

IQBAL ON THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE WORLD ORDER

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The poet-philosopher Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) lived in the first half of the twentieth century. Now, we stand on the threshold of the 21st century. The present day world is a fast-changing world and each moment an entirely new situation arises. This ever-changing scene poses a difficult challenge to the big powers of today. They have to make constant changes in their policies and formulate new strategies in order to cope with each new situation.

It was as long back as April 21st 1938 that Iqbal died. His times are past, and his era seems to be over, yet his thought, his poetry and his concepts are as fresh as ever. They are quite meaningful with reference to our contemporary world and have full potential of meeting the challenges of our times as well. Iqbal, not only possessed an unusually deep insight into the social, economic, political and human problems of his own time, but he also combined with it such a unique philosophical and sagacious appraisals of the future that we can, without any exaggeration, call him a poet of the times yet to come.²⁹

Iqbal had to live under the yoke of colonialism and the British had not only colonised Iqbal's homeland India, but had also subjugated the major parts of Asia and Africa. The free soul of Iqbal could never reconcile with this Western subjugation. His intellect could not be arrested by the shackles of slavery and soared high. Since he had a unique outlook towards life and universe, quite different from the prevalent, he always felt restless in his contemporary surroundings. Naturally, he never felt satisfied with the society he lived in, the prevailing world order and the situation faced by the humanity as a whole.

From the very beginning, we find in Iqbal, a strong desire for a radical change. India was his homeland³⁰ and the life of Indians, under the British

²⁹ In the *Asrar-o-Rumæz*, Iqbal says: "I am the voice of the poet of Tomorrow", *The Secrets of the Self* (Trans. R.A. Nicholson), Lahore, 1975, p. 4.

³⁰ Iqbal's ancestors belonged to and lived in Kashmir. Originally they were Barahmins of Sapru Clan. Referring to his ancestral home, he says in *Payam-i-Mashriq*:

rule, always made Iqbal worried with a sense of pain.³¹ What particularly shocked him was the fact that the Indian Muslims were lagging much behind the Hindu majority in respect of education, employment and the amenities of life, in general. On another level, Iqbal belonged to Muslim Ummah, which was in a state of decline. Most of the Muslim lands were under the British, the Russians or the French colonialism. Since Turkey was known as “the sick man of Europe”, Iqbal had to watch the painful disintegration of the Ottoman caliphate (1924). The Muslim Ummah suffered not only political subjugation, but also economic backwardness and poverty. More than everything, there was an overall civilizational and moral decadence. The colonial powers had descended on them with all their nationalistic prejudices, selfishness and thus perpetuated injustice on a global scale to safeguard their vested interests. Their own conflicting interests brought these materialistic groups to the First World War (1914-18), a “catastrophe which destroyed the

*My body is a flower from
A flowerbed in Kashmir's paradise.
My heart is from sanctum of Hijaz,
My song is from Shiraz.*

(*A Message from the East*, (Trans. Hadi Hussain) Lahore, 1977, p. 146.)

Iqbal's ancestors migrated from Kashmir in the beginning of 16th century and settled in Sialkot, now in Pakistan. Iqbal was born and educated here upto Intermediate. For details, See: Javid Iqbal, *Zinda Rēd*: Lahore, 1979. pp. 1-16.

³¹ Iqbal's Urdu poem ‘Tasweer-i-Dard’ composed in 1904, gives a true picture of his anxiety and worry about his homeland, as he says:

*Is it a rule of assembling thine.
That all be tongue-tied here?
I pine so much for just a chance
To have a work with thee!*

*O thou, unknowing one! Think at
Calamities to come:
For thy destruction in the skies
Are consultations on!*

*If you would fail to understand,
Men of sub-continent!
Not even just a tale of yours
Amongst the tales shall be!*

Iqbal's Call of the Caravan, (Trans. by S. Rehmatullah) Lahore, 1977.
P. 7.)

old world order in almost every respect”³² and which resulted an unprecedented bloodshed and destruction. The League of Nations was formed (1920) for averting a similar situation again. Iqbal’s insight was keen enough to see through these spurious designs. He could see that the actual role of the League was nothing more than that of an instrument to fulfil the imperialistic desires of the super powers. So, he called the League ‘a band of shroud thieves.’³³ Iqbal saw that in spite of the League’s apparent good-will to improve the world order, man continued to moan under the yoke of man; aggression, injustice and plunder continues unabated and ethnic, linguistic and religious chasms increased.

