

# IQBAL'S IDEA OF DEMOCRACY

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I make bold to deal with a topic which has assumed a form of bitter controversy charged with emotions. The topic is democracy. Arguments are being advanced for and against democracy, and references are lavishly being made to what Iqbal thought of it. Interpretations of Iqbal's idea of democracy are being offered, duly twisted to suit the stance of the arguers. Excitement on both sides, i.e. for and against, is generally, out of all proportions to the subject. No respect is shown to the opinions of those who differ. Usually in our society, and especially, over the last two decades, the level of mutual toleration of those who entertain contrary ideas, has touched the lowest ebb. Those who differ are often called insincere, dishonest and even treacherous folk.

We have tried in the following pages to lay down our findings regarding Iqbal's opinion about democracy. Democracy, no doubt, has many facets. Iqbal liked some of them while disliking others. Iqbal was an independent thinker. He observed things dispassionately. He did not accept things because of their popularity and vice versa. His mind was never static. His thoughts and ideas, constantly kept evolving till the last moments of his life. For him to live was to progress. Hence he loved change, not change for the sake of change but change for the better. The following verse does appreciably epitomise this aspect of his outlook.

ہر لحظہ نیا طُور  
برقِ تجلّی!!  
اللہ کرے مرحلہ  
شوق نہ ہو طے!

(We, every moment seek a new Sinai Mountain and a new Illumination.

By the grace of Allah, our love-journey may never come to an end.)<sup>199</sup>

Similarly his ideas regarding democracy kept evolving. He had not picked them up ready-made, as we would see. But to have

an idea of what democracy means and what it stands for we down here a substantial quote.

“A word originating in the classical Greek city states, and meaning the rule of the demos, the citizen body:the right of all to decide what are matters of general concern. The size of modern nation states has meant that (apart from those which include provision for a referendum in their constitutions) democracy is no longer direct but indirect, i.e. through the election of representatives; hence the term representative democracy. The criteria of democracy are therefore; (a) whether such elections are free: i.e. whether they are held frequently and periodically, whether every citizen has the right to vote, whether candidates and parties are free to campaign in opposition to the government of the day, and whether the voter is protected against intimidation by the secrecy of the ballot; (b) whether such elections provide an effective choice: i.e. whether the choice of the electors is not limited to a single party, and whether a majority vote against the government in power leads to, a change of government; (c) whether the elected body of representatives variously known as parliament, congress, national assembly has the right of legislation, the right to vote taxes and control the budget(deciding such, ii matters by majority vote), and the right publicly to question, discuss, criticize, and oppose government measures without being subject to threats of interference or arrest.

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<sup>199</sup> Darb-i-Kalim, Kull iyat-i-Iqbal. p. 127/589

Democracy is based on a belief in the value of the individual human being, and a further criterion is therefore the extent to which certain basic rights are guaranteed (in practice, not just on paper) to every citizen. These are: security against arbitrary arrest and imprisonment; freedom of speech, of the press, and of assembly (i.e. the right to hold public meetings), freedom of petition and of association (i.e. the right to form parties, trade unions, and other societies), freedom of movement; freedom of Religion and of teaching. As a corollary, democracy is held to require the establishment of an independent judiciary and courts of an independent judiciary and courts to which everyone can have access.

Critics of democracy fall into two groups. The first is opposed to democracy root and branch, on the grounds that it is the least efficient form of government and one in which the stability of the State is threatened by faction, complex issues are distorted by popular discussion, difficult decisions evaded or put off, and matters of judgement reduced to the lowest common denominator acceptable to a majority of the voters. The second, in favour of the principles of democracy, argues that these are inadequately realized unless carried further, e.g. by extending equal rights for all citizens from the political and legal to the economic sphere, without which democracy remains at best incomplete, at worst a sham (formal democracy) disguising the reality of class rule.

A variant of this type of criticism argues that, with the growth of Bureaucracy and the power of governments, decisions are no longer effectively influenced by the view of the government or the elected representatives; hence the demand for greater Participation at all levels of decision-making and the problem of how to reconcile this demand with the need for prompt and effective decision on complex and controversial issues.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> The Fontana Dictionary of Modern thought, Edited by, Alan Bullock and Oliver Stallybrass, Fontana/Collins. 1977. Pp. 161-62.

