

IQBAL AND NATIONALISM

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"It seems to me that God is slowly bringing home to us the truth that Islam is neither Nationalism nor Imperialism but a League of Nations which recognizes artificial boundaries and racial distinctions for facility of reference only, and not for restricting the social horizon of its members."⁸

The fundamental problem confronting Islam today is to determine its attitude *vis-a-vis* the ideas and institutions associated with the modern, non-Islamic civilization. In a sense the problem is not a novel one. Islam has been confronted with the same problem in one form or the other from the very beginning. In the early period of its history the primitive Arab Muslims, who were the standard-bearers of Islam, came into contact with the Greek and Persian civilizations. But if the problems faced by Islam then and now are similar in essence, they are enormously different in magnitude. For then Islam had the vigour of a nascent civilization, and all the prestige of a triumphant power which had overpowered both the great empires of the times. Hence Islam faced the challenge without losing its poise, its self-confidence, even its sense of superiority. But today the situation is altogether different. Since the sixteenth century Muslim society has remained steeped in stagnation and degeneracy and has drifted downward. On the other hand Christendom (the historical rival of Islam) has passed through a process of rebirth and regeneration. It shook itself out of its stupor and made tremendous achievements in all fields of life. In the nineteenth century the superiority of Christian Europe over the Muslim world was no longer a subject of debate. It had already become a solid fact. Consequently Muslim countries lost their independence one after the other, and along with that they began to lose their cultural pride and self-confidence. Christendom, towards which the Muslims had looked down in the past with disdain — as religiously

⁸ Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Lahore, 1954, p. 159.

misguided and culturally backward — began to win their admiration. With this change in outlook the ideas and institutions of the European society began to penetrate into the Muslim world and to enjoy tremendous prestige as a result of their association with the culture of the dominant nations of the world.

One of the ideas of European origin which has had a serious impact upon the Muslim world (in fact, upon the whole of the East) is that of nationalism. One of the most serious challenges to the traditional values of Islamic society has been posed by this idea.

The questions posed by nationalism have serious theoretical as well as practical implications. In countries where Muslims are in majority, some of the problems with which Muslims are faced are: What place should be assigned to "love of the fatherland" in the hierarchy of values by the Muslim inhabitants of various countries? Will it be proper for them to give the same degree of importance to their particular fatherlands and nationalities as assigned by the present-day nationalists? If the answer to this question is in the affirmative, will this not strike at the roots of the Islamic ideal that Islam should be the pivotal point in their private as well as public life? Will the nationalist ideal not require the development of a nationality and culture which is common to both Muslim and non-Muslim inhabitants of the fatherland? Will this ideal not require that those elements which are common in the life of Muslims as well as non-Muslims are stressed, and Islam — which is not the common denominator between all the various religious groups which compose the nation — be relegated to a secondary position? Will this ideal not reduce Islam to the position of a private affair as has happened in the West? Moreover, if the Muslims accept the modern concept of nationalism, in what way will they be able to meet the claims of Islamic brotherhood, for the Islamic *ummah* has always been considered by them a universal *ummah* indivisible on racial, linguistic, territorial or such other considerations?

And if Muslims were to reject the nationalist idea that the only sound principle of political life is loyalty to the fatherland, then in what way will it be ensured that both the Muslim and non-Muslim members of the nation are welded into a common nationality? What is it that will ensure the participation of all, Muslims as well as non-Muslims, in national life?

The problems facing Muslims in countries where they are in minority are no less difficult. They are faced with the problem as to how they can maintain their distinct identity as members of an ideological community without adopting a negative attitude towards the nation and the state?

Of modern Islamic thinkers, Iqbal was perhaps the first to realize the magnitude of this challenge. No other Muslim thinker has shown as profound an awareness of the implications of the nationalist idea to the Islamic society. In his poems, as well as in his prose writings, he turns again and again to this question and seeks to give the Muslims a definite lead.

In the following pages we shall make an attempt to grasp the standpoint of Iqbal on the problems raised by nationalism and assess its significance. In order to appreciate that, our discussion will be preceded by an attempt to explain the concept of nationalism and its implications, and the classical Islamic attitude on the point.

(I)

Nationalism is a relatively recent phenomenon in human history. In the past man's loyalty, has not been due to the nation — state or nationality, but to differing forms of social authority, political organization and ideological cohesion such as tribe or clan, the city-state or the feudal lord, the dynastic state, the church or the religious group.⁹ During the Middle Ages there were hardly any traces of nationalism, either in the Islamic world or in Christendom. In those times the object of popular loyalty was not primarily

⁹ See Kohn, Hans, *Nationalism: Its Meaning and History*, Anvil Books No. 8 (Princeton: 1955), p. 9.

nationality, but religion. In Europe "the object of popular loyalty which, was superior to all others" was Christendom.¹⁰ In the Muslim world a Muslim considered his first loyalty to be due to his faith and to the community of believers and only then to the family or the local group.¹¹

This, however, does not mean that *nationalities* were nonexistent in pre-modern times. Nationalities, in the sense of cultural societies conscious of their distinctness, internally homogeneous and alien from other groups, had existed in the Middle Ages and even before. Similarly, patriotism — the attachment to one's native soil and to local traditions — had also existed long. What, however, did not exist in the Middle Ages is the "fusion of patriotism and nationality and the predominance of national patriotism over all other human loyalties... which is nationalism."¹²

This is indeed modern, very modern. In fact it is not until the seventeenth century that we find the first full manifestation of nationalism in England and it is only towards the end of the eighteenth century that nationalism in the modern sense of the term became a generally recognised sentiment in Europe, increasingly moulding all public and private life.¹³

The rise of nationalism in Europe synchronizes with the disintegration of the mediaeval, and the gradual emergence of the modern civilization. The powerful forces, material as well as ideational, which had been released by Renaissance and Reformation had been in operation for many centuries and had enormously affected the structure of European society and culture and had prepared the ground for the acceptance of the nationalist idea. For instance, there had grown up several regional languages in Europe and each one of them had come to possess fairly rich literature. The Christian Church had lost most of its former power and authority. It had split up into several

¹⁰ Hayes, Carlton J.H., *Essays on Nationalism*, (New York: 1933) p. 28.

¹¹ Von Grunebaum, G.E., "Problems of Muslim Nationalism", *Islam and the West*, R.N. Frye (ed.), (The Hague: 1957) p. 14.

¹² Hayes, *op. cit.*, p. 29

¹³ Kohn, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

mutually antagonistic churches, and had thus rent asunder the spiritual unity of Christendom. The weakening of feudalism, and later on of monarchy, had increased the active participation of the people in public affairs. Alongwith these changes, new trends of thought like the sovereignty of the people and the doctrine of natural rights were also emerging. Moreover, the economic transformations which were taking place in the pre-modern times had brought into prominence a new economic class, the middle class. Furthermore, there had also occurred a tremendous change in the mentality of the people due to the impact of scientific progress and the emergence of a changing social order under its pressure. The change in the mentality of the people mainly consisted in the refusal of the enlightened sections of the European people to conform blindly to tradition. A number of factors had even weakened the faith of Europeans in Christianity. People had particularly become increasingly weary of the idea that religion should remain the pivotal point in public life. For the memories of religious civil wars, which had ravaged Europe and had led to wholesale massacres, were still fresh in their minds. It is in this milieu that nationality began to acquire an increasing importance in Europe and gradually became the focus of loyalty in the body-politic, and thereby replaced religion as a cohesive force.

Nationalism has naturally passed through various courses of development in various European countries. Hence in certain respects each nationalism is different from all others. There have, however, also grown up certain characteristics which are common to every nationalism. To borrow the words of Carlton Hayes, nationalism is:

“... a condition of mind among members of a nationality, perhaps already possessed of national state, a condition of mind in which loyalty to the ideal or to the fact of one's national state is superior to all other

loyalties and of which pride in one's nationality and belief in its intrinsic excellence and in its "mission" are integral parts."¹⁴

Nationalist ideology has two basic tenets. In the first place, nationalism believes that each nationality should constitute a united, independent and sovereign state. Hence, if a nationality is subjected to the domination of any other nationality, it should become free and independent; and if the nationality is divided into numerous states, these states should merge in a single national state. Thus, the nationalist view has been that nationality should be the basis of statehood. In the second place, nationalism places national loyalty above all other loyalties.¹⁵ It is this feature of nationalism which distinguishes it from mere patriotism, which had existed even in premodern times.

