

# THE IMPACT OF ECOLOGY ON IQBAL'S THOUGHT

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Iqbal's philosophy of ego (or activism) was not formulated until he abandoned the doctrine of *Wahdat al-wujūd*<sup>2</sup> (Unitarian Monism), which had been innovated by the Hispanic-Arab mystic Muhl al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī (1165-1240).

There is a consensus that Iqbal subscribed to the doctrine of *Wahdat al-wujūd* until at least 1907, the year in which he submitted his doctoral dissertation, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, to Munich University. In the Introduction of his dissertation Iqbal paid a glowing tribute to Al-'Arabī<sup>3</sup>. However, Iqbal's admiration for Al-'Arabī was not the outcome of his two years of research for his dissertation in Europe, but was the product of the philosophical orientation inherited by him from his parents and from his early teachers. Probably he had completed the better part of his doctoral research before he arrived in Europe. It would have been almost impossible for him to complete his work in two years, especially since he was working simultaneously for two other degrees (*i.e.*, bachelor of Arts degree at Trinity College, Cambridge University, and he was also enrolled at the Lincoln's Inn,

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<sup>2</sup> Regarding the impact of Ibn al-'Arabī in India, and the general influence of his doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wujūd*, see an excellent article by Professor Khalīq Ahmad Nizāmī, Hadrat Akbar Muhy-ud-Din Ibn al-'Arabī", *Burhan* (Delhi : January, 1950) ; see also his collection of articles, *Tarkhi Maqalat* (Delhi : Nudwat al-Musannafin, 1966), pp. 14-38.

<sup>3</sup> Iqbal stated: "The student of Islamic Mysticism who is anxious to see an all-embracing exposition of the principle of Unity, must look up the heavy volumes of the Andalusian Ibn al-'Arabī, whose profound teaching stands in strange contrast with the dry-as-dust Islam of his countrymen." *The Development of Metaphysics In Persia*, (Lahore: Bazm-i Iqbal, 1955), p. x.

London, to qualify at the bar)<sup>4</sup>. Iqbal's subsequent researches carried him farther away from Al-'Arabī.

Writing in 1915 his Foreword to the first edition of *Asrār-i Khudī*, Iqbal repudiated Al-'Arabī and *Wahdat al-wujūd*. He complimented Ibn Taimiyya and Wāḥid Mahmūd for raising their voices high against the life-negating impact of Al-'Arabī. Also, he advised his readers to look to the western nations of Europe in order to learn the meaning of life. "By virtue of their will to action, the Western nations are pre-eminent among the nations of the world. For this reason. and in order to appreciate the secret of life, their literatures and ideas are the best guides for the nations of the East."<sup>5</sup> (This Foreword and his thirty five critical verses about Hafiz were eliminated from the subsequent editions of the *Asrār-i Khudī*.) Among the western nations he singled out Britain.

"The world is indebted to the British for their pragmatism. Their ability to comprehend situations is sharper and more developed than that of other nations. For this reason, no high-flown (*damāgh Bākhteh*) philosophic systems, which fail to stand up in the light of facts, have gained popularity in England. Therefore, the works of British thinkers have a place of their own in the world literature. After benefiting from them (*i.e.*, British philosophic ideas) the mind and the heart (*i.e.*, philosophy and literature) of the East must revise their intellectual legacy."<sup>6</sup>

Here, it is maintained that Iqbal graduated from the *Wahdat al-wujūd* of Al-'Arabī to the concept of the ecological struggle. He was aided in this evolutionary thinking by several thinkers of Islam including Ibn Taimiyya,

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<sup>4</sup> 'Abdul Majīd Sālik, *Dīkr-i-Iqbal* (Lahore : Bazm-i Iqbal), 1955, pp. 48, 57.

”مغربی اقوام اپنی قوت عمل کی وجہ سے تمام اقوام عالم میں ممتاز ہیں اور اسی وجہ سے اسرار زندگی کو سمجھنے کے لیے اُن کے ادبیات و تخیلات اہل مشرق کے واسطے بہترین رہنما ہیں۔“

"Deybacheh-i Asrār-i khudī", in Faqir Sayyid Wahid-ud-Din, *Ruzgār-i Faqir* (Karachi : Lion Art Press, 1965), p' 49.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

Wāhid Mahmūd and Shaikh Ahmad Mujaddid Alf-i Thānī, and more significantly by Darwin, and European ecologists, including Ernest Haeckel (the German biologist who first used the term ecology in *History of Creation*, 1868) and their followers. In 1904, a year before he went to Europe, Iqbal demonstrated a sharp awareness of the ecological struggle even though he still subscribed to the theory of *Wahdat al-wujūd*. (It is, however, not suggested that Iqbal's system of philosophy was basically Darwinian ; he was influenced by the concept of the ecological struggle and that it was only one of the strands of thought which helped him formulate his own philosophic system.)

### The Theory of Ecology

The basis of modern ecology lies in the works of Darwin and Wallace. In particular, Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) and *Descent of Man* (1871) set the stage for a new era in biological research. Attention shifted from a preoccupation with cosmological problems, such as the ultimate meaning of each form of life for every other which followed from the assumption of inscrutability of species, to a search for specific causes responsible for the existence of species, based upon accumulated evidence of change in the organic world. Final causes were forsaken in favour of necessary and sufficient conditions.

Darwin formulated the basic ideas which were later brought together to constitute theoretical understructure, the frame of reference, of modern ecology. All life was his province and he perceived it as a moving system of vital relationships in which were implicated every organism and species of life. (This general conception he described metaphorically as the *web of life*.) Organisms are related to one another in the web, Darwin pointed out, on the basis of a struggle for existence. The term *struggle for existence* includes in it the competition among forms of life as well as the cooperation and mutual aid that develop among organisms. Through struggle for existence the *web of life* unfolds an order of biotic community as organisms become adjusted to one another and to the physical environment.