In Iqbal’s view the ideology of nationalism adopted by all the imperialist powers of Europe was mainly responsible for this deplorable situation. It was this national aggrandisement, which he though, gave them an insatiable hunger of expanding their colonial clutches. Iqbal started his career, as a “zealous nationalist”³⁴, but during his stay in Europe (1905-1908), he underwent what he called “*Inqilab-i-‘Azâm*” a complete metamorphism. He tells us that the confrontation with the milieu of Europe, made him firm to Islam,³⁵ a way of life based on the unity of God and the unity of mankind. Iqbal believed that ‘the idea of modern nationalism created a great deal of misunderstanding of international motives and it has opened up a vast field for diplomatic intrigues and tends to ignore the broad human element in art and literature.’

Many painful events, such as invasion of China by Japan (1931) Italy’s aggression against Abyssinia (1935), the unrest in Palestine and the Spanish civil war etc, that followed First World War in Iqbal’s time, were also the offshoots of the same secular nationalism.

³² Iqbal: *Payam-i-Mashriq* (Preface) Lahore, 1973. P. 12.

³³ In his Persian poem ‘The League of Nations’, Iqbal says:

*All I know about it is that a few thieves of the shrouds of the dead
Have set up an association for dividing the world’s graves.*

A Message from the East: (Trans. Hadi Hussain) Lahore, 1977, p. 160.)

In a letter to Miss Farquharson, (20.7.1937) Iqbal writes:

“Muslim Asia is now learning to regard [The League of Nations] as an Anglo-French institution invented for the purpose of dividing the territories of weaker Muslim peoples.” *Speeches, Statements and Writings of Iqbal*, (Ed. Latif Ahmad Sherwani) Lahore 1977, pp. 244-245.)

³⁴ Iqbal: *Letters and Writings of Iqbal*, (Ed. B.A. Dar) Karachi, 1967, p. 58.

³⁵ Iqbal: *Annur-i-Iqbal*, (Ed. B. A. Dar), Karachi, 1976, p. 176.

Communism gained much popularity as an ideological force of Iqbal's age. The red revolution dawned in Russia (1917) before Iqbal's eyes and we can feel a note of welcome for the October Revolution in some of his poems. 'Khizar-i-Rah' (1921) and several Persian poems contained in 'Payam-i-Mashriq' (1923) may be quoted as an example. In 'ñulë'-i-Islam' (1923) he expressed disgust over the lamentable corollary of a civilization based on capitalism.

*Upto now man is a weak prey to Imperialism
 What a havoc man is the Hunter of Mankind in this age!
 The glare of the present civilization dazðles one's sight,
 Yet this craftsmanship is the cutting of false stone.
 The Diplomacy of which were proud the wise men of the West,
 Is but a slaying sword in the bloody hand of greed.
 Merely the magical work of thinking cannot make a culture strong and stable,
 Especially when it is based on Capitalism!*³⁶

Iqbal's optimism about the Communist Revolution however was quite short-lived, as he saw through the inherent evils of Communism. USSR did emerge as a global power but in Afghanistan, she has been beaten back in humiliation. Iqbal could see, even when Communism was at its prime, that deep down, it was carrying the germs of its own destruction. He saw that Communism only added to human miseries and could never alleviate its problems. Iqbal considered the Russian Bolshevism a reaction against the myopic, selfish of European capitalism. Capitalism and Communism in his mind were both based on extremist tendencies and were nothing more than the two faces of the same coin.³⁷ in 'Javaâd N«mah', Iqbal puts the following words in Jam«d-ud-Dân Afgh«nâ's mouth:

*Communism and Imperial Kingship are both characterized by a dissatisfaction and impatience with the conditions of life:
 Both fail to perceive God, and both work a gigantic fraud on mankind.*

³⁶ Iqbal: *The Renaissance of Islam*, (Trans. by Abdur Rahman Tariq and Aziz Ahmad Sheikh, Lahore, 1966, pp. 29-30)

In the preface to his Persian poem *Payam-i-Mashriq*, Iqbal writes:

"Europe has seen with its own eyes the horrible consequences of its intellectual, moral and economic objectives and has also beard from Signor Nitti (A former prime minister of Italy) the heart rending of the West's decline.) p. 12).