Nineteenth century was the century of the triumph of nationalism. Nationalism remained a very potent force throughout this century and led to tremendous changes in the political map of Europe. Nation-states had come into existence and had caused numerous important changes in the character of political life. Formerly religion had been the most important cohesive force in the life of the community. Nationalism now led to the replacement of the religious by the national tie. Thus, religion receded into a position of secondary importance in public life. For, nationalism had taught the people to participate in the political life of their nation-states as its citizens, as the members of the English or the French or the Italian nation, and not as Jews and Christians or as Catholics and Protestants. The natural corollary of all this was that state ceased to be an institution which could be expected to devote itself primarily to the promotion of the cause of faith, although this was expected of it during the Middle Ages. State came to be concerned exclusively with the achievement of common national "interests and with the nation's material well-being.

¹⁴ *Hayes, op. cit.*, p. 6. This is the standard definition of nationalism. *Cf. Kohn, op. cit.*, p. 9

¹⁵ *Cf. Hayes, op. cit.*, pp. 26-29 and *Kohn, op. cit.*, pp. 9-12.

Along with nationalism there developed in Europe the trend of thought which is known as 'secularism'. The impact of this development was that this-worldly matters were separated from otherworldly matters; the concern for well-being here was separated from the concern for the well-being in the hereafter. The rise of nationalism and secularism have coincided in the history of modern Europe and since then have remained inseparable.

(II)

If we turn to the early history of Islam, even to the period of the Holy Prophet, (peace be upon Him) we find Islam facing a problem similar to the problem of nationalism confronting the Muslim society today and the developments which took place during the Prophet's life-time, as well as his teachings, gave Muslim society a definite orientation which has to be borne in mind in trying to appreciate the nature of the challenge posed by nationalism to the contemporary Muslim society.

The society in which the Prophet was born was one organized on the principle of blood-kinship. The need of mutual defence had led to the rise of clans (*qawm*) and tribes (*qabilah*) whose members were tied together by the idea of descent from a common ancestor — whether real or fictitious. Even the religion of the Arabs of those days was a "reflex of the social organisation. Each clan had a clan diety, a counter-part of its clan chieftans in the belief world."¹⁶ The tribe (or its sub-division, the clan) was also the only basis of social security. The tribe alone could ensure the protection of a person's life and property against aggression by other tribes which could be held in check only by the threat of effective retaliation. Moreover, nomadic desert pastoralism could not be carried on by individuals or small family groups, which also gave pre-eminence to the tribe as an economic unit. Accordingly none could afford to live without association with a tribe or clan. If ever a person or a family broke off its ties with the tribe or clan of its

¹⁶ S.A.Q. Husaini, *Arab Administration*, Madras, 1949, p. 9.

birth, it had had to secure the protection of some other tribe by seeking to become its client (*manḥa*) or protected neighbour (*jar*) or confederate (*ḥalīf*).

These tribes regarded themselves as self-sufficient; and thanks to the rigorous conditions of life which frequently led to inter-clan or inter-tribal feuding over water and pasturage, there developed in them a strong tribal particularism. Though sometimes several tribes used to join into a confederation, yet this was only for a limited purpose, such as fighting against a similar confederation of tribes. The main tribes were, therefore, to borrow the words of Montgomery Watt, "sovereign and independent political entities."¹⁷ The attitude of each tribe towards other tribes was based on a deep sense of inherent superiority over others on the ground of ancestral nobility. Each of these tribes competed with others in trying to appropriate the extremely meagre resources of the desert land. The relationship between them was, therefore, generally that of hostility.¹⁸

The driving force of this social system was *'asabiyah*, the spirit of clan. It implied, according to Hitti, "boundless and unconditional loyalty of fellow-clansmen" and corresponded in general "to the patriotism of the passionate, chauvinistic type."¹⁹ The *asabiyah* consisted in one's remaining faithful to one's fellow clansman and helping one's brother-in-clan or tribe, be he the wrong-doer or the wronged."²⁰ The principle was: "My tribe: right or wrong." A man was required to be always prepared to sink or swim with his clansmen.²¹ Even if that clan asked a person to give up his wife, there was no choice for him but to do so. Thus we find that in the pre-Islamic times the loyalty to the tribe stood above all other loyalties. There do not appear to

¹⁷ *Muhammad at Medina*, Oxford, 1956, p. 239.

¹⁸ See Taha Husayn and others (ed.), *Al-Mujmal fi Tarikh al-Adab al-'Arabi*, Cairo, 1928, p. 7.

¹⁹ Phillip Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, London, 1956, p. 27.

²⁰ See Ali Jawwad, *Tarikh al-Arab qabl al-Islam*, Vol. I, Cairo, 1950, p. 365.

²¹ *Al-Mubarrad al-Kamil*, ed. W. Wright (Leipzig, 1864), p. 229, L. 3, cited in Hitti, p. 27.

According to another poet: "There is nothing for me but that I fail if the expedition (of the tribe) fails, and succeed, if it succeeds." *Vide. Al-Mujmal fi Tarikh al-Adab al-Arabi*, cited by Hitti, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

have existed any moral values to which this unqualified and unlimited loyalty to the tribe could be subordinated. According to *jabili* ethics, the tribal '*asabiyah*' was uppermost in the hierarchy of social values.

The message that the Prophet conveyed to his people was to submit to Allah, the One God; to worship none but Him; to accept him (*i.e.* Muhammad) as the last messenger of Allah; to recognize the guidance that he had brought as the Divine Guidance, and to live a righteous life in accordance with this guidance. He insisted that the duty to God be regarded as above all other duties. Even the duty of obeying parents, which has been frequently emphasised by the Prophet in his own preachings and has also been quite often stressed in the Quran, was not permitted to stand in the way of fulfilling man's duty to God, *viz.*, worshipping none but Him.²²

These ideas created a new focus of loyalty, a loyalty to which all other loyalties had to be subordinated — man's loyalty to his Creator. Later on this resulted in the destruction of the entire *jabili* social order, including the whole value-system on which the social life of those days had rested.

The Prophet's teachings in general and his opposition to idolatry and his appeal to the Quraysh to submit to the discipline of a divinely-ordained moral code in particular, were at first received by them with ridicule and slander, and later on, with persecution of the Prophet and his followers. To the Quraysh these few followers of Muhammad were heretics and apostates, the black sheep who had forsaken the faith of their *qawm* and their forefathers.²³ To the Holy Prophet and to his followers, their small group constituted the elect; the chosen group which had discovered the Will of God and was trying to carry it out; the *elite* which had been pulled out from darkness into light. Although most of these believers at Mecca belonged to

²² *Al-Qur'an*, XXIX:8.

²³ That the early Muslims had forsaken the faith of their *qawm*, was an accusation levelled before the Abyssinian King by the 'emissaries of the Quraysh who went to Abyssinia to persuade Negus to surrender the Muslim emigrants.

the Quraysh, yet there were also people like Bilal and Zayad ibn Haritha, who were of foreign origin — the *Ajamis*. The result was that the faith preached by the Prophet began to disrupt the contemporary social order by uniting the Abyssinian Bilal with the Qurayshite Abu Bakr in one camp, as co-workers in the cause of faith, as against some of their kith and kin of the Quraysh who were opposed to the new faith.

