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Hazrat Imam Ja'ffar Sadiq [as] And Modern Microbiology

ABSTRACT:

Hazrat Imam Ja'ffar Sadiq (a.s) is a greatest jurisprudent in Islamic history. As for as his knowledge is conserved, it is sufficient to say that Hazrat Imam Ja'ffar Sadiq (a.s) was teacher of prominent Imams (Imam Abu Hanifa & Imam Malik). Hazrat Imam Ja'ffar Sadiq (a.s)'s religious and scientific ideas are declared as authority in the developing and enhancing the Muslim thoughts. According to most famous scholar Hazrat Abu Hanifa, the Imam Ja'ffar Sadiq (a.s) was a greatest jurisprudent in his era.

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He spent his childhood up to 12 years under Imam Zainul Abedeen [a.s] and the next 19 years under his father Imam Muhammad Baquir [a.s] before he undertook the responsibility of Imamate himself and served the cause of Islam for the next 34 years guiding Muslims, prior to himself being martyred in the year 148 AH on the 25th of Shawaal in Madina.

As far as the knowledge of Imams of Ahlul-Bayt is concerned, it is sufficient to say that Imam Ja'ffar Sadiq [a] was teacher of two Sunni Imamas, i.e Abu-Hanifa Nu'man bin Thabit, whose famous saying "Were it not for the two years [studied under Imam Sadiq [a], al-Nu'man would have perished" and Malik ibne Anas. Malik also confessed straight forwardly that he had not met anyone learned in Islamic jurisprudence better than Imam Ja'ffar Sadiq [as]. Imam left a vast literature which will be a great source to open a new research for the discovering the hidden secrets of the world. “

The Imam opened the doors to thinking in his teachings and always opined that shais should have an intellectual base, so that they may not be obliterated by any change of leadership. He supported that the strength of the shias lay in a rich literature which was more important than

a standing army of soldiers. An army could be defeated by a superior force, but a rich and vast literature cannot be destroyed.”ⁱ We can understand and estimate the knowledge of Imam through this historical event.

“The Abbassid Caliph, al-mansoor commanded Abu Hanifa to prepare for Imam Ja'ffar Sadiq [a] a number of hard questions concerning the Islamic law and to ask imam those questions in the presence of al-ansoor. Abu Hanifa prepared forty difficult questions and asked Imam Ja'ffar Sadiq [a] about them in the presence of al-mansoor. The imam not only answered all the questions but also informed about the opinions of the Iraqi as well as the Hijazi Scholars. Abu Hanifa commented on this episode by saying; “Certainly, the most knowledge among people is the most knowledgeable of their different opinions”ⁱⁱⁱ

Abu Hanifa described his feelings [when he entered the palace of al-mansoor and Imam Ja'ffar Sadiq [as] sitting with him by saying;

“When I saw Imam Ja'ffar, I felt his personality commands more respect than that of Caliph himself. Yet Caliph was ruling the Muslim world, and imam was a private citizen.”ⁱⁱⁱⁱ Since based on the traditions of two weighty things Ahlul Bait carry as much weight in the eyes of Allah as the holy Quran. The former has the same qualities as the latter. Just as the Quran is true from beginning to end without any shadow of doubt. And just as it is incumbent upon every Muslim to obey its commandments Ahlul Bait perfect and sincere guides whose commands must be followed by all.

Therefore there can be no excuse to escape from accepting their leadership and following their creed and faith. The Muslims are bound by these sayings of holy prophet to follow them and no one else.

Just as it is impossible for any Muslims to turn away from the Holy Quran or to adopt any set of rules which is at variance with it, so when the Ahlul Bait have been unequivocally described as equal in weight and importance to the holy Quran, the same attitude has to be adopted with regard to their orders, and it cannot be permissible to turn away from them in order to follow any other persons.