³⁷ Iqbal: *Khuçit-i-Iqbal* (Ed. Rafi-ud-Din Hashmi), Lahore, 1976, pp. 155-156.

For one life means conquest and expansion; for the other extraction of tributes and fees under various pretexts:

Ant between these two stones, poor Adam is like glass!

One brings ruin with Knowledge, and Science; with Religion and Art

While the other snatches life from the body, and bread from the hand.

I see them both floundering in an exaggerated sense of the importance of material means.

Both have a sleek and shining body, but of both the heart is black.³⁸

On this juncture, Iqbal had started feeling disgusted with the contemporary scene. He dubbed the last collection of his Urdu poems, published just two years before his death as *Zarb-i-Kalâm* or as 'Proclamation of War Against the Contemporary Age.' Earlier, he had chanted in *B«l-i-Jibrât*:

The magic old to life is brought by means of present Science and thought:

The path of life cannot be trodden without the aid of Moses' Rod.³⁹

Towards the end of his life, Iqbal's disgust grew very strong.⁴⁰ Four months before his death, in his New Year's Message on Jan. 1, 1938 broadcasted from the Lahore Radio Station, he mourned over man's moral decline the degradation of humanity and the havoc wrought upon the world under the grip of the imperialistic oppression everywhere on the earth, in the following words:⁴¹

The tyranny of imperialism struts abroad, covering its face in the masks of Democracy, Nationalism, Communism, Fascism and

³⁸ *Iqbal's Javâd Nama*, (Trans. A.Q. Niaz,) Lahore, 1984, p. 102.

³⁹ *Gabriel's Wings*, (Trans. Syed Akbar Ali Shah), Lahore, 1984, p. 181.

⁴⁰ In his poem "The Man of Present Age", he says:

Though man aspires to find the track

Of stars that roam in sky and tread:

Alas! Man has completely failed

To map the world of mind or head.

In intricacies of his thought

He is embroiled; is clear and plain,

So he is not as yet aware

Of what is loss and what is gain.

Man has harnessed rays of the Sun.

Much gain from them he has drawn,

But he can not transform the dark

And dismal night of life to dawn.

(Iqbal: *The Rod of Moses*, (Trans. Akbar Ali Shah), Lahore, 1983, p. 40).

⁴¹ Iqbal: *Speeches*, p. 250.

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 under foot in a way of which not even the darkest period of human history presents a parallel. The so-called statesmen to whom Government and leadership of men was entrusted have proved demons of bloodshed, tyranny and oppression. The rulers whose duty it was to protect and cherish those ideals which go to form a higher humanity, to prevent man's oppression of man and to elevate the moral and intellectual level of mankind, have in their hunger for dominion and imperial possessions, shed the blood of millions and reduced millions to servitude, simply in order to pander to the greed and avarice of their own particular groups. After subjugating and establishing their dominion over weaker peoples, they have robbed them of their religions, their morals, of their cultural traditions and their literatures. Then they sowed divisions among them that they should shed one another's blood and go to sleep under the opiate of serfdom so that the leech of imperialism might go on sucking their blood without interruption.

This plight of humanity saddened him quietly. He had a powerful inner personality. He was so full of life. He possessed so strong will and so highly charged qualities of head and heart that he intellectually never surrendered even under the worst of circumstances. No doubt that the natural romantic vein of the poet did make him gloomy sometimes, but his strong will, purity of soul and sincerity of heart always saved him from getting disappointed. He always remained optimistic and hopeful about the future of man and the mankind as a whole. His philosophy of *Khudâ* (Ego), concept of *Isbq* (deep involvement) impart courage to man and make him struggle through life with confidence. He reminds man of his status as being the vicegerent of God on earth. In short, he felt anxious about the contemporary world without ever losing hope. He always continued thinking and contemplating and chalking out plans for the future. Betterment of man's lot was always at the centre of his thoughts. He constantly thought about the reconstruction of the human world. Obviously, it was only possible (and so even today) if a new world order evolved on fresh grounds. He wrote to Syed Sulaiman Nadvâ, one of the leading scholars of his times and his friend on 15th Jan. 1934:

There is a strange struggle going on all-over the world. Democracy in dying out, and dictatorship is replacing it. Material power is being

deified in Germany. A new war is being waged against capitalism. Civilization, especially in Europe, is on its deathbed. To be brief, the whole world order needs a reshuffling. Under these conditions, I would like to know to what extent, in your opinion, can Islam help to formulate a reconstruction? Kindly let me know your point of view on this topic.⁴²

It must be borne in mind that Iqbal has returned from a tour of Europe just one year prior to this script. The impressions of what he saw in Europe was quite fresh in his mind.⁴³ His masterpiece poem, *The Mosque of Cordoba* bears testimony to his unusual experience. 58 years ago, as Iqbal stood in this city of Cordoba, revitalizing his ideals, his great mind flashed back into centuries that had passed, but his clairvoyance was peeping into the future. He was watching what was yet to come in the perspective of what had been. He was experiencing a wakeful dream.

*O Guadalquivir! O thou waters eternally flowing
On thy bank a dreamer stands and dreams of an age to be.
The coming times though lie hid in the womb of destiny
To my gaze laid bare and exposed in its nascent dawn.*⁴⁴

Seen in the proper context of the poem, there remains no doubt that this dream was about the re-awakening of the Muslim Ummah, for the sake of welfare of humanity as a whole and about forging a new order for the world. Iqbal found all the three interconnected. After the failure of Communism and Capitalism, the Muslim Ummah could play a key role in formulating a new world order and rehabilitating the human dignity. Because this Ummah possesses a moral code of life based on divine revelation instead of human conjectures. As a result of a life-long contemplation and philosophical research, Iqbal had concluded that Islam possessed the potential to guide the

⁴² Iqbal: *Iqbal Nama* Vol. I, (Ed. Sheikh Ata-ullah), Lahore, 1944, p. 181. See also, Iqbal: *Iqbal, Jabon-i-Dagar*, (Ed. Muhammad Faridul Haq,) Karachi, 1983, pp. 67-71.

⁴³ After attending the Third Round Table Conference at London, Iqbal visited Spain (Jan. 1933) and went to Madrid, Toledo, Granada, Cordoba and Seville. While in Spain, he wrote to his son, Javid Iqbal:

Thank God that I happened to see this one of the best mosques. I wish you also could see it.

(Iqbal: *Gulfar-i-Iqbal*, (Ed. M. Rafiq Afzal), Lahore, 1977, p. 165. To the editor of *Inqilab* he wrote, "Do see Cordoba, at least once". (*Ibid*: p. 165. For more details, See: *Letters and Writings of Iqbal*, pp. 77-79.

⁴⁴ Iqbal: *The Mosque of Cordoba*, (Trans. Muhammad Abdul Haleem) Hyderabad, n.d.

wandering humanity towards its goal.⁴⁵ The acute problem facing him however, was the fact that the Muslim Ummah, in most parts of the world, was not only under the subjugation of colonialism, but also suffered from an overall moral decline.

Although Iqbal left behind no clear-cut outline of any plan for a new world order, yet one is astonished to observe that the changes that have taken place during the second half of the twentieth century in Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Eastern Europe, indeed all over the world, which are still continuing, reflect to a great extent Iqbal's hopes and dreams.

Through his prophetic poetry, Iqbal struggled for the fulfilment of the Muslim destiny, which is the key to human destiny. It was he, who suggested the concept of an independent state in the northwest of the sub-continent, which could serve as a centre for Islam in India. In a letter to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Iqbal stated that the solution to the problems of Indian Muslims lay in the implementation of the Islamic *Sharâ'ah*, which could only be done in a free Muslim state.⁴⁶ With the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on 14th August 1947, one of Iqbal's dreams was fulfilled. His vision however, was not confined to the Indo-Pak subcontinent. In the northwest he pinned his hopes on Afghanistan as well. Just a year after his return from Spain, he had a chance to spend a few days in Afghanistan, where he felt a re-awakening. Afghans, to his mind, were a valiant nation who unfortunately lacked discipline and a powerful centre.⁴⁷ He considered Afghanistan to be the Balkans of Asia and believed that a strong Afghanistan could be a source of strength for Muslims in India and Central Asia.⁴⁸

In *Javâd Namah* Iqbal says:

Asia is like a human body, made of Water and Clay,

⁴⁵ In one of his last poems, he clearly says that: It is Islam, not Communism, which has the real role to play in the future world order. *Armughan-i-Hijaz* included in *Kulliyat-i-Iqbal*, Urdu, Lahore, 1973, p. 650.)