We peruse the quoted above and we find that many good and positive points can be added to it. But the glaring drawback that transpires is the non-visibility of any moral fibre in this system. Rights are mentioned whereas the question of right and wrong is ignored. What sort of people as human beings are to be elected? Certainly they must be suitable individuals but are they suitable morally as well? What sort of people as human beings are those who elect their representatives? Are they upholders of human values and hence they elect those who have respect for what is good for humanity? Are they elected because they can spend lavishly on election campaign, can brow-beat others into voting for them on account of their muscles or just due to their positive capabilities? Does, in the Western democracy, even legal equality prevail? Are there no racial and territorial prejudices at work? Does Western democracy stand for teaching man's respect for man and thus try to make human beings genuinely human? Does it create feelings of sympathy and sacrifice for others? It is quite obvious that Western democracy is not essentially for forming a government of good people, elected by good people, for promoting good and making people good.

Allama Iqbal in an article "Political Thought in Islam" published in 1910, referring to al-Māwardy, states that he (al—Māwardy) divides the Ummah into two classes; (1) the electors and(2) the candidates for election. The qualifications absolutely necessary-for a candidate were (1) Spotless character (2) Freedom from physical and moral infirmities (3) Necessary legal and theological knowledge (4) Insight necessary for a ruler (5) Courage to defend the empire (6) Belonging to the family of Quresh (Modern sunny lawyers do not regard this as indispensable) -(7) Full of age (al—Ghazālī) (8) Male sex (al—Baidāwī)<sup>201</sup>

Just as the candidate for Caliphate must have some qualifications so according to al—Māwardi the elector must also be qualified. (1) He must

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<sup>201</sup> Thought and Reflections pp. 62-63.

possess good reputation as an honest man (2) Necessary knowledge of state affairs (3) Necessary insight and judgement.<sup>202</sup>

From a legal standpoint the Caliph does not occupy and privileged position. In theory he is like other members of the commonwealth. He can be directly sued in an ordinary court of law.<sup>203</sup>

2. The Caliph may indicate his successor who may be his son but the nomination is invalid until confirmed by the people. The caliph cannot secure the election of his successor during his lifetime.<sup>204</sup>

3. If the caliph does not rule according to law of Islam, or suffers from physical or mental infirmities, the caliphate is forfeited.<sup>205</sup>

Democracy of Iqbal's liking requires the candidate whose first and foremost qualification is "spotless character; freedom from physical and moral infirmities, whereas the elector is required to possess above all other qualifications the attribute of "good reputation as an honest man". Western democracy does not lay down such conditions.

For Iqbal, Islamic government has to be God's kingdom on earth. Such government can be established only in the light of what Islam stands for. Obedience to God and loyalty to the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) is to be the pivotal point in the overall behaviour and conduct of the governmental machinery. And, as is obvious, he who is devotedly obedient to God and loyal to the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) cannot be other than an essentially moral man. Such an individual has to be free from mundane and base considerations. His behaviour is not to be determined by lust and covetousness, treachery and deceit. He has to act as to how he can deserve God's Grace. If persons of such attitude and way of life establish

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid p. 66.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid p. 64.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid P. 64.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid p. 65.

their rule it can't be but a benevolent rule where spiritual brotherhood and justice must be the order of the day. On the contrary, in secular democracies the elected as well as the electors conform to the policy of behaving honestly if and when honesty looks to be the best policy. Iqbal, writing to Prof. Nicholson had made the meanings of Islamic government manifest 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 this earth.”<sup>206</sup>

Iqbal, by “The Kingdom of God on earth”, means the government of shariat-i-Islāmīa which is according to him the best government. It is God and then His Prophet (Peace be upon him) who know what is most suitable for human beings. Human reason howsoever developed and human farsightedness howsoever acute, stands absolutely nowhere as compared to the Creator's wisdom. Hence the way of life revealed through the Last Book. i.e., Quran and elucidated by the practical example of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) is the best and the most congenial way of life for mankind. This “way of life” is called Shariah by the Muslims (and non-Muslims too). Prof. Hasan Askari elaborates this point in the following lines:

“The shariat regime is superior to rational regimes in 3 all respects. The ideas and the beliefs it enjoins, the institutions it prescribes, the type of coercion it practices, the centre of loyalty it identifies, the common norm it engenders, are all superior to the principles and instruments of the rational orders. Shariah regime is the only stable and wholesome form of cultural and political existence. Rational regimes are given to fluctuations, rise, fall and death. Man can escape these cycles by putting his trust in the shariah and adopting a political form that is based on revealed law.”<sup>207</sup>

Mian Muhammad Shafi states:

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<sup>206</sup> Arberry End. Translation of Javēd Namā p. 11.