After mentioning the tradition of Two Weighty Things [Hadees-e-Saqalain]^{iv}, Ibne Hajar holds that:

“These words show that those members of the Ahlul Bait who posed these distinctions were superior to all the people”.^v As Holy Prophet (PUH) said:

“whosoever wishes to live and die like me and enter that heaven [after death], which my lord has promised me, namely, the everlasting heaven should acknowledge Ali [as] as his patron after me, and after him he should acknowledge the sons of Ali [as], because they are the people who will never let you enter the door of misguidance”.^{vi} Therefore the reason we must adopt the faith of Ahlul Bait to the exclusion of all others is that Allah himself has given preference to them only. It is sufficient to quote the poem of al-shaffi’I [one of prominent Sunni Imamas] about Ahlul Bait which goes as follows:

“Members of the House of Prophet, your love are divine duty on mankind. God revealed it in his Quran. it is enough among your great privileges that whoever does not bless you, his prayer is void.”

“If the love of the members of the house of prophet is Rafdh [rejection], let mankind and the jinns testify that I am a Rafidhi [rejector].”^{vii}

World became familiar with microbes after the Invention of Microscope by Galileo and further refinements to the primitive models of Microscope was done by Scientists like Leuwenhoek [1632-1723] prior to this nobody has mentioned about micro-organisms.

The early Microscopic observations appear to have been made between 1625 and 1630 on bees and weevils by the Italian Francesco Stelluti, using a microscope probably supplied by Galileo. In 1665, the first drawing of a micro-organism was published in *Micrographic*. However, the first person to publish extensive, accurate observations of microorganisms was the amateur microscopist Anton Van Leuwenhoek in [1632-1723] of Deft, Netherland. Beginning 1673, Leuwenhoek in sent detailed letters describing his discoveries to The Royal Society of London.^{viii}

Being epitome of Divine Knowledge Imam Ja'ffar[as] has given a detailed account of microbes, long before discovery of Microbes and invention of Microscope by earlier scientists.

“The shia [Twelver] believe that main source of divine knowledge of their imams is Allah himself. He gave that knowledge to prophet [saw], who passed it on to Ali [as], through him it was transferred to his successors one after the other till it reached Imam Ja'ffar[as]. Thus shia twelvers' believe that an imam possess such divine knowledge by birth. Each imam did what was required of him under the then present circumstance.”^{ix} This can be understand through the a famous dialogue between Imam Ja'ffar[as] and Abu Shakir, one of his opponents.

"Abu Shakir, you have said that I have fabricated stories and ask the people to worship Allah, who cannot be seen. You refuse to acknowledge existence of Allah, because He cannot be seen. Can you see inside your own body?"

Replied Abu Shakir: "No, I cannot."

Imam Jafar as-Sadiq said: "If you could have seen what is inside you, you would not have said that you do not believe in Allah, who cannot be seen."

Abu Shakir asked: "What is the relationship between seeing within one's own body and the existence of your unseen Allah?" Imam Jafar as-Sadiq (A. S.) replied: "You have said just now that a thing, which cannot be seen, touched, tasted or heard, does not exist." Abu Shakir said: "Yes, I have said that and I believe it is true." Jafar as-Sadiq asked: "Do you hear the sound of the movement of blood in your body?"

Said Abu Shakir: "No, I do not. But does blood move in the body?" Imam Jafar as-Sadiq (A. S.) said: "Yes, it does. It makes a full circuit of your body. If the circulation of blood stops for a few minutes you will die."

Abu Shakir said: "I cannot believe that blood circulates in the body."

Imam Jafar as-Sadiq said: "It is your ignorance, which does not let you believe that your blood circulates in your body, and the same ignorance does not let you believe in the existence of Allah, Who cannot be seen."

Then the Imam asked Abu Shakir whether he has seen the tiny living beings, which Allah has created in his body.