⁴⁶ Iqbal: *Letters of Iqbal* (Ed. B. A. Dar) Lahore, 1977, p. 254.

⁴⁷ In October 1933, at the invitation of the Afghan King Nadir Shah, Iqbal visited Afghanistan. His book *Musfir* (sub-title: Brief Travel through Afghanistan) was composed after coming back from Afghanistan. For Detail of Iqbal's journey, see: Syed Sulaiman Nadvâ, *Sair-i-Afghanistan*: Hyderabad Deccan. *Musfir* has been translated into English by Maqbool Ilahi (A combined publication under the title: Iqbal's *Pas Cheh Beyad Kard* by Sheikh Hasan Din (and) *Musfir*), Lahore, 1988. Another Translation by Jamil Naqvi, *The Traveller*: Karachi, 1991.

⁴⁸ Iqbal: *Letters of Iqbal*, p. 93.

*And the Afghan nation in that body is like the heart!
If there is in Afghanistan, it means for the whole of Asia!
But if Afghan prospers, it would bode well for the entire
continent!*⁴⁹

To best wishes of Iqbal, an in total in conformity with his expectations, the Afghans rose against the Russian invasion (Dec.1979) and succeeded through an unprecedented and epoch-making resistance to drive the Russian back across the river ħmē. Is it not a fact that the failure of the Communism in Russia, the cessation of the Baltic States from the USSR, the independence of the Eastern Europe, the removal of the Berlin Wall, the Union of Germany and the changes that ensued consequent upon the shameful retreat of Russia from Afghanistan? It is these epoch-making changes which are now forcing upon the United States the urgent need of a new world order. All these are nothing but the offshoots of the Afghan Jihad (struggle). Afghanistan has successfully crossed the turbulent waters and is reaching the tranquil shores.

Further, Iqbal had been fixing his gaze upon Central Asia. Even after the Communist occupation the people of Samarkand and Bukhara, continued putting resistance against it. Anwar P«sh« marched all the way from Turkey to participate in this struggle for freedom. Iqbal also showed keen interest in it. Consequent upon a news (which proved a rumour) that Anwar P«sh« had reached Bukhara and the Turkistan had become independent, Iqbal expressed great pleasure.⁵⁰

Actually, Iqbal had a deep emotional attachment with the Turks. He considered Turkistan to be the heart of Asia, and expressed the hope that: “If the heart gains independence, the rest of the limbs too will be able to shake of their change gradually”.⁵¹ This hope of Iqbal may better be seen with the perspective of present day situation in the Muslim States of Central Asia, where on the streets Iqbal’s verses are echoing as slogans and these states are on their way to gain independence from the USSR.

⁴⁹ Iqbal: *Iqbal's Jawād Nōma*, p. 281.

⁵⁰ Saqib Nafees: *Chaudbry Muhammad Hussain aur Allama Iqbal*. An unpublished M.A. dissertation, Punjab University Lahore, 1984, p. 65.

⁵¹ *Ibid*: p. 65.

In the Iranian revolution (1979),⁵² the Afghan resistance (1979-1989) and the re-awakening in Central Asia a certain amount of influence exerted by Iqbal's poetry can easily be traced. The same influence is now manifesting in itself in the resistance in Kashmir too, where Iqbal's dream can be expected to come true. India is trying hard to crush the struggle in Kashmir militarily. It is an eternal tragedy that almost no lessons are ever learnt from history by individuals as well as the nations.⁵³ India is no match to the military power of Russia based on her nuclear technology and an inexhaustible store of weapons. But even with all that might of arms Russia had to pay very heavily for its imprudent use of force in Afghanistan.