Scientific ecology, then, is indebted to Darwin for the main outlines of its theory, the essential conception being: (1) The *web of life* in which

organisms are adjusted or are seeking adjustment to one another, (2) the adjustment process as a struggle for existence, and (3) the environment comprising a highly complex set of conditions of adjustment. <sup>7</sup>Darwin's contribution to ecology has resulted in the creation of three phases of scientific ecology: plant, animal, and human.

Twentieth century human ecologists (including Robert E. Park and R.D. Mckenzie) say that "ecology conceives society as fundamentally a territorial as well as a cultural organization . . . it assumes that most, if not all, cultural changes in society will be correlated with changes in its territorial organization, and every change in the territorial and occupational distribution of the population will effect changes in the existing cultures."<sup>8</sup> To Park, the evolution of society is, in some respects, the evolution of a territorial organization. The phenomenon of European colonial expansion was also explained by Park from the view-point of human ecology. "This expansion has been made possible," maintained Park, "by a series of inventions which have, at different epochs in its history, revolutionized and transformed the prevailing methods of transportation and communication."<sup>9</sup> They are:

(I) The perfecting of ocean-going ships with which, in the age of discovery, Europeans extended their knowledge of the world outside of Europe.

(2) The steamships, by means of which a great commercial highway has

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. also, Robert Ezra Park, "Human Ecology", *The American Journal of Sociology* (July, 1936), Vol' XLII, No. I, pp. 1-15.

<sup>8</sup> Robert E. Park, "Succession, An Ecological Concept", *American Sociological Review* (April, 1936), Vol. I, No. II, p. 178' McKenzie says : "Let us tentatively define human ecology as a study of the spatial and temporal relations of human beings as affected by the *selective, distributive* and *accommodative* forces of the environment". R. D. McKenzie, "The Ecological Approach to the Study of the Human Community", *The American Journal of Sociology* (November, 1924), Vol. XXX, No. 3, pp. 287, 88-301.

<sup>9</sup> Iqbal's letter of May 28, 1937 to Jinnah is clearly an ecological statement.

For instance, he says : " . . . the enforcement and development of the *Sbarrat* of 1slam is impossible in this country without a free Muslim state or states. This has been my honest conviction for many years and I still believe this to be the only way to solve the problem of bread for Muslims as well as to secure a peaceful India." *Letters of Iqbal to Jinnah* (Lahore : Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, 1956), p. 18.

been established around the world and has made of the seas, with their seaport cities, the centre of the world.

(3) The railways, by which the continental areas have been penetrated and their resources transported to the seaboard, where they have entered into the world of commerce.

(4) The automobile, which have suddenly further transformed continental areas by spreading out over the land network of roads which permit rapid and unlimited transportation in every direction.

(5) Finally, there is the airplane, the possibility of which we are now just beginning to explore."<sup>10</sup>

Referring to the social, economic and political changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution of Europe, Park says: "These changes have literally plowed up the ancient landmarks, undermined the influence of the traditional social order in every part of the world, and released immense social forces which are now seeking everywhere a new equilibrium."<sup>11</sup>

Writing in 1904 an article on the theme of national life (exactly thirty-two years before Park's article was published) Iqbal adopted the ecological concept for the rise and fall of nations. "After observing the phenomena of nature, scholars have reached a conclusion," maintained Iqbal, "that among all organic beings, (including *homo sapiens* and varieties of animal and plant life), constant war is waged. . . In this struggle for existence (*Kamakash-i-Hayat*), all forms of life are engaged, final victory being achieved by those who have the ability to survive and who can adjust themselves to changed circumstances . . . The modern progeny of *homo sapiens* is a memorial to the long-gone national civilizations and cultures, which suffered death and destruction in their struggle for survival."

The law of natural selection, contended Iqbal, was equally applicable to religious and to national languages. "Hundreds of religions came into being in this world. They flourished and then eventually decayed. Why? The answer

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<sup>10</sup> Park, "Succession, An Ecological Concept", *op. cit'*, p. 179.

<sup>11</sup> *Loc. cit.* For a survey of modern literature on human ecology, see, James A. Quinn, "Topical Summary of Current Literature of Human Ecology". *The American Journal of Sociology* (1940 : 46), pp' 191-226 ; this excellent article lists 347 studies on ecology'

is obvious. The intellectual development of man gave rise to new needs and wants, which these religions could not satisfy." Similar was the case with languages. "At one time, Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit were living languages; they are now almost defunct. They lapsed into disuse because of the law [of natural selection]. . ."

Complimenting the Chinese, Hindus, Jews and Zoroastrians for their ability to survive the ravages of time, Iqbal deplored what he thought was the critical situation of the Muslims in India. He feared that they were on the precipice of extinction and needed to reform their entire national life. The modern struggle, Iqbal believed, was conditioned by trade and industry. "Among the Asian nations, the Japanese were the first to comprehend the secret of the revolution. They dedicated themselves to industrializing their national economy. They have achieved this distinction because of the highly industrialized economy and not because of the contributions of any national philosopher, poet, or *litterateur*."

His advice was unequivocal: Muslims must take to *industry* and *craftsmanship*. "In my eyes," declared Iqbal, "the hands of a carpenter, rough and coarse due to the constant use of the saw, are far more attractive and useful compared to the soft and delicate hands of a scholar, which never carried more than the weight of a pen."

Since the Muslims were outnumbered four to one in the sub-continent, Iqbal came to believe that their culture did not have an even chance to survive. This realization became one of the motive forces for the formulation of his doctrine of *Khudi* (ego), the main arch of his philosophic system. *Khudi*, or self-affirmation, became the frame of reference for the analysis of Indian history. Political forces or persons who strengthened collective Muslim *Khudi* became the heroes, because they strengthened the Muslim's ability to survive in their ecological struggle.