Jafar as-Sadiq continued: "It is because of these small creatures and their wonderful work that you are kept alive. They are so small that you cannot see them. Since you are a slave of your senses, you do not know about their existence. If you increase your knowledge and decrease your ignorance, you will come to know that these small beings in your body are as large in number as the particles of sand in the desert. These small creatures are born in your body, multiply in your body, work in your body and die in your body. But you never see them, touch them, taste them or hear them in your life time."

"It is true that one who knows himself knows his Allah. If you had known yourself and had the knowledge of what is going on inside your body, you would not have said that you do not believe in Allah, without seeing Him."

Pointing his finger to a huge stone he said: "Abu Shakir, do you see the stone, which is in the foot of that portico? To you it seems lifeless and motionless, because you do not see the brisk motion, which is inside the stone. Again it is lack of knowledge or your ignorance, which would not let you believe that there is motion inside the stone. The time will come when the learned people would see the motion which is in the stone."^x

Not only imam had told about the microbes but he has also stated explicitly that some of them are beneficial for our health. After the discovery of microorganisms, initially it was believed that these microbes cause various diseases and nobody had an idea that microbes could even be beneficial for life. Nowadays a separate new Discipline of Microbiology has come into being when scientists became familiar with such organisms and research has proved that there are certain beneficial bacteria which are busy to benefit our bodies in multiple ways. Such

organisms are now called Probiotics [i.e beneficial organisms]. There are certain bacteria which reside in the soil and helps plants and crops to grow and nurture by assisting them to absorb nutrients from soil, thus such bacteria also help mankind and animals who feed on crops, cereals, vegetables and grasses.

The trillions of bugs that live in our bodies are often the unsung heroes of our good health.

We are vastly, hopelessly, humbly outnumbered: for every one human cell, there are an estimated ten single-cell microbes in us or on us, at least 100 trillion in all, nestled in our guts and in our urogenital tracts, lying on our skin and happily ensconced in our mouths and noses-entire civilizations of fungi, protozoa, and [mostly] bacteria that eat, breath, evolve, reproduce and die. The Microbes in our body -especially some of the 10,000, or so species of bacteria have indeed been implicated in disorders as diverse as Crohn’s, and also in asthma, heart disease, sinusitis, and possibly even mood disorders. They synthesize Vitamins and affect how quickly we metabolize drugs like paracetamol.”^{xi} Scientists world over agree that we must encourage the growth of our friendly **bacteria in order to remain safe against many diseases. In this regard a lot** of supplements and foods have been formulated and they are commercially available in the market as Pre-biotics.

Deep inside your belly, warring colonies of micro-organisms are bracing for battle. Every few days, entire populations rise up or perish, supported in their evolutionary struggle to survive by the food and chemicals you feed them.

When you eat, you are not just feeding your body-you are providing food for trillions of gut bacteria. Weighing up to two kilo grams – a little more than the adult human brain - these tiny creatures breathe, feed, feed and excrete, creating a profound effect on the food you crave, the state of your health and even how you behave.

“We are starting to realize that the tiny bacteria in our gut play much important role in our health than we ever imagined”. Says Dr Amy Loughman, psychologist and microbiome researcher based at the Food and Mood centre at deakin university in Melbourne. “The community

structure depends on the environment that’s down there. We are only just starting to understand the relevance of these tiny cells and how they are connected to everything else. What we know now is just the tip of the iceberg”.

“But it’s only the last ten years or so that technology has enabled us to properly studies the bacteria that live inside the human gut.

Using high-throughput sequencing technology to examine the DNA of the micro-organism that inhabit your body, scientists have found that only 50 percent of the cells in the body are human – the rest are bacteria, fungi, viruses and even microscopic insects, living and breeding in every crevice of our skin, mouths and gut.

“Together they are called the human micro biome. As humans have evolved so, too, have these tiny organisms. Different species have developed specialized roles in keeping us alive –so much so that some scientists believe human beings are more like symbiotic organisms made up of human, the micro biome, and the surrounding environment.”^{xiii}

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