

Political Philosophy of Allama Iqbal: A Literary Review

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Abstract

This paper discusses Iqbal's vision and thoughts about politics. He has given an ever inspiring treasure of knowledge and philosophy through his works. His philosophy of politics is based on Islamic ideology. He adopted verses of Quran as his medium of expression. He took serious interest in political matters during his stay in Europe. This study is qualitative in nature. Iqbal opposes the concept of Western democracy and promoted spiritual democracy which is based on the concept of Muslim nationalism and leads to Islamic universalism which provided ideological foundations to Pakistan movement and came to be known as 'spiritual father of Pakistan. This study recommends that by following the philosophy of Iqbal with true sense of spirit it will lead Pakistan towards progress, prosperity and will have to carry out the work of leading the world

Key Words: Iqbal Philosophy, Politics, Spiritual Democracy, Muslim Ummah,

Introduction

Allama Muhammad Iqbal is a great poet- philosopher and thinker. He has keen interest in political matters during his stay in Europe, where he got the opportunity to study European political thoughts. He studied different problems and tried to explain them. He did not focus these problems, but also studied nearly all of the social issues which Man has to suffer. He expressed his views in prose, but the major portion of his writings is in verse. So his medium of exchange was verses of Holy Quran. Because he thought verses have more effects than a prose. Quaid-e-Azam said:

"Iqbal was a remarkable poet of world-wide fame. His work will live forever. His services to his country and the Muslims are so numerous that his record can be compared with that of the greatest Indians that ever lived."¹

¹ Statements of Quaid-e-Azam about Allama Iqbal Message of condolence of the death of Sir Muhammad Iqbal, Calcutta, April 21, 1938: The Star of India, April 22, 1938.

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Iqbal and Politics

Iqbal's philosophy of politics is based on Islamic ideology as he has discussed the problems and tried to find their solution from the Islamic point of view. He relies on the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and regards it as his final word. The Muslims all over the world are members of the society founded by the Prophet of Islam (PBUH). According to Dr. Parveen Shaukat Ali:

“Iqbal found the Prophet as the ideal leader of man. He came to conclusion that stagnation in modern Islam was due to physical and spiritual inertia of the Muslims. Instead of following the line of action, laid down the Prophet they had gone astray, which was the sole cause of their ruin and humiliation.”²

Thus Islamic conception of nationality is different from that of other communities of the world. Islam does not believe in such material limitations as language, color and territory. He believed that the message of Islam is eternal and universal. Iqbal says

“Islam has a far deeper significance for us than merely religious; it has a peculiarly national meaning, so that our communal life is unthinkable without a firm grasp of the Islamic Principle. The idea of Islam is, so to speak, our eternal home or country wherein we live, move and have our being. To us it is above everything else, as England is above all to the Englishman and Deutschland über alle to the German. The moment, our grasp of the Islamic Principle is loosened that solidarity of our community is gone.”³

According to Iqbal politics cannot be separated from religion. If politics is separated from religion then it changes itself into tyranny.

جلال پادشاہی ہو کہ جمہوری تماشابو
جدا ہو دیں سیاست سے تورہ جاتی ہے چنگیزی

When religion and state parted the ways for ever, it set the rule of avarice and greed.

²Shaukat Ali, Drparveen, *The Political Philosophy of Iqbal*, publishers untied LtD.176, Anarkali, Lahore, 1978, p 127

³Sherwani, Latif Ahmad, *Speeches, Writings and Statement of Iqbal*, Iqbal Academy, Lahore, 2015, p.125.