<sup>207</sup> Society and State in Islam, Progressive Books, Urdu Bazar, Lahore. (1979) pp. 101-102.

“He(Iqbal) desired to dictate an intorudction to the study of Islam in which Islamic philosophy of jurisprudence were to be brought into bold relief. His eye-sight was declining day by day hence he intended to dictate that book to me. Had that book been written out, it would have proved to be the most authentic and the best book on Islamic form of government, social system and the philosophy of Islamic jurisprudence.”<sup>208</sup>

Similarly, Khawaja Abdul Waheed relates what Iqbal once said to him;

“I have expressed my ideas thoroughly in verse. But something much greater than that is still in my mind which I want to produce in the form of an interpretation of the Quran.”<sup>209</sup>

Whether the desired book was to be called “An Introduction to the study of Islam” or “An Interpretation of the Quran”, the fact remains that Iqbal ardently desired to deal with some very important topics concerning Islam, for the benefit of the Ummah Islamia. He knew the significance of such a work which in his opinion was to be far more valuable than what he had expressed in his poetry. One topic to be dealt with was Islamic form of government as indicated by Mian Muhammad Shafi. But the sad reasons of health did not allow Iqbal to realize that eager aspiration.

What Islamic form of government could be like? Could it be called a monarchy, aristocracy, theocracy, oligarchy, dictatorship, democracy, or still what? Dr. Taha Hussain, in his book “al-Fitnat-ul-Kubrā” [الفتنة الكبرى] vol—I, has compared all known forms of government, pertaining both to past and present era, one by one, with—Islam. His conclusion is that Islamic method of governing human societies could not be likened to any

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<sup>208</sup> Iqbal Aur Mas ala-i-Ta’leem by Muhammad Ahmad, pub. by Iqbal Academy p. 392.

<sup>209</sup> Malfuzāt-i-Iqbāl, pub. Iqbal Academy, Lahore p. 174

form of rule established by different nations of the world in different ages including those in vogue in the contemporary world of man.

Whether Iqbal liked democracy is a controversial topic. Was democracy, according to Iqbal, a form of governance nearest to Islam? But the question arises what sort of democracy? Democracy \$ itself is not a plain and simple phenomenon. There can be direct democracy, indirect democracy, constitutional democracy, monarchical democracy, social democracy, totalitarian democracy, democracy of the aristocracy, democracy of the proletariat. Democracy as an abstract phrase gives no clearly understandable meanings. Democracy needs some qualifying clause. Yet democracy, as against monarchy and dictatorship attracts sympathy. Iqbal also had a soft corner for democracy. In an article “Islam as an Ethical and Political Ideal” written thirty years before his death i.e.in the year 1908, he took up the question of Islamic Democracy. We should keep in mind that Iqbal had returned to India after completing his education in Europe that very year and was thirty-one years of age. This is how he deals with Islam, Muslim Community and Democracy:

“Having thus established that Islam is a Religion of peace, I now proceed to consider the purely political aspect of the Islamic ideal----the ideal of Islam as entertained by a Corporate Individuality.

### **Three Main Problems**

- 1) Given a settled society what does Islam expect of its followers regarded as a community?
- 2) What principles ought to guide them in the i management of communal affairs?
- 3) What must be their ultimate object; and how is it to be achieved?



You know that Islam. is something more than a creed, it is also a community, a nation. The membership of Islam is not determined by birth, locality or naturalisation, it consists in the identity of belief.

Islam is Above all Considerations of Time and Space . The expression “Indian Muhammadans”, however convenient it may be, is a contradiction in terms since Islam in its essence is above all conditions of Time and Space.

Nationality with us is a pure idea: it has no geographical basis. But in as much as the average man demands a material centre of nationality the Muslim looks for it in the holy town of Makkah so that the basis of Muslim nationality combines the real and the ideal, concrete and abstract.

