

IQBAL ON SOCIAL PROBLEMS

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While going through poetical works and other writings of Iqbal, one thing that we cannot remain without noticing is that he had a deep awareness of social problems faced by Muslims in general and Indian Muslims in particular. Though volumes upon volumes have been written on all other aspects of Iqbal's thought, yet so far as I know, no writer on Iqbal has, thus far, touched upon his thinking on social problems. In this article I have attempted to pin-point those social problems which seem to have influenced Iqbal's thought and feelings. I do not claim that the article is based on the discovery of any new verses or writings of Iqbal. However, verses and writings, often quoted in other contexts, have been interpreted in a new light.

Before going headlong into the issue of Iqbal and Social Problems, let us try to get a clear idea of the term "social problems".

A renowned American sociologist, Professor Samuel Koenig of Brooklyn College, City University of New York, in his book entitled *Sociology: An Introduction to the Science of Society*, has defined the term "social problems" in these words: "They are situations or conditions which society regards as threats to its established ways or to its well-being and, therefore, needing to be alleviated or eliminated." He further says:

"What is considered a social problem by one society may not be so regarded by another. Because of changed conditions and attitudes what is thought to be a problem to-day may not have been thought to be one in the past, or *vice versa*, even in the same society. On the other hand there are social problems, which, as shown by historical records and surveys of different societies, are universal and permanent. . . . For this reason, many of the social problems of to-day are identical with those of ancient times."

Lawrence K. Frank, another sociologist, in his article on "Social Problems," published in *The American Journal of Sociology*, defined a social problem as "any difficulty or misbehavior of a fairly large number, of persons, which we wish to remove or correct". According to Harold A. Phelps, "Every society has norms of what constitutes material well-being,

physical health, mental health, and group and personal adjustment. Deviations from these norms are regarded as abnormalities and as constituting social problems." Professor John F. Cuber, of Ohio State University, in his book *Sociology: A Synopsis of Principles*, has enumerated some of the social problems which are slavery, poverty, racial or religious discrimination, caste exploitation of the underprivileged, crime, juvenile delinquency, etc.

Here let us pause and have a look at the moment in history when Iqbal was born, because no discussion on Iqbal and social problems can be fruitful unless we comprehend the political and social situation obtaining at his birth and during his lifetime. A thinker and reformer, after all, is the product of his times, not in the sense that his thinking and behaviour is mechanically caused by external and environmental conditions, but in the sense that they are the result of a conscious and voluntary response to rude conditions.

Iqbal was born in the year 1877 and it will be recalled that the tragic and traumatic event of 1857 was still fresh in the memory of the Indian Muslims. They had lost their sovereignty and independence, and were subjugated by an alien power. Muslim society had been completely shaken on account of this upheaval. In the general massacre ordered by the victorious Britishers five hundred thousand Indians, mostly Muslims, were slaughtered in retaliation for the killing of only seven thousand men of the British army, during the uprising. People were hunted in the streets. Muslims were hanged on thoroughfares and their dead bodies thrown into rivers. They were sewn in the swine's hides and burnt alive. Some of them were blown in the cannons. In Delhi twenty Muslim princes were hanged on a single day. The English army looted houses and shops. Magnificent buildings and market-places around the Red Fort were razed to the ground. The Jāmi'ah Mosque of Delhi was desecrated by the English army for full five years. During this period the mosque remained in their possession. In fact, the failure of the War of Independence and breaking down of the resistance movements had completely dispirited and demoralised the Muslims. The Hindus joined hands with the victorious rulers and persecuted the Muslims. Despair and pessimism had become the general mood. The Muslim society as a whole was passing through a period of turmoil and transformation. It gave rise to a number of social problems. As time passed these social problems continued to multiply and became more complex. To mention only a few, these social

problems were: slavery and the resultant slavish mentality, gradual alienation from Islam and weakening of faith, pessimism and negativism, Hindu-Muslim tension, exploitation of the poor Muslim peasantry by the rich Hindu money-lenders, ousting of the alien cultural and ideological influences, sectarianism and the emergence of the self-proclaimed religious Messiahs, etc., etc.

This brief survey of the political and social situation at the time of Iqbal's birth makes it abundantly clear that it was not merely by chance that during this particular period a good number of the heroes of our history, social and political reformers were either engaged in the struggle to tackle the social and political problems which had arisen in the wake of the defeat in the War of Independence, or took birth and imbibed the crusading spirit from the stalwarts of the elder generation. Maulānā Shiblī, Sayyid Aḥmad Khan, Nawāb Viqārul Mulk and Nawāb Muḥsinul Mulk belong to the first category, while Maulānā Muhammad 'Alī Jauhar, Maulānā Shaukat 'Alī, Nawāb Bahādur Yār Jang, Qā'id-i A'zam Muḥammad 'Alī Jinnāḥ and 'Allāmah Iqbal belong to the second category. It is obvious that the thinking and feelings of Iqbal were moulded and motivated by the social environments in which he opened his eyes. Had the Muslim society been free of the problems it faced, the content and tone of Iqbal's poetry as well as philosophy would have been quite different.

It is quite clear that Iqbal had not theorised on social problems. He had not directly said anything about this concept itself and the term "social problems" occurs nowhere in his prose or poetical writings. But it does not mean that he was oblivious of the multifarious social problems that infected the Muslim society of his time.

Iqbal was not a visionary. He had set before himself a goal, an ideal which permeates all his writings. This ideal was a balanced healthy life — a life not only of thought and reflection, but of practical participation in social activity. That is why that, in spite of being a celebrated poet and philosopher, he became a member and an office-bearer of a political party. He contested elections. It was he who persuaded the Qā'id-i A'zam Muḥammad 'Alī Jinnāḥ, to return to India to lead the Muslims in the struggle ahead which he foresaw. He put forward political solution to social problems. In 1930, in the course of his famous address at Allahabad he clearly advocated the idea of a

separate homeland for Muslims in India. Some people might wonder at a philosopher and a poet doing all this. But Iqbal's behaviour becomes quite plain when we realise that his aim was not an abstract knowledge of reality and the expression of impracticable transitory moods, but his ideal was a balanced healthy life which is possible only in a healthy society. In other words, he was a social reformer though he never called him-self as such.

Iqbal's concept of an ideal Muslim society is derived from the Holy Qur'ān, as he has himself said in a verse:

نہیں تو می خواہی مسلمان زیستن	نیست مکن جز بہ قرن زیستن
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[If you want to live like a Muslim,
it is not possible without the Holy Qur'an.]

The concrete and practical demonstration of the concept of an ideal individual life and of Muslim society is to be found in the pattern which was set for us by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) through his personal example and the society which he personally organised, supervised and guided. Maulānā Ṣalāḥuddīn Aḥmad has rightly pointed out in his book *Ṣarīr-i Khāmab* (Volume I), that "according to Iqbal the touchstone to find out the impurities in social life is provided to us by the Holy Qur'ān and *Sunnab*."

It is in the light of this concept of an ideal Muslim society that we can understand and appreciate Iqbal's thinking on social problems. After this introductory discussion let us now take up one by one the social problems on which Iqbal has expressed himself either in verse or prose.

(1) *Sectarianism and Parochialism*. One of the foremost social problems which from the very beginning attracted Iqbal's attention was sectarianism. It was the major factor in the downfall of Muslim States and the disintegration of Muslim society everywhere. Iqbal was aware of the dangers inherent in sectarianism and, therefore, warned Muslims against them in a number of verses, e.g.:

وا نہ کرنا فرقہ بندی کے لیے اپنی زبان	چھپ کے بیٹھا ہوا ہنگامہ محشر یہاں ⁹²
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⁹² Sayyid ki Lauḥ-i Turbat", *Bāng-i-Darā*, p. 42.