Hence, Iqbal's lack of appreciation for the Mughal Emperor Akbar's *Din-i-Ilahi* (Religion of God) and its concomitant cultural syncreticism, and his approbation of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (Mujaddid Alf Thānī, who spent his life combating the legacy of *Din-i-Ilahi* during the reign of Akbar's son, Emperor Jehāngīr (1605-1628). By the same token, Emperor Aurangzeb

Alamgīr (1658-1707) was the builder of *Khudi* to Iqbal, because in Iqbal's judgement he understood the reality of the ecological struggle in India. Discussing in *Rumūz-i-Bekhudi* (*The Mysteries of Selflessness*) the personal fulfillment of the individual in society, Iqbal described Aurangzeb as:

درمیانِ کارِ زارِ کفر و دین

ترکشِ ما را خدنگِ آخرین

He the last arrow in our quiver left

In the affray of faith with unbelief and

چوں براهیم اندرین بت خانه بود

An Abraham in India's idol-house.

Iqbal's ecological orientation led him to the separation of Muslim India from Hindu India. Consequently, in practical politics he stood for separate electorates, other constitutional safeguards to protect the cultural identity of the Muslims and their eventual self-determination.<sup>12</sup>

In order to appreciate fully the impact of ecology on Iqbal's thought this author translated his article *Qawmi Zindgi*, which appeared in the October 1904 issue of *Makhzan*, Lahore<sup>13</sup>. Its full text is reproduced below.

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<sup>12</sup> Muhammad Iqbal, *Asrār wā Rumūz* (Lahore : Shaikh Ghulam Ali & Sons, 1959), pp. 112-113 ; A. J' Arberry, *The Mysteries of Selflessness* (London : John Murray, 1953), p' 17.

<sup>13</sup> During the summer of 1904 Iqbal visited his elder brother, Shaikh Ataullah, who was then sub-divisional officer at Abbotabad. At the request of the people, Iqbal delivered a lecture on this subject, a summary of which appeared in 2 issues of *Makhzan*, October 1904 and March 1905.

Reference to *Makhzan* October 1904, given in *Maqālat-i-Iqbal* edited by Sayyid Abdul Wahid Mu'ini (Lahore : Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, 1st. edition, May 1963), p. 62 is not exactly correct. (Ed.)

In the history of nations this is a very critical moment. It demands that every nation should examine not only her present situation, but also look upon the well-being of her future generations as a contemporary problem, if she wants to preserve her existence among the nations of the world. Each nation should adopt such a course of action that the cultural elements of its past generations are also preserved. There was a time when the outcome of conflict between nations was determined by the sword, and this weapon of steel was a formidable force in the history of the old world. But in this amazing contemporary world, the survival of nations does not depend on their greater number, nor on the strength of their muscles, nor on their steel weapons. Today their life is protected by the wooden sword (*Kathkē talvār*), which is given the name of *pen*. In today's battles, nations need not be fully armed to shed blood and to engage in warfare in designated battlefields. Nor is it any longer necessary that nations should invade their neighbours in order to conquer them. These techniques were the characteristics of the ancient times.

Today an invisible power (*Khāmosh Qumwat*)<sup>14</sup> makes the difference between the life and death of nations. Utilizing this power, one nation can wipe out the other the way a misspelled word is erased from the blackboard. The battle among elephants has become obsolete; now, only intellectual and ideological forces, and the conflict of civilization is in vogue. This conflict is so fierce and ruthless that the victims would never recover even with miracle drugs and ointments. The distance between nations, which previously precluded cultural diffusion, has virtually disappeared due to the railroads, and the wireless telegraphy. Those countries which were separated by the seas and were completely unknown to others, now appear to be two neighbourhoods of a city, thanks to the fast and superior techniques of navigation in the twentieth century. The nation of the world are being influenced by each other's culture and civilization. During the primitive stages of human culture, flashes of electricity often generated intense religious sentiments; today the same electric energy is instrumental in

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<sup>14</sup> *Silent power* would be the *verbatim* translation of *khāmosh qumwat*, but since Iqbal is referring to science and technology, and particularly electrical energy, *invisible power* would be more accurate.



transmitting human thoughts, and steam provides conveyance while the fan is moved [by the same invisible power]. The sun — whose grandeur and magnificence once deceived the prophet Abraham, and had deeply influenced the philosophical thought (*dil wa damagh*) of a civilized nation [probable allusion to the Hindus] now sheds its light and heat under the direction of scientists.<sup>13</sup> The manifestations of nature, which had remained unconquered for so long, and had succeeded in overawing the ancient nations so that they looked upon them as divine, and erected temples in their name, are now the slaves of man.

Thanks to the progress of modern sciences, man, whom angels described on the day of Creation as wretched and ignorant, is to-day rightly proud of his being the "best of creation" (*asbraf al-makhlūqāt*). His inquisitive mind is untying the tangled secrets of the forces of nature, and by means of his intellectual victories, he is ruling over mountains, oceans, moon, and sun, and stars. This amazing change of conditions distinguished the bygone ages from the modern times. All this points to the development of new physical and spiritual needs calling for the creation of new material wherewithal. This leads one to review the conditions of Indian nations, (especially the Muslims), in the light of changed conditions, and to highlight the obstacles in the rugged path of life. One could then make suggestion to alleviate the situation. (My aim is to draw the attention of the readers to the central and most important aspect of our national life. If I succeed in rousing the interest and thought processes of any of my readers, then this article would have achieved its purpose).