The continued persecution of the companions of the Holy Prophet at the hands of their kith and kin, the emigration of a considerable number of believers to Abyssinia, the mutual sharing of afflictions by believers of various tribal affiliations in promoting the cause of the faith, the cruelties that were perpetrated upon many of the believers by their own blood-kin—all these factors, besides the teaching of the Quran and the preachings of the Prophet, played a great part in moulding the mental attitude of the *ummah* of the Prophet and in eradicating tribal '*asabiyah*' and replacing it with an '*asabiyah*' for the faith of Islam and Muslim community.

The ten years of the Prophet's Meccan life were decisive in so far as event after event hammered into the minds of the believers that they were a group of people altogether separate and distinct from all other groups, even from their brethren-in-tribe. Moreover, they were told by their master (peace be upon him) that neither any tribal affiliation nor worldly riches nor any other token of respectability could do them any good. It is only in recognizing the Truth — revealed through Mohammad (peace be On him) — and in following it that a man's salvation lies, and it is in this that a man's worth consists. The natural result was that the unbelieving notables of the Quraysh were contemptuously regarded by the believers, in the words of the Quran, as "the frightened ass." On the contrary, the Abyssinian Bilal, (for instance) being a believer, was regarded as a member of the "best community."

After the Holy Prophet's mission had continued for about nine years, the prospects of the spread of Islam among the Quraysh of Mecca and even

the people of Ta'if appeared quite bleak, but Yathrib seemed full of promise. In 620 some Yathribites came to 'Ukkaḥ fair and embraced Islam. Subsequently Islam spread among the Yathribites and on their invitation the Holy Prophet graced them by emigrating to it in 622. With full control of the affairs he set out to put into practice his ideas of reform, and to build up a community in accordance with his ideals.

The first noteworthy event that took place in Medina was the formal "fraternization" (*muwakhab*) of the Meccan *Emigrants* (*muhajirun*) and the Medinian "helpers" (*Ansar*). The emigrants who thus became the brothers of the "helpers" shared their properties with them and even had a share in their inheritance until this practice was revoked by the Quran.

Besides "fraternization", the Holy Prophet drew up what may be termed a constitution for the state of Medina in the first year of the Hijrah.²⁴ This document, according to Nicholson, was ostensibly "a cautious and tactful reform" (but) "it was in reality a revolution." Muhammad, writes Nicholson, durst not strike at the independence of the tribes, but he destroyed it, in effect, by shifting the centre of power from the tribe to the community.²⁵ The following points are noteworthy in that constitution:

First, that the 'believers' and those Jews who were their allies for common defence, constituted an *ummah* (a political community) distinct from the rest of the world. However, this unity of Jews and Muslims was based on specific terms and conditions on which the two parties — the believers and those Jewish tribes. "who follow them and are attached to them and crusade along with them" — had agreed as their terms of confederation.

Second, that the separate entity of believers as a community of faith, transcending the tribal affiliations of the individual believers, was clearly

²⁴ For the text of this constitution see *Ibn Hisham*, Vol. II, pp. 147-151. See its English translation in Watt, *Muhammad at Medina*, *op. cit.*, pp. 221-225, and its Urdu translation in Muhammad Hamidullah, *Abd-i-Nabavi ka Niḡam-i-Hukmrani*, Hyderabad, n.d., pp. 102-111.

²⁵ R.A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs*, Cambridge, 1953, p. 173.

recognized. The believers were not allowed to forsake any debtor among them; the peace of the believers is one; in case of any loss of believers' blood in the way of God all the believers would take revenge; no believer could confederate with the client of another believer.²⁶

Thirdly, though the Muslims were divided internally into separate tribal affiliations, yet unlike the former times, these tribes were not independent and sovereign political entities. They are rather merely administrative units. As administrative units they remained and discharged some useful administrative functions. They still had a degree of autonomy and were responsible with regard to their internal affairs, with regard to matters pertaining to their own 'quarters'. The payment of blood-money and the ransoming of their captives, according to the provision of the constitution, were to be made jointly by the members of a clan as in former times.²⁷ But gone was their former position as the focus of supreme loyalty. The tribes remained, but the particularism, and the chauvinistic attachment to them that would stand in the way of subordinating this tribal association to any other higher consideration, were destroyed.

Besides these events which influenced the development of the Muslim *ummah*, the teachings of the Prophet too played a very important part and we find a deep impress of them on the character of the *ummah* of the early Islamic period. Some of the teachings which have direct bearing on our subject were as follows:

1. The essential unity of mankind was emphasised by the Quran by pointing out the common ancestry of man.²⁸ The Prophet himself also stressed this point time and again.
2. The notion of the inherent superiority of one tribe over another was denounced as "arrogance of the times of ignorance." There was no

²⁶ See clauses 3-11 of this constitution in *Hamidullah*, pp. 102 ff. See also *Ibn Hisham*, Vol. II, pp. 147-151.

²⁷ *Hamidullah, op. cit.*

²⁸ See for instance IV: 1-2, and XLIX: 10.

nobility inherent in blood. Real nobility

1. lay in piety and good conduct.

3. As a corollary to this, '*asabiyah*' was strongly denounced by the Prophet who said:

Whoever dies for '*asabiyah*' is not one of us.

Whoever calls towards '*asabiyah*' is not one of us.

Whoever fights for '*asabiyah*' is not one of us.

A companion of the Prophet once inquired of him the meaning of "asabiyah". "Is one's love of one's folk '*asabiyah*'?" he inquired. "No", said the Prophet, '*asabiyah*' is to support one's folk in wrong-doing."

In the latter saying the Prophet clearly explains as to when the love of one's folk assumes objectionable proportions. Love of one's folk, however, is not condemnable in itself.

4. The concept of an ideological *ummah* was further elaborated. It was to be a community of people joined together for the sake of "enjoining right and forbidding indecency." This *ummah* would, therefore, naturally not remain confined to any particular country, race or linguistic group. All those who accepted Islam were to become members of this fraternity of faith,²⁹ and the protecting friends, of one another.³⁰

When Muhammad (peace be on him) breathed his last in 632, he had destroyed the basis of the *jahili* social organisation: the focus of loyalty had shifted from one's clan or tribe to Allah, and in social and political terms, to the *ummah* (community) of those who had surrendered themselves to Allah and had accepted His religion; in other words, to an *ummah* based on faith, and not on kinship.

To recapitulate: the tribal '*asabiyah*' was obliterated by the Prophet during his life-time. He, however, did not abolish the tribes as such. Instead, he

²⁹ Quran LX:8

³⁰ Quran IX:151

created a supra-tribal community, *a community which transcended but did not obliterate tribes*. We have already seen in the constitution of Medina that some features of tribal organisation had been left intact in the social organisation of the Muslim community. It seems that the Prophet had no objection against the survival of the tribes as units of administrative and economic significance. Later on, even during the days of Umar, the second caliph, we find that tribal and clan units served as military formations and their existence facilitated the drawing up of pay-rolls for the standing Muslim army.

Casting a glance at the history of Muslim *ummah* since its inception we find that throughout the fourteen subsequent centuries, Muslims have strongly clung to their belief in universal Islamic brotherhood, and the form of political organization which has been regarded by them as the ideal one was a Caliphate embracing the entire Muslim world. No doubt ever since the disintegration of the Umayyad Caliphate there has never been a time when the whole of the Muslim world has been united in the form of a single state and Muslim juristic thought too subsequently legitimized this development but with reluctance and on the plea of administrative difficulties.³¹

But this unpleasant reality of political life did not have much of an effect on the way of thinking of the Muslims in general. They have always clung to the notion that the Muslims of the world constitute a separate *ummah* and one, indivisible brotherhood. This has prevented them from developing the notion that they belong to any community on racial, territorial or any other similar grounds. Despite the fragmentation of the Muslim world into more than one states, ruled separately by Muslim princes, a Muslim did not recognize any part of the *Dar al-Islam* as foreign.. territory. A Muslim could freely move about the length and breadth of the Islamic world and take employment and settle down wherever he liked. *Dar al-Islam*, despite its internal divisions due to dynastic interests, was culturally and spiritually one

³¹ See for instance, Al-Mawardi, *Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyah*

world as distinct from the world of unbelievers which was termed *Dar-al-Harb* (the abode of war).

