POLITICAL THOUGHT OF IQBAL AND CONTEMPORARY: ISLAMIC RESURGENCE

Muhammad Mumtaz Ali

ABSTRACT

This paper comprises sections. In the first section, his views on the importance and relevance of faith, his methodology of the study of Islam, spirituality, and ethical ideals of Islam are explored and assessed. In the second section, his political thought is presented. This is followed by the conclusion.

Introduction

Iqbal, the poet-philosopher of Islam, made certain observations in his writings such as the following:

The most remarkable phenomenon of modern history, however, is the enormous rapidity with which the world of Islam is spiritually moving towards the West. There is nothing wrong in this movement, for European culture, on its intellectual side, is only a further development of some of the most important phases of the culture of Islam.[260]

We heartily welcome the liberal movement in modern Islam.[261]

The claim of the present generation of Muslim liberals to re-interpret the foundational legal principles, in the light of their own experience and the altered conditions of modern life, is, in my opinion, perfectly justified.[262]

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[260] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1994), p.7.
[261] *Ibid.*, p. 162.
[262] *Ibid.*, p. 168.

I am sorry that Muslims have never recognized the modernity of Qur'an.[263]

the idea of Universal Imamate has failed in practice……The idea has ceased to be operative and cannot work as a living factor in the organization of modern Islam.[264]

I therefore demand the formation of a consolidated Muslim state in the best interest of India and Islam.[265]

Based on such observations of Iqbal, a few scholars who wrote on the development of Islamic thought in modern age concluded that Iqbal was either a modernist Muslim thinker or a Muslim nationalist.[266] They, therefore, associated him with the tradition of modernity and so-called modernism in Islam. They thought Iqbal was a staunch supporter of modernity and Muslim nationalism in the Muslim world. However, this writer, based on an exploration and a close examination of his thought, reached to a different conclusion. It is, therefore, argued here that to consider Iqbal as a modernist and a Muslim nationalist is to do a great injustice to him. The fact is that Iqbal belongs neither to the tradition of traditionalists and reformists nor secularists and modernists. Hence, the aim of this paper is to refute the unfounded conclusion that Iqbal was a modernist and a Muslim nationalist.

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[263] Iqbal has said this in one of his letters which is quoted here by Chawdhry Muzzaffar Hussain, "Khutbath ka Asal Mauzu" [The main Theme of Lectures by Iqbal], Iqbaliyyat [*Iqbal Review*] (January—March, 1997), p.34.

[264] Mohammad Iqbal, op. cit., p.158.

[265] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[266] See for example, Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr who said, "Much like other Islamic modernists, Iqbal found the ideal polity in the early history of Islam," in "Iqbal's Impact on Contemporary Understandings of the Islamic Polity", Iqbal Review, vol. 42, no. 4 (October 2001), p. 19; Javid Iqbal also made similar statement, 'Although Iqbal was a critic of western civilization, he was not opposed to modernity' in " Modern Indian Muslims and Iqbal," *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, vol. 14, no. 1, (1997), p. 36; Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982); Mazheruddin Siddiqi, *Modern Reformist Thought in The Muslim World* (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, 1982); Abdullah al-Ahsan, *Ummah or Nation? Identity Crisis in Contemporary Muslim Society* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1992).

Iqbal demonstrated in his thought an evolutionary process. In spite of this, it is contended that he rightly deserves a place in the tradition of Islamic Revivalism that is the most important tradition of Islam that stands for the revival of Islam and Islamic civilization.[267] In our view Iqbal stood as a revivalist and struggled hard throughout his life since 1905 until his death for the revival of Islam and Islamic civilization. He wrote:

Now, along with the renaissance of Muslim communities, the renaissance of Islam also is needed. I pray to God Almighty that He, for the sake of his beloved, the Prophet, peace be upon him, produces such an interpreter among Muslims who gets at the 'lost wisdom' once more and offers it to *ummah*. Our demise is not near at hand. The Qur'an still holds on.[268]

Nevertheless, the revival of Islam and its civilization to Iqbal is absolutely necessary for peace, security and prosperity for the entire mankind in this modern age. No one, therefore, he contended, should misunderstand in any way that the revival of Islam is either a backward step or against the interest of humanity; rather, it is for the survival of humanity as humanity. The Islamic revivalistic trend in Iqbal's thought can be easily gleaned through an exploration of his views on spirituality, ethical values of Islam, and his critical insights into the ideologies of democracy and nationalism, his views on the institution of *Khilafah* and the need for *Ijtihād* and the necessity of Islamic political system. An exploration into all these areas and his political thought will help us to unfold all false understandings about Iqbal and reveal the fact that to Iqbal, the modern west and western thought have lost the credibility to claim the leadership of mankind for they failed to guide mankind to achieve peace, security and prosperity. Hence, Iqbal contended that to fill up this gap of leadership, Muslims should come forward. For this purpose, at the very outset, they must realize that they first need to understand clearly the weaknesses of Western thought on one hand and on the other the spiritual and moral force of the teachings of Islam. A brief study of Iqbal's political thought, in fact, provides an empirical evidence to the fact that he

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[267] I think this was the reason that John L. Esposito realized the position of Iqbal rightly and included him in his book on Islamic resurgence entitled, *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1983, pp. 175-190.

[268] Chawdhry Muzzaffar Hussain, "Khutbath ka Asal Mauzu" [The main Theme of Lectures by Iqbal], Iqbaliyyat [*Iqbal Review*] (January–March, 1997), p. 35.

endeavoured for the revival of Islamic civilization. He argued that unless mankind submits itself to the teachings of God, and accepts Islam as the way of life, it cannot achieve the noble goals of peace, security and prosperity.

This paper comprises sections. In the first section, his views on the importance and relevance of faith, his methodology of the study of Islam, spirituality, and ethical ideals of Islam are explored and assessed. In the second section, his political thought is presented. This is followed by the conclusion.

FIRST SECTION: IQBAL'S VIEWS ON FAITH, METHODOLOGY OF IQBAL'S THOUGHT, SPIRITUALITY AND ETHICS

Faith: The Basis of Life

Iqbal, an idealist-realist philosopher-thinker, penetrating deeply into the conditions of his time, realized that the cherished goals of humanity—peace, security, prosperity, equality, justice, liberty, rule of law, harmony, and peaceful co-existence, once elaborated and practiced by Islam, were being destroyed by the communities of the modern world of both the East and the West. Instead of peace and harmony, one observes chaos and conflict. On the eve of 1938, in his message broadcasted from the Lahore Station of the All-India Radio, Iqbal expressed his disenchantment with the modern dominant political tradition largely because of its irrational and illogical insistence on the denial of spirituality, acceptance of materialism, its ties to capitalist economics, and its lack of a meaningful conception of the so-called democratic community. He echoed, in fact, the view of Bertrand Russell and said that scientific civilization is, no doubt, a good civilization but it is by itself not sufficient; increase in knowledge and skills should be accompanied by an increase in wisdom. For Russell and Iqbal, wisdom means the right conception of the ends of life. Both believed that this is something which science in itself does not provide. They, therefore, concluded that the progress of science by itself is not enough to guarantee any genuine progress.[269] For Iqbal the conditions of his time manifested an empirical

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[269] Bertrand Russell, *The Scientific Outlook* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. xxix.

evidence for this truth identified by Russell. He, therefore, made the following statement in the court of humanity:

> 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, the tyranny of imperialism struts abroad, covering its face under 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 to 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 possessions, 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.[270]

Iqbal further continued saying:

> 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...the same misery prevails in every corner of man's earthly home, and hundreds of thousands of men are being butchered mercilessly. Engines of destruction created by science are

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[270] Mohammad Iqbal in *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, edited by Syed Abdul Vahid (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf Publishers, 1992), pp. 373-374.

wiping out the great landmarks of Man's cultural achievements. The governments which are not themselves engaged in this drama of fire and blood are sucking the blood of the weaker people economically.[271]

Iqbal then raised a pertinent question:

Do you not see that the people of Spain, though they have the same common bond of one race, one nationality, one language and one religion, are cutting one another's throats and destroying their culture and civilization by their own hands owing to a difference in their economic creed?[272]

According to Iqbal this single event demonstrates clearly that 'national unity' is not a 'very durable force.' He asserted that only one unity is dependable, the unity of brotherhood of man, which stands above race, nationality, colour or language.[273]

Hence, he argued that:

as 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 contended life and the beautiful ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity will never materialize.[274]

Iqbal believed that the phenomena described above are only "premonitions of a coming storm, which is likely to sweep over the whole world." According to him it is the natural result of a "wholly political civilization" which has always perceived man as a "thing to be exploited and not as a personality to be developed and enlarged by purely cultural forces."

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[271] *Ibid.*, p. 374.

[272] *Ibid.*, p. 375.