### [Ecological Struggle]

After observing the phenomena of nature, scholars have reached a conclusion that among all organic beings, (including *homo sapiens*, and varieties of animal and plant life), constant war is waged. In other words, the secret of nature is essentially struggle, which presents in a way a very painful spectacle, engaging all organic beings in war with their neighbours. In this struggle for existence (*Kashmakash-i hayāt*) all forms of life are engaged, final victory being achieved by those who have the ability to survive, and who can adjust themselves to the changed circumstances. In the long-past [geological] ages, varied species of animals and birds existed; today even their names are

extinct. As the environment and conditions of life changed, the animal life suffered destruction, because they could not adjust themselves to various stages of the [natural] evolution (*inqalab*).

The discovery of this law [natural selection] was made by modern scholars with utmost labour. This is a universal law, equally applicable to *homo sapiens*, and species of animals and birds, including other forms of organic beings. I want to demonstrate the impact of this overpowering law on the evolutionary development of human beings in the past and in the present. Was the man of our times, [*homo sapiens*] always in his present biological state ? No, never. The modern progeny of *homo sapiens* is a memorial to the long-gone national civilizations and cultures, which suffered death and destruction in their struggle for survival. Their destruction was so complete that not a faint trace of them is left behind. Thousands of years have elapsed since the death of Egyptian pyramid builders. The philosophy of the ancient Greeks has survived but they are no more. Where is today that African nation [of Carthage] whose brave military officers devastated the West, and then finally attacked the magnificent Roman Empire? Is there a trace of this nation anywhere? Hundreds of nations came into being in this world; after flourishing and prospering in their own times, they eventually disappeared unto dust.

The progress of mankind, as history teaches us, was not achieved in an easy way. Hundreds of nations were sacrificed in the pursuit of educational and cultural. development ; and thousands of individuals made the offering of blood at the altar [of progress]. Wars, epidemics, and famines are obviously the outcome of this universal law [of struggle for survival]. Viewed in the light of human evolution, these phenomena, which appear to be a divine scourge, are blessings in disguise. They are meant to lend order to the web of life (*niẓām-i Oudrat*). The law of [natural selection] is not only applicable to mankind, but its impact equally envelops other aspects of life. Hundreds of religions came into being in this world. They flourished and then eventually decayed. Why ? The answer is obvious. The intellectual development of man gave rise to new needs and wants, which these religions could not satisfy. That is why the theologians had to invent new dialectics in order to strengthen their religion. This is why they endeavoured to dress up their religious teaching so that it might be their guide in temporal (*'amli*) and

spiritual aspects of life. At one time Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit were living languages ; now they are almost defunct. They lapsed into disuse because of [the law of natural selection] ; Punjabi, which we use for daily intercourse, is likewise subject to this law. Hundreds of words currently being used by the educated strata of society are not to be found in Punjabi. Modern expressions of thought have developed owing to an increase in human intelligence. Punjabi is incapable of expressing them. Against this background, Punjabi is likely to meet the same fate which the ancient languages met. Looking at the conditions of some contemporary nations, one would realize that the original inhabitants of America and Australia have fallen victim to the onslaught of superior civilization and culture. Nations of Central Asia, and Iran, and China are also under the pressure of the laws of natural selection. Scholarly view regards their future prospects as very bleak.

History points up the indispensable role of the struggle for survival as a boost to human development. This mighty oak of human progress flourishes at the expense of numerous saplings. Just as it is necessary that various nations be sacrificed in the interest of collective human progress, similarly it is necessary that the individuals may be disregarded in order to ensure the growth and development of a nation. Here we face a novel and difficult question: If an individual does not have a vested interest in the intellectual and cultural development of the future generations, or if he is not specially interested in their distant economic well-being and political prestige or grandeur why should his personal interests be subordinated to those of his national progress ? Will I live a hundred years from now ? Then why should I sacrifice myself at the altar of national interest, or spend sleepless nights worrying about the distant national progress ? This is a very discomfoting question, yet an inevitable one, defying all rational answers. Religion rescues us from the dangers of doubt. It teaches us that the principle of self-sacrifice for the interests of others is not based on rationality. The virtue [of self-sacrifice], which is indispensable for human evolution and national advancement, finds its justification in super-natural (*Fuq al-'adat*) principles.

[The concept of prophecy can be explained in a similar manner]. The prophetic mission (*awāz-i Nubbūvai*) and its significance cannot be explained in rational terms. A prophet enjoys spiritual experiences with the help of his extra-ordinary faculties (*gher ma'mūli Qawā*). They lend him divine grandeur

and overwhelming power before which all claims to human superiority pale into insignificance. This is the secret of religion not comprehended by simple minds. Very erroneously, they have considered the principles of religion as contributory factors for international bloodshed and world wars. Very similar is the concept of [self-] sacrifice, which was adopted by all nations of the world at different times and situations in their history. Discerning observers appreciate the fact that if tribes of men were not inculcated with the [virtue of] sacrifice, the lack of it would have hampered the evolutionary growth of man, preventing civilization and culture to acquire its present form. If the evolutionary development of civilization and culture is the tree, then religion is its fruit. Just as water, air, and food are essential to human nourishment, similarly, religion is indispensable for national development. The religious value of sacrifice not only helps in human evolution, but there is another aspect of it, which cannot be overlooked. In the ancient world, slavery was considered to be an integral part of the social structure. Even Plato declared it permissible in his book, *The Republic*. There was a rationale for this position. The concept of employment was not yet regarded as a free contract. Therefore, payment for the services rendered was inconceivable. Since a social structure cannot be maintained without an agreed principle of employment, acceptance of slavery became mandatory. Consequently, a large number of human beings became mere articles of possession, and were denied a role in the struggle for survival, so essential for human progress.