(III)

In such a society, the idea of nationalism began to penetrate along with other ideas belonging to the modern European civilization. This process began with a perceptible degree of force in the nineteenth century when the Muslims began to awaken from their dream-world to find that a large part of the Muslim world had already fallen a prey to the domination of European colonial powers, and the rest was seriously menaced by the same threat.

It is in this situation, or rather as a reaction against it, that nationalism arose in the Muslim world. It was essentially the reaction of Muslims against the heart-breaking situation in which they found themselves — the European domination over the Muslim world. The gloomy state of affairs found in the Muslim world aroused love for national independence, and created the urge for the ejection of foreign control. The continuance of foreign dominance kept the flame of nationalist sentiments alive and provided a tangible purpose for which nationalist struggle could be waged.

In the Muslim world nationalism has, therefore, generally denoted the drive to get rid of alien control and dominance. It is nationalism in this sense that has been one of the most powerful driving forces in the contemporary world of Islam. It is nationalism in this sense which has found a ready and enthusiastic response from the broad masses of Muslims in all parts of the Muslim world. However, in course of time there has also developed a nationalist ideology which, in its content, is hardly distinguishable from any other nationalist ideology and seems to take no notice of the peculiar ideas and institutions which characterize the Muslim society. Adherence to this ideology is confined only to a small section of the westernized *elite* in the Muslim world. It is of great significance, nevertheless, because this *elite* commands a position of no mean importance in the affairs of the Muslim world.

The nationalist ideology (or merely the nationalist attitude of mind in many cases) of this *elite* is overridingly secular in its orientation and is opposed to some of the most cherished socio-political ideals of the Muslims. For, these nationalists, following the trend of modern nationalist thought believe in nationality on non-religious grounds and hold that religion should be reduced to a private affair and should not be allowed to interfere with public affairs. Their ideal is to evolve a common nationality based on such factors as the sharing of a common fatherland, a common language, common historical memories, common material interests, etc. The importance of the role of religion as a nation-building factor is no doubt recognized by these nationalists, but merely as a historical incident. It is not seen as having any normative importance for the nation as a whole. Belief in the universal brotherhood of Islam is also frowned upon either for fear of driving a wedge within the ranks of the nation all of whose members are not Muslims, even though a predominant majority might be Muslim (as for instance, the Arab and Indonesian nationalists say) or for fear of obscuring the peculiarities which go to make that nation a distinct collective entity, distinct even from all other Muslim nations (as for instance, the Turkish nationalists say).

When Iqbal began to think and express himself on the problems of the Muslims and of his fellow-countrymen around the turn of the century, nationalism in the Muslim world was in its embryonic stage. It goes to the credit of Iqbal to have anticipated the trends which were bound to follow in the wake of the popularisation of nationalism in the Muslim world, and to have given them a clear guidance.

Except for a very brief period in his life, Iqbal pitted himself in opposition to nationalism. It is only in his first collection of poems, *Bang-i-Dim*, and only in a few poems of the first period (*i.e.* prior to 1905) that we see him in the garb of an ardent Indian nationalist. These poems eloquently speak of his love of the nationalist variety for the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent and its people. The fatherland occupies the central place in his mind and

religion is mentioned as a divisive factor in the nation. Rather than religion, fatherland forms the centre of affection and loyalty. Instead of ordinary temples Iqbal would like to erect a "new temple," the temple of his fatherland, India. Addressing the Brahmins of the country he says:

پتھر کی مورتوں کو تو سمجھا ہے خدا

32 خاک وطن کا مجھ کو ہر ذرہ دیوتا ہے

(Thou seest deity in the images of stone,

For me there is deity in every particle of the country's dust.)

But this was a temporary and a very short-lived phase. Curiously enough, what generally leads to the weakening of faith in Islam of so many other people, led to a further strengthening of Iqbal's faith in Islam and developed in him resistance against alien ideologies. This was Iqbal's three-year stay in Europe (1905-1908). Here a good deal of change in his mental attitude came about. The fundamental change that occurred in him was his disenchantment with the western civilization. Besides that, in Europe, Iqbal had a full view of nationalism: its motives and its results. Here he saw how it had destroyed the idea of universal brotherhood; how it had created artificial barriers between man and man and between nation and nation; how it had sown seeds of international discord. Furthermore, he also became conscious of the dangerous possibilities of the idea of nationalism in the context of the Muslim world. He became sure that the spread of this idea was bound to divide the Muslim world and thus smooth the way for the realization of the designs of colonial powers. The fears of Iqbal were vindicated very soon when during the first world war a section of Muslims in the Arab world collaborated with the British against the Turks. For, nationalism had made

³² Iqbal, *Bang-i-Dira*, p. 88

them abandon their former line of thinking: that they should remain loyal to the Ottoman state because it was an Islamic Empire. The Ottoman state now appeared to many of the Arabs as detestable foreign domination. In this context what Iqbal himself says about the development of his views on the subject is noteworthy:

... I have been repudiating the concept of nationalism since the time when it was not known in India and the Muslim world. At the very start it had become clear to me from the writings of European authors that the imperialistic designs of Europe were in great need of this effective weapon — the propagation of the European conception of nationalism in Muslim countries — to shatter the religious unity of Islam to pieces.³³

It is essential to bear in mind at the very outset that Iqbal does not confuse between patriotism and nationalism. He draws a clear line of demarcation between the two and while he rejects nationalism, he has nothing but respect for patriotism, as we shall see shortly. Love of the fatherland or nation, far from being morally condemnable, is a sound, healthy and morally praiseworthy trait of character. What is objectionable is its exaggeration.

This trend of thought in Iqbal is based on the Islamic viewpoint in regard to all worldly attachments. It is not the worldly attachments themselves which are held by Islam as objectionable; it is their exaggeration which is disapproved. For instance, the urge to acquire worldly riches, and the instinct of self-love, allegiance to one's parents, one's wife and children, or one's kinsmen, none of these is bad in itself. On the contrary, all these are positively good and occupy important positions in the Islamic hierarchy of values. But these very things become "*fitnah*" according to Islam, if they make

³³ Iqbal, *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, ed. "Shamloo", second edition, Lahore, 1948, p. 224.

us forget our Creator, or the next world, or our obligations towards our Creator.³⁴

Iqbal makes this point clear again and again by stressing that his opposition to nationalism should not be misconstrued as opposition to patriotism:

Nationalism in the sense of one's love of one's
country and even readiness to die for its honour
is a part of Muslim's faith....³⁵

But Iqbal is emphatic that nationalism as understood in the present times is very much different from patriotism which is held by Islam as a praiseworthy attribute. In one of his couplets, alluding to the reported saying of the Prophet that "love of one's homeland is part of faith," he points out:

ارشاد نبوت میں وطن اور ہی کچھ ہے

36 گفتار سیاست میں وطن اور ہی کچھ ہے

(Fatherland in political parlance denotes one thing,
in the Prophetic parlance, quite another).

A proper appreciation of Iqbal's attitude in regard to nationalism, therefore, makes it imperative to study what, in his view, constitutes the essence of modern nationalism.

³⁴ Cf. Quran, *passim*

³⁵ *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, p. 141. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 225, also p. 38. "Patriotism is a perfectly natural virtue and has a place in the moral life of man."

³⁶ *Bang-i-Dira*, p. 174.

Iqbal does not regard nationalism to be merely the result of a fortuitous combination of certain transient political circumstances. Its roots lie much deeper. They are to be found deep in the very nature of the teachings of Christianity and the peculiar course of Christian historical development. The ultimate seeds of nationalism are to be found in the doctrinal formulations of Christianity which have been characterized by complete other-worldliness, a negative attitude towards worldly life, and duality of spirit and matter. It is these aspects of Christianity which led to a bifurcation between spiritual and temporal affairs of life, to a separation between the church and the state, and reduced religion to a matter of private concern of individuals which has nothing to do with what is called man's temporal life. "Primitive Christianity," says Iqbal, "was founded, not as a political or civil unit, but as a monastic order in a profane world."³⁷ "renouncing the world of matter and fixing its gaze completely on the world of spirit,"³⁸ and accepting uncritically "the duality of matter and spirit probably from Manichaeism."³⁹ Such a purely other-worldly religion could not guide and regulate human life in its totality. To substantiate his point Iqbal quotes Naumann who observes:

"Primitive Christianity attached no value to the preservation of the state, law, organization, production. It simply does not reflect on the conditions of human society. ..

