

# IQBAL ON MARX

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In the light of the Holy Quran, the world population or say the mankind is divided into two major groups, i.e. the theists (who believe in God) and the atheists (who do not believe in God). Beyond doubt Iqbal was one of the keenest observers of the world affairs and he concerned very much with the expected consequences of the preaching of new gospels in this century. When we peep into the past we find that after the revolution in Russia in 1917, the writers and thinkers over the world were deeply influenced by the socialist slogans about the equity of human beings. It is 'evident that this revolution was basically against the tyrant Tzar, the Emperor of Russia, blood-sucking capitalism and humiliating Christian Church domination. The hero of this revolution was Lenin, a great Marxist. Two out-standing Urdu poets namely Iqbal and Hasrat Mohani were influenced to the extent of the merits of socialism without departing from the belief in one God and the teachings of the Holy Quran. After the creation of Pakistan in 1947, I remember some of our progressive writers made an abortive attempt to prove that Iqbal was a socialist. The base of their contention were the following verses of Iqbal:

اٹھو میری دنیا کے  
غریبوں کو جگا دو  
کاخ امرا کے در و دیوار بال  
دو  
برمائو غلاموں کا لہو

سوز یقین سے  
کنجشک فروماہی کو  
شاہیں سے لڑادو  
سلطانی جمہود کا آتا ہے  
زمانہ

جو نقش کہن تم کو نظر  
آئے مٹا دو  
جس کھیت سے دہقان کو  
میسر نہیں روزی  
اس کھیت کے ہر خوشہ  
گندم کو جلا دو<sup>18</sup>

The caption of this poem is 'Farman-i-Khuda' (God's Ordain) and it indicates that God is not pleased with the institution of Capitalism which is synonymous to cruelty and injustice specifically in relation to labour and wages. In Islam hoarding of the commodities and piling up the wealth in the vaults are regarded as sin and social crime. In the verses noted above God issues orders to His angels: 'Rise and awake the poverty-stricken people on earth and shake the wall of the palaces of richmen. Kindle a new fire in the hearts of the slaves and enable the poor sparrow to fight against eagle. Now the days of democracy are coming; therefore you destroy every sign of the yore, you find in the world. The corn-fields which are not for feeding of the peasants then burn every heap of wheat therein. There is no reason why the

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<sup>18</sup> Bal-i-Jibreel, pp. 109-401/110-402.

Elders of the Christian Church remain standing as intercessors between God and His creature; therefore remove them from their seats Iqbal has uttered many verses about Marx and Socialism in Urdu and Persian languages. Here I quote some verses from his collection:

روح سلطانی رہے یا قی تو پھر  
کیا اضطراب  
ہے مگر کیا اس یہودی کی  
شرارت کا جواب  
وہ کلم بے تجلی وہ مسیح بے  
صلیب  
نیست پیغمبر و لیکن در بغل  
دارد کتاب<sup>19</sup>

In this poem which is in the form of poetic dialogues between Satan (Iblis and his advisers (members of his high command). Iqbal vigorously attacks those religious leaders who are the pets of the Capitalists. In his opinion the present type of democracy in the East is nothing but a cover for dictatorship. In the following verse Iqbal calls Marx a Prophet or a messenger without divine revelation:

وہ کلیم بے تجلی وہ مسیح بے  
صلیب  
نیست پیغمبر و لیکن در بغل

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<sup>19</sup> Armaghan-i-Hijaz, (Urdu), p. 8/650.

He a Moses without divine manifestation; he a Christ without a Cross? And though not a Prophet or Messenger of God but has got a Book in his bosom).

