philosophy is out for a Welt Anschauung, for a World-View”¹³

It seems that the problem of Dr. Zafar al-Hassan is to differentiate and fixate the limits of subject and the object that is found in confusion among the philosophical thinkers.

“Now clearly the problem presupposes a distinction. It presupposes that on one side stands the subject, and on the other the object. The subject asks about the object; what is it? And it also asks about its own self, what am I? And hence how should I behave in the situation I am in?”¹⁴

Dr. Zafar al-Hassan very clearly described the problems of the subjected oriented research and he averred that the

flow of research from subject to object will create a chaos in the system of research.

(F) Limitations of Philosophy

A certain lid cannot be fit for every bottle, same is the case for philosophy, and it is not the master of all the trades as there are certain fields that are not accessible for philosophy, particularly for the rational, empirical and critical type of philosophy. The range of human intellect is up to the things which can be conceived and comprehended by the senses; the five senses as intellect depends only upon the senses, but a lot of realities are there that are there but beyond the reach of the senses, so these things being the members of the out of range family cannot be the topic of the philosophy.

“Philosophy cannot justifiably maintain that the World-All is a whole. The assumption that it is a whole remains only an assumption,---and with it the question of my relation to it or the position in it, the second problem of philosophy, loses much of its pertinence.”¹⁵

No doubt there are certain realities, but not rightly taken as the subject of the philosophy, if taken under it, a lot of trouble can be inferred. Human passions, ideas, dogmas, convictions, emotions, intentions, emotions and memories are there to make some phenomena that can be termed as something spiritual.

And they are common property of all; they are “over there”; everyone can apprehend and handle them. But ideas have no being of their own and are exclusively mine or thine; they are the most private property of the individual; they are “not over there”. He and he alone and no one else can apprehend and tackle them.”¹⁶

If all the things belong to the universe that is made of these ideas, so according to the empiricists the existence of the whole impossible. Then there may be a unity and not a whole, if in this process unity emerges, there would be as many unities as there are people on the planet and thus in this mechanism the concept of whole that leads to one God would be impossible, so philosophy cannot justify the conception of the world all is a whole.

(G) Dr. Zafar's Methodology

Dr. Zafar travels from inward to outwards, from lower to higher, from micro to macro, from unit to the whole or from subject to object and thus seeks the solution and for the purpose he elaborates and decides the worth of all the parameters of the problems under discussion.

“Now clearly the problems presuppose a distinction. It presupposes that on one side stands the subject and on the other, the object: The subject asks about the object: What is it? And also asks about its own self: What am I and hence, how should I behave in a situation I am in? The problem is consequently two-fold (a) About the nature of the world (b) About the nature of the self.”¹⁷

Now the parameters are sorted and separated and after this detachment how it is possible to move your information from one to another even if knowing one completely.

“Problem thus formulated is, I submit, incapable of being resolved for the simple reason that if the subject is other than object, standing, as it does over it, and the duality between the subject and the object is something which is given a priori no amount of philosophical quibbling can

possibly make the object intelligible in terms of the subject nor can it help seeing itself other than the object.”¹⁸

Travelling of one whole from object to the subject exhausted the philosophers of the past and they did but created some theories that would fall beyond realities of the life.

(H) The Problem of Duality and its Solution

Even the European thoughts and philosophy had been entangled in an extremely perplexing situation since very long. Epistemology and the disciplines like that remained enmeshed into labyrinth of verbal debates without reaching any solution of any problem. The dual nature of subject and object created problems for all the philosophers for further study but Dr. Zafar al Hassan very smartly resolved it.

“There is the knower, act of knowing and the object which is to be known. But if all these there are distinct it is impossible to say that subject can know the object for if they are really different one cannot know the other.”¹⁹

Some European philosophers think that subject and the object is the same and the difference is just of direction as they say that these are the two faces but of the same coin. At this confusion raised by these thinkers, Dr. Zafar al-Hassan raised a question that what would be the possibility of the knowledge.

“If we proceed in treating ontology as a primary science and on being of the philosophical opinion that reality in fact is one, we can proceed to argue that the subject and the object to be known are facets of one and the same reality. And unless both of these form facets or aspects of knowledge and refer to a view of reality that is one there

can be no possibility of real knowledge.”²⁰

According to Dr. Zafar al-Hassan subject and object are two different things and can never be the same and he further declared that with the absence of this dual nature of subject or object the concept of knowledge would be vanished away.