[Do not use your tongue for sectarianism,
there are terrible dangers hidden in it.]

یہ وہ پھل ہے کہ جنت سے نکلواتا ہی آدم
کو⁹³

شجر ہے فرقہ آرائی، تعصب ہے ثمر اس کا

[Sectarianism is a tree and prejudice is its fruit,
one which causes the expulsion of Adam from heaven.]

Addressing the moon in his poem "Hilāl-i 'īd" he says:

اپنی آزادی بھی دیکھ ان کی گرفتاری بھی دیکھ⁹⁴

فرقہ آرائی کی زنجیروں میں ہیں مسلم اسیر

[Muslims are bound in the shackles of sectarianism,
just see your freedom and their bondage.]

In the eighth canto of the poem "Mehrāb Gul Afghān Ke Afkār" Iqbal
condemns sectarianism, parochialism and tribalism:

کہ امتیازِ قبائل تمام تر خواری

یہ نکتہ خوب کہا شیر شاہ سوری نے

کہ ہر قبیلہ ہے اپنے بتوں کا زناری⁹⁵

ہزار پارہ ہے کہسار کی مسلمانی

[Sher Shāh Sūrī has taught us this good lesson
that the tribal discrimination leads to humiliation.
Islamic society in the mountainous regions is broken up
into small factions as each tribe worships its own idol of tribalism.]

⁹³ "Taṣwīr-i Dard," *ibid.*, p. 70.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

⁹⁵ *Darb-i Kalim*, p. 180.

(2) *Orthodoxy*. Orthodoxy and narrow conservatism was another social problem which stunted the growth of Muslim society. In a number of poems Iqbal has taken note of this problem. Often he satirises the *Mullā* who is an embodiment of orthodoxy, conservatism and narrow-mindedness, as, for example, the poem "Mullā Aur Bahisht" in *Bāl-i Jibrīl* and poems entitled "Ijtihād," "Mullā-i Haram" and "Tauhīd" included in *Darb-i Kalim* are all subtle satires against the "dry-as-dust" approach to Islam of the *Mullā*. Iqbal had these people in mind when he wrote:

آئینِ نو سے ڈرنا طرزِ کہن پہ اڑنا
 منزل کٹھن یہی ہے قوموں کی زندگی میں⁹⁶

[The most difficult stage in the life of nations

is the fear of the new order and sticking to the old ways of behaviour.]

(3) *Liberalism*. From what has been said in the preceding paragraph it will be wrong to conclude that Iqbal was a liberalist or that he wanted to throw overboard all the old values which have been transmitted to us through the true '*Ulamā*' of Islam. In fact, he considered liberalism as a social problem that appeared in the Indian Muslim society as a fashion imported from the West. He considered it even more dangerous than orthodoxy and conservatism. This is perhaps the only problem which has been directly discussed at length in the *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. In the sixth lecture entitled "The Principle of Movement in the Structure of Islam," Iqbal writes:

"We heartily welcome the liberal movement in modern Islam: but it must also be admitted that the appearance of liberal ideas in Islam constitutes also the most critical moment in the history of Islam. Liberalism has a tendency to act as a force of disintegration, and the race-idea which appears to be working in modern Islam with greater

⁹⁶ *Bāng-i Darā*, p. 191.

force than ever may ultimately wipe off the broad human outlook which Muslim people have imbibed from their religion."⁹⁷

In his poetical works also Iqbal has taken cognizance of this social phenomenon. He terms liberality of thought as an "invention of satan". He warns that liberalism of thought is dangerous for those who have no originality. He has written a poem entitled "Āzādī-i Fikr" in which he says:

رکھتے نہیں جو فکر و تدبر کا سلیقہ	آزادی افکار سے ہے ان کی تباہی
انسان کو حیوان بنانے کا طریقہ! ⁹⁸	ہو فکر اگر خام تو آزادی افکار

[Liberalism of thought brings destruction to those who do not possess originality of thought.

It is a way to turn men into beasts if it is immature.]

(4) *Modernism*. This leads us to the consideration of an allied social problem, viz. modernism, which Iqbal disapproves in a number of his verses. According to him, modernism and blind imitation of the West have robbed us of the moral values which were our distinctive feature as Muslims. He writes:

حیاتِ تازہ اپنے ساتھ لائی لذتیں کیا کیا رقابت، خود فروشی، ناشکیبائی ہوس ناکی ⁹⁹

[Modern living has brought with itself strange consequences.

It has brought jealousy, abject submission, impatience and lust.]

He ridicules the modernist tendency in the following humorous verse:

⁹⁷ *Reconstruction*, pp. 162-63.

⁹⁸ *Darb-i Kalīm*, p. 74.

⁹⁹ *Bāng-i Darā*, p. 252

100 نئی تہذیب کے انڈے ہیں گندے

اٹھا کر پھینک دو باہر گلی میں

[Throw out into the street

the eggs of modern civilisation as they are bad and rotten.]

Iqbal believes that Muslims will lose their identity and individuality in blindly following the Western ways. People who show so much enthusiasm and raise the slogan of modernism are actually using this device as a cover for their apish mentality.

تقلید سے ناکارہ نہ کر اپنی خودی کو

کر اس کی حفاظت کہ یہ گوہر ہے یگانہ

لیکن مجھے ڈر ہے کہ یہ آوازہ ت جدید

مشرق میں ہے تقلیدِ فرنگی کا بہانہ!¹⁰¹

[Do not render useless your ego ;

you must guard it as it is a unique jewel.

I am afraid this cry for modernism

is a pretext for blindly following the West.]

(5) *Adoption of Western Culture.* Iqbal's concern was to save Indian Muslims and Muslims living in other Eastern countries from the onslaught of the Western culture. Common people did not realise that Western civilisation was on the decline and that it was unwise to welcome it in the East and be subjugated by it:

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 335.

¹⁰¹ *Darb-i-Kalim*, p. 170.

زندہ کر سکتی ہے ایران و عرب کو کیونکر

یہ فرنگی مدنیت کہ جو ہے خود لبِ گور!¹⁰²

[How can the Western culture revive Iran and the Arab countries;
it is itself at the verge of its end.]

In his poems "Maghrabī T'andhib" and "Mard-i Afrang," both included in *Darb•i Kalim*, he terms Western culture as a perversion of feeling and thought. For example, he says:

فسادِ قلب و نظر ہے فرنگ کی تہذیب
کہ روح اس مدنیت کی رہ سکی نہ عقیف¹⁰³

[Western civilisation is a perversion of the feeling and thought,
the soul of this culture could not remain chaste.]

Iqbal wanted Muslims to preserve their own cultural heritage, and not to suffer from any sense of inferiority on that account:

دیکھے تُو زمانے کو اگر اپنی نظر سے
افلاک منورہوں ترے نورِ سحر سے

اغیار کے افکار و تخیل کی گدائی
کیا تجھ کو نہیں اپنی خودی تک بھی رسائی¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 68.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 69.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., pp, 120.21.

[Even heavens may be illuminated by the fresh morning light
emanating from within you,
only if you develop your independent point of view...
You are borrowing thoughts and ideas from the aliens.
You seem to have no access to your own individual self.]

In the whole poem "Iblis Kā Farmān Apne Siyāsī Farzandon Ke Nām" in *Ḍarb-i Kalīm*,¹⁰⁵ Iqbal's diagnosis of the downfall of uslims is cultural subjugation to the West, and above all the fact that they have been robbed of the "Muhammadan Spirit" (روح محمد).