This split is a disaster both for country and faith, and shows the culture's blind lack of vision.⁴

According to Dr. Muhammed Maruf:

“Religious experience differs from various types of non-religious experience in that it involves an intimate union with some divine object, or at least a search for such a union. But for this, the experience would cease to be religious in proper sense.”⁵

Iqbal's Ideal Individual and State

Iqbal emphasizes the importance of state he regards it as an end in itself according to him individual depend upon social organization for every right even for life. But in his later writings, the State and individual are made interdependent. Here he maintains the balance between the two, and regards them as equally important. Individual cannot realize his self spiritually without the help of state and state cannot maintain itself and cannot make any progress without the inner worth of individuals. Individual depends on society for his survival and society plays a supportive role. Iqbal states,

“This self is personality woven of individuality and sociality both of which develop side by side.”⁶

In this Iqbal pointed two terms individuality and sociality. Individuality composed of wishes, desires, passions and intentions. All of these things are self-directed and self-determined which an individual can utilize only in society because an individual can develop himself under certain social condition. Living with other fellowmen is a natural desire of an individual. Society contributes to improve and fulfill individual aims and goals. Iqbal was constrained to say subsequently in Bang-i-Dara:

فرد قائم ربط ملت سے ہے تنہا کچھ نہیں

موج ہے دریا میں اور بیروں دریا کچھ نہیں

An individual lives if with the Millathimself he identifies. If alone he stands, He surely dies. The waves flourish in the bosom of the sea, Outside the ocean they all cease to be.⁷

⁴Kulliyat Iqbal, Allam Iqbal , khaznia – ilm o adabUrduBazaar, , Lahore,2006, P387

⁵Maruf, Dr. Muhammed, *Iqbal's Philosophy of Religion a Study in the Cognitive Value of Religious Experience*, Iqbal Academy, Lahore, Pakistan , 2003 p. 202.

⁶ Habib, N. *Versatile Iqbal*, Bazm-i-Iqbal, Lahore, 1985, p.106

⁷Kulliyat Iqbal, Allam Iqbal , khaznia – ilm o adab,Urdu bazaar, , Lahore,2006, P233

To Iqbal only a social man can utilize his abilities to full extent by living in a society. He can shape his own destiny as well as that of the universal by adjusting himself to its forces. In fact society sets rules and roles for individual; the respect of individual is in obeying and adopting these rules and roles. Allama Iqbal address individual as a member of society. Individual and society are reciprocal to each other.

افراد کے ہاتھوں میں اقوام کی تقدیر

ہر فرد ہے ملت کے مقدر کا ستارہ

Fortunes of states through individual prowess ripen,
each men one star of their ascendant (destiny)⁸

Iqbal pointed out that all pillars of Islam serve the purpose of sociality. Individual works more effectively when united. We can see its demonstration in term of collective prayers. So it is clear that according to Iqbal individual can fully realize his own self only in a society. Iqbal contended that wherever the Qur'an calls upon the people to follow and join the Muslim party, the word '*millah*' or '*ummah*' is used. In the following couplet of Iqbal, we hear the echoes of the universalism of the Muslims of the world:

بتان رنگ و خوں کو توڑ کر ملت میں گم ہو جا

نہ تو رانی رہے باقی نہ ایرانی نہ افغانی

Break, break the idols of color and race. In the *Millat* yourself you must efface.

Call not yourself of Turkish nationality, or an Iranian, or an Afghani.⁹

Iqbal & Democracy

According to Iqbal individual life and destiny is determined by form of government. Iqbal was great promoter of democratic government which is based on Islamic ideology. He believed that the message of Islam is eternal and universal. The main reason of his views is the moral deprivation of Muslims in sub continent due to loss of power. He hoped that the Muslims would one day regain the lost glory of their past. In his view ideology of *Tawhid* is the basic principle of Islamic state in which there is no discrimination on the basis of race, color, language, education, geographical gain, and a Muslim and a non-believer.

ولایت، پادشاہی، علم اشیا کی جہانگیری

⁸Kulliyat Iqbal, Allam Iqbal, khaznia – ilm o adab,Urdu bazaar, , Lahore,2006, P672

⁹Kulliyat Iqbal, Allam Iqbal, khaznia – ilm o adab,Urdu bazaar, , Lahore,2006, P320

یہ سب کیا ہیں؟ فقط اک نکتہء ایمان کی تفسیریں

Province, kingdom, knowledge of the world! What is all this?

