

THINK AND WORK FOR THE GROUP

Community
GROUP

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Community

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Following the downfall of the eight hundred Muslim rule over Indian subcontinent during the eighteenth century, the Muslims got severe set-back economically and socially. The rich had turned paupers and the poor Muslim masses were left without leaders.

In order to awaken the down-trodden Muslims and encourage them to face the situation, a poet rose to the occasion. His name was Khwaja Altaf Husain with Hali as his poetic name which literally means 'Conscious of the present'. From social, political, religious and moral point of view, he indeed proved to be essentially and truly conscious of his 'present'. He addressed the Muslims of his age through the Urdu Musaddas which means a poem which each stanza consists of six lines. The Musaddas of Hali had proved to be a revolutionizing poem and brought about a radical change in the thinking and actions of the Muslims of that country.

Hereunder we reproduce a translation of a some of the stanzas in which the poet exhorts the Muslims not to think and work individually but to do so for the group if they are to prosper and regain their lost glory.

"Every individuals' honour rests with the honour of the group, and every individuals' disgrace lies in the disgrace of the group; personal greatness and personal rule have neither lasted, nor shall they ever last. Only that twig would bloom and blossom in this garden whose root remains green."

In this stanza the poet lays emphasis in the importance of the good of the group as against that of the individual. According to him only those acts which aim at the common and the greater good are worth admiration as against those

whose benefit is limited to the individual. He therefore stresses that personal interests should be subordinated to the national interests. Self aggrandisement and personal authority have never had any stability. The root of prosperity is the nation. If the nation prospers all its individual constituents would prosper.

" When an ant finds some store it runs up to its group and takes them back to that place. It shows every one of them its own find. They ever go in this way. Lakhs of them feed on the earning of single individuals. "

In the previous stanza the poet has been building up his theory that every individual should work for the good and betterment of the whole nation. In this stanza he strengthens his counsel by citing the example of the ant which always works for the whole group.

" When an ant which has neither knowledge nor wisdom fulfils the needs of its species and makes each one of them satisfied in respect of their livelihood entrusting all its acquisition to them, can there be any thing more shame ful than that man should not have regard for man. "

" What a curse! that the species which is superior to all, which reckons itself to be the ruler of the world, which considers itself better than angels; which poses itself to be the embodiment of Allah on earth may not have even this much sign of manliness as admittedly exists in the insects of the ground. "

In these two stanzas the poet draws an analogy between a man and an ant so far as the working for the group or

community is concerned. While an ant works for its whole kind and subordinates its individual interest to the interest of the group, man is so impudent that he has little sympathy with his fellow men. It is a matter of great shame that man is not even worth a small insect of the earth in this respect, although he takes himself to be Allah's representative on earth and superior even to the angels.

(Extract from MUSSADAS-E-HALI)