(6) *Slavery and Servile Mentality*. In Iqbal's view slavery and the resultant slavish and servile mentality among the Muslims was highly deplorable and the root cause of many other social problems. A large number of verses contain references to this social malady. In fact, the number of poems and verses written by Iqbal on this topic and a couple of other topics far exceeds the number of poems and verses written on any single topic. Why does not he champion the cause of freedom of the Human Ego? Freedom of Human Ego is not just a philosophical theory for him. This was also his political and social creed. He had closely observed the devastating effects of the British imperialistic rule in India. He was particularly dismayed at the deep-rooted and incorrigible servile and slavish mentality that had crept into the minds of Indian Muslims. People at large were devoid of moral courage and self-confidence. They had lost the initiative and zest which are to be found among people of free nations. Furthermore, it led to isolationism, individualism and selfishness and a sense of inferiority. How beautifully has Iqbal described, in the following verse, the difference caused in human life by slavery on the one hand and freedom on the other:

بندگی میں گھٹ کر رہ جاتی ہے اک جوئے کم آب
اور آزادی میں بحرِ پیکراں ہے زندگی¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 148.

¹⁰⁶ *Bānga-i-Darā*, p. 293

A shallow rivulet is further narrowed down by bondage,
and life in freedom is like a limitless ocean.]

Iqbal has written a long Persian poem entitled "Bandgī Nāmāh" (On Slavery), wherein he has painted a grim picture of the state of bondage and slavery. He has effectively depicted the harm it causes to an individual and to society as a whole:

از غلامی دل بمیرد در بدن	از غلامی روح گردد بارِ تن
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از غلامی بزمِ ملت فرد فرد	ابن و آن با این و آن اندر نبرد ¹⁰⁷
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[In slavery the heart dies within the body,
and spirit becomes a burden upon the body.

On account of slavery society is disintegrated into individuals
and everybody is at war with everybody.]

In his poem "Mashriq-o Maghrib" in *Ḍarb-i Kalim*, he diagnoses the cause of the ills prevalent in the Eastern countries as slavery and imitation of the ways of the Western countries.

Iqbal's lengthy poem "Dar Bayān-i Funūn-i Laṭīfah-i Ghulāmān" (On the Fine Arts of the Slaves) brings out the truth that fine arts of the slave nations are decadent, pessimistic, retrogressive and negativistic. For example, he says:

مرگِ با اندر فنونِ بندگی	من چه گویم از فسونِ بندگی
نغمهٔ او خالی از نارِ حیات	همچو میل افتد بدیوار حیات ¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ *Zabūr-i Ajam*, pp. 248-49.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

[How difficult I find it to describe the evil caused by slavery?

The fine arts of the slaves contain in them deaths.

The music of the slaves is devoid of the fire of life,
and it demolishes the wall of life just like flood-water.]

He further says in the same poem:

از تنِ بے جاں چه امیدِ بهی	در غلامی تن ز جاں گردد تہی
آدمی از خویشتن غافل رود ¹⁰⁹	ذوقِ ایجاد و نمود از دل رود

[Slavery saps life from the body.

What hope of any good can you have from a lifeless body?

Heart is robbed of inventiveness and initiative,
man becomes oblivious of himself.]

Similarly, in the poem "Madhhab-i Ghulāmān" (Religion of the Slaves), he declares that the religion practised by the slave nations is devoid of real faith. Prayer is a routine affair, mechanically repeated. They pay mere lip service to the centre of their devotion and worship. The worship of the mighty and the powerful becomes their creed:

انگبینِ زندگانی بد مذاق	در غلامی عشق و مذهب را فرق
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تا بدن را زنده دارد جاں دہد	دین و دانش را غلام ارزاں دہد
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¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 257.

گرچہ بر لبِ ہائے او نامِ خداست	قبیٰئہ او طاقتِ فرمانِ رواست
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از غلامیٰ ذوقِ دیدارے مجوے	از غلامیٰ جانِ بیدار مجوے ¹¹⁰
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[In slavery there occurs a duality between love, i.e. inner experience and religion,

the syrup of life turns bitter... .

A slave is ready to sell off both his faith and intelligence at a cheap price.

He is ready to give up even his spiritual self in order to keep the body alive.

Although he utters the name of God, yet in reality he pays homage to the might of the ruler... .

Do not expect the slave to possess the taste for communion with God, and do not expect him to have a spirit awake to higher experiences.]

On the contrary, Iqbal praises the "Arts of the Free People". These are life-giving and inspire confidence in us. He invites the reader to closely observe and ponder over the creative activity of the free people. In such a case, according to Iqbal, the reader will himself discover in these arts characteristics quite different from those of the slave nations. These arts do not effeminate the observer. They infuse in the observer the masculine qualities:

یک زمان با رفتگان صحبت گزین	صنعتِ آزاد مردان بہ ہیں
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سنگہا با سنگہا پیوستہ اند	روزگارے را بآنے بستہ اند
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¹¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 258-60.

در جہانِ دیگر اندازد ترا	دیدنِ او پختہ تر سازد ترا
از ضمیرِ او خبر می آورد	نقش سوئے نقش گرمی آورد
در دلِ سنگِ این دو لعلِ ارجمند ¹¹¹	ہمتِ مردانہ و طبعِ بلند

[For a while take yourself to the company of the distinguished ancestors, you will have a glimpse of the arts and crafts of the free people... .

How gracefully they have fitted stone with stone;

They have created Time with moments.

The sight of these pieces of art inspire you with strength and take you to a different realm.

A look at the artistic creation points to the Creator and gives you an idea of the Creator's mind.

Courage and dignity are the two high traits, which have been imprinted in stone.]

A strange and lamentable manifestation of servile mentality among Muslims was the tendency in quite a large section of the so-called '*ulamā*' to interpret the Qur'ān to suit the wishes of the alien rulers. According to Iqbal, it was highly abominable:

اسی قرآن میں ہے اب ترکِ جہاں کی تعلیم
جس نے مومن کو بنایا مہ و پرویں کا امیر

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 262..

تھا جو 'نا خوب' بتدریج وہی خوب ہوا
کہ غلامی میں بدل جاتا ہے قوموں کا ضمیر¹¹²

[The Holy Qur'an which teaches a Mu'min to be sovereign even to the planets

has been interpreted to contain teachings for the renunciation of the world... .

Slavery corrupts the mentality of nations to such an extent

that whatever was originally right has now been declared as wrong.]

Iqbal uses very strong language in condemning this opportunism in his poem entitled "Ijtihād"

ان غلاموں کا یہ مسلک ہے کہ ناقص ہے کتاب
کہ سکھاتی نہیں مومن کو غلامی کے طریق¹¹³

[These slaves are of the view that the Holy Book

is deficient as it does not teach a *Mu'min* the manners of slavery.]

At another place he deplores opportunism in these words:

کرتے ہیں غلاموں کو غلامی پہ رضامند
تاویل مسائل کا بناتے ہیں بہانہ¹¹⁴!

[Under the pretext of interpreting the religious issues

they prepare the slaves to be reconciled to slavery.]

Slavish and servile mentality was also observable among artists, i.e. the

¹¹² *Darb-i Kalim*, p. 8.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

painters and the poets Iqbal was equally vehement in expressing his disapproval in their case. He wanted them to show originality in their artistic creations and not to imitate the style of the Westerners. For example, he says:

کس درجہ یہاں عام ہوی مرگِ تخیل
ہندی بھی فرنگی کا مقلد، عجمی بھی¹¹⁵

[Originality of imagination has died away to such an extent that the Eastern people, Indians and Iranians both, have turned into blind imitators of the Westerners.]