The Prophet of Arabia was the first to teach the lesson of natural liberty (*Fitiāzādī*) for all individuals. In declaring the equality of rights between the slave and the master, he laid the foundations of the cultural revolution, the impact of which is being felt by the world. This action amounted to involving a large segment of humanity, *i.e.*, slaves, in the process of struggle, which really generates higher forms of civilization and culture, and strengthens them. What was the consequence of this teaching of the Wise Man of Arabia ? Among Muslims, slaves rose to the position of sovereigns and ministers. Education made the slaves philosophers and *littérateurs*. Humiliating restrictions were abolished, thus enabling a slave to compete on individual merits with privileged members [of society], and to achieve the highest position in the state. The best specimen of this social revolution was presented in the conduct of Caliph 'Umar, especially during his journey to take possession of Jerusalem. As far as I know the national history of no

other people presents such an example ; Muslims can be rightly proud of it. The question of female's rights is also a delicate issue. Regarding women, the Prophet preached their freedom (*azādana t'alim di*). However, this vast subject demands thorough investigation ; instead of discussing it in detail, I would merely allude to it at an appropriate place.

Regarding life, a thought-provoking question demands an answer: Is it within the means of a nation to organize the material conditions of its national existence in accordance with its plans? In other words, can a nation exercise control over its destiny ? Or perhaps human beings, like animals and vegetation, are equally subject to uncontrollable forces of nature? The essence of life in human being is not different from that in other forms of life, yet *homo sapiens*, because of his God-given intelligence, is superior to all other forms of life. Man is endowed with a great power of intelligence, which enables him to appreciate the prerequisites (*sht'aii-i-zindagā0*) and other vicissitudes of life. Man can comprehend the laws of nature, benefit from this knowledge, and thus determine the direction of his evolution. When he sees that the productivity of land is not in proportion to the increase in population, he combats the natural forces with his [mechanical] invention. The struggle for the advancement of civilization and culture would have been of no avail if man did not possess intelligence. Then our life would not have differed from animal life and that of other organic beings. Like those beings, who are unable to mould the twists and turns of life, our existence and survival would have depended upon the forces of nature.<sup>15</sup>

[Nations which survived the ravages of Time]

So far I have discussed the problems of life in terms of theory. Now, I would discuss facts, drawing conclusions from them most helpful for the country and our nation.

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<sup>15</sup> In this rhetorical style Iqbal is slightly imprecise, particularly in this sentence. Instead of using the word scientist, he simply says *badrat-i Insān* (respected man)' For greater clarity of expression *scientists* has been substituted.

If we view the past and present history of the civilized world, we find that of all the ancient peoples, only four nations have survived the sharp sword of the laws of nature [i.e., natural selection]: Chinese, Hindus, Jews, and Parsees [Zoroastrians]. Realizing the meaning of change, the Japanese in Asia, and the Italians in the west, have recently endeavored to change their morals and politics in order to come to terms with modern forces of civilization. Since the national backgrounds of Hindus and Chinese are entirely different from those of Jews and Zoroastrians (and their analysis within the framework of this article cannot be helpful), I would not even allude to their amazing but interesting past. However, it is significant that notwithstanding periodical external invasions of their homelands, hundreds of years of [political] slavery, and other natural and super-natural calamities [*ardhī wa samāny āfāt*] which were endured by these four nations, they have survived to this day.

*Bani Israel.* The history of the Jews is a pathetic story, too painful to be heard. But their spirit of endurance is so intense and man ellous that of all the nations of East and West only Hindus can be compared with them. The first law-giver, and the first teacher in the world emphasizing absolute unity of God was Moses. Similarly, in modern times the *philosopher* who propounded [the doctrine of] the unity of being (*tawhīd-i wujūd*) was a Dutch Jew [i.e., Spinoza]. It is amazing that these two principles [i.e., *tawhīd i mulaq* and *tawhīd-i wujūd*] of the reality of existence (*Haqiqat i ashyā*, which are the most powerful forces for the progress of civilization and culture, (though appear superficially to be contradictory), are the intellectual creation of the same nation, i.e. the Jews. Although the philosophy of the unity of being (*tawhīd i wujūd*) had been very well developed by the Asian off-shoot (i.e., Hindus), of the Indo-European family, it can be safely said that the philosophy of Spinoza (1632-1677) was not in the least influenced by the intricate *Vedanta* philosophy.<sup>16</sup> Hundreds of prophets rose in the fold of this

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<sup>16</sup> Hindu sacred literature includes four different types, namely the *Sambhita* as collection of verses (*Sam*, together, *bhita*, put ; they are *Rg-Veda*, *Sama-Veda*, *Yajur-Veda* and *Atharva-Veda*), *Brahmanas*, and the *Upanishads*! According to the Hindu belief the Vedas "were revealed as commandments and prohibitions to show the true path of happiness. The *Upanishads* only revealed the ultimate truth and reality, a knowledge of which at once emancipates a man!" The *Upanishads* are also known by another name *Vedanta*, as they were believed to be the last portions of the *Veda* (*Veda-anta, end*!) More than two hundred *Upanishads* are said to have

[Jewish] exalted nation. Numerous kings and jurists contributed to the perfection of its civilization and culture. At last, divine punishment in the form of natural laws of existence descended upon the Jews, forcing them into Diaspora and dreadful alien subjugation. Their old glory, political independence, and prestige were gone. Their culture decayed, and the Jewish Nation disintegrated in the western world. It is still suffering oppression at the hands of other nations.