[273] *Ibid.*

[274] *Ibid.*

He further asserted that the peoples of Asia, particularly, are bound to rise against the acquisitive economy which the West has developed and imposed on the nations of the East. The people of Asia, according to Iqbal, cannot comply with modern Western capitalism with its undisciplined individualism any more.[275] He felt, therefore, that only faith which he himself represented recognizes the worth of the individual, and disciplines him to give away his all to the service of God and man. He maintained that its possibilities are not yet exhausted. It is a historic fact that in the beginning, faith played a revolutionary role in human societies by challenging, altering, and often smashing the old but irrational values, customs, habits, and opinions of the peoples. He believed that faith can still create a new world where the social rank of man is not determined by his caste or colour, or the amount of dividend he earns, but by the kind of life he lives, where the poor tax the rich, where human society is founded not on the equality of stomachs but on the equality of spirits, where an Untouchable can marry the daughter of a king, where private ownership is a trust and where capita cannot be allowed to accumulate so as to dominate the real producer of wealth.[276]

Iqbal rejected the harshly critical argument of Marx who thought that faith was "the heart of the heartless world" and reasoned that by submitting to God, people were placing their creative power outside themselves, a tendency according to Marx that would only prolong their willingness to be dominated by each other and by capital. Iqbal held totally a different view. For him the essence of religion is faith, and faith which has a cognitive content is the source of creative energy.[277] For humanity to be genuinely liberated, he maintained, there is no other way except to surrender itself to the faith, for faith in true God would induce in humanity the spirit of free man who is able to see himself as the sole, creative, and responsible power over world's affairs. He, therefore, reminded his people and told them that they should come forward to save humanity from the destruction of capitalism and liberalism. But they should not forget that at this stage of history what they needed first was to realize that the superb idealism of their own faith, however, needed emancipation from the medieval fancies of

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[275] *Ibid.*, p. 212.
[276] *Ibid.*, p. 213.
[277] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, op. cit., p. 1.

theologians and legists. Iqbal asserted that at the moment his people, spiritually, were still living in a prison house of thoughts and emotions, which during the course of centuries they had woven around themselves. And let it be further said to the shame of us—men of older generation—that we have failed to equip the younger generation for economic, political and even religious crisis that the present age is likely to bring. In this background, he argued that the whole community needed a complete overhauling of its present mentality in order that it might again become capable of feeling the urge of fresh desires and ideals. They have not recognized the inner force of their faith and they have long ceased to explore the depths of their own inner life. The result is that they have ceased to live in the full glow and colour of life, and are consequently in danger of an unmanly compromise with forces which, they are made to think, they cannot vanquish in open conflict.[278]

   Keeping these limitations of Muslims into consideration, Iqbal urged them to struggle to bring a constructive change in the society. He said: "He who desires to change an unfavourable environment must undergo a complete transformation of his inner being. God changeth not the condition of a people until they themselves take the initiative to change their condition by constantly illuminating the zone of their daily activity in the light of a definite ideal. Nothing can be achieved without a firm faith in the independence of one's own inner life. This faith alone keeps a people's eye fixed on their goal and saves them from perpetual vacillation. The lesson that past experience has brought to you must be taken to heart. Expect nothing from any side. Concentrate your whole ego on yourself alone, and ripen your clay into real manhood if you wish to see your aspirations realized. Remember! The flame of life cannot be borrowed from others; it must be kindled in the temple of one's own soul."[279] He, therefore, told Muslims that no obstacle should stop them from marching forward to save humanity from self-destruction. He said "I am quite sensible of the difficulties that lie in our way, all that I can say is that if we cannot get over our difficulties, the world will soon get rid of us."[280]

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[278] Mohammad Iqbal in *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, op. cit., p. 213.
[279] *Ibid.*, pp. 213-214.
[280] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

Methodology of Iqbal's Thought

This was the realization and background in which the ideas of Iqbal were developed. He wanted on one hand to liberate his people from intellectual slavery of the so-called modern scientific thought and ideologies and on the other to create confidence among them on their own Islamic perspective to life and society by way of scrutinizing their own heritage and sources. He suggested a fundamental principle that so far as human thought is concerned it should be studied critically, and with regard to the understanding of the Divine sources, he was of the opinion that the Qur'an is the authentic Divine source. It should be understood based on the principles in the Qur'an, which have been identified by commentators of the Holy Book. Here, he was open for any alterations and modifications of knowledge. So far as the collection of Traditions are concerned, he was of the opinion that it should be approached critically. Iqbal further argued that for the understanding of the Divine sources or the Reality, we need to depend upon all possible ways and means. In this way he refuted the claims of rationality and empiricism as the only sources of knowledge respectively. His method was a combination of all those means which are useful for the understanding of Reality. He also did not discard personal inner experiences of individuals as a means of knowledge. He contended that all possible means of knowledge are in need of each other for they seek visions of the same Reality. Our reasons, senses, perceptions, intuitions, inspirations and mystic experiences all play a role according to their functions in our life.[281] Based on this Iqbal, therefore, decided to show them the sound spiritual and logical basis of Islamic thought by way of elaborating the logical weaknesses of the modern political thought and eradicating the dogmatic and fatalistic attitude of his own people. He argued that his convictions were not the result of any reactions to the modern political thought or the result of pessimistic understanding of his heritage, rather his convictions were the result of a comparative study of world religions and ideologies on one hand and the critical study of legacy of Islam on the other. He argued that a search for such spiritual principles which could be the basis of social organization must be based on a comparative and critical study of all currents of thoughts, philosophical and religious.

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[281] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, op. cit., p. 3.

To achieve this goal Iqbal suggested that one should adopt a critical and comparative approach. According to him a student of spiritual principles must be scientific in his approach. It is not because he does not have faith in religion or revelation but because his aim is to approach the subject from a thoroughly human standpoint, and not because he doubts the fact of Divine Revelation as the final basis of human organization.[282] To search for spiritual principles, Iqbal said: "I propose to look at Islam from the standpoint of the critical student."[283] Furthermore, a philosophical and scientific discussion of some of the basic ideas of Islam would be helpful towards a proper understanding of the meaning of Islam as a message to humanity.[284] Based on this approach he finally reached to the conclusion that Islam is the only way of life that can guarantee peace, security and prosperity. He said: "I have given the best part of my life to a careful study of Islam, its law and polity, its culture, its history and its literature. This constant contact with the spirit of Islam, as it unfolds itself in time, has, I think, given me a kind of insight into its significance as a world-fact."[285] He further said: "I hope more than twenty years long, study of the world's thought has given me sufficient training to judge things impartially."[286]

Spirituality: The Essence and Basis of Life

In the light of Iqbal's insights into the history of civilizations and based on his own experience and observation of realities around him, he realized that the lack of spirituality is the root cause of all chaos and crisis. He, therefore, concluded that spirituality is the essence and basis of life. Due to this, it seems to us that his restless soul was in search of those fundamental principles which may guarantee peace and harmony in man's life on this earth. He, therefore, contended that all religious, philosophical and scientific understanding of man about the origin and development of life which denies the spiritual basis of life cannot be the solid basis of human development simply because the whole history of mankind reveals the fact that life in

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[282] Mohammad Iqbal in *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, op. cit., pp. 30-31.
[283] *Ibid.*
[284] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, op. cit., p.8.
[285] Mohammad Iqbal in *Speeches And Statements of Iqbal,* edited by Shamloo, (Lahore: al-Manar Academy, 1948), p. 3.
[286] Mohammad Iqbal in *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, op. cit., p. 100.

nature is not material but spiritual. He, therefore, rejected all religions and ideologies, both classical and modern, which do not accept the spiritual basis of man's material life. To Iqbal, who was by profession and training a lawyer, Islam, as being the religion of all mankind and the source of spirit and matter, appears to be the only alternative to civilizational development for it provides both guidance and law, the *Shariah* law, which is the most authentic and realistic law which is most suitable for modern societies. He, therefore, believed that if mankind follows this, self-destruction can be avoided and the world can be kept under control from chaos and crisis which are dominant features of the modern world, and consequently develop peace and security for all. With this perception, he developed his political thought based on three fundamental parameters, namely, spirituality, ethical and political ideals of mankind. To explore in detail the political thought of Iqbal, we need to make a thorough investigation into these parameters.