When therefore, it is said that the interests of Islam are superior to those of Muslims it is meant that the interests of the individual as a unit are subordinate to the interests of the community as an external symbol of the Islamic principle. This is the only principle which limits the liberty of the individual who is otherwise absolutely free.

### **Democracy of Islam**

The best form of government for such a community would be democracy, the ideal of which is to let a man develop all the possibilities of his nature by allowing him as much freedom as practicable.

The Caliph of Islam is not an infallible being: like other Muslims he is subject to the same law, he is elected by the people and is deposed by them if he goes contrary to law. An ancestor of the present Sultan of Turkey was sued in an ordinary court of law by a mason who succeeded in getting him fined by the town Qazi----Muslims Failure to Improve the Political Ideals of Asia

Democracy, then, is the most important aspect of Islam as a political ideal. It must, however, be confessed that the Muslims, with their idea of individual freedom could do nothing for the political improvement of Asia.

Their democracy lasted only thirty years, and disappeared with their political expansion

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—Democracy has been the great mission of England in modern times, and English Statesmen have boldly carried this principle to countries which have been for centuries groaning under the most atrocious form of despotism.<sup>210</sup>

I may kindly be excused for this elongated quote. But in my opinion it was necessary. This article which he wrote when he Was only 31 years of age shows clearly his idea of Muslim nationalism. In express terms he has laid down that the Muslim community is a spiritual brotherhood and its members are bound to one another on account of common beliefs and ideals. Muslim Community according to Iqbal was thus supra-territorial, supra-racial and supra-lingual. It was a brotherhood which could accommodate any individual and society from whatever ethnic stock it came and from whatever territory, provided it shared their essential Islamic beliefs. Such an individual or society which may be free from all material and earthly shackles could be nurtured only by Islam. In Islam there were no racial, territorial, lingual, material distinctions on account of which a particular class or caste of people entitled them to rule others and condemn others to remain subjugated and in a state of servitude. Here the standards were different from other societies. Here it was not as a rule the best who belonged to the most powerful clan or the most wealthy family. In a Muslim society the best were those who feared God most; who were purest in respect of character. And the most prominent feature of an Islamic Society was the law based on Quranic injunctions and prohibitions as enforced by the Holy Prophet and amplified by his immediate successors. That law epitomised the egalitarian principles of a spiritual fraternity. These laws had the capacity to beat down all kinds of discrimination and injustice. Let justice be administered, was the most vital

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<sup>210</sup> Islam As An Ethical and a Political Ideal, ed. by Dr. S.Y. Hashmy, Islamic Book Service, Urdu Bazar, Lahore (1977) pp. 99-105.

fibre of Islamic structure. Iqbal has stressed this point in the excerpts quoted above. But the example laid down of Islamic justice pertains to Sultan Salim, who was not the elected head of a Muslim state, who rather was the most powerful Emperor of the Sixteenth century. Islamic law is essentially democratic hence cannot spare any one even the highest authority in hierarchy of administration. In Islamic law none is above law. Here a question inevitably arises. What would Iqbal prefer, a king who administers justice or an elected head of the state who is unjust? —I hope the reply is obvious.

We have seen in the above quotation from Iqbal's article that he had named the Islamic form of government as Islamic Democracy. This shows his sympathy with the word democracy, although what he presumably meant was Islamic spirit of equality before law, Islamic spirit of equality in respect of opportunities and Islamic spirit of equality irrespective of class or ethnic differences.

And we have observed that for Iqbal, in 1908, it was democracy at work in Britain that he felt was comparatively better than other forms of rule then prevalent in the world. But perhaps the article written in 1908 was the last thing written by him in support of British type of democracy.