Only the interpretation of faith¹⁰

Iqbal was of the view that, there was no doubt that people have the right of election of their representatives but both people and representatives have to work within the framework of the law revealed by God called the *Shariah* law. So for him state and government is a trust of God, where the ultimate authority is Allah and the state has to create such law and order which is according to the commands of God, and should select such Islamic consultative assembly who would maintain Islamic justice, economic system and society. Iqbal was in favor of democracy based on Islamic values and condemn democracy which is divorced from religion and belief as in the case of western democracy.

مری نگاہ میں ہے یہ سیاست لادیں

کنیزا ہرمن دووں نہاد و مردہ ضمیر

In my view statesmanship cut off from creed,
Is Satan's salve, has no qualms, but low breed.¹¹

Iqbal calls such democracy as "Spiritual Democracy", which should be governed by parliament members who strictly follow the teachings of Islam and would work on the principle of *Ijtihad* and with due regard to the requirements of the times. They would create Islamic laws which would satisfy our timely needs on the one hand and, eliminate discrimination, reflect our collective perceptions and would be able to create unity among us.

"The Democracy of Islam did not grow out of the extension of economic opportunity, it is a spiritual principle based on the assumption that every human being is a centre of latent power, the possibilities of which can be developed by cultivating a certain type of character. Out of the plebeian material Islam has formed a man of the noblest type of life and power"¹²

Iqbal wanted that whole Islamic world should follow this ideal spiritual democracy so that Muslims would become powerful, peaceful and prosperous. He expects such Islamic state who will be problem solving for its

¹⁰Kulliyat Iqbal, Allam Iqbal , khaznia – ilm o adab,Urdu bazaar , Lahore,2006, P321

¹¹Kulliyat Iqbal, Allam Iqbal , khaznia – ilm o adab,Urdu bazaar , Lahore,2006, P637

¹²Sherwani, Latif Ahmad, *Speeches, Writings and Statement of Iqbal*, Iqbal Academy, Lahore, 2015, p.125.

poor population by disallowing the concentration of wealth in few hands and follow fair distribution of resources. He wants the elimination of all kinds of feudalism or kingship. He wants the implementation of Islamic economic system which will ultimately remove any kind of economic disparity completely

Iqbal contributed to the development of democratic thinking. Iqbal opposes the concept of Western democracy and promotes that of spiritual democracy. In fact, spiritual democracy is a form of government which is related to the ideological State of Iqbal. He therefore, explains

“Let the Muslim of today appreciate his position, reconstruct his social life in the light of ultimate principles, and evolve out of the hitherto partially revealed purpose of Islam, that spiritual democracy is the ultimate aim of Islam¹³”

Iqbal became a strong critic of the Western democratic form of government where persons are counted, not weighted; it is a material fact but not of personality, which is a spiritual fact He says that, Democracy is a form of government in which People are counted but their worth is not assessed. The major objection Iqbal had on western democracy is that it takes publicity under consideration rather ability. However it is possible that a person can be beneficial without having potential abilities. His views on western democracy promote sectarianism and extremist group. This kind of democracy gives all sorts of freedom to individuals but destroys his good qualities of following religious commands and he become slave of his own desires. Iqbal has put this idea in Bang-i-Dara.

دیار مغرب کے رہنے والو خدا کی بستی دکان نہیں ہے
 کھرا جسے تم سمجھ رہے ہو وہ اب زر کم عیار ہوگا
 تمہاری تہذیب اپنے خنجر سے آپ ہی خود کٹی کرے گی
 جوشاخ نازک پہ آشیانہ بنے گا ناپائیدار ہوگا

Oh you, who have in the West your living place,
 God's acre is not a market-place.
 The coin that you today real deem soon to you will counterfeit seem.
 With its own dagger your civilization will bring about its own annihilation.¹⁴

¹³ Iqbal, Mohammad. (1983). Zarb-i-Kalim (The Rod of Moses). Trans. by Syed Akbar Ali Shah. Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan

¹⁴ Kuliyyat Iqbal, Allam Iqbal, khaznia – ilm o adab Urdu Bazaar, , Lahore, 2006, P174

