

IQBAL DAY IN MOROCCO

IN Rabat, the capital of Morocco, Iqbal Day was celebrated by the Pakistan Embassy. Professor S. I. Fahid read an article on Iqbal whom he called "the great philosopher of the Muslim world and the immortal poet." This article was later published in the Arabic monthly *Al-Iman*, a journal devoted to the study of Islamic culture and sponsored by 'the Youth Organisation for the development of Islam.'

The 21st of April every year is the historical day when tributes are paid to Iqbal, the eminent poet of the Muslim world and to the great thinker of Pakistan who put forth the concept of an independent state for, the hundred million Muslims of the sub-continent.

The eminent and well-known scholar of Syria, Amir Shakaib Arslan, said that during the last 10 centuries Muslim world did not produce any thinker greater than Iqbal. There is no doubt that this opinion of Shakaib Arslan about Iqbal is perfectly justified considering his natural abilities and his actual performance in the world of thought. But Iqbal was not only a thinker of great eminence ; he was an outstanding genius whose intellectual versatility was manifest in the fields of *fiqh*, politics, education and law alike.

Iqbal was opposed to nationalism, interpreted as a narrow concept of modern political thought which implies hatred of people living beyond certain arbitrary boundaries. Positively he advocated a life of constant effort and undying endeavour. These are the two significant aspects of his thought which are expressed in different forms in his verses. He says : "Life is a continuing and evolving phenomenon in the universe. As soon as life ceases to evolve and to change, it becomes death."

After his return from Europe, Iqbal forewarned the West about the disaster that was in store for the world as a result of its materialism and imperialism. I am quoting Iqbal's actual words in which he expressed his foreboding which show Iqbal's great insight into the historical process as it was being unfolded in the West before his eyes:

دیار مغرب کے رہنے والو! خدا کی بستی دکان نہیں

کھرا جسے تم سمجھ رہے ہو وہ اب زرکم عیار ہوگا
تمہاری تہذیب اپنے خنجر سے آپ ہی خودکشی کرے گی
جو شاخ نازک پہ آشیانہ بنے گا، ناپائیدار ہوگا

O people of the West, this world of God is not a shop;
What you think to be genuine will turn out to be counterfeit.
Your civilization will come to an end through your own hands,
A nest built on a slender bough is sure to fall down.

His excellent poems like "Shikwa" and "Jawab-i-shikwa" established his fame as a great poet. He wrote both in Urdu and Persian. In 1915 his first great Mathnavi, *Asrar-i-Khudi*, was published. Three years later *Rumuz-i-Bekbudi* appeared. In the first Iqbal expounds the concept of *Khudi* or ego which is the basis of his philosophy. He holds that all existing things, living or otherwise, are endowed with individuality, a unique sense of existence which is somehow different from others, which marks it off from the rest. When this sense of uniqueness develops according to a particular pattern man's ego gains tremendous strength and acquires mastery over its environment, and the categories of time and space cease to circumscribe its expression. Man reaches nearest to God, the great Individual. This development of the ego culminates in the birth of a Perfect Man whom Iqbal calls *Mard-i-Momin* (The Believing Individual). According to Iqbal the different stages of development necessary for perfect manhood are based on love, fortitude, patience, rectitude, virtuous living and true creative activity. Without passing through this discipline it is impossible to reach the goal.

In *Rumuz-i-Bekbudi* Iqbal enumerates six conditions for the establishment of an ideal state :

1. *Taubid* as a spiritual basis of human society;
2. Spiritual leadership which helps in evolving a social order based on *Taubid*;
3. A basic law for the guidance of society ;

4. A spiritual centre ;
5. An ideal which motivates the members of the society towards a particular goal and insures unity and harmony among them ;
6. Conquest of the forces of nature.

According to Iqbal a society wedded to these six principles attains everlasting life and defies decay and death.

I shall now refer to another aspect of Iqbal's genius. During 1928 and 1929, Iqbal delivered some lectures which were later on published as *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. It stands as a masterpiece of religious thought and made Iqbal the greatest thinker of the contemporary Muslim world. In these lectures Iqbal expounds Muslim philosophy on the basis of classical traditions of Muslim thought, in the light of the latest trends of western contribution in science and philosophy. He was very outspoken in his criticism of the *Ulama* who theoretically accept the principle of *Ijtihad* and yet in practice adhere to the principle that one must accept the decision of one of the four traditional schools of legal thought. He says :

"The claim of the present generation of Muslim liberals to re-interpret the foundational legal principles, in the light of their own experience and the altered conditions of modern life, is, in my opinion, perfectly justified. The teaching of the Quran that life is a process of progressive creation necessitates that each generation, guided but unhampered by the work of its predecessor, should be permitted to solve its own problems" (*Reconstruction*, p. 168).