Iqbal's contention is that from the point of view of Islam, life is essentially spiritual and the essence of Islam is also spiritual. To support his contention, he raised a fundamental question at the very outset: Why do we need a spiritual basis for our life? He answered that this spiritual basis is indispensable for a meaningful social life. He asserted that there is no social life without spiritual understanding of life as such. It is with this reason that Iqbal differs from Nietzsche who did not see any spiritual purpose in the universe.[287] Iqbal seemed to be in search of spirituality that can provide "a purely psychological foundation of human unity" and human unity "becomes possible only with the perception that all human life is spiritual in its origin." Hence, he realized that there is an integral relationship between spirituality and human organization and unity. More than that the sense of spirituality for him is a source "creative of fresh loyalties without any ceremonial to keep them alive, and makes it possible for man to emancipate himself from the earth."[288]

Based on this, he found in the fundamental principle of Islam, *Tawhid,* the foundation of world unity. Iqbal asserted that according to this principle God is the ultimate spiritual basis of all life. And loyalty to God virtually amounts

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[287] Ibid. p. 242.
[288] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, op. cit., p. 146.

to man's loyalty to his own ideal nature.[289] Islam, as a polity, is only a practical means of making this principle a living factor in the intellectual and emotional life of mankind. It demands loyalty to God and denies all other deities who claim loyalty. Islam as a social polity generates the spirit of freedom. The essence of *Tawhid*, as Iqbal conceived it, as a working idea is equality, solidarity, and freedom. The State, from the Islamic standpoint, is an endeavour to transform these ideal principles into space-time forces, an aspiration to realize them in a definite human organization. The ultimate reality according to the principles of *Tawhid*, is spiritual, and its life consists in its temporal activity.[290] The spirit, therefore, finds its opportunities in the natural, the material and the profane. All that is profane is, therefore, sacred in the roots of its being. The mere material has no substance until we discover it rooted in the spiritual. There is no such thing as a profane world as it was understood in modern Western philosophical thought. All this immensity of matter constitutes a scope for the self-realization of spirit. Iqbal further argued that "the State according to Islam is only an effort to realize the spiritual in a human organization."[291] In Islam the spiritual and the temporal are not two distinct domains, and the nature of an act, however secular in its import, is determined by the attitude of mind with which the agent does it. It is the invisible mental background of the act which ultimately determines its character. According to Iqbal an act is temporal or profane if it is done in a spirit of detachment from the infinite complexity of life behind it; it is spiritual if it is inspired by that complexity. Iqbal maintained that Islam "is a single unanalyzable reality which is one or the other as your point of view varies. It is wrong to say that in Islam it is the same reality which appears as the Church looked at from one point of view and the state from another. It is not true to say that the Church and the State are two sides or facets of the same thing …suffice it to say that this ancient mistake arose out of the bifurcation of the unity of man into two distinct and separate realities which somehow have a point of contact, but which are in essence opposed to each other."[292] Iqbal pointed out that the truth, however, is that matter is spirit in space-time reference. The idea of the separation of matter and spirit and, therefore, the separation of Church and State is completely an alien idea

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[289] *Ibid.*, p. 147.

[290] *Ibid.*, pp. 154-155.

[291] *Ibid.*, p. 155.

[292] *Ibid.*, p. 154.

to Islam. The fact is that Primitive Christianity was founded, not as a political or civil unit, but as a monastic order in a profane world, having nothing to do with civil affairs, and obeying the Roman authority practically in all matters. The result of this was that when the State became Christian, State and Church confronted each other as distinct powers with interminable boundary disputes between them. Such a thing could never happen in Islam; for Islam was from the very beginning a civil society.[293] Iqbal, therefore, believed that "Politics have their roots in the spiritual life of man…that Islam is not a matter of private opinion. It is a society, or if you like, a civic church."[294] As Iqbal saw it, Nietzsche did not believe in the spiritual purpose in the universe. To him there was no ethical principle resident in the forces of history. Virtue, Justice, Duty, Love all were meaningless terms to him. The process of history is determined purely by economical forces and the only principle that governs is 'Might is Right.' It must be noted that Karl Marx and Nietzsche borrowed this materialistic interpretation of the historical process from the left wing followers of Hegel and accepted it without criticism. They, however, drew absolutely opposite inferences from this interpretation. Karl Marx predicted that power would eventually fall into the hands of the proletariat by the sheer forces of historical causes. The proletariat, therefore, wrest by force the power from the hands of the rich and imposed upon the world a new social order. Nietzsche, on the other hand, said that it is the superior man who has been robbed of power and he should assert himself and tell the inferior to remain where he should be, i.e., hewers of wood and drawers of water. However, the truth is, Iqbal contended, that this materialistic interpretation of the historical process has marred the teachings of both Karl Marx and Nietzsche. It has done more harm to the teachings of Karl Marx.[295]

Iqbal believed that Islam does not bifurcate the unity of man into an irreconcilable duality of spirit and matter. In Islam God and the universe, spirit and matter, Church and State are organic to each other. Man is not the citizen of a profane world to be renounced in the interest of a world of spirit

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[293] *Ibid.*, p. 155.

[294] Mohammad Iqbal in *Discourses of Iqbal* edited by Shahid Hussain Razzaqi, (Lahore: Sh. Ghulam Ali and Sons, 1979), p. 84.

[295] Mohammad Iqbal in *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, op. cit., pp. 242-243.

situated elsewhere. To Islam matter is spirit realizing itself in space and time. He asserted that Europe uncritically accepted the duality of spirit and matter probably from the Manichean thought. According to Iqbal Europe's best thinkers realized this initial mistake, but her statesmen indirectly forced the world to accept it as an unquestionable dogma. It was, then, this mistaken separation of spiritual and temporal which has largely influenced European religious and political thought and finally resulted practically in the total exclusion of Christianity from the life of European states. The result was a set of mutually ill-adjusted states dominated by interests not human but national.[296]

According to Iqbal Islam does favour the idea of division of work but this Islamic idea of the division of religious and political functions of the state must not be confounded with the European idea of the separation of Church and State. The former in Islam is only a division of functions as is clear from the gradual creation in the Muslim state of the offices of *Shaykh al-Islam* and Ministers; the latter is based on the metaphysical dualism of spirit and matter. Christianity began as an order of monks having nothing to do with the affairs of the world; Islam was, from the very beginning, a civil society with laws civil in their nature though believed to be revelational in origin.

The metaphysical dualism on which the European idea is based has borne bitter fruit among Western nations.[297] Iqbal believed that the great evils from which humanity is suffering today are evils that can be handled only by religious sentiments; that the handling of those evils has been in the great part surrendered to the State; that the State has itself been delivered over to corrupt political machines; that such machines are not only unwilling, but unable, to deal with those evils; and that nothing but a religious awakening of the citizens to their public duties can save countless millions from misery, and the State itself from degradation.[298] He said: "In the history of Muslim political experience this separation has meant only a separation of functions, not of ideas. It cannot be maintained that in Muslim countries the separation of Church and State means the freedom of Muslim legislative activity from

[296] Mohammad Iqbal in *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, op. cit., pp. 5-6.
[297] Mohammad Iqbal in *Discourses of Iqbal,* op. cit., p. 251.
[298] *Ibid.*, p. 252.

the conscience of the people, which has for centuries been trained and developed by the spirituality of Islam. Experience alone will show how the idea, if it is put in practice by a right kind of leadership in a proper environment, will work in modern times. We can only hope that it will not be productive of the evils which it has produced in Europe and America."[299] From this point of view Islam is both religion and polity, State and Church. They are integral to each other. He further elaborated:

> I have already indicated to you the meaning of the word religion as applied to Islam. The truth is that Islam is not a church. It is a state conceived as a contractual organism long before Rousseau ever thought of such a thing, and animated by an ethical ideal which regards man not as an earth-rooted creature, defined by this or that portion of the earth, but as a spiritual being understood in terms of social mechanism, and possessing rights and duties as a living factor in that mechanism."[300]

In fact, for Iqbal "religion is not a departmental affair; it is neither mere thought, nor mere feeling, nor mere action; it is an expression of the whole man."[301]

Is religion a private affair? Would we like to see Islam as a moral and political ideal, meeting the same fate in the world of Islam as Christianity has already met in Europe? Is it possible to retain Islam as an ethical ideal and to reject it as a polity in favour of national polities, in which religious attitude is not permitted to play any part? According to Iqbal these are the questions which have become of special importance in the contemporary age where both spirituality and ethics are rejected from the domains of state and politics.[302]

Ethical Ideals of Mankind and Islam

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[299] *Ibid.*

[300] Mohammad Iqbal in *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, op. cit., p. 14.

[301] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, op. cit, p. 2.

[302] Mohammad Iqbal in *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal,* op. cit., p. 8.

Iqbal concluded that if life in nature is spiritual then it must be ethical. Hence, he examined the ethical ideal of human society in the light of the teachings of Islam. Life, according to Islam, is one single unit, i.e., the unity of life is a fact. This is the logical consequence of the spiritual origin of life. This proposition is followed by another, that life, in reality, is both ethical and political in its origin. It, therefore, needs both ethical and political ideals. Based on this premise Iqbal developed his ethical and political ideals which are integral to one another. A careful discussion of ethical and political ideals, as Iqbal put it, requires a thorough understanding of the nature of the universe and man. Therefore, Iqbal believed that Islamic ethical ideals are based on two important propositions namely, the nature of universe and man. He made intellectual efforts to understand the true nature of universe and man in the light of the teachings of God.[303] Iqbal, as a philosopher and thinker, did not develop his understanding of the nature of man and universe based on his own reason and sense perception. Rather, as a principle of his methodology he adopted an approach to make the fundamental teachings of God as the basis of further thinking and reflections. He, therefore, developed his thought in the light of God's teachings for he clearly understood that the understanding of the true nature of man and universe is simply beyond the human faculties of reason and sense perception.

