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A MUSLIM IQBAL ON MUSLIM THOUGHT AND STATE

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Iqbal, the muslim poet-philosopher, was born at a time when India was in mid of a revolutionary process. The Indian muslims were passing through a stage when their tradition and past glories were fading out in the eyes of their new generation born in the British occupation period. The religion seemed to them only a bundle of superstitions and metaphysical illusions. The advent of European thought and philosophy which prevailed all over the educated society had become a threat for their faith and belief. The half-educated people had become half-britishers, not only in their dress but also in their thinking. The Sir Sayyed Movement which called upon them to be sympathetic towards western culture and thought had been widely misunderstood and misutilised. Akbar Allah-abadi's satirical poetry had been rendered ineffective; and the new generation had started an open confrontation with orthodox muslim thought and culture.

On the other hand the christian missionaries had invaded India with their government engineered machinery and officially supplied finances. The hoards of muslim population were being dragged to the christian fold. The motivated and relatively wealthy Hindu population was exploiting this situation for their own ends and were all out to injure the muslim integrity and feeling in every possible way. The Arya Samaj Movement was an outcome of this muslim inability to counter with.

The end of nineteenth century brought for muslims of India nothing but distrust, disbelief and disappointment.

Iqbal was born in Sialkot, which was the first christian mission center in the North-Western India and the Panjab. The city of Sialkot was chosen by christian missionaries primarily for three principal reasons: (a) The major population of Sialkot consisted of poor farmer class; (b) Sialkot had been a strong British Cantonement area which served as forceful deterrant during the Sikh War and therefore the missionaries felt secure and well guarded; (c) The population of that area was particularly more receptive to new ideas.

Iqbal's parents who were devoted muslims had seen the christian conversion movement and campaign with their own eyes and felt its harms with their own hearts while being in the mid of the stream.

Iqbal's teacher Syed Mir Hasan, a great muslim scholar, taught at the Church Mission School

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and felt their designs while being among them. Iqbal personally got his education in the Mission School and had had the experience of studying Bible under compulsion.

This psychological back-ground served as a basis of his muslim feelings and thinking. He admired everyone who was fighting against hostile forces, may be they were political organisations or religious movements. He came to Lahore in a period when war against the christians, the Arya Samajis and the new-light-thinkers was in its full swing and he chose to join.

Iqbal had been influenced principally by Shah Waliullah's movement for muslim's purification, Akbar Allahabadi's poetic-philosophic movement against western culture and civilization, Roomi's mystic benevolence of thought, Afghani's symbolism and outspoken liberal expressions and within India, by the Ahmadiyya movement, whose founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was waging a war against the christians, Aryas and the atheists. Shah Waliullah's movement served him to cope with the western philosophical trends and their adjustment in the contemporary muslim thought in India, and the Ahmadiyya movement* provided him with a broader view of Quranic interpretations and served as a practical example of "true islamic spirit". Roomi and Afghani were his intellectual guides from whom he learnt the essence of mysticism. He was against the so called lethargic mystics and he discarded Hafiz Sheerazi's poetry and sufism on the grounds that they were harmful to muslims.

In the period before his departure to Europe he had been very gloomy over the prevailing situation. He believed that their internal infirmity could be more dangerous than the hostile outer forces

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The Ahmadiyya movement, was founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian who professed to be the Promised Messiah. He was the only man who fought with courage against the christians, the Aryas and the atheists. Iqbal had never been an Ahmadi, like his elder brother, and like the whole family of his respectable teacher Syed Mir Hasan, but had been under great influence of the Ahmadiyya movement till his differences with the community on political grounds. He always held the Ahmadies in high esteem and sought their guidance in the matters relating to the interpretation of the Muslim Law and Shariah. He described the Ahmadiyyas as being the only people having true Islamic spirit, right on the stage of Aligarh Muslim University. The Ahrar Movement, which was gaining popular backing in the Panjab, forced Iqbal to dissociate from the Ahmadies. He Dissociated on the grounds that (a) Ahmadies think all other muslims as infidels (while Ahmadies do not) (b) Ahmadies do not have active social and religious contacts with other muslims and (c) that he had heard some Ahmadi using derogatory language for the Holy Prophet. All these three were mere mis-statements. "Zikre Iqbal", written by Abdul Majeed Salik, a great Iqbalian scholar, stands as a proof for the assertions given above.

therefore he tried to propagate and preach in his own way to make the muslims aware of this fact. He had been described by his close associates as reciting Hali's Musaddas like religious books. Later his own poems Shikwa and Jawabe Shikwa, which were composed after his return from Europe became the religious recitals of muslims. Shikwa is a poem, which in my view is a glaring example of Iqbal's passion for muslim revivalism and the Jawabe Shikwa (which is more forceful a poem than the Shikwa) is an answer to the questions posed by the new hostile situations and circumstances.