Anyway, it was the British type of democracy which had its impact on Indian political and administrative life. It was naturally the British type of democracy then that became the focal point of Iqbal's critical observation. The way, the British Imperialism bestowed political rights and brought about legislative Reforms, was castigated by Iqbal in un—equivocal terms. From 1909 on, some progress on the road to Self Rule was apparently taking place. After World War I and Act of 1919, the British Government looked more benign, constitutionally, in spite of Jalianwala Bagh tragedy, Khilafat and Non-cooperation Movements launched by Indians, Muslims and Hindus forging a sort of unity although a shortk lived one. What was the spirit of

those Reforms, is depicted by Iqbal in the following verses, composed in 1922, forming part of his famous poem “Khizr—i—Rah” [خضر راہ]

ہے وہی سازِ کہنِ مغرب کا جمہوری نظام  
جس کے پردے میں نہیں غیراز نوائے قیصری  
دیو استبدادِ جمہوری قبا میں پائے کوب  
تو سمجھتا ہے یہ آزادی کی ہے نیلم پری  
مجلسِ آئین و اصلاح و رعایات و حقوق  
طبّ مغرب میں مردے میٹھے، اثرِ خوابِ آوری  
گرمئیِ گفتارِ اعضائے مجالسِ الامان  
یہ بھی اک سرمایہ داروں کی ہے جنگِ زرگری  
اس سرابِ رنگ و بو کو گلستانِ سجھا ہے تُو  
اے نادانِ قفس کو آشیاں سمجھا ہے تُو

- 1) Western democratic system is the same old• musical instrument which contains no tunes other than Imperial ones.
- 2) It is the demon of autocracy dancing in the garb of democracy. And you think it is a fairy of freedom come from Paradise.
- 3) Legislative Councils, Reforms, Concessions and Grants, Rights etc are the Western medicine which tastes sweet but in effect is opiate.

4) This eloquence of the members of the Legislative Council is irresistible. It is (in reality) nothing but a warfare of Capitalists to make more money.

5) You take this mirage of colour and smell for a garden. I am sorry for you. You on account of your foolishness, see cage as your nest.<sup>211</sup>

These verses so clearly declare about and warn against Western sham democracy, by which he meant the British form of it, because it was the British Government that were granting Reforms and Rights to Iqbal's country-men. Iqbal characterised all that democratic process and apparatus as deceptive. Outwardly it was granting of freedom, inwardly it was tightening of the rope around the neck of the slaves. Appearance was democracy, reality was Imperialism and the most cruel type of autocracy. Moreover these playthings of democracy were meant only for the aristocratic and capitalist classes, who, through this democratic exercise aimed at nothing but earning more wealth. Thus earning more, the capitalists served the purpose of their masters in a more handsome and more artful manner.

Around this very period i.e. 1922, Iqbal was compiling his Persian poetry in the form of Pyam-i-Mashriq which was published in 1923: In it under the caption "Jumhuriat" he wrote:<sup>212</sup>

متاع معنی بیگانه ازدوں  
فطرتاں جوئی  
زموراں شوخی طبع سلیمانے  
نمی آید

<sup>211</sup> Bang-i-Dara, Kulliyat-i-Iqbal (Urdu) pp. 262-62.

<sup>212</sup> Kulliyāt-i-Iqbāl (Persian) p. 135/305.

گریزاز طرزِ جمہوری غلام  
پختہ کارے شو  
کہ از مغر دو صد خر فکر  
انسانے نمی آید

“You seek the treasures of an alien philosophy

From common, low grade people, themselves poor of mind. Ants crawling on the ground cannot attain The heights of wisdom of a Solomon.

Avoid the method of democracy;

Become the bondman of some one of ripe intelligence For a few hundred donkeys cannot have combined The brains of one man, of one homosapiens.<sup>213</sup>

These and other verses containing the same derogatory strain regarding democracy were written, as is obvious before he himself entered the arena of practical politics in 1926, when he fought elections to the Punjab Legislative Council and won a seat for himself. This he probably did to see the democracy work from still closer quarters. To suppose that he was misguided and was provoked into fighting an election by ill-guided people because it was below his dignity to become a member of an Assembly, dogs not carry much weight. He gained personal experience and due to it could afterwards talk of the divisive and deceptive nature of that democracy more vehemently. He wrote the following verses around the time he was a member of the Punjab Legislative Council:

فرنگ آئینِ جمہوری نہاد است

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<sup>213</sup> A Message from the East by M. Hadi Hussain, Iqbal Academy (1977) p. 98.