Iqbal was not against of democracy but towards its demerits only. He accepted some principles of democracy which are according to Islamic teachings and rejected those principles which are incompatible with Islamic Philosophy of life and Islamic polity. Quaid-e-Azam said:

“Although a great poet and philosopher, he was no less a practical politician. With his firm conviction and faith in the ideals of Islam, he was one of the few who originally thought over the feasibility of carving out of India an Islamic State in the north-west and north-east zones, which are historical homelands of Muslims.”¹⁵

Iqbal and Muslim Nationalism

On the basis of this very philosophy of “spiritual democracy” Iqbal presented the concept of Muslim nationalism in contrast with the nationalism followed by the geographical, racial and linguistic movements of Europe. On one hand he wanted Muslims to liberate themselves from slavery of so-called scientific thoughts and ideologies and on the other hand wanted to create confidence among them by reminding them that teachings of Islam have complete political and social system in it and following them is the only way to maintain their identity and dignity.

مشرق از سلطانی مغرب خراب

اشتراک از دین و ملت برده خراب

To fail to find the self is naught to be,
to find it but to bestow one's self
On self....¹⁶

After his return from Europe Iqbal opposed the concept of Indian nationalism and adopted Muslim Nationalism. He had given his views on Islamic universalism. He was confirmed that western democratic concept of nationalism cannot be applied to India. Because two major communities of Muslim and Hindus were living in India who do not share common language, common culture, common history which is the basis of nationalism. Rather Muslims possess separate identity with their own religious and cultural values.

He believes that if this nationalism is followed in India as in Europe than it will have less material gains for Muslims as it will create disaffiliation

¹⁵Statements of Quaid-e-Azam about Allama Iqbal Message on Iqbal Day, New Delhi, March 30, 1946

¹⁶ Maruf, op, cit, p. 75.

from religion. He is in opinion that patriotism has importance in man's moral life but man's faith, culture, and his historical tradition is above all. These are the elements which Iqbal said are of more worth than the piece of earth. Because land is not sufficient basis for a nation, there are number of other forces which are necessary for the formation of a nation. So it is clear from his views that nationalism and religion cannot go hand in hand.

According to Iqbal if nationality is not based on spirituality than it will results in communalism. He observed that Indian nationalism will result in total suppression of the cultural entities of the country and will create mutual bitterness and even oppression. To Iqbal a nationalist give more importance to artificial factors for unity and solidarity but true solidarity is based on the spiritual and ethical foundation and in the case of Muslims unity and solidarity it is achieved only on the basis of faith which based on two propositions that God is one, and that the Prophet Muhammad, peace be up on him is the last messenger to guide mankind to the right ways of living. Iqbal observed that any other way will be irreligious and contrary to human dignity. He asserted that only one unity is required, the unity of brotherhood of man, which stands above race, nationality, color or language.

آبتاوں تجھ کو رمز آئینہ ان المکوک

سطننت اقوام غالب کی ہے اک جادو گری

خواب سے بیدار ہوتا ہے زرا مخکوم اگر

پھر سلا دیتی ہے اس کو حکمراں کی ساحری

Come, of a king's duties I will unravel the mystery.
Empire is a conquering nation's jugglery
If from slumber awakens a subject's face,
Into sleep lulls him the magic of the ruling race¹⁷.

On the basis of his understanding and realization of nationalism Iqbal rejects the so-called nationalism and geographical nationality. He feels that nationalism based on race or territory will mislead Muslims from their own ideal of a universal humanity. He feels it is his duty as a Muslim and as a lover of all mankind, to remind them of their true function in the evolution of mankind. Iqbal was of the view that origin of Muslim nationalism lies in Islam. In Islam scope of nationalism is not limited as it is not determined by birth or domicile, it did not consider the natural, historical and cultural differences of different races but it is based on common faith. All the

Kuliyat Iqbal, Allam Iqbal , khaznia – ilm o adabUrdu bazaar , Lahore,2006, P,311 312

Muslims of the world constitute a single Muslim nation *Ummah*. It was Islamic universalism which is a base of Muslim nationalism.