In another poem he writes thus:

تاثیرِ غلامی سے خودی جس کی ہوئی نرم
اچھی نہیں اس قوم کے حق میں عجمی لے!¹¹⁶

[Non-Arab style is not good for a nation whose ego has been softened under the influence of slavery.]

Iqbal's spirit revolted against this state of affairs. In fact, he was ashamed of being born in an enslaved country where people had no urge for freedom:

لیکن مجھے پیدا کیا اُس دیس میں تونے
جس دیں کے بندے ہیں غلامی پہ رضا مند!¹¹⁷

[O God! You caused me to take birth in a country where people are reconciled to slavery.]

Iqbal was deeply concerned over the ideological confusion found among

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 123.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 126.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 15.

Muslims, which came as a result of a long period of slavery:

دل توڑ گئی ان کا دو صدیوں کی غلامی
دارو کوئی سوچ ان کی پریشاں نظری کا¹¹⁸

[Think of some remedy for their ideological confusion,
two hundred years of slavery has broken their spirit.]

The ultimate result of this servile attitude was the loss of identity:

ہوئی ہے زیرِ فلک اُمتوں کی رسوائی
خودی سے جب ادب و دیں ہوئے ہیں بیگانہ!¹¹⁹

[When literature and religion of a nation both lose the originality
and egohood,

it leads to the humiliation of the nation]

خودی کی موت سے مشرق کی سر زمینوں میں
ہوا نہ کوئی خدائی کا رازداں پیدا!¹²⁰

[Due to the death of egohood among the Eastern nations
no genius discoverer of Divine secrets was born.]

All this is due to the ravages of imperialism which has its own baits and
temptations to entrap the weak nations:

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 55.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 98.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p.99.

خواجگی میں کوئی مشکل نہیں رہتی باقی
پختہ ہو جاتے ہیں خوئے غلامی میں غلام!¹²¹

[There remains no obstacle in the way of imperialism
as the slaves become confirmed in the habit of slavery.]

(7) *Western Education*. One of the necessary evils — and somehow it became a social problem — which come in the wake of foreign rule, was what came to be called Western education, that is, the system of education enforced by the British rulers in India. It would be wrong to assume that Iqbal was opposed to any modifications in the age-old educational system prevalent among Indian Muslims. However, he foresaw the social effects of Western education, specially its effects on the mediocre minds — and society is composed mainly of mediocre minds. Western educational system in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent was notoriously devised by Lord Macaulay to achieve certain imperialistic objectives which were good according to the moral code of the rulers. Fortunately for the rulers and unfortunately for the Indian Muslims, quite a large percentage of students who received education under this system acquired atheistic tendencies and a contempt for Eastern and Islamic culture. Quite a few Muslim leaders had sincerely and in good faith supported the Western educational system as they hoped that Muslims would obtain certain economic benefits by it. But, in exchange of whatever economic benefits accrued, Muslim society had to pay a heavy price in the form of the loss of certain values. Iqbal expresses these views in a poem "Ta'lim Aur Us Ke Nata'ij" (Education and Its Consequences):

ہم سمجھتے تھے کہ لائے گی فراغت تعلیم
کیا خبر تھی کہ چلا آئے گا الحاد بھی ساتھ¹²²

[We believed that education, i.e. Western educational system, would
bring prosperity;

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 145.

¹²² *Bāng-i Darā*, p. 233.

little did we know that it would entail atheism.]

Iqbal, no doubt, conceded that education imparted under an alien system did enable the Muslim young men to earn their living but they were, more often than not, robbed of their faith. These views are contained in a poem entitled "Firdaus Men Ek Mukālamah" (A Dialogue in Paradise):

جب پیرِ فلک نے ورقِ ایام کا اُلٹا
آئی یہ صدا پاؤگے تعلیم سے اعزاز!
آیا ہے مگر اس سے عقیدوں میں تزلزل
دنیا تو ملی طائرِ دیں کر گیا پرواز!¹²³

[When the heavens turned over the leaf of days,

a voice was heard saying: "O, you will get worldly honour through education;

but as a result of this an upheaval has taken place in the beliefs:

in other words, you have gained the world, but the bird of faith has flown away.]

In another poem he further explains his viewpoint on this issue:

عصرِ حاضرِ ملکِ الموت ہے تیرا جس نے
قبض کی روح تری دے کے تجھے فکرِ معاش!

مدرسے نے تری آنکھوں سے چھپایا جن کو
خلوتِ کوہ و بیاباں میں وہ اسرارِ ہیں فاش!¹²⁴

¹²³ Ibid., p. 276.

¹²⁴ *Darb-i Kalim*, pp. 82-83.

[Modern age is like the angel of death, which

has taken away from you your soul by giving you the worry for earning a livelihood... .

Those secrets which had been concealed from your sight by the school can be discovered by meditation on mountains and in wilderness.]

Female education, otherwise so essential, was also yielding undesirable results. Iqbal has pointed out this serious social problem through humour in *Bāng-i Darā*:

ڈھونڈ لی قوم نے فلاح کی راہ	لڑکیاں پڑھ رہی ہیں انگریزی
وضع مشرق کو جانتے ہیں گناہ	روشِ مغربی ہے مدنظر
پردہ اٹھنے کی منتظر ہے نگاہ ¹²⁵	یہ ڈراما دکھائے گا کیا سین؟

[Girls are learning English.

The nation has thus discovered the way to its salvation.

People now aim at Western fashions

and consider the Eastern culture as sinful.

All eyes are now watching for the raising of the curtain;

Let us now see what scene of this drama appears on the stage.]

جس علم کی تاثیر سے زن ہوتی ہے نازن
کہتے ہیں اسی علم کو اربابِ نظر موت

بیگانہ رہے دیں سے اگر مدرسہ زن
ہے عشق و محبت کے لیے علم و ہنر موت¹²⁶

[A knowledge which takes away feminine qualities from women is considered fatal by the men of insight.

Sciences and arts taught in female educational institutions, where there are no arrangements for religious instructions, are ruinous for inner life of real love.]

Iqbal considered the so-called liberal education imparted under the Western educational system as an intrigue against the Muslims. He has pointed out this fact in a poem entitled "Din-o Ta'lim" (Faith and Education):

اور یہ اہلِ کلیسا کا نظامِ تعلیم
ایک سازش ہے فقط دین و مروت کے خلاف¹²⁷

[This system of education devised by alien Christian missionaries is an intrigue against faith and morality.]

According to Iqbal, the Western educational system has not only robbed Muslims of faith and morality but has also deprived them of certain social values which were the peculiarity of the Muslim East. For example, the teacher was always held in the highest esteem among the Muslims. But since the Western educational system has infused into the minds of students a materialistic and commercial outlook, the age-old sacred teacher-student relationship has deteriorated into a shopkeeper-customer relationship:

تھے وہ بھی دن کہ خدمتِ اُستاد کے عوض
دل چاہتا تھا ہدیہ دل پیش کیجیے

¹²⁶ *Darb-i Kalim*, p. 95.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

بدل زمانہ ایسا کہ لڑکا پس از سبق
 کہتا ہے ماسٹر سے کہ ”بل پیش کیجیے“¹²⁸

[There were times when students were ready to offer

even their hearts, i.e. the most cherished possessions, in return to the service of the teacher.

But now times have changed to such an extent that after the lesson is over,

the student asks his teacher to present his bill for payment.]