*Afghans, the offshoots of Jews.* Undoubtedly an offshoot of the Jews, the Afghan nation is still independent and sovereign in the rocky highlands of Asia. Historians, who keenly study the dynamics of national rise and fall, are apprehensive that if the Afghans failed to understand the significance of modern revolution, and failed to utilize their political independence for cultural improvement, they would decay like the rest of the Central Asian nations. The most amazing characteristic of the BaniIsrael is their physical survival, their tenacity to defy the ravages of time. They have lost their state and national identity, yet the biggest States in the world borrow money from them. Because of their affluence, they are busily working to implement their national programme of buying land in their ancestral home in order to recreate their bygone glory.

Consider the national history of the Parsees [Zoroastrians]. At one time they were magnificent. Like the Jews, prophets were born among them. Iranian civilization reached the zenith of development, succumbing eventually to the Arab swords during the reign of Emperor Yezdigird III [634-652]. The Sassanian refinement completely vanished; Zoroastrian clergy were silenced, and their fire-temples were thoroughly destroyed. Some Zoroastrians, who failed to accept Islam, took asylum in India. Did this nation suffer total annihilation? No. The fact is that both Zoroastrians and the Jews have understood [the power of] modern revolution, which lies in industry and trade. The lion's share of the world's trade is in their hands, which is the real cause of their national rejuvenation.

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been composed, although the earliest *Upanishads* (no more than thirteen) were composed by 500 B.C. They continued to be written during the Muslim rule. In 1917, one hundred and twelve *Upanishads* were published by the Nirnaya- Sagara Press in Bombay' Cf. Surendranath Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy* (Cambridge : At the University Press, 1957), Vol. I, pp. 13, 28-30, 39.

In addition to the Italians, (who are part of the Western World), the Japanese are progressing with amazing speed. Only forty years ago this nation was almost dead. The first educational council in Japan was established in 1868. Four years later (1872), the first educational law was promulgated. On this occasion the Japanese Emperor made the following remark: "It is our desire to spread education in Japan. So that no family in any village should remain uneducated." Copying the techniques of the Western Nations, this Far Eastern Nation, (which was the disciple of India in religious matters), has progressed so rapidly in worldly matters within thirty-six years that today it is considered to be an equal of more civilized nations. Western observers simply marvel at the fast pace of Japanese development. The discerning eyes of Japan comprehended the secret of this magnificent revolution, adopting an indispensable programme of national survival. Education and social reforms changed the national character of Japan. Since of all the Asian nations Japan has grasped the secret of life, it should be, therefore, in worldly matters, our ideal to emulate. We must thoroughly investigate the causes of Japanese metamorphosis, copying those aspects of it which are most suited to the conditions of our country.

### [Conditions of India and Muslims]

In the light of these circumstances, the conditions of India make us sad and pessimistic. Just look at the decorative articles and furnishings in our houses. For little things we depend on other nations, and this dependence is increasing daily. The (oil) lamp was manufactured in Germany, its bulb in Australia, the oil for it imported from Russia, and the match, utilized to light the lamp, came from Sweden or Japan. The clock which hangs on the wall of your living room, was made in the United States, and the little watch, safely tick-ticking in your pocket, is an excellent sample of the handiwork of the artisans of Geneva. Similarly, material for our clothes, even walking sticks, knives, scissors, drapes, and other articles of daily use, reach us from the factories of foreign countries.

How can we succeed in the race of life while its scope widens daily, if the country is entirely impervious to the development of its trade and industry? Undoubtedly our country exports raw materials, including cotton, tea, coal. But unfortunately our country is only a source of raw material for



other countries, and is completely dependent upon them for manufactured goods. An agricultural country like India can neither win the race for progress, nor escape from periodic famines and epidemics unless it adopts entirely new methods to fulfil the needs of its people. Unless India is industrialized, and its people learn to stand on their own feet, nature will continue to chastise us with famines, enfeebling us physically and morally.

Among the Indians, our Hindu compatriots have grasped to some extent the secret of success. Since they are temperamentally suited to industry and trade, a very wide scope of progress (*taraqqi kē ayk nāsī' maydān*) lies ahead of them. Very regretfully must I say that in this respect the prospects of the Muslims appear to be highly uncertain. This unfortunate nation has not only lost political power, but also (the ability) for industry and trade. Wounded by the sharp sword of poverty, it is hanging on to the meaningless so-called will of God, and is completely impervious to the dictates of time. What else can it do? It has not yet quite settled the religious polemics. Almost daily a new sect is born, claiming to be the exclusive heir of the heavens while condemning the rest of mankind to perdition. The sects among Muslims are so hopelessly divided that the prospects for national solidarity and unity appear slim indeed.

Look at the religious teachers. Should coincidentally two of them happen to be in one city, they would challenge each other to debate the issues of Jesus Christ's birth and those passages of the Qur'an, which abrogate each other. During the debates the propriety of scholarly argumentation would be utterly disregarded. The qualities of scholarship, which were the hall-mark of Islam, are sadly missing. God help us; these religious teachers daily add new names of "Muslim-infidels" to their personal roster. The story of upper class indulgence in luxury is also truly novel, With the blessings of God, a man has sired two daughters and two sons, yet he is in pursuit of a third wife. Behind the back of the first two wives, secret but indirect messages for the third marriage are sent to the family of eligible girls. If the sire achieved temporary truce in the family conflict, he would only utilize the time to flirt with the street beauties. If someone had the courage to mildly advise him, the sire would loudly retort: Busy-body ! why don't you mind your own business.

What can be said of the common folks? Some squander their lifelong savings on the circumcision rites of their sons. Rather than cajoling their children to go to school, some parents would keep them home to nurse their fears of teachers. [What an example of frugality!] The one who earns his living in the day spends all in the night, thinking that God would take care of tomorrow. On very minor issues, litigations are started, and in the process, estates disappear because of the exorbitant legal expenses. Culturally, they are backward; girls are uneducated, boys are ignorant, unemployed, and shirk all manual work. The crime rate is on the rise among them. The Muslim lower classes with little or no money incur expenses *a la* Emperor Shah Jahan (*damāgh shah. jabani, amadenyan qalil*). Looking at their poverty, one could remark that the month of Ramadhan suits most the conditions of the Muslims.