Iqbal was a nationalist. He was proud of his country for three important reasons: that India had been stronghold of muslims for centuries, that India had had a long tradition of active mysticism and had illuminating examples of religious intellect in the personalities of Hazrat Khawaja Mueenud Deen Chishtee of Ajmer, Hazrat Khawaja Nizamud Deen Aulia of Delhi and Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh of Lahore, and that India was the country from whose direction the Prophet of Islam felt a cool breeze coming into Arabia. The Himalayas and the Ganges are geographical facts, therefore, in my opinion they could not be cited as nationalistic symbols. All the poems of Iqbal written on nationalist topics had had an influence of the three salient features mentioned above. The three muslim reasons.

Iqbal's second phase of poetry is called the "Pan Islamic Phase". I do not agree on the grounds that his first phase of poetry was equally islamic. His popularity among the masses of India was unparalleled. Every Indian liked his poetry, may be he was a muslim or a hindu or a christian or anything. He was a poet of great scholastic calibre. He was categorised as the revival of Ghalib's intellect in poetry.

Muslims being sentimental, had had held him capable of the positions he had never aspired for. For example he never aspired to be at the Bench of the High Court, but the muslims of the Panjab recommended his name for appointment as a Judge when a vacancy of a muslim Judge was created. The Chief Justice, who was a hindu, rejected this popular demand that 'he knew and loved Iqbal as a great poet and not as an eminent jurist'. This created a great problem both for Iqbal and the authorities. This incident has been described only to show that he was equally popular among the muslims and the hindus for being a great Indian poet. Although Iqbal always described himself as a muslim first and an indian later, his position as a poet was secure. Therefore it would be equally unjustified to describe the second phase of his poetry as islamic and the first phase nationalist. Both were the same.

The third and final phase of Iqbal's poetry is the 'Humanitarian' stage. This too in my opinion is not very much true. Iqbal, after having studied at length the western philosophy, culture and civilization, had become more bold in expression, more realistic in his approach and more philosophical

in his poetry, but he never compromised his muslimness. The impact of western philosophical thought had not changed his basic thinking.

The most important stage in Iqbal's life was the stage when he started studying philosophy. Here ushered in the famous Sir Thomas Arnold, who introduced him to the study of philosophy. Iqbal was a student of Arabic and philosophy. He graduated in these subjects and preferred to teach Arabic at the Oriental College, because he had got distinction in Arabic, the language of the Quran. Sir Thomas Arnold dragged him out and roused his interest in philosophy, sent him to Europe for higher studies and patronised him at every stage. Iqbal had his Ph.D. in philosophy on "The Development of Metaphysics in Persia", later joined the Bar and returned to India as a barrister.

During his stay in Europe, he had active contact with living philosophers, scholars and men of letters. He was impressed by German philosophy very much, but remained in Europe as a muslim and returned as a muslim. This was the strong impact of his parents and his teacher and most of all his strong muslim intellect.

A brief analysis of his philosophy would be sufficient to reach the point where we could be able to see his real place. His basic philosophy is the philosophy of Self. He has combined Hegel's self, Schopenhauer's will and Nietzsche's super-man. Starting with Schopenhauer: 'that if I merely were an intellectual being, an outward looking subject, I should perceive nothing but phenomena arranged in space and time, and in casual relation. In my innermost consciousness, however, I come face to face with my true real basal self; in the consciousness of activity I become aware of the thing itself. The thing in itself is Will; it is primary, timeless, spaceless, uncaused activity that expresses itself in me is impulse, instinct, striving, craving, yearning. I also become aware of myself as a phenomenon, as a part of nature; I image myself as an extended organic body. I know myself in two ways: as will and as body.' ... Iqbal described his Self ... that 'it always moves in some directions, is essentially directive in nature, It develops into strong purposeful personality by desires and aspirations... with Will... Desires presuppose environment. Hence the development of life and Self depend upon having established some connection with its objective reality: the world, the society and the Ultimate Reality. The Self can not grow in isolation. Hence the Self had to confront a non-self at every step... Man though Living in an environment provided for him has the power to reshape it according to his Will. After the conquest of environment he is free and near the God who is the most Free Individual' ... In contrast to Schopenhauer's will ... 'which controls perception, memory, imagination, judgement and reasoning' and which did not fit in Iqbal's frame because Schopenhauer denied the existence of God.

Iqbal's ideal was not Schopenhauer, but German individualist Friedrich Nietzsche... 'who wrote before the appearance of American Pragmatism and may be regarded the *enfant terrible* of the whole

movement of discontentment. He not only antagonised the old theories and methods, but swept away the old values and condemns the entire trend of our modern civilization, considering the historical attitude as the cause of the weakness of our age; strong, reverent, burden-bearing man carries too many heavy strange words and values of the past on his back. It is the function of the philosophy, to transform all values to create new values, new ideals, and a new civilization...'