According to the first proposition, Islam looks upon the universe as a reality and, consequently, recognizes as reality all that is in it. Sin, pain, sorrow, struggle, are certainly real, but Islam teaches that evil is not essential to the universe; the universe can be reformed and the elements of sin and evil can be gradually eliminated. All that is in the universe is God's and the seemingly destructive forces of nature become a source of life, if properly controlled by man, who is endowed with the power to understand and to control them.[304] Iqbal maintained that these and other similar teachings of the Qur'an, combined with the Qur'anic recognition of the reality of sin and sorrow, indicate that the Islamic view of the universe is neither optimistic nor pessimistic. Islam believes in the efficacy of well-directed actions; hence, from the standpoint of Islam all human efforts must be directed towards

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[303] Mohammad Iqbal in *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, op. cit., p. 32.
[304] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

scientific discovery and social progress.[305] If this is the reality, then what is really the obstacle towards the spiritual and ethical development of man and his society? As an answer to this question, Iqbal said: "Although Islam recognizes the fact of pain, sin and struggle in nature, yet the principal fact which stands in the way of man's ethical progress is, according to Islam, neither pain, nor sin, nor struggle. It is fear to which man is a victim owing to his ignorance of the nature of his environment and want of absolute faith in God. The highest stage of man's ethical progress is reached when he becomes absolutely free from fear and grief."[306]

The central proposition, as Iqbal explained, which regulates the structure of Islam, then, is that there is fear in nature, and the object of Islam is to free man from fear. This view of the universe indicates also the Islamic view of the metaphysical nature of man. If fear is the force which dominates man and counteracts his ethical progress, then, as Iqbal conceived it, man must be regarded as a unit of force, an energy, a will, a germ of infinite power, the gradual unfolding of which must be the object of all human activity. He further asserted that the essential nature of man, then, consists in will, not in intellect or understanding.[307] This is the reason that differentiates Iqbal from others' opinions on the issue of education and contended that the aim of education, as wrongly understood by many, is not the training of the intellect, rather it is the training of the willpower of an individual. He said: "Education, we are told, will work the required transformation. I may say at once that I do not put much faith in education as a means of ethical training– I mean education as understood in this country.[308] I venture to say, that the present system of education in this country is not at all suited to us as a people. It is not true to our genius as a nation, it tends to produce an un-Muslim type of character, it is not determined by our national requirements, it breaks entirely with our past, and appears to proceed on the false assumption that the ideal of education is the training of human intellect rather than human will."[309] This is the reason that Iqbal considered the immense amount of money spent every year on education as a waste for it is

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[305] *Ibid.*
[306] *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.
[307] *Ibid.*, p. 35.
[308] *Ibid.*, p. 43.
[309] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

based on Western and secular philosophy of life in which there is no place for God and His guidance for the construction of social life.[310] Instead of this, he suggested that Muslims must have, in order to be truly themselves, their own schools, colleges and universities, based on their own philosophy of education, keeping alive their social and historical traditions, making them good and peaceful men of character and creating in them the free but law-abiding spirit which evolves out of itself the noblest types of political virtue.[311]

With regard to the ethical nature of man, the teaching of Islam is different from those of other religious systems and modern ideologies. Iqbal believed that according to the tenets of Islam man is essentially good and peaceful—a view explained and defended, in our own times, he contended, even by Rousseau—the great father of modern political thought. In his view the possibility of the elimination of sin and pain from the evolutionary process and faith in the natural goodness of man are the basic propositions of Islam, as in modern European civilization, which has, almost unconsciously, recognized the truth of these propositions in spite of the religious system with which it is associated. He emphasized that ethically speaking, therefore, man is naturally good and peaceful. Metaphysically speaking, he is a unit of energy, which cannot bring out its dormant possibilities owing to its misconception of the nature of its environment. Against this, if anyone understands that man is basically wicked, as understood by Hobbes, then Iqbal said, he must not be permitted to have his own way; his entire life must be controlled by external authority, as Hobbes claimed. But for Iqbal this will lead instead to elimination, to the further consolidation of and control by priesthood in religion and autocracy in politics. Sometimes, it may come in disguised forms such as liberalism, individualism and so on. The ethical ideal of Islam is to disenthrall man from fear, and thus to give him a sense of his personality, to make him conscious of himself as a source of power.[312] This idea of man as an individual of infinite power determines, according to the teachings of Islam, the worth of all human action. That which intensifies the sense of individuality in man is good, that which enfeebles it is bad. Virtue is

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[310] *Ibid.*

[311] *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

[312] *Ibid.*, p.36.

power, force and strength; evil is weakness. Give man a keen sense of respect for his own personality, let him move fearless and free in the immensity of God's earth, and he will respect the personalities of others and become perfectly virtuous[313] Why, then, certain forms of human activity, e.g., self-renunciation, poverty, slavish obedience which sometimes conceals itself under beautiful name of humility and unworldliness–modes of activity which tend to weaken the force of human individuality–are regarded as virtues by certain religions, and altogether ignored by Islam? Iqbal answered this question by saying that, no doubt, some religions glorify poverty and unworldliness; however, Islam looks upon poverty as a vice, and says: 'Do not forget thy share in the world.' The highest virtue from the standpoint of Islam is righteousness which is defined by the Qur'an in the following manner:

> It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces in prayers towards East and west, but righteousness is of him who believeth in God And the last day and the angels and the scriptures and the Prophets, Who give the money for God's sake unto his kindred and unto Orphans and the needy and to strangers and to those who ask and For the redemption of captives; of those who are constant at Prayer, and of those who perform their covenant when they have Covenanted, and behave themselves patiently in adversity and In times of violence. (2:177)

Islam transmutes the moral values of ancient world, and declares the preservation, intensification of the sense of human personality to be the ultimate ground of all ethical activity. Man is a free responsible being; he is the maker of his own destiny and his salvation is his own business. There is no mediator between God and man.[314] Islam rejects all those doctrines which proceed upon the assumption of the insufficiency of human personality and tend to create in man a sense of dependence, which is regarded by Islam as a force obstructing the ethical progress of man. The development of human individuality is the principal concern of Islam.[315] According to Iqbal, individual personality is the central fact of the universe and that personality is

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[313] *Ibid.*, p.37.

[314] *Ibid.*, p.38.

[315] *Ibid.*

the central fact in the constitution of man. This personality is the bearer of Divine trust. The nature of man, therefore, in spite of his constitutional shortcomings is not hopeless. On the other hand, it has the quality of growth as well as the quality of corruption; it has the power to expand by absorbing the elements of the universe of which it appears to be an insignificant part, it has also the power of absorbing the attributes of God, and thus attain to the vicegerency of God on earth.[316]

Iqbal asserted that Nietzsche did not at all believe in this spiritual fact of human personality. According to Nietzsche all this spiritual understanding of man about himself is a fiction. Iqbal further contended that it might appear true if someone looked at man from a purely intellectual point of view; this in fact manifested a methodological shortcoming of the Western thought. This was also the reason that caused Kant to reach to the same conclusion that God, immortality and freedom are mere fictions though useful for practical purposes. The views of Nietzsche and Kant, however, are refuted by the inner experience, as Iqbal maintained it, because we know that the human personality grows and expands by education. The question here is not whether human personality is a substance or not. The real question here is whether this weak, created and dependent personality can be made to survive the shock of death and thus become a permanent element in the constitution of the universe. Iqbal answered that the human personality could be made permanent by adopting a certain mode of life and thereby bringing it into contact with the ultimate source of life.[317] According to Iqbal the concept of man in western political thought is purely materialist and a biological product; whereas for him man is the product of moral and spiritual forces.[318]

Based on this understanding, Iqbal argued that briefly speaking, a strong will in a strong body is the ethical ideal of Islam. This strong willpower stimulates sufficient strength of character to oppose those forces which tend to disintegrate the social organism to which he belongs. One should understand that in the great struggle for existence it is not principally number which makes a social organism survive. Character is the ultimate source of

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[316] *Ibid*, pp. 238-239.

[317] *Ibid.*, pp. 239-240.

[318] *Ibid.*, p. 242.

man, not only in his efforts against a hostile natural environment, but also in his contest with kindred competitors after a fuller, richer, ampler life. The absence of this understanding will be the source of decline. The decay of this spirit of religion combined with other causes of a political nature will develop in him a habit of self-dwarfing, a sense of dependence and, above all, the spirit of laziness.[319]

Iqbal further argued that from this point of view an illiterate shopkeeper deserves a greater respect for he earns his honest bread and sustains sufficiently his family than a graduate of high culture, whose low, timid voice betokens the dearth of soul in his body, who takes pride in his submissiveness and depends on others. Islam, therefore, rejects the sense of dependence which undermines the force of human individuality. Iqbal argued that economic dependence, in fact, is the prolific mother of all forms of vice. For him, power, energy, force, physical strength, constitute the law of life.[320] Islam always gave importance to the conditions of life and made due poor tax (*zakath*) as an obligation along with charity and endowments to improve the economic and general living conditions of people and continuously inspire the followers to fight against poverty.