Iqbal believes that Islamic universalism can be attained only by strengthening of Muslim nationalism which is the ultimate goal of Muslims. He wants to revive Islam and Islamic civilization for the sake of the safety of humanity. For this Muslims have to protect their separate identity and need political power to retain their uniqueness. He envisioned an ideal state for Muslims of subcontinent which should be designed on divine law of Islam and which should work for the betterment of Muslim *Ummah*.

With this realization Iqbal presented two “Nation Theory” vividly in his presidential address of the All-India Muslim League at Allahabad on the 29th December, 1930.

“India is a continent of human groups belonging to different races, speaking different languages and professing different religions. Their behavior is not at all determined by a common race-consciousness..... The Muslim demand for the creation of a “Muslim India” without India, is, therefore, perfectly justified, personally ‘ I would go further than the demands embodied in it; (the resolution of the All-Parties Muslim Conference at Delhi),I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state Self Government within the British Empire or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State, appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims, at least of the North-West India”.¹⁸

Conclusion

Iqbal has put forward his ideas in a logical manner the subject he has chosen is a philosophical but his thoughts are clear and comprehensible they have been expressed in a clear and simple way. After exploring Iqbal’s political thought we came to the conclusion that Islamic ideology is the basis of his political thought. He believed politics cannot be separated from religion. Individuals depend on society for his survival and society plays a supporting role. A social man can utilize his abilities to full extent by living in a society. Individual life and destiny is determined by form of government. Iqbal called such democracy as spiritual democracy. Iqbal want whole

¹⁸Saeedud Din Ahmad Dar, Ideology of Pakistan , National institute of Historical and cultural research centr of excellence, Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad, Pakistan 2000, P62,63

Islamic world should follow this ideal spiritual democracy so that Muslim would become powerful, peaceful and prosperous. On the basis of this philosophy of spiritual democracy Iqbal present the concept of Muslim nationalism. Iqbal believed that Islamic universalism can be attained only by strengthening of Muslim nationalism which is the ultimate goal of Muslims. He wanted to revive Islam and Islamic civilization for the sake of the safety of humanity. He, therefore, made it clearer that the creation of a separate Islamic state does not mean in any way the formation of a rigid, fanatic and fundamentalist religious state. He envisioned an Islamic state would be a welfare state. It stands for peace, security and prosperity of the people. It comes into existence with the consent of the people. It runs on the basis of a constitution and rule of law.

But it is a pity that just after seventy years of creation of Pakistan, the people of Pakistan have ignored the message of Iqbal. Today's Pakistan political system has adopted few of his thoughts and suggestions, therefore, could not cherish goals of peace, security and prosperity at the best. At present, our political leaders have forgotten the main cause of establishment of ideal Islamic state of Iqbal and have ignored Iqbal's message. They have adopted western thoughts with the false expectation that they will achieve real development. But reality shows that after seventy years we are still dependent on the West. Today, Pakistan is facing the problem of extremism, terrorism and provincialism. Pakistan's honor is greatly damaged at international level due to the fires of terrorism. Due to crisis of leadership, our nation is confused and is showing lack of confidence. Our political leaders, who hold power, do not represent the voice of the people and depend totally on the support of the Western major powers. If we want to change this state of affairs, as envisioned by Iqbal, there is no other way for us except to work hard sincerely, wisely and intelligently for the reconstruction of the Islamic state. Pakistan's lost glory can only be regained by following the message of our great political thinker, Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal.

نہیں ہے ناامید اقبال اپنی کشت ویراں سے
ذرا نم ہو تو یہ مٹی بڑی زرخیز ہے ساقی

Iqbal is not at all hopeless of his barren lands
with a little moisture, this soil is extremely fertile.¹⁹

¹⁹Kuliyat Iqbal, Allam Iqbal , khaznia – ilm o adab,Urdu bazaar, Lahore,2006, p. 311 361