In Iqbal's 'Armaghan-i-Hijaz', the fifth adviser of Satan calls Marx, an Incarnation of Mazdak, a revolutionist of Iran before Islam who had introduced a new type of Socialism which granted the freedom of sex without reservation of blood relations or private property. Wealth and women were common. No one could be the only master of a woman in his time but it must be kept in mind here that Marx or Lenin had no idea of such a sex free society. Marxism grants freedom of sex life but within the limits of regulations. Iqbal's own words are:

وہ یہودی فتنہ گر وہ روح  
مزوک کا بزور<sup>21</sup>

Iblis (Satan) in his presidential address assures his lieutenants that the Socialism or Communism cannot disturb us due to the evils which are planted in the hearts of human beings and these evils cannot be removed in these systems. The only danger that we can confront in future is from Islam. Iqbal becomes very difficult for the narrow minded Muslims when he utters the following verse:

جانتا ہے جس پہ  
روشن باطن ایام ہے

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 8/650.

<sup>21</sup> Armaghan-i-Hijaz, p. 10/652.

مزو کیت فتنه مزدا  
نہیں اسلام ہے<sup>22</sup>

“I know as I am aware of the secret of the future that Mazdakiyat is not a menace ahead but it is Islam that worries.”

Apparently the verse seems to be pseudo-Islamic but the fact is reverse because in the following verses the Satan admits the importance of the Islamic Shari’ah which may defeat the Satanic powers therefore the danger for the Satanic designs is Islam and Islam alone. There is no other force on earth that may destroy evil.

### **Socialism:**

Before we proceed further to discuss the views of Iqbal let us have an idea about Marx and Marxism, Communism and Socialism etc. After the Industrial revolution in Europe, the hydra-headed monster of Capitalism threatened the lives of the poor thus a social change became incumbent. Karl Marx (1818-1883 A.C.) who came forward with a new gospel called Das Kapital (The Capital) was the son of a German Jewish lawyer who became a Christian later on. Marx was educated in Germany and he remained under the lure of Hegel’s philosophy of dialectical process which was for Marx a dominating factor in sociology. Marx as young man started his career as a working Journalists before leaving Germany for Paris (France) where he met French Socialists including Proudhon, St. Simon, Louis Blanc and Fourier but very soon he was disgusted and called them Utopians. Then Marx left France for London in the days of orthodox economists like Richardo. Here in 1848 the Manifesto of the Communist Party was prepared. It still guides the Russian Government today. Soon after its publication a revolution took place in Germany. Marx also took part in it but after the failure of this

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 12/654.

revolution he was exiled and from there he came to London. He started his research work in the British Museum, the abode of the revolutionists. The first volume of his marvellous book *Das Capital* was published in 1867. Marx lived in England till 1883 as a poverty-stricken person. He was then suffering, starving and could not afford to procure medicine for his dying daughter. Some people think that Marx was a blind follower of Hegel but this is not true. He disagreed with him on many points. Here I quote an example. Hegel was of the opinion that thoughts are more important than things, the real is the abstract ideal, hence ideals such as Nationalism creates institution like state. Marx contrarily observed: the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind and translated into terms of thought<sup>23</sup>. It seems imperative at his juncture to take into considerations some of the fundamentals of Communism (Socialism is a lesser form of it). To abolish the institution of Capitalism- it is necessary to nationalise everything to be controlled by the government for the sake of equity and equality; therefore there should be no private property. Every citizen has an equal right to live according to his requirements and efficiency. The basic formula for the new economic order is C-M-C. (Commodity-Money-Commodity), then it further emanates C-C., M-C-M, M-M and so on so forth.<sup>24</sup> What Marx owed to Hegel was his concept of history as the evolution of society by means of dialectical process but the economic theory of Marx was of his own. Since Communism is a bit abstract in nature and needs revision as it was demanded even in the life-time of Marx by the revisionists, it seems practicable only in its premature form which is called Socialism. According to Lloyed Socialism is simply a tendency and not a body of dogmas.<sup>25</sup> At the initial stage when it is implemented, it is positively a conglomeration of communism, capitalism and fascism because on the one hand it crushes the social evils but on the other hand it bans the freedom of speech freedom of thought and the freedom of the Press. At the same time

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<sup>23</sup> Democracy and its Rivals, Christopher Lloyd, Karachi, 1961.