We are passing through the most critical time. Nothing will be achieved unless the whole of the Muslim nation reforms her total national life. Great achievements are not made without commensurate hard work. Even God does not change the fate of a nation unless its members endeavour to change it.

An English author says that hard work done with honesty is the highest form of divine worship, whether it benefits the individual or the whole nation. In reality, the nation cannot be conceived of without the individual. Individual action, therefore, envelops the entire nation, making an individual's labour truly a national task. The good and reprehensible nature of individual labour will effect the national life accordingly. The first individual obligation is the honest discharge of his duties assigned to him by the nation. It should be properly appreciated that the progress and decadence of an individual signifies the national rise and fall. This kind of labour has been described as an act of divine worship. Very appropriately a Persian poet has said:

جز به محنت نشود پا به ره عشق رواں

اشک من خون جگر خورد و دویدن آموخت

Without hard work one could not even walk in the direction of love;

Before it could drop, my tears had to nourish on the blood of liver.

No nation in the world can be reformed unless its members reform themselves, because individual actions are truly actions of a nation. The life of an individual is not his exclusive possession, it is owned by the nation. Why is suicide an offense? Superficially it would seem that punishment for an attempt at suicide is against the principle of justice. Law has accepted in principle that an individual life is in reality the life of society. An individual does not commit violence merely against himself by suicidal attempt, but he endeavors to destroy the vitality of national culture, of which his personal self is a part.

#### [Muslim Social Reforms]

If we want to benefit from the Japanese experience (presently Japan is the only best model for us), then we must undertake national social reforms, and widen the educational system. Among Muslims, the problem of social reforms is intertwined with religion, because Muslim culture is really the practical aspect of Islam. No contour of our cultural life can be separated from religious principles. Although I do not want to discuss this issue within the framework of religion, I would want to point out that the modern revolution in our national life has generated new cultural needs, calling for the revision of our legal principles, the collection of which is generally known as the *Shari'a*. There are no inherent defects in the established principles of Islam. The jurists of bygone ages, however, had drawn certain principles from the Qur'an and the Traditions, which were suitable to particular situations and were practicable in general. But they are no longer adequate for modern needs.

Undoubtedly the *Shi'a* commentators of the Qur'an demonstrated an amazing range of comprehension in the interpretation of certain principles. But, according to my understanding, the interpretations of the *Shari'a* offered by Abu Hanifah have remained unsurpassed in their depth and excellence. If Islam had permitted the practice of raising statues in the honour of outstanding leaders and scholars, Abu Hanifah would have been the first

jurist deserving this honour. His contribution to the interpretational analysis of the philosophy of *Shari'a* will never be forgotten by the Muslims, even though it ranks second to the contributions of Caliph 'Ali.

Modern life demands that new techniques of dialectics (*jadid 'ilm-i-kalam*) should be devised in order to reaffirm the principles of our religion. Therefore, the time calls for the emergence of a great jurist who may accomplish a modern interpretation of the Islamic laws. This jurist should possess not only rich imagination, but also command a very high level of intellect in order to codify Islamic laws on modern style, capable of coping with contemporary cultural requirements. As far as I can see such an accomplished jurist has not emerged in the world of Islam. Perhaps the task is too big for one individual. It might even need one century to complete.

This is a fascinating discussion. Since the Muslim nation is not yet ready to debate these issues cool-mindedly, I stop here very reluctantly. Nevertheless, I would like to call the attention of the readers to a few cultural problems. The rights of women, to begin with, is the most delicate issue in the realm of social reforms. Related to it are the problems of polygamy, education, and the wearing of the veil (*pardah*). Western scholars have unjustly criticised Islam about the rights of women. Actually their criticism is erroneously directed against Islam, while their real target is the body of legal precedents created by the jurists from the general and broad principles of the Qur'an. (Regarding them, it can be said that the individual Ijtihad<sup>15</sup> cannot be considered as an integral part of Islam). The motive of [the western critics] is to allege that the status of women in Islam is merely that of slaves. This invites speculation. How could the Prophet of Islam, who elevated the slaves to the status of the masters, relegate the most important segment of humanity, woman, to the position of slaves, especially when he described them as one of the three most beloved objects in the world? The present conduct of Muslims [*vis-a-vis* women] conforms merely to the personal reasoning of the old jurists. No doubt they need to be amended, provided these amendments do not contravene the principles of Islam.

If peripheral matters are discarded in favour of particular issues, then the issue of female education appears to be the most deserving of attention. Woman is the root of any culture. Mother and wife are two sweet words

embodying all the spiritual and temporal virtues. If affection for mother begets patriotism, love of wife leads to divine love. This lights up the need to strengthen the roots of our culture by adorning our women with education. Educating a woman means educating the entire family, while male education remains pretty much of a personal matter. No nation in the world can make progress if half of its members remain uneducated. Should our women be exposed to western education, or should perhaps, an altogether new policy be adopted, making it possible for our women to retain the traditionally polite manners (*sharifanā atwār*) so characteristic of eastern up-bringing? I have thought over these problems but since I have not been able to work out any practical plan, I would not want to offer an opinion.

Also, polygamous practice among Muslims needs reform! It is true that polygamy was legally allowed on account of certain basic spiritual considerations. Besides, in early Islam, economic as well as political factors necessitated it. As far as I see now, there is hardly any need for polygamy among us. Insistence upon its retention in modern times amounts to overlooking the poor economic conditions of our nation, and to providing a legal excuse to the well-to-do among us for sexual indulgence.

