

SIR JADUNATH SARKAR(Part-3) सर जदुनाथ सरकार (भाग-3)

M.A. (HISTORY) SEM-3 PAPER CC:10

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Life and works (जीवन और कार्य)

INTELLIGIBILITY AND PURPOSE IN HISTORY (इतिहास में बोधगम्यता और उद्देश्य):

The historian Jadunath **had his own conception of intelligibility and purpose in history**. Although he recognised the fact that intelligibility in history is inherent in the historical process itself, yet he did not altogether brush aside the medieval idea that attributed causality in history to divine intervention. He believed in human destiny; but destiny meant to intervention. He believed in human destiny; but destiny meant to him character. For example, writing about the fate that overtook Shah Alam II (1759-1806), he says; "No man can rise above destiny as the wise of ancient days have truly said. Destiny is only another name for character,

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and Shah Alam's character alone was responsible for the fate that now overwhelmed him and his house." He also believed in divine justice. Writing about the punishment given to Shah Alam's Nazir, Manzoor Ali, who assisted the ruffian Ghulam Qadir Rohilla in the latter's insulting the aged emperor, he says: "one almost feels a grim satisfaction that divine justice did not sleep over the prime cause of these princely sufferings, the arch-traitor Nazir Manzoor Ali." A fine of seven lakhs was imposed upon him and he "then was beaten, dragged into a latrine and threatened with having his mouth stuffed with excrement unless he paid its."

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Similarly, the historian speaks of divine retribution when Ghulam Qadir was captured and put to death by the orders of Mahadaji Sindhia, and Jadunath Sarkar also believed that an invisible, inscrutable and inexorable force guides human destiny and that force too was, in his eyes, synonymous with the total effect of the human action. Very often he uses '**Fate**' in the sense of divine justice or divine retribution. A few examples will make the point clear. Aurangzeb's strenuous reign of fifty years was, in his view, the story of a man "buttling in vain against and invisible, but inexorable fate." And therefore, it "ends in colossal failure."

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Describing Shivaji's escape from Agra he writes: "The credit of his escape from the claws of the faithless tyrant rests solely with him, even when we concede fate with the effects of human action when he says: "The seeds that had been sown in the third stage of his [Aurangzeb's] life, unnoticed and in ignorance of their fruits, began to sprout up in the fourth, and he had to gather their baneful harvest in the fifth and closing periods of his life."

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Sir Jadunath **believed in inevitability in history due to the operation of certain forces of the age.** Again, he says that “slowly but pitilessly his ‘Fate’ works itself out, finally defeating all his efforts, though the invisible cause of his failure lay in his character and past deeds. Slowly but with increasing clearness does the tragic plot unfold itself till Aurangzeb realizes the true nature of the forces arrayed against him and the real trend of affairs... and he retires to Ahamadnagar only when the first summons of death reaches him.” Jadunath Sarkar also believed in divine mercy.

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for example, describing the condition of India after Nadir Shah's departure, he says, "Heaven seems to have taken pity on the sorely afflicted people of Northern India. In the next season there was adequate and timely rainfall, the earth yielded a profuse harvest and all foodstuff became cheap and plentiful, as if to make amends for the people's recent sufferings.... Nature is not half so much the cause of a nation's misery as Man."

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Like other great scholars and sages, Sir Jadunath was of opinion that **history had a lesson for all of us**. For example, he writes: “The head long decay of the age-old Muslim rule in India, and the utter failure of the new-sprung Marathas.... must be studied with an accuracy of details as to facts and penetrating analysis as to causes if we wish to find out the true solutions of the problems of modern India and avoid pitfalls of the past.”

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“The light of our fathers’ experience is indispensably necessary in guiding a right the steps of those who would rule the destinies of our people in the present.” At another place he says: “History when rightly read is a justification of Providence, the revelation of a great purpose fulfilled in times.” True history is an “object-lesson to the people for all ages to come.”

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Some of Sir Jadunath Sarkar's sentences have become almost proverbial and passed into the idiom of the language. For example, he writes: (1) "A nation's greatest enemy is within, not without"; (2) "War is the supreme test of a nation's efficiency"; (3) "Nana Fadnis saw the things of Delhi Empire through his ears"; (4) "Civil war, as a test for the survival of the fittest to rule, was barred by the British bayonets"; etc.

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Dr. K. R. Qanungo is of the opinion that “he (Jadunath) has all through his works revealed himself as a ‘sage, counselor and judge’.” He again says, “if Jadunath is anything today he is the stern prophet of free India in his writings and speeches.”

The historian Jadunath had a host of critics, some of whom were sincere and others openly hostile. But hardly did anyone think of challenging the factual background of any of his numerous writings, and none dared charge him with deliberately distorting facts, omitting those that he did not like or glossing over

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inconvenient ones. This was because Jadunath had never been guilty of any distortion of facts and of the mistakes of omission and commission.

There have been just two or three honest points of criticism regarding facts or their interpretation, and these contend that criticism regarding facts or their interpretation, and these contend that

(1) in his assessment of Aurangzeb's religious policy he (Sarkar) did not take notice of the emperor's Banaras *farman*, making a grant of land to the Vishwanath temple,

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(ii) that his interpretation of the *jazia* is not fair, and that

(iii) in the absence of decisive evidence it is unfair to say that Shivaji's murder of Afzal Khan was a 'preventive murder'.

The critics were silenced when it was brought home to them that (i) Aurangzeb issued the *farman* in question during the war of succession when he was keen to seek the Hindu support in capturing Shuja, and it had nothing to do with his so-called desire to patronise Hindu religious institutions;

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(ii) that the historian did not offer his own interpretation of the *jazia*, but only summed up the “agreed judgments” of the contemporary Muslim jurists and, therefore, it is ludicrous to attempt “to exonerate Aurangzeb and Islam in the same breath”; and (iii) that Afzal Khan was guilty of gripping Shivaji and striking the first blow on the Maratha king with his belt-dagger is clearly attested by Mir Alam, the famous wazir of Nizam-ul-mulk of Ahmadnagar who was also a historian.

(To be continued)