Iqbal was aware of the fact that the Western educational system was an unavoidable and necessary evil. Muslims could either accept it as such or have to go without it altogether; the latter course being even deadlier for the future of Muslim Society. So in this predicament the question that arose in Iqbal's mind was whether there was any remedy against the ill effects of this system, Yes, there was one — strong faith. Only strong faith could shield the Muslim youth against the devastating ill effects of the alien educational system. In his poem "Jāwīd Se" (To Jāwīd) he says:

جوہر میں ہو لا الہ تو کیا خوف	تعلیم ہو گو فرنگیانہ! ¹²⁹
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[Even if one studies under the Western educational system,

there is no risk of any harm, provided faith in one God is imbedded in the very nature of a man.]

(8) *Alienation from Islam and Weakening of Faith*. Gradual alienation from the teachings of Islam and weakening of faith was a chronic social problem in the Muslim society, particularly in India. This phenomenon can be traced back to the period ensuing the *Khilāfat-i Rāshidab*. This tendency continued to grow imperceptibly during the centuries in various Muslim lands. But in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent the process started notably in Akbar's reign.

¹²⁸ *Bāng-i Darā*, p. 327.

¹²⁹ *Darb-i Kalim*, p. 86.

Proclamation by Akbar of the so-called *Dīn-i Ilābī*, a hotchpotch of elements borrowed from Islam, Hinduism Christianity and Zoroastrianism, to win for himself the allegiance of the greatest number, was the beginning of the drift away from the purity of Islam. The problem became quite serious during the British rule. One of the avowed but unpublicised objectives of the educational system introduced by the Britishers was that when Muslim young men completed education in the recognised schools and colleges, they might not become Christians, but they would not remain Muslims either. This system was showing wonderful results for the rulers. It soon became a fashion with a great majority of Muslim students completing their education in the colleges to doubt and sometimes even to challenge the fundamentals of Islam. Iqbal took note of this social problem quite early in his poetic career. Poems and verses lamenting this state of affairs are to be found in all his collections, which shows that he remained concerned about this issue throughout his lifetime:

دیکھ مسجد میں شکستِ رشتہ تسبیحِ شیخ
 بتکدے میں برہمن کی پختہ زناری بھی دیکھ
 کافروں کی مسلم آئینی کا بھی نظارہ کر
 اور اپنے مسلموں کی مسلم آزادی بھی دیکھ¹³⁰

[(O moon), look ! in the mosque the binding string of the rosary of the priest has broken;

but on the contrary in the temple the Hindu priest's faith has been strengthened.

Also observe non-Muslims practising principles of Islam and Muslims torturing their fellow Muslims.)

In the long poem entitled "Jawāb-i Shikwah" Iqbal has ascribed the downfall of the Muslims to atheism, disregard of the Qur'an, non-observance of the duties and of the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet as also to a number of other social evils:

¹³⁰ *Bāng-i Darā*, p. 200.

ہاتھ بے زور ہیں، الحاد سے دل خوگر ہیں
 امتی باعثِ رسوائی پیغمبر ہیں¹³¹

[Hands are weakened and the hearts have become accustomed to atheism.

The followers bring bad name to the Prophet, i.e. by the violation of the principles laid down by him.]

کون ہے تارکِ آئینِ رسولِ مختار؟
 مصلحت وقت کی ہے کس کے عمل کا معیار؟
 کس کی آنکھوں میں سما یا ہے شعارِ اغیار؟
 ہو گئی کس کی نگہ طرزِ سلف سے بیزار؟
 قبل میں سوز نہیں، روح میں احساس نہیں
 کچھ بھی پیغامِ محمد کا تمہیں پاس نہیں!¹³²

[Who has renounced the ways laid down by the Holy Prophet?

Who has made opportunism the criterion for his actions?

Who has developed a liking for the ways of the non-Muslims?

Who has started disliking the manners of his ancestors?

(The implied answer is, Muslims)

Hearts are devoid of warmth and souls are devoid of feelings,

You have no regard for the message of the Holy Prophet.]

واعظِ قوم کی وہ پختہ خیالی نہ رہی
 برقِ طبعی نہ رہی، شعلہِ مقالی نہ رہی

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 222.

¹³² Ibid., p. 225.

رہ گئی رسمِ اذان، روحِ بلالی نہ رہی
 فلسفہ رہ گیا، تلقینِ غزالی نہ رہی
 مسجدیں مرثیہ خواں ہیں کہ نمازی نہ رہے
 یعنی وہ صاحبِ اوصافِ حجازی نہ رہے¹³³

[The priest lacks in the strength of convictions,
 there is no force in his nature, nor is there any warmth in his sermon.
 The *adhān* has turned into a ritual, devoted of the Bilāhan spirit;
 there is only philosophising left while Ghazālī's counsel has gone.
 Mosques lament the decreasing number of the people coming to offer
 prayers;
 in short, pure Islamic traits have vanished from the character of
 Muslims.]

ہر کوئی مستِ مئے ذوقِ تنِ آسانی ہے
 تم مسلمان ہو، یہ اندازِ مسلمانی ہے؟
 حیدری فقر ہے، نے دولتِ عثمانی ہے
 تم کو اسلاف سے کیا نسبتِ روحانی ہے
 وہ زمانے میں معزز تھے مسلمان ہو کر
 اور تم خوار ہوئے تارکِ قرآن ہو کر!¹³⁴

[Everyone among you Muslims is dead drunk with the wine of lithargy.
 Are you really Muslims ? Is this the way the Muslims ought to conduct
 themselves?

¹³³ Ibid., p. 225.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 227.

You lack the *faqr* of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and the wealth of Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān. You have no spiritual connection with your ancestors.

They were respected in the world for being Muslims,
whereas you are looked down upon for renouncing the Holy Qur'an.]

Sometimes Iqbal finds the state of affairs so desperate that he cries out:

صفیں کج دل پریشان سجدے بے ذوق
کہ جذبِ اندروں باقی نہیں ہے ¹³⁵

[The queues—of Muslims—are curved ; their hearts are confused, and their prayers are spiritless.

All this is because there is no internal warmth and religious fervour left in them.]

Iqbal finds this tendency to ignoring the true teachings of Islam present in every field of life. He says:

تمدن، تصوف، شریعت، کلام	بتانِ عجم کے پجاری تمام!
حقیقت خرافات میں کہو گئی	یہ اُمتِ روایات میں کہو گئی!

بجھی عشق کی آگ اندھیر ہے!	مسلمان نہیں راکھ کا ڈھیر ہے! ¹³⁶
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[In culture. in mysticism, in Sharī'ah and in dialectic philosophy,
there is imitation of non-Arab — alien — traditions.

The reality of religion has been lost in absurdities,
and this Ummah has become entrapped in unwanted traditions...

¹³⁵ *Bāl-i Jibrīl*, p. 120.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 167-68.

How sad it is that the fire of Divine love is extinguished and
Muslims have become just a heap of ashes.]

At a stage alienation from Islam took the form of secularism adopted as a political and social creed in the West. It came as a fashion to Muslim countries, but it was fraught with dangers for them. Iqbal warned them of a number of social problems created by secularism, particularly in the political field in a poem entitled "La-dīn Siyāsat" (Secular Politics).

Iqbal's advice to Muslims is:

¹³⁷ پیوستہ رہ شجر سے امید بہار رکھ! رکھ	ملت کے ساتھ رابطہ استوار رکھ
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[O Muslim ! keep your ties with the Islamic *millat* intact.

You should remain attached to the tree — of your mil at — and hope that someday there again will be spring for the tree — and it will bear fruit.]