Iqbal adhered to Nietzsche's principle of change and pleaded a well knit transformation to his fellow muslims, who by virtue of being an ignored people of a slave nation, readily responded to. Iqbal's superman is almost a facsimile copy of Nietzsche's superman, but with difference that Iqbal's superman is a muslim, a Momin (a true believer). Although Iqbal denied the Fascist elements of Nietzsche's superman, he could not resist to symbolize his own superman as a Falcon, Shaheen, which is the strongest of the birds, having the virtues of power, independence and drive.

It would be equally interesting to note that Iqbal loved Nietzsche because Nietzsche hated christianity. As related by Thilly... 'Religion too, particularly christianity, is repudiated for the same reason; and his contempt of science and philosophy is to be explained in the same way, by his glorification of the will of power. Peace, happiness, pity, self denial, contempt of the world, effeminacy, non resistance, equality... Nietzsche thought all that just the symptoms of decadence ...'

The third western philosophical school which impressed Iqbal was the Hegelian. Hegel's concept of the evolution of ... 'ethical spirit into a community of self conscious individuals ...' which is the result of the evolution of active reason ...' sounded reasonable to Iqbal and his idea of '... Providence, or universal reason which makes use of the passions and private interests of individuals to realize universal ends ...' looked fitting in Iqbal's perspective of a muslim society. This primarily served Iqbal in his propagation of the theory of self denial to certain extent.

Iqbal took a middle road, and maintained that the growth and development of full and free personality is impossible except where it draws its spiritual sustenance from the culture of the group to which it belongs. And Iqbal belonged to muslim culture of India.

Iqbal's concept of a society centered round the following points as described by S.A.Vahid, an eminent Iqbalian, that (a) it must be based on spiritual considerations (b) it must center round an inspired leadership or prophethood (c) it must possess a code of guidance (d) it must have a goal to which the whole society would move (e) it must gain supremacy over the forces of nature (f) the communal or collective ego must be developed in the same way as the individual ego is developed (g) it must safeguard the right of women.

These points are picked up from Nietzsche, Hegel and Schopenhauer and had been described in Iqbal's poetry at a considerable length.

The most exciting experience of Iqbal was in prose writing, when he chose to deliver lectures on

different Islamic topics to apprise the new educated generation of the country of the impact of western philosophy on his thinking and his approach towards the problems which faced muslims, particularly in the field of religion. Those lectures published under the title of "Reconstruction of Religious Thought In Islam", were delivered at different occasions, in the south Indian city of Madras. Those included: "The Knowledge and Religious Experience", "The Philosophical Tests of Religious Experience", "The Conception of God and the Meaning of the Prayer", "The Human Ego, His Freedom and Immortality", "The Spirit of Muslim Culture", "The Principle of Movement in the Structure of Islam", and "Is Religion Possible".

The lectures were widely acclaimed by the whole population, muslims and non muslims alike, because this had led them to the discovery of a philosopher-poet who was a religious thinker of a high calibre. Iqbal warned them that "with the advancement of scientific thought even our concept of intelligibility is undergoing a change. No wonder that the younger generation of Islam in Asia and Africa demand a fresh orientation of their faith."

The most important period of Iqbal's life was the period when he had started thinking of a 'muslim state', as a political thinker. The idea of a muslim state as envisaged by Iqbal was not that of a muslim state within India, but he emphatically said that he wanted... 'to see the Panjab, North West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state.' Because in his eyes the ... 'life of Islam as a cultural force in this country very largely depends on its centralization in a specified territory'. The emphasis is on culture and not on the system.

This brief study of Iqbal brings into light the efforts made by Iqbal for the revival of muslim thought in the twentieth century. He was a muslim who, despite a number of economical, political, social setbacks never faced a single spiritual setback because he had strong spiritual force behind him. Who it could be? We don't know. Iqbal is said to have been reciting his following couplet only moments before his death:

Surroode Rafta Baz Ayad Keh Nayad,
Naseeme Az Hijaz Ayad Keh Nayad,
Sar Aamad Roozgare en Fakeere,
Diger Danae Raz Ayad Keh Nayad.

This means: I don't know that that breeze which blew from Arabia will again blow or not, the symphony which we heard will be heard again or not but, the man who came here right in time, was here. I don't know whether another man, who knows the Will of God, will come again.

The Iqbalists say that Iqbal himself was the subject of this couplet. I don't agree, because Iqbal never professed to be the recipient of God's revelations, which he described as a virtue of 'a man who knows the Will of God'. And Iqbal knew himself better.

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