Hence we either dare to aim at being without a state, and thus throw ourselves into the arms of anarchy, or we decide to possess, alongside of our religious creed, a political creed as well."⁴⁰

In fact Christianity was tried in quite an early state of its history by Constantine "as a system of unification. Its failure to work as such a system drove the Emperor Julian to the old gods of Rome."⁴¹ The result was that

³⁷ *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 155.

³⁸ *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, p. 8.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴⁰ *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 166.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

"state and church confronted each other as distinct powers with interminable boundary disputes between them."⁴²

The structure of Christianity as a universal system of ethics was rudely shaken by the Reformation initiated by Luther. Although the revolt of Luther was directed against the church organization, not against any system of polity of a secular nature, its consequences were very far-reaching. The consequences of this revolt were of ethical as well as political import. Eventually this revolt resulted in "the complete displacement of the universal ethics of Christianity by the growth of a purely national and hence narrower systems of ethics."⁴³ Iqbal makes detailed observation on this point which explain his point of view in a fairly clear manner:

" . . . The upshot of the intellectual movement initiated by such men as Rousseau and Luther. was the break-up of one into mutually ill-adjusted many, the transformation of a human into national outlook, requiring a more realistic foundation, such as the notion of country, and finding expression through varying systems of polity evolved on national lines, *i.e.*, on lines which recognize territory as the only principle of political solidarity. If you begin with the conception of religion as complete other-worldliness, then what has happened to Christianity is perfectly natural. The universal ethics of Jesus is displaced by national systems of ethics and polity. The conclusion to which Europe is consequently driven is that religion is a private affair of the individual and has nothing to do with what is called man's temporal life . . . [a development which has] resulted practically in the total exclusion of Christianity from the life of European states. The result is a set of mutually ill-adjusted states, dominated by interests not human but national. And these ill-adjusted states after trampling over the morals and convictions of Christianity are today feeling the need. . . . of a unity which Christian church-organization originally gave them, but which, instead of reconstructing it in

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁴³ *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, p. 5. Iqbal repeats this sentence over and over again in describing the ethical impact of nationalism.

the light of Christ's mission of human brotherhood, they thought it fit to destroy under the inspiration of Luther.⁴⁴

In other words, nationalism is based on the idea that territory (rather than religion) is the sole principle of human solidarity, and this assumption is ultimately bound to displace the universal ethics propounded by Religion by a system of ethics based on the assumption that national interest is the supreme good, and the criterion of right and wrong. It is obvious that the growth of such a trend of thought will reduce religion to an extremely

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

In his poetry too Iqbal refers to this development in Europe--the reduction of religion to a position of insignificance because of complete separation between religion and state. The effect of this development is that politics and statecraft are dominated by greed and avarice to such a degree that it appears as if a giant has been released from his chains! For instance, he says:

کلیسا کی بنیاد رہبانیت تھی
سماتی کہاں اس فقیری میں میری
ہوئی دین و دولت میں جس دم جدائی
ہوس کی امیری ہوس کی وزیری!
(بال جبریل صفحہ 160)

سری نگاہ میں ہے یہ سیاست لا دیں
کنیڈا ہرمن و دوں نہاد و مردہ ضمیر
ہوئی ہے ترک کلیسا سے حاکمی آزاد
فرنگیوں کی سیاست ہے دیو بے زنجیر
(ضرب کلیم صفحہ 154)

جلال پادشاہی ہو کہ جمہوری تماشا ہو
جدا ہو دین سیاست سے تو رہ جاتی ہے چنگیزی
(ارمغان حجاز)

insignificant role in human society. Thus, it becomes clear that Iqbal's condemnation of nationalism is not a condemnation of love of the fatherland. It is a condemnation of the modern concept of nation and fatherland, the significance of which is not merely geographical. "It is", according to Iqbal, "rather a principle of human society",⁴⁵ which claims to be the only proper basis of cohesion and unity in human society and which exiles religion from playing a befitting role in human life.

This being briefly Iqbal's view of nationalism, let us make an attempt to discover the reasons underlying his opposition to nationalism. His reasons for opposing nationalism are Islamic as well as human. Such a statement in regard to Iqbal, however, should be made with considerable reserve and caution. For the Islamic and human aspects of his thought are inextricably woven, one into the other. In fact, the human consciousness of Iqbal is so profoundly imbued with Islam that it seems quite arbitrary to separate the Islamic and human aspects of his consciousness.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, one might hypothetically aver that even if Iqbal were not so deeply under the influence of his religion and culture, his human nature would still have risen in revolt against nationalism, although the virulence in his condemnation of nationalism undoubtedly springs from the realization that modern nationalism and Islam cannot go together hand in hand.

One of the reasons for Iqbal's opposition to nationalism lies in the fact that Iqbal has broad human sympathies and an outlook which is essentially human in its motivation and universal in its range. On the contrary, nationalism tends to narrow down human outlook, and fetters human sympathies. This is both degrading to mankind and is contrary to the higher purposes of life. This robs life of its sublimity as well as breadth. It cannot be

⁴⁵ *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, p. 225.

⁴⁶ Mentioning that he has respect for the customs, laws and social institutions of other communities, Iqbal stresses: "Yet I love the communal group which is the source of my life and behaviour and which has formed me what I am by giving me its religion, its literature, its thought, its culture and thereby creating its whole post as a living operative factor in *my* present consciousness." *Ibid.*, p.11.

over-stressed that for this breadth of outlook Iqbal is chiefly indebted to Islam. His broad outlook and his independence of the fetters of national narrow-mindedness have a deep impress of the universalist and human stress in Islamic teachings. Hence we find that, according to Iqbal, this breadth of outlook is reflected at its best in the *hijrah* (flight) of the Holy Prophet. Explaining the significance of universalism, which forms an important ingredient of Iqbal's thought, he expressed his vision of the ideal pattern of human life in terms of the *hijrah* in the beautiful lines:

Flight is the law that rules the Muslim's life,

And is a cause of his stability;

Its meaning is, to leap from shallowness,

To quit the dew, the ocean to subdue.

Transgress the bloom; the garden is thy goal;

The loss of less more vastly gain adorns. The sun's great glory is in
ranging free; The skies' arena lies beneath his feet.

Be not a streamlet, seeking wealth from rain

Be boundless; quest no limit in the world.

The frowning sea was once a simple plain,

Played being shore, and liquefied of shame.

Have thou the will to master everything,

That thou myest win dominion over all;

Plunge like a fish, and populate the sea;

Shake off the chains of too constricted space.

He who has burst from the dimensions' bonds
Ranges through all directions, like the sky.
The roses' scent by parting from the rose
Leaps far abroad, and through the garden's breadth
Disseminates itself. Thou, who hest snatched
One corner of the meadow for thine own,
Like the poor nightingale art satisfied
To serenade one rose. Be like the breeze;
Cast off the burden of complacency
From thy wide shoulders; in thy wide embrace
Gather the garden.⁴⁷

In his Urdu couplets too he sings in the same tune of his universalist ideals. In one of the couplets, for instance, he finds the ideal of human life in the life of fish in the ocean — in its being absolutely free and unbounded by all artificial territorial limitations.

ہو قید مقامی تو نتیجہ ہے تباہی
رہ بحر میں آزاد وطن صورت ماہی
ہے ترک وطن سنت محبوب الہی

⁴⁷ *The Mysteries of Selflessness*, tr. A.J. Arberry, London, 1953, p. 31.

(Attachment to a piece of land leads to ruin.