(9) *Nationalism*. The first half of the present century saw nationalism becoming the most popular political creed. It spread from Western countries to various lands in the East. Muslim countries fighting for independence from foreign rule found nationalism the most effective weapon in their struggle against imperialism. However, beyond a certain limit it clashes with the international and universal spirit of Islam. Nationalism is recommended by Iqbal only as a transitory measure and strategy. He writes:

"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 to form a living family of republics.... It seems to me that pod 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."¹³⁸

How prophetic these words have proved now when we see the Muslim

¹³⁷ *Bāng-i- Darā*, p. 280.

¹³⁸ *Reconstruction*, p. 159.

world moving in the direction indicated by Iqbal! But at the time when Iqbal was writing these lines, nationalism was considered by far the only sensible political ideal to be pursued. But from the broader point of view of Islam it has a tendency to divide whereas Islam aims at unifying at least the Muslim world. That is why Iqbal was opposed to nationalistic outlook. It created social problems one way or the other in the Muslim countries. In Muslim India it culminated into a religio-political thinking which saw in a united India, rather than in Pakistan, the solution of the problems facing Muslims. The root cause of nationalism is attachment to homeland which Iqbal decried in the following verses in the poem named "Waṭaniyāt" (Theory of Attachment to Homeland):

ان تازہ خداؤں میں بڑا سب سے وطن ہے
 جو پیرہن اس کا ہے وہ مذہب کا کفن ہے
 یہ بت کہ تراشیدہ تہذیبِ نوی ہے
 غارت گرِ کاشانہ دینِ نبوی ہے

ہو قیدِ مقامی تو نتیجہ ہے تباہی
 رہ بحر میں آزادِ وطن صورتِ ماہی

اقوامِ جہاں میں ہے رقابت تو اسی سے
 تسخیر ہے مقصودِ تجارت تو اسی سے¹³⁹

[Among the new gods the greatest is the "motherland".

Its dress is the shroud for religion.

¹³⁹ *Bāng-i-Darā*, pp. 173.74.

This idol which has been shaped by the modern civilisation has a tendency to disintegrate the Islamic family created by the Holy Prophet...

The result of the narrow local loyalties is nothing but ruin.

You should be free of local and territorial attachments just like a fish which moves freely in the ocean.. .

Rivalries among nations of the world is due to nationalism.

and also it is due to it that some nations secretly aim at the subjugation of other nations under the cover of trade.]

Then Iqbal tries to correct the mistaken thinking regarding nationalism by declaring it as a disintegrating force while the cementing force is Islam:

قوم مذہب سے ہے، مذہب جو نہیں، تم بھی نہیں
جذبِ باہم جو نہیں محفلِ انجم بھی نہیں¹⁴⁰

[Nation is in reality based on religion ; without it a nation is nothing.

If there is no mutual gravitational force working in the stars, they cannot be bound into a system.]

He further says in *Zabūr-i 'Ajam*:

ایں نکتہ کشائندہ اسرارِ نہاں است
ملک است تنِ خاکی و دینِ روحِ رواں است¹⁴¹

[This point exposes the hidden secret that

a country is just like a body, while faith — religion — is like its soul.]

According to Iqbal, the dichotomy between State and religion is the creation of the wrong notion once prevalent among the Western people that

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 223.

¹⁴¹ *Zabūr-i 'Ajam*, p. 117.

body and mind were two separate entities:

نگاہش ملک و دین را ہم دو تا دید ¹⁴²	بدن را تا فرنگ از جاں جدا دید
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[Since the Westerners considered body separate from mind,
hence they believe State and religion to be different from each other.]

(10) *Capitalism and Feudalism*. Islam is anti-capitalist and antifeudalist in spirit. It discourages the exploitation of the downtrodden. The life of the Holy Prophet shows how much regard he had for the labourer. On many an occasion, we are told, the Holy Prophet worked with ordinary labourers. It was he who said:

"Pay the wages of the labourer before the sweat on his forehead dries up." Unfortunately the capitalist order somehow became firmly established in most of the Muslim countries. Iqbal found Muslim States adopting or having had already adopted capitalistic and feudalistic economic system. Conscious of the ills accompanying capitalism, Iqbal expressed his disapproval for adopting it:

جاننا ہوں یہ امت حاملِ قرآن نہیں
ہے وہی سرمایہ داری بندہٴ مومن کا دین
جاننا ہوں میں کہ مشرق کی اندھیری رات میں
بے یدِ بیضا ہے پیرانِ حرم کی آستین¹⁴³

[I know that this *Ummah* has ceased to uphold the teachings of the Holy Qur'an,

even a *Mu'min* has faith in capitalism.

I know that in this dark night in the East

the Muslim priests do not possess the shining hand, i e. inner light.]

¹⁴² Ibid. ("Gulshani-i-Raz Jadid"), p. 217.

¹⁴³ *Armughān-i Hijāz (Kulliyāt-i Iqbal Fārisī)*, p. 654.

At the time when Iqbal was writing his poetry, the country, specially Muslim majority areas, were not industrialised. There-fore capitalism existed in the form of feudalism. Feudal lords exploited the poor peasants. Iqbal condemns feudalism in the most forceful words:

جس کھیت سے دہقان کو میسر نہ ہو روزی اُس کھیت کے پر خوشہ گندم کو جلا دو ¹⁴⁴
--

[Burn every ear of wheat of the farm.

from which a farmer does not get his subsistence.]

اور یہ بسہ دار بے زحمت	پی گیا سب لہو اسامی کا ¹⁴⁵
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[The feudal lord

has sucked the blood of his poor tenant.]

Iqbal has taken note of the social problems attendant on capitalism, feudalism and exploitation of the poor, in a number of poems. For example, he pleads for social change in the poems "Punjāb Ke Dehqān Se"¹⁴⁶ (To the Peasant of the Punjab) and "Punjāb Ke Pīrzādon Se"¹⁴⁷ (To the Pīrzādahs of the Punjab) and in the poem "Punjābī Musulmān"¹⁴⁸ he has exhorted the Punjabi Muslims, mainly farmers and workers, to wake up and change the existing unjust social order. He asks them to break the shackles of the feudalistic system. Not only that, he appeals to Muslims to get rid of the old customs which are remnants of capitalistic-feudalistic social set-up:

بتانِ شعوب و قبائل کو توڑ	رسومِ کہن کے سلاسل کو توڑ ¹⁴⁹
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¹⁴⁴ *Bāl-i Jibril*, p. 149.

¹⁴⁵ *Bāng-i Darā*, p. 333.

¹⁴⁶ *Bāl-i Jibril*, p. 204.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 211-12.

¹⁴⁸ *Darb-i Kalīm*, p. 58

¹⁴⁹ *Bāl-i Jibril*, p. 204.

[Break the idols of tribalism
and shatter the chains of old customs.]

Iqbal's opposition of capitalism and feudalism was traceable to his firm faith in the just social and economic order based on the teachings of the Holy Qur'ān. The basic postulate of the Islamic economic order, derived from the Holy Qur'ān, is contained in the following verse of Iqbal:

حکمِ حق ہے لیس للانسان الا ما سعی
کھائے کیوں مزدور کی محنت کا پھل سرمایہ دار¹⁵⁰

[God commands that "There is nothing for a man except that for which he has striven."

Therefore why should a capitalist eat the fruit of the hard work of a labourer?]

(11) *Communism and Socialism*. Iqbal took note, both in prose and verse, of what in future was going to become a social problem and was to create some other problems in the Muslim world, i.e. communism and socialism. In the lecture entitled "Is Religion Possible?" he writes thus:

"Both nationalism and atheistic socialism, at least in the pre-sent state of human adjustments, must draw upon the psycho-logical forces of hate, suspicion, and resentment which tend to impoverish the soul of man and close up his hidden sources of spiritual energy. Neither the technique of medieval mysticism nor nationalism nor atheistic socialism can cure the ills of a despairing humanity."¹⁵¹

Iqbal was closely watching the impact of the experiment of atheistic socialism being carried out in Russia. Large Muslim areas in Central Asia had already been inundated by the onrushing flood of that ideology. It did not only change the economic order, which it originally promised to do — and had it done only that it might have been welcome there — but it went much beyond the promised limits. It changed the very social structure, which, ipso

¹⁵⁰ *Bāng-i Darā*, p. 335.