Iqbal also emphasized that in the eyes of Islam there is no special privileged class. It is the masses who constitute the backbone of a nation; they ought to be better fed, better housed and properly educated. No doubt, life is not bread and butter alone; it is something more. It is a healthy character reflecting the national ideal in all its aspects.[321] Hence, the ideal of education, as Iqbal said, is not the training of human intellect rather the human will for education is a means through which we create men of will and determination who are, in a true sense, concerned for the welfare of an individual and society. Furthermore, Iqbal argued that the spirit of Islam is not afraid of its contact with matter. Indeed, he said, the Qur'an says: "Forget not thy share in the world." It is, therefore, not difficult for anyone

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[319] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

[320] *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

[321] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

to understand that the progress of a materialist outlook is only a form of self-realization.[322]

Iqbal understood clearly that Islam, "as an ethical ideal plus a certain kind of polity, i.e., a social structure regulated by a legal system and animated by a specific ethical ideal --, has been the chief formative factor in the life-history of mankind. It has furnished those basic emotions and loyalties which gradually unify scattered individuals and groups and finally transform them into a well-defined people."[323] He maintained that Islam, as a people-building force, has worked at its best and has the potentials to work presently and in the future. The structure of Islam as a society is almost entirely due to the working of Islam as a culture inspired by a specific ethical ideal.[324]

SECOND SECTION: POLITICAL IDEALS OF MANKIND AND ISLAM

For Iqbal the political ideals of any community must be subordinate to the spiritual and ethical ideals of that community. In the case of Islam and Muslims, the political ideals are integral to the spiritual and ethical ideals of Islam. The Muslim community is, therefore, bound to elaborate its political ideals in the light of the teachings of Islam. The Muslim community is also supposed to develop its political system according to the political ideals of Islam. Hence, the political system is neither isolated nor outside the framework of spiritual and ethical ideals. Iqbal at a time when the whole world was rushing towards the secular nation state, pleaded for a state which was deeply rooted in spiritual and ethical ideals. In other words, Iqbal genuinely stood in favour of the Islamic state. In fact like Muhammad Asad and Mawdudi, Iqbal also explained systematically the need for an Islamic state. He also refuted scientifically the false foundations of secular systems.

Iqbal developed his views upon the premise that Islam basically is a religion of peace and prosperity. He said: "It has been said, by the critics of Islam, that Islam is a religion which implies a state of war and can thrive only

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[322] Mohammad Iqbal in *Discourses of Iqbal*, op. cit., p. 249.
[323] Mohammad Iqbal in *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, op. cit., p. 4.
[324] *Ibid.*

in a state of war."[325] He asserted that Islam is essentially a religion of peace and prosperity. Therefore, all forms of political and social disturbances are condemned by the Qur'an in the most uncompromising terms.[326] There is no doubt about it; however, the question is how far the injunctions of the Qur'an were practically upheld by the followers of Islam throughout the history? Iqbal did not provide a detailed answer to this question. He only contended that Islam does not tolerate any kind of political and social disorders. They are severely denounced by the Qur'an. The Qur'an considers them equal to evil and destruction (*fasad*). For this purpose, all sorts of secret and violent activities of political and social nature of unrest are condemned. At the political level, Iqbal said, "the ideal of Islam is to secure social peace at any cost." All methods of violent change in society are condemned in the most unmistakable language.[327] In all Islamic teachings unity, peace, harmony and prosperity are emphasized. However, it does not mean that kingship or any other kind of tyranny or dictatorship is allowed or any ruler is accepted for forever. Iqbal pointed out that Islam provides certain principles for the guidance in the management of communal affairs. What principles ought to guide them? What must be their ultimate object and how should they be achieved? These questions are answered by Iqbal. He contended that polity in Islam is not something undesirable. It is integral to Islam as "Islam is not merely a creed rather it is something more than a creed, it is also a community, a civilization. The membership of Islam as a community is not determined by birth, locality or naturalization; it consists in the identity of belief."[328] Iqbal, therefore, argued that the expression of 'Indian Muslim,' however convenient it may be, is a contradiction in terms since Islam in its essence is above all conditions of time and space. Nationality in Islam is a pure idea; it has no geographical basis. But inasmuch 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, the concrete and the abstract.[329] In the eyes of Iqbal the best form of government for such a community would be democracy, the ideal of which is to let man develop all the possibilities of his nature by allowing him

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[325] Mohammad Iqbal in *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal,* op. cit., p.46.

[326] *Ibid.*, p. 48.

[327] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

[328] *Ibid.*, p. 51.

[329] *Ibid.*

as much freedom as practicable. But the freedom of the individual as a unit is subordinate to the interests of the community as an external symbol of the Islamic principle.[330]

However, in the discussion on democracy it cannot be ignored that a few Muslims as well as Western scholars are quite critical about the Western philosophy of democracy. Some of them argue that the Western form of democracy gives all sorts of freedom to individuals which destroy certain good qualities of man particularly those which are approved by religion and those which go against the nature of man and, consequently, he becomes permissive in nature and does not follow any guidance from God or morals except the dictates of his own desires. Hence, a pertinent question arises here: From the above statements of Iqbal on democracy, can it be concluded that Iqbal has accepted democracy in its totality? Absolutely not. Iqbal did not stand with the Western form of democracy. Instead, he elaborated on his own understanding of democracy. By asserting that legitimate political power comes from people who are free from influences, Iqbal made an important contribution to the development of democratic thinking. His theory, subsequently, refuted the concept of the separation of Church and State. In fact, as Iqbal put it, the democracy of Europe, overshadowed by socialistic agitation and anarchical fear, originated mainly in the economic regeneration of European societies. But the democracy of Islam did not grow out of the extension of economic opportunity, it is a spiritual principle based on the fact that every human being is a centre of latent power, the possibilities of which can be developed by cultivating a certain type of character. Out of the plebeian material, Islam has formed men of the noblest type of life and power. Iqbal argued that this democracy of Islam was an experimental refutation of the ideas of Nietzsche, who abhorred the 'rule of the herd' and hopelessness of the plebeian and based all higher culture on the cultivation and growth of an aristocracy of Superman.[331]

Iqbal further argued that humanity needs three things namely, a spiritual interpretation of the universe, spiritual emancipation of the individual, and basic principles of a universal import directing the evolution of human

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[330] *Ibid.*
[331] *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.

society on a spiritual basis. The modern Western thought has achieved some progress in this direction but in its totality it failed to guide mankind towards the path of peace, security and prosperity. Iqbal asserted that materialistic democracy, for example, is the best example of the failure of the Western thought. He observed that democracy in the West never became a living factor of life. In fact, "the idealism of Europe never became a living factor in her life, and the result is a perverted ego seeking itself through mutually intolerant democracies whose sole function is to exploit the poor in the interest of the rich."[332] He, therefore, urged the Muslims of the modern age to come forward "to construct the social life in the light of the ultimate principles of Islam, and evolve, out of the hitherto partially revealed purpose of Islam, that spiritual democracy which is the ultimate aim of Islam."[333]

In the context of the ideal of individual freedom, democracy, then, is the most important aspect of Islam which is regarded as a political ideal.[334] By referring to the event of the election of the first Rightly-guided caliph, he elaborated his idea of individual freedom. He said in the process of election, the idea of universal agreement is, in fact, the fundamental principle of Islamic constitutional theory. Iqbal maintained that Abu Bakr, the first Rightly-guided caliph was universally elected by the people. But, Umar, the second Caliph himself had the opinion that it was done in a hurry. Therefore, Umar held the view that the hurried election of Abu Bakr, though very happy in its consequences and justified by the need of the time, should not form a precedent in Islam for, as Umar is reported to have said that an election which is only a partial expression of the people's will is null and void. It was, therefore, understood by Iqbal that political sovereignty *de facto* resides in the people and that the electorate by their free act of unanimous choice embody it in a determinate personality in which the collective will is individualized without investing this concrete seat of power with any privilege in the eye of the law except legal control over the individual wills of which it is an expression.[335] Furthermore, to maintain the spirit of universal franchise, some more measurements were adopted by Umar, as such: He committed his trust,

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[332] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, op. cit., p. 179.

[333] *Ibid.*, p.180.

[334] Mohammad Iqbal in *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, op. cit., p. 51.