Live in the ocean, free from local attachments

like a fish. Migration from homeland is the

Sunnah of the Prophet; be a witness to the

truth of the Prophethood.)

This boundlessness of Iqbal's human outlook, this refusal to allow human mind and human life to be fettered by the narrowness of outlook and attitude which stem from exaggerated sanctification of the boundaries of one's homeland, definitely range Iqbal in a profound opposition to nationalism. For nationalism has an inherent tendency to stress the particular and the parochial at the cost of the general and the universal.

Besides this cramping of human consciousness by a narrow range of human sympathies, which characterizes nationalism, Iqbal also discovers in nationalism certain other fundamental errors which go to make it a great scourge for mankind. The idea of nationalism is, in essence, an affirmation of the principle that blood-kinship is the proper basis of human unity. And blood relationship, as a principle of human unity, according to Iqbal, is "earth-rootedness."⁴⁹ This is a false principle in the eyes of Iqbal as it runs counter to the basic assumption of his thought that "life is spiritual in its origin."⁵⁰ And the boast of Iqbal is that the fundamental change brought about in man's outlook and culture by Islam, *inter alia*, is that it destroyed the "system of unification which were based on blood-relationship."⁵¹ Islam, says

⁴⁸ *Bang-i-Dira*, Lahore, 1959, p. 174.

⁴⁹ *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 146

⁵⁰ *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 146

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

Iqbal with a profound sense of the superiority of Islam, seeks a purely psychological foundation of human unity, "not in the blood and bones but in the mind of man."⁵² In short, by stressing "blood-relationship" as the basis of human unification, nationalism de-spiritualizes and impoverishes human life, sinking it into the mire of "earth-rootedness."

Nationalism is considered by Iqbal a thoroughly materialistic, irreligious and anti-ethical doctrine. We have already seen that Iqbal seems to stress that the fact that in Europe religion declined, was reduced to the position of a private affair, and was deprived of exercising any influence on his temporal affairs during that very period of history when nationalism became powerful, is not without profound significance. In fact Iqbal discovers a causal relationship between these two developments. As a human being, Iqbal feels quite disconcerted at these developments. Even though he basically disagrees with Christianity, he is unhappy that the religious unity of Europe which was built by the Christian Church was destroyed by nationalism.⁵³ After the failure of Christianity to serve as the basis of unity, Europe found this basis in the idea of nationality. "But what has been the end of that choice?" asks Iqbal. "The reformation of Luther, the period of unsound rationalism and separation — indeed war — between the principles of religion and state. Where did these forces drive Europe to? To irreligiousness, religious scepticism and economic conflicts."⁵⁴ It led to the displacement of the universal ethics of Christianity by the systems of national ethics, a development which is not wholesome at all for mankind. "The result of this tendency we have seen with our own eyes in the great European War which, far from bringing any workable synthesis of the two opposing systems of ethics, has made the European scene still more intolerable."⁵⁵

⁵² *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, p. 139.

⁵³ *Cf. Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

⁵⁵ *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 163. Iqbal laments this development in Europe in his poetry as well. See pp. 71 f. above.

The decline of religion in Europe has also brought about a fundamental change in ethical outlook. Instead of ethics based on religious teachings which gave mankind a set of definite, absolute moral principles, moral relativism is emerging as the ascendant trend of thought. In practical terms this means nothing else except unbridled worship of one's individual or collective self-interest, the replacement of moral absolutes by the dictates of expediency. In the realm of politics and statecraft, this has provided an ethical basis for unprincipled opportunism. Since the idea of the supremacy of moral imperatives based on religion has weakened, there remains nothing to guide the nations today except considerations of material gain and loss. This has even led to the ethical justification of worst crimes on the plea that they are conducive to the interests of the nation.

This ethical relativism of modern times finds its most forceful expression in the political philosophy of Machiavelli, whose doctrines have had a revolutionary influence upon the character of the modern world — on its ethical conceptions as well as political behaviour. The essentially unethical attitude which, in the opinion of Iqbal, is imbedded in nationalism, is perhaps best explained by the fact that in his *Rumuz* he links up the development of nationalism with the political philosophy of Machiavelli:

——When atheism

First rent religion's garment, there arrived

That Satan's messenger, the Florentine⁵⁶

Who worshipped falsehood, whose collyrium

Shattered the sight of men. He wrote a scroll

For Princes, and so scattered in our clay

⁵⁶ That is, Machiavelli.

The seed of conflict; his fell genius
Decamped to darkness, and his sword-like pen
Struck Truth asunder. Carving images
Like Azar was his trade; his fertile mind
Conceived a new design; his novel faith
Proclaimed the State the only worshipful;
His thoughts the ignoble turned praiseworthy.
So, when the feet of this adorable
He kissed, the touchstone that he introduced
To test the truth was Gain. His doctrine caused
Falsehood to flourish, plotting stratagens
Became an art.....
.....Dark night he wrapped
About the people's eyes; deception called,
In his vocabulary, expediency.⁵⁷

But perhaps a more important reason for Iqbal's adverse criticism of nationalism is that in his view nationalism does not fit into the ideological framework of Islam and is out of tune with the course of its historical development.

⁵⁷ *The Mysteries of Selflessness*, pp. 32-33.

As we have seen earlier, Iqbal considers the rise of nationalism as a natural development in the context of Christianity: r view of its exaggerated other-worldliness, its duality of spirit and matter manifesting itself in the separation between the church and the state.⁵⁸ In other words, the success of nationalism in Christendom is to be attributed to some of the basic weaknesses of Christianity. Since Islam is fundamentally at variance with Christianity, Iqbal is of the view that nationalism in its modern conception cannot (and should not) be assimilated by the Muslim society.

To elaborate, Iqbal considers Islam to be basically different from Christianity in so far as Islam (unlike Christianity) "does not bifurcate the unity of man into an irreconcilable duality of spirit and matter. In Islam God and the universe, spirit and matter, church and state, are organic to each other."⁵⁹

Closely related to the above is the fact that Islam does not signify merely a private relationship between man and his Creator; it is, rather, "an ethical ideal plus a certain kind of polity. . . a social structure regulated by a legal system and animated by a specific ethical ideal."⁶⁰ Iqbal considers the religious ideal of Islam to be organically related to the social order which it seeks to create. Iqbal is so emphatic on this issue that for him the rejection of one will eventually involve the rejection of the other.⁶¹

Besides these characteristic attitudes of Islam is the peculiar historical development of Islam. In harmony with its afore-mentioned characteristics, Islam did not appear as a monastic order in a profane world. On the contrary, it has been a civil society from the very beginning,⁶² fully concerned with man's life in its totality. It is because of this — Islam's interest in man's temporal life and its positive concern for building a healthy social order in

⁵⁸ Cf. *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, pp. 5ff.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

⁶² *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 155.

accord with its religious ideal — that throughout its history Islam has furnished those basic emotions and loyalties which gradually unify scattered individuals into a well-defined people. Hence the inner unity of the Islamic society, in Iqbal's view, is solely due to the laws and institutions attached with the culture of Islam.⁶³

Thus, Islam is itself a principle of solidarity and provides a basis of social cohesion. It cannot, therefore, allow its principle of solidarity to be subverted by the intrusion of an altogether different principle of solidarity.⁶⁴

But Iqbal does not merely say that modern nationalism *cannot* assimilated by Islam. The underlying current of his writings also that modern nationalism *should not* be assimilated by Islam. The main reasons by Iqbal against the acceptance of modern nationalism are briefly as follows:

1. Nationalism essentially rests on the separation between church and state. Such a separation is peculiar to Christianity and is completely unknown to Islam. In fact it is incongruous with Islam. For this separation would also lead to an indifference towards the social order of Islam which would have catastrophic consequences. It would subject Islam to the same miserable fate that Christianity has suffered in Europe: its being deprived of exercising any influence on the temporal life of man.
2. In Nationalism Iqbal sees "the germs of atheistic materialism which I look upon as the greatest danger to modern humanity."⁶⁵ He considers it out-and-out irreligious, for the growth of a nationhood (on territorial or racial, or any similar basis) is possible only when accompanied with indifference towards religion.⁶⁶ For, says Iqbal:

⁶³ See *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, p. 4.