¹⁵¹ *Reconstruction*, pp. 188-89.

facto, involved a major change in the religious and moral code.

The study of Iqbal's poems like "Lenin Khudā Ke Ḥudūr Men,"¹⁵² "Ishdirākiyat,"¹⁵³ "Karl Marix Ki Awāz,"¹⁵⁴ and "Bolshevik Rus"¹⁵⁵ do indicate the poet's admiration for certain good points in socialism and communism which resembled certain teachings of Islam. From these poems we further learn about Iqbal's judgment that the economic ideals of socialism were better than those of capitalism. However, Iqbal stresses the point that the ideology and economic programme given by Islam was the best and, therefore, sufficient for Muslims:

¹⁵⁶ اللہ کرے تجھ کو عطا جدتِ کردار	قرآن میں ہو غوطہ زہ اے مردِ مسلمان
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[O Muslim ! you should dive into the Holy Qur'an,
may God bless you with originality of action.]

(12) *Persecution of Muslims by Non-Muslims*. A social problem which greatly influenced Muslim society was their persecution at the hands of non-Muslims. In the case of Hindus the chief form of persecution was untouchability. Hindus treated Muslims as impure and contemptible. Iqbal, in the beginning of his career as a poet and philosopher, took for granted the Indian nationhood for Muslims and worked for it. But the daily demonstration of the ingrained and incorrigible hostile Hindu attitude of the Hindus for Muslims and their culture, their murderous attacks on Muslims, arsen and looting of Muslim property by them and disputes over the cow-slaughter, forced Iqbal, as later on it was to force the Qā'id-i A'zam also, to change his views on Hindu-Muslim harmony and co-existence. He found the solution of this social problem in a separate homeland for Muslims in the Indo-Pak subcontinent. Muslims were not persecuted by Hindus alone. The British rulers also had a grudge against them and, therefore, discriminated against them in services and in economic opportunities. It appears there was an implicit understanding between the alien rulers and Hindus leaders. They

¹⁵² *Bal-i Jibril*, pp. 141-47.

¹⁵³ *Darb-i Kalim*, p. 138.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

joined hands in humiliating and harming the Muslims. This conspiracy has now clearly been exposed after the confessions of Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy in India, about his nasty role at the time of the creation of Pakistan. Iqbal's prophetic vision had discovered the conspiracy long ago. He expressed his concern at the persecution of Muslims at the hands of the non-Muslims in the following verses:

غدارِ وطنِ اس کو بتاتے ہیں برہمن
انگریز سمجھتا ہے مسلمانوں کو گداگر!
پنجاب کے اربابِ نبوت کی شریعت
کہتی ہے کہ یہ مومنِ پارینہ ہے کافر!¹⁵⁷

[The Brahmins call the Muslims as traitors,

whereas the Englishmen treat them as mere beggars.

The code of the new prophet sprung in the Punjab (i.e. Ahmadism) describes the orthodox Muslims as infidels.]

(13) *Ahmadism*. Ahmadism, founded by Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad of Qadian, started as a reformative movement but as time passed it broke away from Islam to become a separate religious community in the lifetime of its founder. The movement soon developed into the most painful social problem for the Muslim society in India, since, in reality, according to the unanimous verdict of the '*Ulamā*' of all sects of Islam, Ahmadism did not qualify to be included in the fold of Islam, but its exponents insisted on calling themselves Muslims and labelling Muslims as non-Muslims. Severe controversies raged round religious matters which were settled and regarding which there was no difference of opinion. In some cases families were divided on account of conversion of one or more members to the new faith. If only either husband or wife was converted to Ahmadism the problem became all the more complicated and painful. The founder of the community had ordained, that an Ahmadi girl cannot be married to a non-Ahmadi boy. However, non-Ahmadi girls were acceptable in marriage in Ahmadi families.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 20.

Tension also arose on the founder's verdict that unflinching allegiance to the British rulers was a religious duty and that *Jihād*, always considered as a religious duty in view of clear verses in the Qur'ān, had become prohibited or *ḥarām* on the appearance of the new prophet in the person of Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad Qadiani, himself. All these pronouncements ran counter to the accepted' beliefs of the Muslims of all shades of opinion.

Iqbal realised the dangerous implications of the newly founded faith. It was mainly with this background that he discussed, at length, and offered a philosophical proof of universally accepted Islamic concept of the finality of Prophethood, in one of the lectures included in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*.

Iqbal also criticised the views of the founder of Ahmadism regarding the institution of *Jihād*. Referring indirectly but clearly to the views of Ghulām Aḥmad Qadiani, Iqbal wrote:

ردِ جہاد میں تو بہت کچھل کہا گیا
تردید حج میں کوئی رسالہ رقم کریں¹⁵⁸

[Much has been written on the cancellation of *Jihād*,
now let him write a tract on the denial of *Hajj*.]

In a poem entitled "Jihād," Iqbal says:

فتویٰ ہے شیخ کا یہ زمانہ قلم کا ہے
دنیا میں اب رہی نہیں تلوار کارگر

باطل کے فال و فر کی حفاظت کے واسطے
یورپ زرہ میں دوب گیا دوش تا کمر!

ہم پوچھتے ہیں شیخ کلیسا نواز سے
 مشرق میں جنگ شر ہے تو مغرب میں بھی ہے شر
 حق سے اگر غرض ہے تو زیبا ہے کیا یہ بات
 اسلام کا محاسبہ، یورپ سے درگزر؟¹⁵⁹

[The Shaikh — i.e. Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad Qadiani — has given the verdict that this is the age of the pen,

and that now sword has become ineffective in the world...

Europe has been fully armed from top to toe

for the protection of the greatness of the forces of evil.

We ask the old man supporting the Christian doctrines:

if war is evil only in the East, must it not be evil in the West too ? If he really says what is true, is it right on his part that

he should criticise Islam but ignore the wrongdoings of Europe?]

Iqbal knew that these teachings were intended to discourage Muslims all over the world fighting for their independence. In plain words, these teachings aimed at persuading the Muslims to acquiesce in the state of bondage.

The bond of Islam brings about unity among Muslims of various castes and racial groups. But the new faith weakened the unity of the Muslim society and Iqbal considered it highly objectionable.

ہے زندہ فقط وحدتِ افکار سے ملت
 وحدت ہو فنا جس سے وہ الہام بھی الحاد!

¹⁵⁹ *Darb-i Kalim*, pp. 22-23.

مسکینی و محکومی و نویدئی جاوید
جس کا یہ تصوف ہو اسلام کر ایجاد¹⁶⁰

[The *Millat* is alive only on account of the unity of thought.

A revelation — here the reference is to the claims of Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad — which destroys unity, is atheistic.

You better invent a faith in which mysticism
brings meekness, servitude, and eternal pessimism.]

In another poem entitled "Imāmat" (Religious Leadership) Iqbal says:

فتنہ ملت بیضا ہے امامت اس کی
جو مسلمان کو سلاطین کا پرستار کرے¹⁶¹

[The religious leadership of a man who persuades Muslims
to pay allegiance to kings, is catastrophic for the Islamic *Millat*.]