In his Urdu and Persian works Iqbal most forcefully asserts that Islam alone can save humanity from its present crisis. In *Javid Namah* we see Abu Jahl justifying his stand against the teaching of the Holy Prophet. His main objection against the Prophet was his message of human brotherhood and equality of all men as moral individuals:

سینہ ما از محمد داغ داغ

از دم او کعبه را گل شد چراغ

مذہب او قاطع ملک و نسب

از قریش و منکر از فضل عرب

در نگاه او یکے بالا و پست

با غلام خویش بر یک خوان نشت

قدرا پرار عرب نشناخته

با کلفتان حبش در ساخته

احمران با اسودان آمیختند

آبروئے دودمانے ریختند

این مساوات این مواخات اعجمی ست

خوب می دانم که سلمان مزدک ست

My breast is riven and anguished by this Mohammad;

His breath has put out the burning lamp of the Kaaba.

His creed cuts through the rulership and lineage,

Of Koraish, denies the supremacy of the Arabs ;

In his eyes lofty and lowly are the same thing —

He has sat down at the same table with his slave.

He has not recognized the worth of the noble Arabs

But associated with uncouth Abyssinians ;

Redskins have been confounded with blackskins,

The honour of tribe and family has been destroyed.

This equality and fraternity are foreign things —

I know very well that Salman is a Mazdakite.

In the early years of Iqbal's life people hesitated to accept his message. There were protests and strong disapproval of his stand which manifested itself in a number of controversial articles and books. But gradually the people realised the truth of this message as a result of which the great poet-thinker received loving homage of his people during his life-time. His role in the awakening of the people of the sub-continent and specially the Muslims by his poetry was so vital and far-reaching in effect that one can hardly realise it at present. He succeeded in restoring to the Muslims once again their self-confidence and an urge to realise that greatness which was once their characteristic. He gave them

the standard to measure their moral worth and undoubtedly that standard was his philosophy of *Khudi*. He revolutionised the thinking of his people about life and universe. It was as a result of his message that the people of the sub-continent awoke from their slumber and only ten years after his death this urge for freedom took the shape of an independent state of Pakistan. Iqbal was fortunate in that he saw during his life-time the early development of this dynamic urge for new life. Iqbal is in fact the spiritual father of Pakistan.

Iqbal is a citizen of the world. His loyalties are broad enough to encompass all men of all races and all countries. He stands for the dignity of man as such. He is loved equally by the people of the East and the West. It is true that Iqbal criticises West very strongly but his criticism is perfectly justified and based on realistic appraisal of the contemporary situation as it prevails in the West. But he is equally appreciative of the contributions to human civilization and culture made by the West. His appreciation and criticism are not arbitrary but are based on certain moral values which, according to him, must be given a determining role in evaluating different aspects of the culture.

Iqbal spoke equally against racialism, for, according to him, racialism is a negation of human brotherhood and has the germs of unleashing wars and destruction on mankind. To Muslims his message is:

جوہر ما با مقدمے بستہ نیست

بادۂ تندش بجامے بستہ نیست

قلب او از ہند و روم و شام نیست

مرز و بوم او بجز اسلام نیست

Our essence is not bound to any place;

The vigour of our wine is not contained in any bowl.

Our heart is neither from India or Syria or Rum,

No any fatherland does we profess except Islam.

Iqbal stood for Islamic brotherhood and entertained a great affection for the Arab world. To him Mecca is the ideal centre for the Muslim community spread all over the world. In fact the Quran is the only source of his inspiration.

Iqbal was undoubtedly a great man; he represented a new upsurge which revitalised the Muslim people in all lands. His message of dynamism and faith is finding ready response everywhere, for his message is the essence of what is worthy to be preserved in the cultures of the East and the West.

The Arab world is fortunate that some of Iqbal's best works have been translated into Arabic. His famous poems like "Shikwa" and "Jawab-i-Shikwa" are available in Arabic. A poetess of Iraq, (Amina) Nuruddin, and Dr. Abdul Wahab Azzam have translated into Arabic many works of Iqbal. I hope that the remaining books of Iqbal will soon be translated into Arabic.

In the end I would like to mention one fact. Throughout his life Iqbal tried his best to awaken the Muslim world and it is fortunate that before his death, struggle for emancipation from foreign yoke was at its height in the Muslim world and the chains of imperialists were being loosened in the Muslim countries of Asia and Africa. The Quran (iii. 138) declares :

And be not weak-hearted nor grieve, for you will have the upper hand if you are the believers.