رسن از گردنِ دیوے کشاد است  
چورھزنِ کاردانے درتگ و تار  
شکمِ ہا بہر نانے در تگ و تاز  
گردھے را گردھے در کمین است  
خدایش یار اگر کارش چنین است  
زمن وہ اہل مغرب را پیامے  
کہ جمہور است تیغ بے نیامے

- 1) Europe has enforced Democracy and has thus unleashed a demon
- 2) A caravan, is actively in search of some other caravan, like a robber. It is stomachs out to snatch a loaf.
- 3) A group of people is sitting in ambush to fall upon some other group. God help it if this be its performance.
- 4) Impart this message from me to the Westerners that government of the people is like a sword out of its scabbard, killing ruthlessly.<sup>214</sup>

And during this very period Iqbal was preparing his Lectures which he later on delivered at Madras and Aligarh. He referring to Turkish Ijtihad in respect of Khilafat had stated:

“Turkey’s Ijtihad is that according to the spirit of Islam the Caliphate or Imamate can be vested in a body of persons or an elected Assembly. --- Personally I believe that the Turkish view is perfectly sound. It is hardly necessary to argue this point. The republican form of government is not only

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<sup>214</sup> Zabūr-i-Ajam, Kulliyat-i-Iqbal (Persian) pp. 167, 168/559-60.

thoroughly with the spirit of Islam, but has also become a necessity in view of the new forces that are set free in the world of Islam.”<sup>215</sup>

As is obvious, Iqbal was a supporter of democracy but was against the amoral way of its exercise.

How could he reconcile with what the Western democracy stood for and what it brought about. Where fifty-one meant one hundred and where it were the number of votes and not the worth of voters that were to be the deciding factor, then how good and truth

could find support. Iqbal had expressed such forebodings in as early as 1908. He had said:

“The democracy has a tendency to foster the spirit of legality ----This is not in itself bad; but unfortunately it tends to displace the purely moral standpoint and to make the illegal and wrong identical in meaning.”<sup>216</sup>

Where there are persons to count and not personalities, anything can be voted for and then given authority. The other day we read in a newspaper that a certain gentleman had sought permission of the British Parliament to marry his mother-in-law and the permission was granted ----as a special case though. Thus any moral requirement can be done away with, under democratic permit. Where voters have the final authority, no sin can remain sin, no crime can remain crime, even Divine Writ can be voted down and defied. We know that about a year ago a marriage between two adults belonging to the masculine gender was ceremonised at a Church in England and Priest bestowed his benedictions on the couple and prayed for the success of the marriage. Tomorrow all kinds of incest can be voted through and thus brought in vogue. Any aggression and high handedness, on the international level can be validated. The world forum, United Nations, too, is apparently working democratically but it is the vote that sells away the souls

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<sup>215</sup> Reconstruction p. 157.

<sup>216</sup> Stray Reflections” Sh. Ghulam Ali & Sons, Lahore p. 12.



inhabitants and homelands of Palistinians, Eritarians, South-Africans, Namibians and so on and so forth to others with a permission to perpetrate all kinds of imaginable and unimaginable atrocities on the biped herds handed over to the cruel masters. Members of Parliaments and World Forums, with no morals and no notion of values are masters, more ferocious than carnivorous animals. But they are “heads” occupying parliamentary seats, nobody bothers about what the heads contain. Iqbal not without reason chastised this inhuman way of constituting legalities. He says:

اس راز کو اک مردِ فرنگی نے کیا فاش  
پر چند کہ دانا اسے کھولا نہیں کرتے  
جمہوریت اک طرزِ حکومت ہے کہ جس میں  
ہندوں کو گنا کرتے ہیں تو لا نہیں کرتے

- 1) A European gentleman has disclosed this secret although men of wisdom as a rule, do not give away what they have in their minds.
- 2) Democracy is a form of government in which persons are counted and not weighed.<sup>217</sup>

As has already been stressed one reason why Iqbal was against European democracy, in whatever country it worked and under whatever cover, was that it were the number of votes that characterized a thing right or wrong. And those who voted were not worthy of doing that job.