<sup>24</sup> World's Famous Books in outlines, London, 1946, p. 130.

<sup>25</sup> Democracy and its Rivals by Lloyed, p. 112.

the class struggle is not finished, it simply changes its style under the patronage of the ruling class. Peon and Premier are both equal as human beings but not equal in status. Such equality is a dream as yet that is why Bernard Shaw demanded simply the equality of income in Socialism and nothing else.<sup>26</sup> However we once again return to Iqbal who pronounces about Socialism as under:

قوموں کی روش سے مجھے  
ہوتا ہے یہ معلوم  
بے سوع نہیں روس کی یہ  
گرمئی گرفتار  
اندیشہ ہو شوخی افکار پہ  
مجبور  
فرسودہ طریقوں سے زمانہ ہوا  
بیزار  
انساں کی ہوس نے جنہیں  
رکھا تھا چھپا کر  
کھلتے نظر آتے ہیں بتدریج وہ  
اسرار<sup>27</sup>

Another verse of Iqbal that needs clarification is as following:

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>27</sup> Zarb-i-Kalim, p. 1 37/598.

صاحب سرمایہ از  
نسل خلیل  
یعنی آن پیغمبر ہے  
جبرئیل<sup>28</sup>

(Trans Marx the author of Das Capital; being one of the children's of Abraham is also a Messenger but without Gabriel i.e. Divine Revelation).

It should be borne in mind that the word 'Paighamber' (messenger) is composed of two Persian words, 'Paigam, (message) and 'Bar' (the Carrier) thus who carries any message is a messenger but in day to day use it never means the Prophet of God unless the word God is not added to it. What this verse means is that Marx is a man who gave a new message of economic order to the suffering mankind. He knew what suffering means because he suffered himself a lot. He himself starved and his child died without medicine. Iqbal was a very good critic and he did not simply admire Socialism but also criticized it in the following verses:

وہ یہودی گر، وہ روح مزدک کا  
بروز  
ہر قبا ہونے کو ہے اس کے جنون  
سے تار تار<sup>29</sup>  
غربیاں گم کردہ اند افلاک را

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<sup>28</sup> javid Nama, p.64/652.

<sup>29</sup> Artnaghan-i-Hijaz, 10/652.



در شکم جویند جان پاک را<sup>30</sup>  
دین آن پیغمبرے حق ناشناس  
بر مواوات شکم دارد اساس

(i) In the verse from 'Armaghan-i-Hijaz', he calls Marx the Incarnation of Mazdak who had freed man from morality in Iran before the advent of Islam. In Mazdakiyat there was no private property and no privacy of sex, Woman was for one and for all. Mazdak was killed by the king because fornication had become a popular fashion rather an order of the day in Iran.

(ii) In the Persian verses noted above, Iqbal criticises Marx for placing the foundation of equality on stomach (Shikam) i.e. the physical needs and for the same reason the calls him a messenger unaware of the truth [پیغمبر

[حق ناشناس] Now it be-comes clear that Iqbal was not at all a Socialist.

### Muhammad and Islam

Sigmund Frued, the founder of modern sex-psychology once said that human life passes through three distinct psychological phases; superstition, religion and science and now being the era of science, all the religions are out of date. But he is absolutely wrong because a divine religion generally and Islam particularly are not the psychological phases of human life. Islam is not a social, commercial or a political revolution or reaction confining itself to a particular or specific field or walk of life. It is a natural urge to know the self, it's origin and its relation with the Originator. It is evident that a code of morality is always necessary for the solidarity of a nation. No nation can survive without a law. It is an incontrovertible fact that the life of the holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) was the most perfect life, a human

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 64/652.

being could lead on this earth. Humanitarianism and social justice for which people cry so much were perfectly translated into action that we can witness in the life of the holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). He was just, truthful and trustworthy (Ameen) and he taught the same to mankind in the name of one God Almighty.