[335] *Ibid.*, p. 58.

before he died, for the selection of his successor to seven electors—one of them being his own son, with the condition that their choice must be unanimous, and that none of them must stand as a candidate for the Caliphate. It will be seen, from Umar's exclusion of his own son from the candidature, how remote the idea of hereditary monarchy was from the Islamic political consciousness.[336]

For a deeper understanding of Iqbal's concept of democracy and ultimately the constitution of the Islamic political system, we need to look into two fundamental propositions as elaborated by Iqbal, as shown below.

1. Legal Sovereignty: In Iqbal's concept of democracy, Legal Sovereignty does not belong to the people. It resides with God. He said: "The law of God is absolutely supreme. Authority, except as an interpreter of the law, has no place in the social structure of Islam." Islam is totally against personal authority. It regards it as inimical to the full development of human individuality. Iqbal argued that at the higher stage of civilization the idea of personal absolute authority does not seem to be workable. The demand of people for a fundamental structural change in the government of personal authority seems to be indispensable by way of the introduction of the principle of election. For Iqbal, there was no doubt that people have the right of election of their representatives but both people and representatives have to work within the framework of the law revealed by God called the *Shariah* law. From the point of view of the *Shariah* law, Church and State are not two different identities; they are the same.[337] He stated that "according to the law of Islam there is no distinction between the Church and the State. The State with us is not a combination of religious and secular authority, but it is a unity in which no such distinction exists. The Caliph is not necessarily the high-priest of Islam; he is not the representative of God on earth. He is fallible like other men, and is subject, like every Muslim, to the impersonal authority of the same law. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself is not regarded as absolutely infallible by many theologians. In fact, the idea of personal authority is quite contrary to the spirit of Islam…."[338] Iqbal further

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[336] *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

[337] *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

[338] *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

observed that a Muslim is free to do anything he likes, provided he does not violate the *Shariah* law. The general principles of the *Shariah* law are believed to have been revealed; the details, in order to cover the relatively secular cases, are left to the interpretation of professional jurists. It is, therefore, true to say that the entire fabric of Islamic law, actually administered, is really judge-made law, so that the jurist performs the legislative function in the Islamic constitution. If, however, an absolutely new case arises which is not provided for in the law of Islam, the will of the whole Muslim community becomes a further source of law.[339]

As stated earlier even the chief executive, the Caliph of Islam, is not an infallible being; mechanisms are developed to regulate his authority for there is no particular precedence against it; rather, incidents are there in favour of regulating the office of the institution of the Caliph. 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 the law of God or against the universal principles of good governance.[340]

Furthermore, according to Iqbal, "From a legal standpoint, the Caliph does not occupy any privileged positions. In theory, he is like other members of the Commonwealth. He can be directly sued in an ordinary law court. The second Caliph was once accused of appropriating a larger share in the spoils of war, and he had to clear his conduct before the people, by providing evidence according to the law of Islam. In his judicial capacity he is open to the criticism of every Muslim."[341] On the issue of hereditary rule, Iqbal categorically rejected it. For him neither the divine wisdom nor rationality approves kingship or feudalism. Iqbal, therefore, argued that the elected Caliph has no special right to appoint or nominate anyone as his successor particularly from his family. If he does for any special cases, then it is imperative for the community to confirm his appointment by the consent of the people. He contended: "The Caliph may indicate his successor who may be his son; but the nomination is invalid until confirmed by the people. Out of the fourteen Caliphs of the House of Umayyad, only four succeeded in

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[339] *Ibid.*
[340] *Ibid.*, p. 58.
[341] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

securing their sons as successors. The Caliph cannot secure the election of his successor during his own life time" (p. 65). Iqbal further argued that whenever this principle was ignored, a majority of scholars and people strongly protested against the behaviour of the Caliph.[342] He said, "If the Caliph does not rule according to the law of Islam, or suffers from physical or mental infirmity, the Caliphate is fortified. He is deposed and his deposition is confirmed by the people."[343]

The question whether two or more rival Caliphate can exist simultaneously is discussed by jurists. Iqbal also addressed this issue. After considering various views of the jurists, Iqbal concluded that only one Caliphate is desirable. However, he further held that there is nothing illegal in the co-existence of two or more Caliphates, provided they are in different countries. This view is certainly contrary to the old idea of Rightly-Guided Caliphate, yet in so far as the present Muslim Commonwealth is governed by an impersonal authority, i.e., law, in his opinion, this position seems to be quite tenable. Moreover, as a matter of fact, two rival Caliphates have existed in the Muslim history for a long time.[344]

However, he argued that in the light of experiences and circumstances one should think and decide about the existence of one or more Caliphate. No one single formula is workable. What is desirable, ideally speaking, is the establishment of the universal Caliphate. To be more realistic one should understand that at present the universal Caliphate has taken the place of the Commonwealth of the Muslim countries because "the idea of Universal Imamate has failed in practice. It was a workable idea when the Empire of Islam was intact. Since the break-up of this Empire, independent political units have arisen. The idea has ceased to be operative and cannot work as a living factor in the organization of modern Islam. Far from serving any useful purpose it has really stood in the way of a reunion of independent Muslim States."[345] The only alternative left for the political unity of Muslim countries is this: "In order to create a really effective political unity of Islam,

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[342] *Ibid.*, p. 65.
[343] *Ibid.*
[344] *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.
[345] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, op. cit., p. 158.

all Muslim countries must first become independent; and then in their totality they should range themselves under one Caliph. Is such a thing possible at the present moment? If not to-day, one must wait."[346] Due to the absence of the effective universal Caliphate and the practical realities, he accepted as a reality the emergence of a modern state with the understanding that Muslims will make it Islamic as it is their collective duty. He said: "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. A true and living unity is not so easy as to be achieved by mere symbolic overlordship. It is truly manifested in a multiplicity of free independent units whose racial rivalries are adjusted and harmonized by the unifying bond of a common spiritual aspiration. It seems to me that God is slowly bringing home to us the truth that Islam is neither about 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."[347]

For Iqbal the Caliphate and the office of the Caliph are two different things. The former represents the system of government and the nature of the state whereas the latter represents the office of the chief executive. The names and forms, for Iqbal, are not important for they are not universal, rather relative. What is more important is the establishment of an Islamic political order with a constitutional government on the basis of the consent of the people for it is obligatory for Muslims who constitute a majority in a particular country. For those Muslims who live and stay in other places in any other forms of state and government, the establishment of their own model of government and state is not necessarily as important as the Muslims that form a majority of the community. Based on this understanding he claimed that the Muslims of India must demand for a separate state where they can establish their own form of state and government. He also argued that in the changing circumstances, it is not obligatory for Muslims to insist on the so-called names of the Muslim state and chief executive. The Caliph and the Caliphate, for example, in a universal form at present are not possible. Therefore, Muslims should not insist on this issue. To be realistic

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[346] *Ibid.*, p. 159.
[347] *Ibid.*

they should accept local states such as Egypt and Indonesia wherein they must establish the Islamic political system as elaborated above with the sole aim of realizing the ideals of Islam.

At this stage one more point needs clarification, as it is understood by certain authors out of its context. Iqbal did appreciate the use of power of *Ijtihād* in the Muslim world particularly by the people of Turkey in around 1922–24 in the area of socio-political thought. According to Iqbal, who was a staunch supporter of *Ijtihād*, among the Muslim nations it was Turkey which alone had shaken off its dogmatic slumber, and attained self-consciousness.[348] He supported the right of intellectual freedom in the changing circumstances. It is indispensable to achieve a synthesis of ideal and reality which entails a keen intellectual and moral struggle. He argued that the growing complexities of a mobile and broadening life would bring new situations and challenges suggesting new points of view that will necessitate fresh interpretations of fundamental principles which require their application in an ever changing world. If we neglect this, Iqbal said, it is equivalent to have a succession of identical thoughts and feelings which is to have no thoughts and feelings at all. Only new thoughts and fresh interpretations guarantee the right kind of development. Hence, Iqbal, on one hand, rejected mechanically repeated old values and traditions of the Muslim world in general and, on the other, appreciated the efforts of Turkey in creating new values. There he saw signs of a new life. A life which has taken a step to move, change, and amplify, giving birth to new desires, bringing new difficulties and suggesting new interpretations. It was this sense and spirit of *Ijtihād* which was welcomed by Iqbal.[349] It is, therefore, totally wrong to conclude that Iqbal approved the abolition of the Caliphate on the same grounds as those elaborated by Mustapha Kamal.[350]

Quite contrary to the above conclusion, what we observe is that he out rightly rejected several *Ijtihādic* opinions of the people of Turkey and considered them erroneous. On the issue of the relationship between religion and state and the place of religion and state, Iqbal took a different position.

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[348] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, op. cit., p. 162.
[349] *Ibid.*
[350] Hamid Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought*, Islamic Book Trust, KL, 2001, p. 88.