In his very famous poem, “Devil’s Advisory Council” written hardly one year before his death, contained in his “Armughan-i-Hijaz”, published after his death, he expressed his utter disgust with the so-called “Democracy”. He

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<sup>217</sup> Darb-i-Kālīm, Kulliyāt-i-Iqbāl (Urdu) p. 148/610.

makes an advisor of the Arch Devil refer to the European democratic method of rule in these words:

تو نے کیا دیکھا نہیں مغرب  
کا جمہوری نظام  
چہرہ روشن اندروں چنگیز سے  
تاریک تر

“Have you not observed the Western democratic system? The face of this democracy is bright but the soul is darker than that of Chengis Khan.”<sup>218</sup>

And now we come to his statement which was broadcast from All India Radio Lahore as the New Year Message on January 1st, 1938 i.e. only three months and twenty days before his death. A part of that Message is being given below:

“The modern age prides itself on its progress in knowledge and its matchless scientific developments. No doubt, the pride is justified. Today space and time are being annihilated and man is achieving amazing successes in unveiling the secrets of nature and harnessing its forces to his own service. But in spite of all these developments, tyranny of imperialism struts abroad, covering its face in the masks of Democracy, Nationalism, Communism, Fascism and heaven knows what else besides. Under these masks, in every corner of the earth the spirit of freedom and the dignity of man are being trampled underfoot in a way of which not even the darkest period of human history presents a parallel. The so-called statesmen to whom government had entrusted leadership have proved demons of bloodshed, tyranny and oppression.

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<sup>218</sup> Armughān-i-Hijāz Kulliyāt-i-Iqbāl (Urdu) 8/ 65 p 9.

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As I look back on the year that has passed and as I look at the world in the midst of the New Year's rejoicings, if may be Abyssinia or Palestine, Spain or China, the same misery prevails in every corner of man's earthly home and hundreds of thousands of men are being butchered mercilessly.

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So long as this so-called democracy, this accursed nationalism and this degraded imperialism are not shattered, so long as men do not demonstrate by their actions that they believe that the whole world is the family of God, so long as distinctions of race, colour and geographical nationalities are not wiped out completely, they will never be able to lead a happy and contented life, and the beautiful ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity will never materialize!<sup>219</sup>

Mention has been made in the foregoing pages that the Caliph who did not rule according to the shariah, forfeited his right to rule. This shows that between Islamic government and the Muslim society, there exists a tacit understanding, or to be more manifest, a contract. Iqbal understands the nature of relation between the elected and the electors according to al-Mawardi's view who defines this relationship as "Aqd" --binding together, a contract in consequence of which the caliph has to do certain duties If he fulfils his duties Muslims obey him and assist him.<sup>220</sup> Otherwise the Aqd or the contract stands broken. This is certainly a spirit of government akin to that of democracy, in other words a form of government tacitly democratic. It is neither purely, this form, nor that. It is an amalgam of forms of rule. It has always to abide by the broad based principles of shariah. No democracy has the liberty to temper with them. Similarly no kingship or dictatorial regime can set aside what has been laid down by shariah, hence Islamic form

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<sup>219</sup> Thoughts and Reflections, S.A. Valid, pp. 373,374-75.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid pp. 67-68.

of rule cannot be any specific mode of polity known to the West. To make this point clearer I quote Ilyas Ahmad:

“The Islamic state is Theocratic Democracy. Thus to summarise: Islam was not merely a Revolution; it was a revelation also. It was not mere solution; it was full and complete Salvation. Hence if the Islamic state was the work of man in one sense it was also the work of God in another. If it was a democracy in one sense, it was also a theocracy in another. In fine, as it was both theocracy and democracy, it was a theocratic democracy as well as a democratic theocracy and as has been already said, it not only represented a democratic conception of divine government but also the divinely ordained method of democratic government. Religion and politics could never be separated in Islam and to this day Religion remains the basic foundation of Islamic social and political structure.”<sup>221</sup>

We can conclude that according to Iqbal the spirit of Islamic government was akin to democracy but with a rider that only men of sound moral character and acute understanding of the affairs of the society could be declared candidates for the election as the Head of the State. Similarly it were individuals who commanded good repute could be the electors. This shows that adult franchise had no place in Islamic polity. Moreover party-system is not visible or at least cannot be visualized in Iqbal’s writings.

Keeping these points in view we can safely say that the Parliament in Iqbal’s view turns into a Shura of the Shariah whereas the structure of the government takes the shape of Khilafat ————— It no longer remains Democracy as such.

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<sup>221</sup> The Social Contract and the Islamic State, Shahzad Publishers Lahore (1979) p. 118.