The withdrawal of colonial rule from Asia and Africa, the independence of the Muslim states in both these continents, the breakdown of Communism in Russia, the failure of the Communistic hegemony in Eastern Europe, the resurgence of the Muslim world all bear out Iqbal's optimism to be far from hollow idealism. In 1923 Iqbal said: "The internal unrest of world's nations is the fore-runner of a great spiritual and cultural revolution".⁵⁴ Now, half a century after his death, the circumstances have come closer to a world order, Iqbal would have proposed. The Palestinian issue, and the stubbornness of Israel on this issue is, however, the major obstacle in the way of translating into reality a new world order, based on true justice. Iqbal was keenly interested in this issue. It is interesting to note that as far back as the thirties, he observed that the issue is not going to be solved easily and it will take time. However, he hoped that ultimately solution must emerge.⁵⁵ As seen in his poetry, Iqbal's attitude towards West was

⁵² He hinted at re-awakening in Iran and wished to visit the country. *Iqbal Nama* Vol. II (Ed. Sheikh Ata-Ullah), Lahore, 1952, p. 165.

⁵³ In his letter (20.7.1937) to Miss Farquharson, Iqbal writes:

"Through wisdom alone, comes power; and when power abandons the ways of wisdom and relies upon itself alone, its end is death." (*Speeches*, p. 244.)

⁵⁴ *Payam-i-Mashriq*, pp. 11-12.

⁵⁵ Iqbal believed that Palestine does not belong to the Jews, because they abandoned it of their own free will long before its possession by the Arabs.

In a letter to Miss Farquharson, he writes:

"Zionism as a movement was deliberately created, not for the purpose of giving a National Home to the Jews, but mainly for the purpose of giving a home to British Imperialism on the Mediterranean littoral." (*Speeches*: p. 245.)

generally of vehement criticism with a note of disappointment and it was quite natural. For example, on the Palestinian issue, the West in general, and America in particular, showed unmistakable partiality. In life manner, the West tried to keep the East and particularly the Muslim community from all developments through a very unfair political game and colonial subjugation. Iqbal, however also had a reconciliatory mood towards the West. He believed in the following saying of the Prophet of Islam Muhammad (Peace be upon him): ‘Wisdom is the lost property of the believer’. He saw no harm in availing the Western advancement in learning and its technical superiority, without succumbing to its external glamour.⁵⁶ This attitude shows an extraordinary balance of mind.

But what is the role of the West today? The USA which is considered to be the representative of the world civilization and the so-called sole super power of the contemporary world is bent upon imposing a new world order serving nothing except the American interests on the global level and also the interests of Israel in the Middle East. That is why this New World Order has been quite aptly been called the Jew World Order. In this perspective, Iqbal

Now, the Americans have replaced the British. For further details about Iqbal’s viewpoint upon the Palestinian problem, see: Letters to Miss Farquharson and a statement on the Report Recommending the Partition of Palestine by Iqbal: (*Speeches*, p. 244-48)

⁵⁶ In *Javād N◀mah*, Iqbal warns the East not to imitate the West, as it will take away the East from itself. Instead of a blind imitation, Iqbal insists, tht the oriental people should make a critical appraisal of the West. To quote him:

*The Power of the West does not lie in its orchestras;
 Nor does it lie in its dances; nor even in its daughters going about without veils.
 It is not due to the magic of faces radiant like tulips;
 Nor from the bare legs of the women; nor from the shaven faces of its males.
 Its greatness and strength does not lie in Irreligion;
 Nor is its rise due to the Latin script.
 The glory of the West springs from its knowledge,
 And its mastery of the various techniques.
 Its wisdom does not lie in the cut of its clothes;
 Nor is the oriental turban any kind of bar to the acquirement of the sciences and the technical skills,
 O Thou Smart Young man! to gain mastery of science and the technical skills
 What is needed is brain, not the European style of dress.
 On this path, the utmost essential is a proper vision;
 And this kind of headgear, or that, makes no difference.
 If thou be blessed with an active and an alert mind, that is all thou needst;
 If thou have a temperament that can perceive things and get straight to the point, that is quite enough.*

(Iqbal’s, *Javād N◀mah*, pp. 282-283.)