The view of the Nationalist Party that the supreme interest of the Party lies with State and not religion was refuted by Iqbal. Iqbal considered erroneous the claim of the Party that the State is the essential factor in national life which determines the character and function of all other factors.[351] Discussing about this claim of the Nationalist Party, Iqbal stated: "Personally, I think it is a mistake to suppose that the idea of State is more dominant and rules all other ideas embodied in the system of Islam."[352] He refuted this point at length on the ground that according to the Qur'an the ultimate Reality is spiritual. The State according to Islam is only an effort to realize the spiritual essence in a human organization.[353]

Iqbal further asserted that the "truth is that the Turkish Nationalists assimilated the idea of the separation of the Church and the State from the history of European political ideas."[354] He said: "Such a thing could never happen in Islam; for Islam was from the very beginning a civil society…The Nationalist theory of State, therefore, is misleading inasmuch as it suggests a dualism which does not exist in Islam."[355] He maintained that Islam is a harmony of idealism and positivism; and, as a unity of the eternal verities of freedom, equality, and solidarity, it has no fatherland. As there is no English Mathematics, German Astronomy or French Chemistry, so is there no Turkish, Arabian, Persian or Indian Islam. Just as the universal character of scientific truth engenders varieties of scientific national cultures, much in the same way the universal character of Islamic verities creates varieties of national, moral and social ideals. Modern cultures based on national egoism is only another form of barbarism; this is true as we have seen in our own time after the September 11, 2002 attack at the twin towers in New York, in the form of American war against Afghanistan and Iraq. For Iqbal this is the natural outcome of an over-developed industrialism through which men satisfy their primitive instincts and inclinations. He regretted that unfortunately during the course of history the moral and social ideals of Islam have been gradually de-Islamized through the influence of local character, and unIslamic superstitions of Muslim nations. These ideas today

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[351] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, op. cit., p. 153.
[352] *Ibid.*, p. 154.
[353] *Ibid.*, p. 155.
[354] *Ibid.*
[355] *Ibid.*, p. 156.

are more Iranian, Turkish, or Arabian than Islamic. Moreover, the emergence of kingdoms in the Muslim world further overshadowed or rather displaced the social and political ideals of Islam.[356]

Iqbal was always critical of the general materialist outlook adopted by Turkey for it is inimical to Islam. Commenting on the abolition of the old dress or the introduction of the Latin script Iqbal categorically stated that it was a serious error of judgment.[357] On the subject of the adoption of the Swiss code with its rule of inheritance, Iqbal said, it was another serious error which has arisen out of the youthful zeal for reform excusable in a people furiously desiring to go ahead.[358] To avoid such kind of serious *Ijtihādic* mistakes, Iqbal suggested that in a new elected assembly the *Ulama'* should play a prominent role. He said: "The *Ulama'* should form a vital part of a Muslim legislative assembly helping and guiding free discussion on question relating to law. The only effective remedy for the possibilities of erroneous interpretations is to reform the present system of legal education in Muslim countries, to extend its sphere, and to combine it with an intelligent study of modern jurisprudence."[359] However, he was fully aware of the difficulties which are indispensable in the process of the formation of new theories and development of new institutions. But he considered them as part of *Ijtihād*. For him the process of *Ijtihād* is bound to pass through the most critical moment in history. It may sometimes, if we are not vigilant, he asserted, become a source of confusion and disintegration. However, it does not mean that due to this kind of unavoidable problems we can ignore the need for *Ijtihād*.

What is the mechanism according to Iqbal to avoid problems in the process of *Ijtihād*? He suggested the idea of collective *Ijtihād* under the supervision of qualified scholars of Islam. If we do not find measures to check on the youthful desire of those who are enthusiastically determine to think afresh for a forward march we would definitely make big mistakes as committed by Turkish reformers. He said: "Further, our religious and

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[356] *Ibid.*, p. 158.

[357] Mohammad Iqbal in *Discourses of Iqbal*, op. cit., p. 249.

[358] *Ibid.*, p. 250.

[359] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, op. cit., p. 176.

political reformers in their zeal for liberalism may overstep the proper limits of reform in the absence of a check on their youthful fevour…It is the duty of the leaders of the world of Islam today to understand the real meaning of what has happened in Europe, and then to move forward with self-control and a clear insight into the ultimate aims of Islam as a social policy."[360]

Therefore, the acceptance of the 'modern' state by Iqbal does not mean that he has accepted a secular state or a state free from the guidance of the Law of God. Elaborating on the concept of *Ijtihād* and how it should be done in modern times, he also emphasized the importance of the role of consensus of the people in specialized areas such as law. In this way he showed his emphasis on the participation of people and on the need of God's guidance for social and political organization in modern times. He considered *Ijma'* (consensus), the third source of Islamic Law, the most important concept of Islam both as legal as well as political concept which fulfils the most important obligation of the idea of consultation in the socio-political matters of community of believers. *Ijma'* for Iqbal was not only a legal principle but the mechanism of the principle of consultation. It is, however, strange that this important notion throughout history remained practically a mere idea, and did not assume the form of a permanent institution. Possibly its transformation into a permanent legislative and political institution was contrary to the political interests of the kind of absolute monarchy that grew up in the Muslim world immediately after the fourth Rightly guided caliph. This mistake should not be repeated, but rather be rectified by way of encouraging the formation of a permanent assembly which might become the means of consensus of the people on both legal and political issues.

It is important to point out here that Iqbal introduced his own idea of the Caliphate or Imamate not as a state but as an institution which can be vested in a body of persons or an elected Assembly due to the changing circumstances instead of in a single person.[361] He, therefore, approved fully the idea of legislative assembly and parliament as the forum for *Ijma'*. The formation of assembly and parliament for Iqbal is necessary for consensus but this formation should not take the same line as it has taken in modern

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[360] *Ibid.*, p. 163.
[361] *Ibid.*, p. 157.

nation states both in the west and in the east. He, therefore, suggested that the constitution of assembly or parliament must reflect the spiritual, ethical and even political ideals of Islam. Assembly for him is the only possible form through which a community can reach to a consensus, which is the most important political ideal. This will secure contributions to legal and political matters from laymen who happen to possess a keen insight into the affairs of the community. In this way alone we can stir into activity the dormant spirit of life in our legal and political system, and give it an evolutionary outlook.[362] Here, the purpose of the consensus is to interpret and explain the law of God. In cases where there is no clear guidance from the Law through consensus, the assembly will enact a new law. This will guarantee the continuous growth of socio-political and legal system of Islam in space and time context. To avoid any confusion regarding the nature of the constitution of assembly and parliament, Iqbal clearly suggested that it must not reflect the nature of modern assemblies. Present assembly members do not manifest the knowledge of the teachings of Islam, nor are they fully aware of modern realities. In his opinion such an assembly will make grave mistakes in their interpretations and judgments related to socio-political and legal matters. To avoid erroneous judgments and decisions, he suggested that we should adopt necessary measures, for example, other than the elected members of the assembly, we should nominate the *Ulama* and experts of various areas. The *Ulama* should play a dynamic role as a part of a Muslim legislative assembly. They should supervise free discussions on questions relating to the law.[363]

Iqbal also discussed the importance of the office of the Caliph. He argued that in the changing circumstances, the Caliph can be called by any other name, because the name for him is not as important as the qualifications of a Caliph. He, therefore, enumerated the qualifications of the Caliph and ministers in detail and this implies that Iqbal was a strong supporter of the qualifications of a caliph. He also emphasized the need for the qualifications even for an ordinary member of the assemblies and parliaments elected by the people. This is necessary because these are the institutions of states which are based on Islamic spirituality. In other words these states, for Iqbal, are ideological states and represent Islam as an Ideology which has a programme

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[362] *Ibid.*, pp. 173-174.
[363] *Ibid.*, p. 176.

of action to raise the standard of life by way of raising the quality of life. Of course these qualifications are relative and can be altered and modified according to the circumstances. Another important aspect of the process of election as identified by Iqbal is related again to the qualifications of the candidates. They should be identified as candidates by people who are comparatively more knowledgeable than ordinary people in the society. People should give their consent in favour of candidates who are well-respected by the elite group of the society not on the basis of a class but rather as the true followers of divine teachings.[364] He said, "Just as a candidate for the Caliphate must have certain qualifications, so, the elector also must be qualified. He must possess: 1. Good reputation as an honest man. 2. Necessary knowledge of State affairs. 3. Necessary insight and judgment."[365] This is necessary because these are the representatives of the people who run this ideological state and government of the Muslim community. Therefore, they must possess good conduct in accordance with the law of Islam. All executive and administrative staff particularly at the higher levels such as Prime Minister and Ministers and other higher officials of the government must possess the same qualifications as the Caliph. They must be thoroughly educated especially in the affairs of the state and the society.[366] In this connection, Iqbal highlighted another important aspect of the government in Islam, i.e., the public criticism of the Caliph and his government, and dismissal if he fails to produce good results. Generally, during the early Caliphate, deposition or the dismissal of the Caliph or an officer took place in the mosque when they failed to maintain good conduct in accordance with the teachings of Islam. People had the right to address the issue in the mosque at the time of the congregation prayer. The mosque, in fact, is the Muslim forum, as Iqbal argued, and the institution of daily prayers is closely connected with the political life of Muslim communities. Apart from its spiritual and social functions, the institution was meant to serve as a ready means of constant criticism of the government and the state.[367] According to Iqbal, the use of force or forced election is quite illegal. If anyone argues that forced election becomes legal in times of political unrest, Iqbal considered such a person as opportunistic and contended that