Here, again, the reference is to the views preached by Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad that those Muslims who were not loyal to the British rulers were violating a religious injunction. Iqbal has delineated upon the social perils involved in the claim to prophethood for himself by Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad in the poem "Ilhām-o Āzādī" wherein he writes:

محکوم کے الہام سے اللہ بچائے
غارِ گرِ اقوام ہے وہ صورتِ چنگی¹⁶² ز

[May God save us from the revelation of a slave;

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 30.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 46.

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 51.

it is as ruinous for nations as the ravages of Chingiz.]

Similarly, in another poem captioned "Nabuwwat" (Prophet., hood) he writes:

وہ نبوت ہے مسلمان کے لیے برگِ حشیش
جس نبوت میں نہیں قوت و شوکت کا پیام¹⁶³

[A prophethood which does not deliver the message of strength and glory

is like the leaves of hashish which opiate.]

We find verses on this social issue in a number of other poems e.g. "Mahdi,"¹⁶⁴ "Punjabi Musalmān,"¹⁶⁵ "Azādī,"¹⁶⁶ etc., which shows how deeply Iqbal was concerned over the social problems created by Ahmadism.

(14) *Pessimism and Negativism.* The cumulative result of all the social problems which afflicted Muslim society, specially in the subcontinent, was a deep sense of frustration and pessimism. Our poetry and literature mirrored this mood or else it induced an escape from the painful situation through fairy tales. The tragedy was that our artists as well as the so-called Messiahs accentuated this mood. Thus pessimism and negativism became social problems.

Iqbal condemned this attitude in artists when he wrote:

عشق و مستی کا جنازہ ہے تخیل ان کا
ان کے اندیشہٴ تاریک میں قوموں کے مزار!¹⁶⁷

[Their thinking serves a death-blow to true love and ecstasy,
in their dark ideas are hidden the tombs of nations.]

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 53.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 56.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 128.

We find verses on the same theme in Iqbal's other poems, e.g. "Shi'r-i 'Ajam,"¹⁶⁸ "Shā'ir,"¹⁶⁹ "Surūd-i Ḥarām,"¹⁷⁰ etc. In "Surūd Ḥarām," he writes:

اگر نوا میں ہے پوشیدہ موت کا پیغام
حرام میری نگاہوں میں نائے و چنگ و رباب!¹⁷¹

[If they contain in their tunes the message of death,
then, in my eyes, the flute, the lute and *rubāb* are *ḥarām*.]

Similarly, in the poem captioned "Funūn-i Laṭīfah (Fine Arts) he says:

شاعر کی نوا ہو کہ مغنی کا نقص ہو
جس سے ہو چمن افسردہ وہ بادِ سحر کیا!¹⁷²

[Whether it is the poems written by a poet, or songs sung by a singer,
if it saddens the garden, i.e. society, it is no morning breeze.]

Iqbal exhorts Muslims not to lose hope and confidence. They should be optimistic and continue their struggle. He wants them to have faith in their energies:

اپنی اصلیت سے ہو آگاہ اے غافل کہ تو
قطرہ ہے، لیکن مثالِ بحرِ بے پایاں بھی ہے!
کیوں گرفتارِ طلسمِ ہیچِ مقداری ہے تو
دیکھ تو پوشیدہ تجھ میں شوکتِ طوفان بھی ہے!¹⁷³

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 127.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 126.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 125.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.,

¹⁷² Ibid., p. 117.

¹⁷³ *Bāng-i Darā*, p. 213.

[O you, who are oblivious of yourself, become conscious of your real nature,
you are a drop but you possess the depth of a fathomless ocean too.
Why are you shackled by the magic of a sense of being a nonentity?
Look, there is hidden in your own self the grandeur of a storm.]

Iqbal is not dismayed and discouraged at the temporary phase of trials and tribulations:

کب ڈرا سکتا ہے غم کا عارضی منظر مجھے
174 ہے بھروسا اپنی ملت کے مقدر پر مجھے

[The temporary scene of gloom cannot frighten me,
I have trust in the bright future of my *Millat*.]

یاس کے عنصر سے ہے آزاد میرا روزگار
175 فتح کامل کی خبر دیتا ہے جوشِ کارزار

[My life is free from the element of pessimism,
the fury of the battlefield foretells of the eventual victory.]

The poem "Asirī"¹⁷⁶ (Imprisonment) imparts a lesson to Muslims not to lose heart on account of slavery. It may rather be turned to an advantage. Look, the drop of rain, entrapped in the shell, becomes a pearl, and a drop of blood, enclosed in the pouch of a musk deer, becomes musk.

Iqbal's poem entitled "Ṭulū'-i Islam' (The Dawn of Islam) carries the message of hope and confidence for Muslims. For example, he says:

مسلمان کو مسلمان کر دیا طوفانِ مغرب نے
تلاطمِ ہائے دریا ہی سے گوہر کی سیرابی

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 217.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. 85.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 286.

عطا مومن کو پھر درگاہِ حق سے ہونے والا ہے
شکوہِ ترکمانی، ذہنِ ہندی، نطقِ اعرابی¹⁷⁷

[The fierce storm blowing from the West has turned Muslims into staunch Muslims.

A pearl is nurtured by the storms in the ocean.

God is once again going to bestow upon the *Mu'min*
the Turkish glory, the Indian intellect and Arab eloquence.]

In the same poem he further says:

کتابِ ملتِ بیضا کی پھر شیرازہ بندی ہے
یہ شاخِ ہاشمی کرنے کو ہے پھر برگ و پر پیدا!¹⁷⁸

[The scattered leaves of the book of the Muslim *Millat* are again going to be bound together in order.

This tree of the Hashimite Prophet — Muslim *Millat* — is again going to bear fruit.]

(15) *Iqbal's Solution of Social Problems*. Iqbal's poetry and philosophy were like beacon of light in the dark night of despondency which engulfed Muslims in India and elsewhere. He himself said:

ترے لیے ہے مرا شعلہ نوا قندیل!¹⁷⁹

[The spark of my song is a candle for you.]

He did not just lament over the multifarious social, political and economic problems, that had spread a pall of gloom over the Muslim society. He also showed them a way out. Through his philosophy and poetry he

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 304.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 305.

¹⁷⁹ *Bal-i Jibril*, p, 93.

pointed out to Muslims the direction in which they must move if they wanted to achieve their goal and made it abundantly clear that they must possess certain positive individual and national traits in order to get rid of the state of affairs. It was clear that Iqbal desired them to be ready to play the role of leadership among the nations of the world, whenever the opportunity came — and Iqbal's seer-like vision foresaw this opportunity occurring in not very distant future.

سبق پھر پھر صداقت کا عدالت کا شجاعت کا
 لیا جائے گا تجھ سے کام دنیا کی امامت کا¹⁸⁰

[O Muslim ! learn once again the lesson of Truthfulness, Justice and Bravery;

You are going to be entrusted with the leadership of the world.]

Iqbal wanted Muslims to acquire the traits of dignified poise, self confidence, selflessness, initiative, strong convictions, freedom from the fear of death, simplicity, the habit of meditation, etc., because all these traits go to make a person a real *Mu'min* or *Mujāhid* — Iqbal's ideal man.

Only a society composed of such men of character can be free of social problems and can ultimately qualify itself to play the leading role in the world.

وہی زمانے کی گردش پہ غالب آتا ہے
 جو ہر نفس سے کرے عمرِ جاوداں پیدا¹⁸¹

[Only he overpowers the rotation of time
 who can create an eternal life in every breath.]

¹⁸⁰ *Bāng-i Darā*, p. 307,

¹⁸¹ *Ḍarb-i Kalim*, p. 99.