⁶⁴ *Cf. ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶⁵ *Speeches and Writings of Iqbal*, p. 38.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

...if such a nation comprises different religions and communities, the communities generally die away and the only common factor that remains in the individuals of the nation is irreligiosity.⁶⁷

Iqbal also argues that one of the dangers of nationalism is that it gives birth to the conception of the relativity of religions. Too much of a stress that each nation has its own peculiarities lands people into the erroneous conception that "the religion of a land belongs to that land alone and does not suit the temperaments of other nations."⁶⁸

3. Islam seeks the realization of human brotherhood. Its purpose is "to unite and organize mankind despite all its natural distinctions." According to Iqbal the requisite harmony among the nations of the world can be brought about by Islam alone. And the world today finds itself in such a perilous situation that either it will put an end to the artificial barriers which divide the nations of the world or be destroyed by intermittent warfare.⁶⁹

Nationalism seeks to defeat this noble object by emphasising and perpetuating the differences between nation and nation, country and country, race and race. "From nationalism", says Iqbal, "thoughts naturally move towards the idea that mankind has been so harpily divided into nations that it is impossible to bring about unity between them."⁷⁰

4. And above all, Iqbal believes that the idea of nationalism militates against the Islamic principle of solidarity. Iqbal is emphatic that "in its principles of human association Islam admits of no *modus vivendi* and is not prepared to compromise with any other law regulating human society."⁷¹

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 238. It is obvious that Iqbal who staunchly believed in the universal validity of Islam could not tolerate this trend of thought.

⁶⁹ *Cf. Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, pp. 139-140.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

Iqbal is emphatic that Islam, taken as a "law regulating human society", has a peculiar composition;⁷² the bond around which it seeks to organize human society is not community of fatherland, or of race, or of language.⁷³ Iqbal stresses that since Islam is the bond of unity among Muslims, Muslims have no other nationality and fatherland except that of Islam,⁷⁴ despite differences of country, race, language, etc. Emphasising that Muslims should be identified with their religion, and not with any country, he says:

Our Essence is not bound to any Place

The vigour of our wine is not contained

In any bowl; Chinese and Indian

Alike the sherd that constitutes one jar,

Turkish and Syrian alike the clay

Forming our body, neither is our heart

Of India, or Syria, or Rum,

Nor any fatherland do we profess

72 اپنی ملت پر قیاس اقوام مغرب سے نہ کر
خاص ہے ترکیب میں قوم رسول ہاشمی
ان کی جمعیت کا ہے ملک وطن پر انحصار
قوت مذہب سے مستحکم ہے جمعیت تیری
73 بنا ہمارے حصار ملت کی اتحاد وطن نہیں
74 اسلا تیرا دیس ہے تو مصطفوی ہے

Except Islam.⁷⁵ ...

Thou art a Muslim; do not bind thy heart

To any clime, nor lose thyself within

This world dimensionate. The Muslim true

Is not contained in any land on earth;

Syria and Rum are lost within his heart.⁷⁶

Nationalism strikes at the very heart of this kind of brotherhood which Iqbal envisages by regarding country, race, language, etc., as the bases of unification.⁷⁷ For the obvious result of this principle is to drive a wedge between Muslims and Muslims, making Muslims of one land or race foreign to the Muslims of other lands and races.

(IV)

The foregoing discussion gives a more or less clear idea of the nature and motivation of Iqbal's opposition to nationalism. His belief in the innate unity of mankind, his belief in the solidarity of the Muslim community which transcends national distinctions, his profound detestation of the duality of church and religion (which, in Iqbal's view, is a pre-requisite of nationalism) — all these place him in a position of fundamental conflict with nationalism. But what does that mean in terms of Iqbal's own vision of Muslim polity? Does he stand for a complete merger of Muslim nations into a single Islamic state embracing all Muslim countries?

There is no doubt that at times Iqbal frowns even at the existence of 'nations' instead of an universal community embracing all the sons of Adam.

⁷⁵ *Mysteries of Selflessness*, p. 29.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 30

In his small poem entitled "Mecca and Geneva", he expresses doubt regarding the usefulness of the League of Nations on the plea that it rests on the idea of uniting 'nations' instead of humanity. The message of Mecca to a world torn by strife between nations is to attack the problem by trying to unify humankind.

اس دور میں اقوام کی صحبت بھی ہوئی عام

پوشیدہ نگاہوں سے ہوئی وحدت آدم

تفریق ملل حکمت افرنگ کا مقصود

اسلا کا مقصود فقط وحدت آدم

مکہ نے دیا خاک جنیوا کو یہ پیغام

جمعیت اقوام کہ جمعیت آدم⁷⁸

(The association of nations has become common these days; but the unity of mankind remains hidden from human eyes. The disruption of human communities is the object of Frankish statesmanship; the object of Islam is the unity of man. Mecca gives this message to Geneva: a League of Nations or a League of human beings?)

But this should not be taken very literally. In his prose writings Iqbal displays much greater regard for the realities of life, particularly of the present-day conditions. He shows full readiness to tolerate a considerable degree of variety within the framework of the profound unity which Islam

⁷⁸ *Zarb-i-Kaleem*, p. 54.

creates among its various peoples. The Qur'an itself does not completely deny the existence of such factors as language, colour, etc. in human life. Nor does it deny that these factors have some effect upon human life. On the contrary the Holy Quran considers these distinctions to be signs of God:

ان فى اختلاف الوانكم والسنك لايات لاوى الالباب

"Verily in the difference of your colours and languages
there are signs for those who possess wisdom."

Iqbal quotes a well-known Qur'anic verse to support the view that despite the enormously significant deracializing role of Islam, it is not totally opposed to 'race':⁷⁹

"Verily we have made you into tribes and sub-tribes so that you may be identified; but the best among you in the eye of God is he who is purest in life."

His opinion is that although "Islam looks askance at the nature's race-building plans and creates, by means of its peculiar institutions an outlook which would counteract the race-building forces of nature",⁸⁰ it does not contest the stark reality that there do exist different races, languages, countries, etc. and that this difference has its effects on human affairs. Islam does not seek to destroy the existence of these distinctions; it merely seeks to prevent them from becoming harmful. The method that Islam employs, according to Iqbal, to counteract the race-building process (or, for that matter, to counteract the operation of all those forces which tend to divide mankind) is "stooping to conquer without itself becoming a race-making factor."⁸¹ In other words, Iqbal does not hold the opinion that divisions

⁷⁹ *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, p. 140.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

within mankind are not to be countenanced at all. His viewpoint merely is that there are things even higher than one's love for and obligations towards "the piece of earth with which the spirit of man happens to be temporarily associated."⁸²

In the context of Muslim society, Iqbal believes that its inherent unity and homogeneity owe themselves to uniform belief in the unity of God and the Finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be on him) supplemented by the "five well-known practices of Islam",⁸³ which guarantee for a practically uniform spiritual atmosphere in the world of Islam." This unity, according to Iqbal, also has a political significance. Iqbal does not envisage a state of affairs in which Muslim nations will remain completely unconcerned with each other's problems. There has to be some sort of a unity between them, some sort of a link to make them share each others fortune and misfortune. According to Iqbal, the ideal political form of this Muslim solidarity is "a world state".⁸⁴ But the question as to what form Muslim solidarity should assume is a question of secondary importance. What is of primary importance is the consciousness that all Muslims constitute basically one brotherhood and that if there are any divisions within them — Iqbal seems to say — they may be tolerated out of consideration for administrative convenience, or out of deference to the inherent diversity found in human life which has to be respected as a reality. Iqbal, therefore, does not rule out other alternatives in regard to the form of Muslim unity such as "a league of Muslim states, or of a number of independent states whose pacts and alliances are determined by purely economic and political considerations."⁸⁵ In a mood of realism Iqbal is prepared even to recognize in the present situation that the true and living unity in the Muslim world could be "truly manifested in a multiplicity of free independent units whose racial rivalries are adjusted and harmonized by the unifying bond of common