(I) The Concept of Facets of One and the Same reality

How can we proceed further to seek out the real solutions of our problems? This was the question that demanded the attentions of the philosophers and Dr. Zafar’s opinion in this regard is very sound.

“The problem of epistemology, as formalated above, is capable of being resolved if ontological inquiry were to lead to the finding that all reality is one and that the logical polarity between the subject and the object in a proposition is capable of being transcended in the direction of one Absolute reality of which the knowing subject and the known object are integral elements.”²¹

Human knowledge is related with the speculative consciousness as its very function is to accumulate more and more knowledge and this may be of internal and external whereabouts. This knowledge attitude of human being is chasing after to get unitary and this unitary would try to plunge into the ocean of the metaphysical beings. And at this phase the knowledge attitude would not take rest, but would move forward to seek something about the origin of the being at the unitary stage.

“The theoretical or the speculative consciousness is, as said above, the knowledge-attitude of man. It has an ideal of knowledge. It yearns to realize that ideal. This ideal consists in having a unified

picture of the universe. It consists in finding out a unitary principle, out of which could spring all the multiplicity of the world from which the multiplicity could be deduced. Such unity has been hovering before the gaze of every metaphysician.”²²

The thinking about the unity had been very debatable among the thinkers and had been an interesting topic to some extent and they have tried it in a very different way, but most of the thinkers discussed it from object to subject and Dr. Burhān Aḥmad Fārūqī rejected this mode as he advocated for subjective approach.

“The yearning for it is so intense that the speculative consciousness is strongly inclined to go forward and assert the existence of this unity; indeed it would go still further and grasp the essence of it also. The efforts made in this direction have different forms resulting from the different tendencies of the thinkers who have tried to determine this unity. The empirically-minded started from the side of the objects of experience, i.e., the multiplicity.”²³

According to Burhān Aḥmad Fārūqī there are three types of the formulation of the human sensations. The sensation that is attentive to the external beings is theoretical consciousness and it bears the burden of seeking knowledge of the objects of the universe and the most developed form of this consciousness is inferred in the form of physical sciences. The second discipline that is developed in human consciousness is about the humanity and can be taken in the modern language as morality or ethics and all the social sciences are sprung out of it. The third type of consciousness is about to seek out the reality and the most developed formulation of this consciousness is modern theology.

“Man takes different attitudes towards the objects of his experience. These attitudes are called different forms of consciousness. Theoretic consciousness is the attitude which he takes towards the world of objects in order to acquire its knowledge; and epistemology or logic is the science that studies the nature and implications of this consciousness.²⁴”

Dr. Fārūqī’s mastery can be recognized from the fact that he has a full command on the any topic that is under discussion. Here he makes us understand the conception of the physical science that these are the discipline of knowledge that belong to the objects all around us or for simplicity consciousness of all the things that are in our whereabouts.

“Moral consciousness is another attitude that man takes he takes it towards mankind; and ethics or moral philosophy is the science that deals with the laws that arise in this field and the implications thereof. Similarly religious consciousness is the attitude that man takes towards ultimate reality; and ‘theistic’ or philosophy of religion is the branch of knowledge that studies the nature and

implications of this consciousness.²⁵”

According to Burhān Aḥmad Fārūqī the function of philosophy is to create a correspondence and collaboration among these three types of consciousness to create the unity of the world principle. And a quite resembling situation is found in Dr. Zafar al-Hassan conception of knowledge.

“When we speak of the whole as the subject matter of the philosophy, we mean by it the World-All. We further imply thereby that all the parts of this World-All are connected and go to make a unified existent. Now the term whole can, in this connection, have various senses. We must therefore inquire if we can maintain that the World-All really exists or can be justifiably conceived to be a whole in any of the senses.”²⁶

The unity of the world principle of Burhān Aḥmad Fārūqī and the world all of Zafar al-Hassan bring closer these two great philosophers from many corners in their respective philosophies. This is the outcome of the time that as a student Burhān Aḥmad Fārūqī spent under the kind patronage of Dr. Zafar al-Hassan.

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