The *pardab*, wearing of the veil by Muslim women, is another controversial but thought-provoking issue. The westernized Muslims are against this custom, saying that neither in contemporary Muslim countries, nor in the milieu of early Islam, was *pardab* ever observed in its present Indian style, covering the female body from head to toe. In India, *pardab* was initially emphasized for ethical reasons! Abandoning it now by a *coup* would hurt the nation because the nations of India (*aqwām-i-Hindustān*) have not progressed very much in improving their morals. If, however, our nation's morals were to improve to the level of early Muslims, then, of course, *pardab* could be de-emphasized, making it possible for women to exchange freely ideas with male members of the society.

In addition to these problems, some very objectionable Muslim marriage customs should be reformed. Marriages without the consent of the spouses are a daily occurrence. Complaints of husband-wife clashes are heard from 99% of Muslim families. Engagement could be a very useful custom if the couple is allowed to visit each other in the presence of their parents. This

would give them the opportunity to examine their habits and temperaments. If, for instance, they found themselves mutually incompatible, then the engagement could be called off by agreement. The current engagement custom defeats its own purpose. A boy may be a regular visitor to his future in-laws, but the moment his engagement is announced, he is made to stay away from his future wife's house the way a pious man shuns bars. Among the Afghans, the couple is allowed to visit each other. This practice, however, is of Jewish origin, pointing to the Jewish descent of the Afghans.

Engagement has also created certain reprehensible practices. For instance, among certain Muslim families, a great deal of money is spent from the announcement of the engagement to the day of marriage, causing bad blood among the families and plaguing the future husband-wife relations. If this aspect of the engagement custom were reformed it could be a very useful social institution, combining all the qualities of Western courtship, but none of its defects.

In addition to other national vices, more well-to-do Muslims are addicted to the vice of ostentatious displays of their affluence. An interesting and thought-provoking incident comes to my mind. A saintly individual named Kayser Shah lived in the town of Wazirabad, (which is not too far away from our city, Sialkot). He was a believer in the doctrine of *Wahdat al-mujid*, and had the reputation of working miracles. Respectable people in the surrounding areas, including the Hindus, admired him.

One day a landlord came to visit him after having celebrated the marriage of his only son. The landlord started telling tall tales about the magnificence of the marriage ceremonies. Very patiently, the pious man listened to the story of his conspicuous consumption, entailing fantastic expenses on his son's marriage. Just then a *derwaish* (an ascetic) interrupted their conversation saying that the pious man's lunch was ready, which consisted of only a dry loaf of bread. Addressing the landlord, the pious man said: "Why don't you go to the bazaar to buy me some curry?" Coincidentally, the landlord had no money on him at that time. Flushed with embarrassment, the landlord asked him to spare a few pennies scattered in front of him. The pious man retorted why he could not buy him a *mull* with his reputation for ostentation. How could that be? inquired the embarrassed

rich visitor. In his usual light-hearted manner, the pious man remarked that if one could not buy even a *muli* with one's notoriety for ostentation, then what is the use of it? The affluent visitor was really put to shame, and promised not to behave like this again.

[National Choice: Industrialization or Annihilation]

Next to social reforms, our paramount need is mass education. Muslims believe that the real aim of education is intellectual grooming. To date, our leaders have organized our education with this aim in mind. After a careful review of this problem, I conclude that the real purpose of education is to enable young men to fulfil their cultural obligations. It is not implied here that those who have the innate ability for scholarly investigation should be thwarted. I maintain that national education should be organized to cater to those national needs, which are created by changed circumstances. [For instance, take the case of Britain]' The English are geared to trade ; Napoleon often described them as a nation of shopkeepers. Historically, this description fits the English people more now than it did in the days of Napoleon. This country imports all raw material, including her food, and exports in return manufactured products. In other words, Britain is a gigantic store from which other nations purchase necessary merchandise. The British national economy needs a personnel trained in modern trade. Consequently, British education is geared to creating commercial know-hew.

The modern revolution has been conditioned by trade and industry. Among the Asian nations, the Japanese were the first to comprehend the secret of this revolution. They dedicated themselves to industrializing their national economy. Today they are recognized as one of the civilized nations of the world. They have achieved this distinction because of their highly industrialized economy and not because of the contributions of any national philosopher, poet, or *litterateur*.

The contemporary struggle for survival among nations would inevitably ruin some nations. The outcome of this conflict, however, is not determined by armed soldiers. In fact, the soldiers of this combat are those trained workers who are quietly engaged in productive labour in the factories of their nations. Today, if you want to evaluate the national power of a country, you

need not examine its guns and rifles; instead, you better visit its factories with a view to determining its dependence on foreign countries and relative economic and industrial self-sufficiency. In view of this, I recommend that education of the Indians, and that of the Muslims in particular, should emphasize industrial training. World events impel me to say that any nation found lacking in industrial education would suffer degradation and humiliation and [in the long run] would not be able to survive. Unfortunately, the Muslims are impervious to these dangers. I fear that they may have to pay for their indifference. Muslims must take to industry and craftsmanship. In my eyes, the hands of a carpenter, rough and coarse due to the constant use of the saw, are far more attractive and useful compared to the soft and delicate hands of a scholar, which never carried more than the weight of a pen. This subject rouses in me a glow of emotions which cannot be described in words ; surely these disjointed and broken thoughts cannot reveal the depth of my feelings. [Perhaps a Persian verse would say it more eloquently]:

از اشک می‌رسید که در دل چه خروش است

ایں قطره ز دریا چه خبر داشته باشد

Why ask a tear [rolling down my cheek] the inner stirrings of my heart ;

What could this [mean] drop tell you about the depth of a river!<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> The right of interpreting the Quran and the *Sunnah* or of forming a new opinion by applying analogical deduction.