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

spiritual aspiration."⁸⁶ And the reason for this conclusion is that Islam is not opposed to distinctions between mankind as long as these distinctions do not narrow man's outlook and approach. Says Iqbal:

"It seems to me that God is bringing home to us the truth that Islam is neither Nationalism nor Imperialism but a League of Nations which recognizes artificial boundaries and racial distinctions for facilities of reference only, and not for restricting the social horizon of its members."⁸⁷

While discussing the doctrines of Turkish nationalists, Iqbal disagrees with their nationalist ideology which suggest a separation between church and state which is foreign to Islam, Iqbal nevertheless shows full awareness of the political situation of the contemporary Muslim world and evinces full readiness to effect a considerable degree of adjustment between his ideals and the realities of actual life. In the mid-1920's when the bulk of the Muslim world lay languishing under the yoke of European colonialism, an effective Muslim solidarity on the world plane was a difficult proposition. Hence the temporary course that he suggested to the Muslim world in that set of circumstances was the following:

For the present every Muslim nation must sink into her own deeper self, *temporarily* focus her vision on herself alone, until all are strong and powerful enough to form a living family of nations.⁸⁸

The underlying argument is, if we may make use of a metaphor, that a strong chain requires all its links to be strong and firm. Unless these links are strong, the chain will remain a tenuous one. The solidarity of the Muslim nations can be strong and fruitful only if these nations unite after having developed into independent and strong nations.

⁸⁶ *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 159.

⁸⁷ *Loc. cit.*

⁸⁸ *Loc. cit.* Emphasis our own.

To summarize: Iqbal believes ideally in a completely unified Muslim world, but is also quite prepared to countenance the existence of a multiplicity of Muslim states as long as these Muslim states do not lead to the restriction of the social horizon of the Muslims and provided they evolve some formula by which the claims of universal Islamic solidarity are fulfilled.

(V)

In the context of nationalism, the problem of minorities is of very serious importance. What position does Iqbal envisage for Muslim minorities in non-Islamic states and for the non-Muslim minorities in an Islamic state?

Here too Iqbal's position is radically different from that of the nationalists. The nationalist ideal has generally been to develop the heterogeneous religious and cultural elements found in a country into an uniform nation, by destroying heterogeneity. The nationalist blossom is always intolerant of the blooming of a hundred different flowers. An aggravation of this situation sometimes leads, as in several countries in the world today, to the insecurity of life, honour, and property of the minorities. True, this is in abnormal circumstances. But in normal circumstances when the minorities are not threatened by physical extermination, their culture is constantly threatened by destruction. For the majority has a tendency to employ all possible methods, crude as well as subtle, to put an end to the heterogeneity found in the national life. All this renders political freedom a painfully meaningless proposition for the minorities as they are perpetually haunted by the destruction of all that is cherished by a people — its religion, language, traditions, and culture.

On the contrary Islam, which is the fountainhead of Iqbal's inspiration, stands for what might be termed as cultural self-determination for all. Motivated by a genuine spirit of tolerance, Islam grants the non-Muslim communities living under the protection of Islamic Law, the fullest opportunity to live honourably and develop freely according to their genius.

In the context of India, Iqbal's attitude was inspired by the respect with which Islam looks at the existence of various collective entities. Hence unity in India should be sought, says Iqbal," not in the negation but in the mutual harmony and cooperation of the many."⁸⁹ The crisis in Indian political life too had resulted because the majority was not possessed of the generosity to allow the minorities to live and develop in the manner they liked to live and develop. The following sentences of Iqbal illustrate his way of thinking:

Perhaps we suspect each other's intentions and inwardly aim at dominating each other.

Perhaps in the higher interests of mutual co-operation, we cannot afford to part with the monopolies which circumstances have placed in our hands and conceal our egoism under the cloak of a nationalism, outwardly stimulating a large-hearted patriotism, but inwardly as narrow-minded as a caste or a tribe. Perhaps we are unwilling to recognize that *each group has a right to develop according to its own cultural traditions.*⁹⁰

Thus, the polity which Iqbal envisages is one in which the individualities of the various religious and cultural groups are fully respected. As for non-Muslims living under Islamic dispensation, Islam grants them full measure of freedom. It even goes so far as to allow non-Muslims to enforce their religious laws upon themselves, even though these laws might be in conflict with the laws of Islam.⁹¹

For Muslims living in non-Muslim states, Iqbal claims the same right: the right to full and free development on the lines of their own culture and

⁸⁹ *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, p. 9.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10. Italics our own.

⁹¹ *Cf. Ibid.*, pp. 14 f.

traditions⁹² or as Iqbal has put it elsewhere, "self-determination as a cultural unit."⁹³

This large-hearted reciprocity in recognizing each other's right to live according to our own tradition is the best guarantee of harmony and goodwill between Muslims and non-Muslims. Their separate cultural entities having been secured, they have a wide area of co-operation in the interest of the country upon whose well-being their own well-being depends.

(VI)

Iqbal came forward with these views about nationalism when the concept of an Indian (territorial) nationalism, (which looked disdainfully at Islam as a factor of discordance,) was on the ascendant. The safety of Islam in India, in the view of Iqbal, lay in rejecting this concept of nationalism and in striving for the centralization of Islam in India — an objective which subsequently became known as the "Pakistan" movement and became the national objective of Muslim India. Iqbal not only gave the Muslims of India this ideal but also laid down its intellectual foundations by elucidating and elaborating his concept of what might be designated as ideological nationalism. It is this aspect of Iqbal's thought which was at the basis of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah's famous Two-Nation Theory, the ideological cornerstone of Pakistan movement. Thanks to Iqbal's realization of the implications of modern nationalism, and his timely warning and guidance, the Muslims of this subcontinent at least were not seduced by this newfangled deity which had been denounced Iqbal in these vigorous terms:

ان تازہ خداؤں میں بڑا سب سے وطن ہے

جو پیرہن اس کا ہے وہ مذہب کا کفن ہے

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

اقوام جہاں میں ہے رقابت تو اسی سے

تسخیر ہے مقصود تجارت تو اسی سے

خالی ہے صداقت سے تجارت تو اسی سے

کمزور کا گھر ہوتا ہے غارت تو اسی سے

اقوام میں مخلوق خدا بٹتی ہے اس سے

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(Of these new deities, the biggest is the 'fatherland' — the deity whose garment is the coffin of religion.

The rivalry of nations is due to this. The subjugation (of nations) through commerce is due to this. If politics is devoid of honesty, it is because of this; if the home of the weak is ruined, it is because of this. It is this which divides the creatures of God into nations; it is this which strikes at the root of the nationality of Islam).

It would be hardly any exaggeration to say that Iqbal has been the main vehicle in our times for a vigorous assertion of the Islamic concept of *ummah*. Iqbal has made a unique contribution to contemporary Muslim thought by proudly and confidently rejecting nationalism as a counterfeit ideology and by inspiring confidence in the Muslims that the concept of an universal Islamic *ummah* is a much grander concept than that of nationalism. His contribution is also great in so far as he discussed the problem of nationalism

⁹⁴ *Bang-i-Dira*, pp. 173-74.

on a level profounder than that of any other contemporary Muslim thinker with the result that the case of Iqbal against nationalism is not based merely on calculations of political gain and loss, but on the claim that nationalism is unsuited to the genius and temperament of Islam and that once it is allowed to take roots, it is bound to deprive religion of its rightful position in human life.

Iqbal's ideas gave the Muslims of India their national objective above twenty years ago. But if studied carefully, his ideas can still serve as beacon lights to the present-day Muslim world which, having won its independence, stands perplexed not sure whether to develop along the lines of modern nationalism or in the light of the Islamic doctrine of *ummah*.