Before coming down to Iqbal's own remarks about the social justice in Islam, I should make it clear that the Islamic structure of social justice is altogether different from all the Isms in the world. In nature Islam is neither democracy nor dictatorship (or kingship) and in it there is no accommodation for Communism, Socialism, Capitalism or Feudalism etc. (for detailed discussion see, 'Islam, The Mis understood Religion' by Mohammad Qutb, Kuwait edition). Islam is not the religion for extremists at all; it is rather a balanced middle way of life. In Islam a Muslim can have private property but for his own needs only i.e. a house to live with family but not for rental purposes because rent is also a kind of interest since no tenant can become the owner of the house for which he has already paid a sum more than it's real cost, in the form of rent for so many years of his tenancy. He does not become even a share-holder or a partner in this property therefore it is un-Islamic way of dealing. It is a social injustice also. A Muslim is allowed to earn and save little money for himself and his family but hoarding and the accumulation of wealth to keep in steel boxes for years together is not allowed. The money should remain in circulation so that all the men are benefitted by it. There is a freedom of thought and action within the religious limitations and there is no compulsion in Islam, In civil life an ordinary Muslim is free to question the greatest Caliph of Islam, if he is in doubt about anything. As human beings all the rulers and the ruled are equal and they are the servants of the people and not the Masters. All the things belong to Allah who is the real master of this universe. Iqbal has emphasized this point in this verse:

اس سے بڑھ کر اور کیا فکر و

نظر کا انقلاب  
پادشاہوں کی نہیں، اللہ کی  
ہے یہ زمین<sup>31</sup>

(What more can be a change in thought and observation that the land belongs to Allah and not to the longs).

According to a tradition of the holy Prophet one should pay the wages of a labour before his sweat dries. Islam has given full protection to an employee. Women are free to marry and remarry and to have a divorce. She can have property and she shares inheritance. Man is allowed to have four wives in case of war, when there are many female war prisoners with children or when there are more women in number than men in a Muslim society whatever the cause may be but the men are bound to do justice to all of them and treat them equally. The maximum number of wives is four. The Quraishites cried for the basic changes brought by the Prophets as Iqbal speaks of in the following verses:

‘His creed cuts through the rulership and Lineage of Quraish, denies the supremacy of the Arabs; in his eyes lofty and lowly are the same thing, He has sat down at the same table with nis slave. He has not recognized the worth of the noble Arabs but associated with the uncouth Abyssinians: redskins have been confounded with the black skins; the honour of tribe and family has been destroyed. This equality and fraternity are foreign things. I know very well that Salman is a Mazdakite’<sup>32</sup>

This is the cry of Abu Jahl in ‘Tawasin-i-Muhammad’ in Iqbal’s ‘Javid-Nama’. One gathers from these verses that the proud Arabs were not prepared to accept the philosophy of social justice. It will not be out of place

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<sup>31</sup> Armaghan-i-Hijaz, p. 13/655.

<sup>32</sup> Javid Nama, Eng: Trans. A.J. Arberry London 1966 pp. 51, 57.

here if I quote a saying of Hadrat ‘Umar bin - Al-Khattab, the second righteous caliph of Islam who said on an occasion:

ان عشت فسا جعل  
الناس بيانا واحدا

‘If could find a chance in my life-time, I will put all the people on equal footings economically according to their talents and needs’.

The word ‘Babban’ (بيانا) means method (tariqah), way of life (rawish) and a kind (qism) according to Arabic lexicology.<sup>33</sup> Salman Farsi and Abu Zar Ghifari were also of the same opinion. It should be borne in mind here that Salman of Persia was one of the Companions of the holy Prophet and he was not at all Mazdakite as Abu Jahl cried, However social justice is the need of the hour. The Muslim states should not play in the hands of the capitalists because Capitalism is also pseudo-Islamic. Neither Communism nor Capitalism Iqbal is for Islam, the religion revealed to him by Allah as the last and hence the most perfect code of life for all humanity.

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<sup>33</sup> Lughat-ul-Hadis, Allama Waheed-uz-Zuman, Aram Bagh Karachi—Vol II p. 7.