

# IQBAL'S CONCEPT OF AN IDEAL SOCIETY

Dr Muhammad Baqir

Ideal human beings create the ideal society. Islam brought together God and the World and this was a preparation for the realisation of an ideal society. Iqbal visualized this role of the religion in shaping the ideal human society. In his seventh lecture entitled "Is Religion Possible?" he says:

"Both nationalism and atheistic socialism, at least in the present 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. Surely the present moment is one of the great crisis in the history of modern culture. The modern world stands in need of biological renewal. And religion, which in its higher manifestations is neither dogma, nor priesthood, nor ritual, can alone ethically prepare the modern man for the burden of the great responsibility which the advancement of modern science necessarily involves, and restore to him that attitude of faith which makes him capable of winning a personality here and, retaining it hereafter".<sup>57</sup>

The ideal man who would ultimately create an ideal society on earth is still to come. In his own words:

---

<sup>57</sup>Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 188-89.

"For the present he is a sure ideal, but the evolution of humanity is tending towards the production of an ideal race of more or less unique individuals who will become his fitting parents. Thus the kingdom of God on earth means the democracy of more or less unique individuals, presided over by the most unique individual possible on earth. Nietzsche had a glimpse of the ideal race but his atheism and aristocratic prejudices marred his whole conception."

Thus the ideal society, comprising ideal human beings is yet to be created through whole human efforts. And these efforts according to Iqbal are to be based on (1) the knowledge of self ;(2) the knowledge of God.

These themes are extensively discussed by Iqbal in his prose and poetical writings in Urdu, and English. The question arises as to the source of these excellences and delving deep into Iqbal we find that the best source of his inspiration has been the Qur'an wherefrom he picked up these guidelines to attain happiness in an ideal world and the next world. Thus it will be an interesting study to briefly examine these expositions in the light of the Qur'an and the consequent trends of Iqbal to lead humanity to an ideal society.

The knowledge of self is the key to the knowledge of God. The Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him) says "He who knows himself well, knows God." That is by contemplation of his own being and attributes, man arrives at some knowledge of God. Thus, he finds in his own being reflected in miniature the power, wisdom and love of the Creator. In this way the knowledge of oneself becomes a key to the knowledge of God. Not only are man's attributes a reflection of God's attributes, but the mode of existence of man's soul affects some insight into God's mode of existence. Both God and the soul are invisible, not confined to space and time and outside the categories of quantity and quality. Nor can the ideas of shape, colour or size be attached to them. The Holy Prophet said.

”خلق الانسان على صورته“

"God created man in His own likeness"

And that is why Iqbal insists that the combination of the knowledge of self and God creates the ideal man:

خودی کا سر نہاں لا الہ  
الا اللہ  
خودی ہے تیغ ، فساں لا  
الہ الا اللہ

Iqbal feels that the ideal man is reflected in the ideal society and unless he improves, the ideal society cannot exist and for creating ideal men he has suggested very sure and certain ways of following the Faith:

فرد و قوم اےینہ یک  
دیگر اند  
سلک و گوہر کہکشاں و  
اختر اند  
فرد می گیرد ز ملت  
احترام

ملت از افراد می یابد  
نظام

خوشر آن باشد که  
ایمان آوری  
تا بدست آبد نجات و  
سروری