is justified to concentrate all his hopes on the East. Actually what he wanted was that the Eastern nations in general, and the Muslims in particular, should come forward to play their role in formulating a new world order.⁵⁷ This amounts a grave responsibility resting on the shoulders of the Muslim community. Notwithstanding a certain wave of reawakening amongst the Muslims, they have also shown signs of further decadence in certain aspects during the twentieth century. This decadence has been discussed by Iqbal quite frequently and he has tried to suggest plans to overcome this dilemma. He emphasized the need of *Ijtihād* (exercise of discretion) and a reconstruction of the Islamic Jurisprudence in order to meet the intellectual challenge of the present day world. He wished an intrinsic change in the Muslim community that could lead it to a self-consciousness and self-reliance.⁵⁸ The biggest difficulty is that without developing and understanding Islam, Iqbal's concept of a world order cannot be comprehended. The influence of clergy, inherited from the medieval age, the heritage of crusades and the confusions created by some Orientalists have been keeping the West from acquiring a true understanding of Islam. To quote Iqbal: "Islam, has not been introduced properly as yet"⁵⁹ meaning thereby that the curtain between Muslim and non-Muslim world has to be raised. Iqbal visualises Islam as a very vast religion. In one of his lectures he says:

The spirit of Islam is so broad that it is practically boundless. With the exception of atheistic ideas alone it has assimilated all the

⁵⁷ In his Urdu poem '*Jam'āat-i-Aqwaṁ-i-Mashriq*', Iqbal says:

*If Tebran is made
The Geneva of the East
The fate of Earthly globe
May have some change at least!*

⁵⁸ The East, and especially the Muslim East, has opened its eyes after a centuries-long slumber. But the nations of the East should realize that life can bring about no revolution in its surroundings until a revolution takes place in its inner depths and that no new world can take shape externally until it is formed in the minds of men. This ineluctable law, which has been stated by the Qur'an in the simple but eloquent words: "Verily, God does not change a nation until it changes itself" [sūii.1] governs both the individual and the collective spheres of life

A Message from the East, p. xviii.

⁵⁹ Iqbal: *Iqbal, Jabān-i-Dāgar*, p. 91. In a letter he writes: "he cultural and philosophical side of Islam is ought to be worked." *Letters of Iqbal*, p. 117

attainable ideas of surrounding peoples, and given them its own peculiar directions of development.⁶⁰

To Iqbal's mind a new world order can attain meaning and success only of it is honestly based on truth and justice, away from all ethnic, linguistic or geographical compartmentalization.⁶¹ According to him:

National unity too is not a very durable force. Only one unity is dependable and that unity is brotherhood of man, which is above race, nationality, colour or language.⁶²

The glory of man occupies important place in the World Order as conceived by Iqbal. He believed that the whole world is the family of God,⁶³ so man can be maintained on this earth only by honouring mankind.

The Question remains how, under the existing circumstances, can it be possible to formulate a world order reflecting the aspirations of Iqbal? Looking around us today we do not feel much encouraged. The very concept of veto for the big powers is itself a partiality. Through this, UNO betrays justice. The fascinating dreams which Iqbal had about a happy and contented life and the beautiful ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity cannot possibly be materialized in any so-called New World Order which ignores the aspirations of the bigger world community and enforces itself through nuclear threat, military power and the superiority of weapons in order to safe guard certain vested interests.

The failure of such a based order is quite obvious. Towards the end of his years, Iqbal has posed a question in one of his statements asking how many centuries would it take humanity to come out of these ills and to reach the apogee of human possibilities.⁶⁴ It is for us to furnish the answer of this question and especially for those who are at the helm of affairs in today's world. We may sum up with a verse from Iqbal that needs much contemplation in the present day world order.

The essence of humanity is respect of man.

And thou shalt do well to make careful note of this important point.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Iqbal: *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Lahore, 1986.

⁶¹ Iqbal: *Speeches*, p. 25.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 251.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

⁶⁵ *Iqbal's Javād Nama*, p.

This may as well be considered a motto of the world order Iqbal could have possibly proposed. We may conclude our discussion with Iqbal's own words.

Let us pray that God Almighty may grant humanity to those, who are in places of power and government and teach them to cherish mankind.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Iqbal: *Speeches*, p. 251.