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[364] Mohammad Iqbal in *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, op. cit., pp. 62-63.
[365] *Ibid.*, p. 66.
[366] *Ibid.*, p. 68.
[367] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

for this kind of opportunist view, we do not find any support in the law of Islam.[368]

On the issue of the nature of the relationship of the elected and the elector, Iqbal maintained that it is a kind of contract (*Aqd*) binding together both parties to achieve some higher and noble goals of society. The Caliph is responsible for some basic duties which are universal in nature, for example, his duty is to define and defend the religion, to enforce the law of Islam, to levy customs and taxes according to the law of Islam, to pay annual salaries and to direct the State treasury properly and ultimately bring peace and prosperity. If he fulfils those conditions, the people have mainly two duties in relation to him, viz., to obey him, and to assist him in his work. All this implies that the origin of state and government is not by force but by free consent of individuals who unite to form a brotherhood, based upon legal equality, in order that each member of the brotherhood may work out the potentialities of his individuality under the law of Islam. The aim of government is to maintain peace, security and to bring prosperity.[369] In short, the fundamental principle as laid down in the Qur'an and *Sunnah* is the principle of election; the details or rather the translation of this principle into a workable scheme of government is left to be determined by other considerations of time and space. Un- fortunately, this principle of election was not developed further and not institutionalised in the Muslim world. Consequently, Muslims failed to develop the requisite new political ideas and institutions.

2. Political sovereignty: Political sovereignty belongs to the people, i.e., the absolute equality of all members of the community in the eyes of the law. There is no aristocracy in Islam. There is no privileged class, no priesthood, no caste system. Islam is a unity in which there is no distinction, and this unity is secured by making men believe in the two simple propositions–the unity of God and the mission of the Prophet–propositions which are certainly of a supranational character, but based as they are on the general religious experience of mankind, are intensely true to the average human nature. This principle of the equality of all believers helped Muslims to rise as

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[368] *Ibid.*, p. 67.
[369] *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

the greatest political institution within a few centuries of the Islamic *Hijrah* calendar. Islam works as a levelling force; it gives the individual a sense of his inward power; it elevates those who are socially low. The elevation of the downtrodden was the chief secret of the glory of the Muslim political institution in India.[370] Iqbal raised this practical question and answered that if this principle is practiced it would give good results and if it is not put into practice sincerely particularly by those who are in charge, i.e., the rulers, it will not yield the same good results.

Iqbal argued: "The law of Islam does not recognize the apparently natural differences of race, nor the historical differences of nationality. The political ideal of Islam consists in the creation of a people born of a free fusion of all races and nationalities. Nationality, with Islam, is not the highest limit of political development; for the general principles of the law of Islam rest on human nature, not on the peculiarities of a particular people. The inner cohesion of such a nation would consist not in ethnic or geographic unity, not in the unity of language or social tradition, but in the unity of the religious and political ideal; or, in the psychological fact of ' like-mindedness'…The membership of this nation, consequently, would not be determined by birth, marriage, domicile or naturalization. It would be determined by a public declaration of 'like-mindedness,' and would terminate when the individual has ceased to be like-minded with others. The ideal territory for such a nation would be the whole earth…The realization of this ideal, however, is not impossible, for the ideal nation does already exist in germ. The life of modern political communities finds expression, to a great extent, in common institutions, law and government; and the various sociological circles, so to speak, are continually expanding to touch one another. Further, it is not incompatible with the sovereignty of individual states, since its structure will be determined not by physical force, but by the spiritual force of a common ideal."[371]

Thus, Iqbal argued that Islam creates in its followers internal cohesion necessary for social organization and collective developmental efforts. It also warns against the forces of disintegration in the society. This instinctive

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[370] *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.
[371] *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

perception of an individual is absolutely necessary and this is, no doubt, the result of the much deeper foundation in the conscience of the followers of Islam. This sense of cohesion is the source of life. It is developed based on certain well-defined principles and boundaries. Islam provides these spiritual principles, for man, society and state, which carry, as experience subsequently proved, great potentialities of expansion and development. Iqbal believed that Islam is a religious community in a much deeper sense than other communities whose structure is determined partly by religion and partly by the idea of race. He said: "Islam repudiates the race idea altogether and founds itself on the religious idea alone. Since Islam bases itself on the religious idea alone, a basis which is wholly spiritual and consequently far more ethereal than blood relationship, Muslim society is naturally much more sensitive to forces which it considers harmful to its integrity."[372] Iqbal argued that it was wrong to say that science was the greatest enemy of Islam: "No, it is the race-idea which is the greatest enemy of Islam; in fact, of all humanity. It is, therefore, the duty of all lovers of mankind to stand in revolt—against this dreadful invention of the Devil."[373] In fact for Iqbal the nationalist theory of the state, therefore, is misleading inasmuch as it suggests a dualism which does not exist in Islam.[374] Iqbal asserted that the modern culture based as it is on national egoism is only another form of barbarism.[375] Therefore, the separation of Church and State and, consequently, the emergence of secularism and nationalism have undermined the ethical and political ideals of man and society. Iqbal maintained that the Europe today presents the greatest hindrance in the way of man's ethical advancement because of its insistence on materialism and individualism.[376] This is the reason why Iqbal believed that the present-day political ideals, as they are being shaped by these ideologies, may affect the original nature and character of man and the structure of society. He declared: "I am opposed to nationalism as it is understood in Europe, not because, if it is allowed to develop in India, it is likely to bring less material gain to Muslims. I am opposed to it because I see in it the germs of atheistic materialism which I look upon as the greatest danger to modern humanity. Patriotism is a perfectly natural virtue and has a

[372] Mohammad Iqbal in *Discourses of Iqbal*, op. cit., pp. 217-218.
[373] Mohammad Iqbal in *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, op. cit., pp. 98-99.
[374] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, op. cit., p. 156.
[375] *Ibid.*
[376] *Ibid.*, p. 179.

place in the moral life of man. Yet, that which really matters is a man's faith, his culture and his historical tradition. These are the things which, in my eyes, are worth living for and dying for, and not the piece of earth with which the spirit of man happens to be temporarily associated.'[377]

According to Iqbal nationality which is not deeply rooted in spirituality generates the feeling of communalism. He asserted that it is obvious that the nationalist, whose political idealism has practically killed his sense of fact, is intolerant of the birth of a desire for self-determination in the heart of the people of another faith or nationality. He thought wrongly that the only way to Indian nationalism, for example, lies in a total suppression of the cultural entities of the country. The fact is that only through the interaction of different faiths and cultures alone can India develop a rich and enduring culture. A nationalism achieved by such methods of suppression can mean nothing but mutual bitterness and even oppression.[378] A nationalist, therefore, ignores this fact and puts emphasis on artificial factors for unity and solidarity. True solidarity is based simply on the spiritual and ethical foundation. In the case of Muslims, Iqbal argued, the unity and solidarity is achieved only on the basis of faith. The "simple faith of a Muslim is based on two propositions—that God is one, and that the Prophet Muhammad, peace be up on him, is the last of the line of those holy men who have appeared from time to time in all countries and in all ages among all peoples to guide mankind to the right ways of living." If, as one can think, a dogma must be defined as an ultra rational proposition which, for the purpose of securing religious solidarity, must be assented to without any understanding of its metaphysical import, then these two simple propositions of Islam cannot be described even as dogma, for both of them are supported by the experience of mankind and are fairly amenable to rational argument.[379] The "meaning of these two propositions are simple: No spiritual surrender to any human beings after Muhammad, peace be upon him, who emancipated his followers by giving them a law which is realizable as arising from the very core of

[377] Mohammad Iqbal in *Discourses of Iqbal*, op. cit., p. 84.
[378] *Ibid.*, p. 231.
[379] *Ibid.*, p. 235.

human conscience. Theologically the doctrine is that the socio-political organization called 'Islam' is perfect and eternal."[380]

Iqbal contended that the student of history knows very well that the last and authentic revelation from God as Islam was sent and spread at a time when the old principles of human unification, such as blood relationship and throne-culture, were failing. It, therefore, finds the principle of human unification not in the blood and bones but in the minds of man. Indeed, its social message to mankind is: "De-racialize yourself or perish by internecine war."[381] Does this mean that Islam is totally opposed to race? Iqbal said no. Its history shows that in social reform it relies mainly on its scheme for gradual de-racialization and proceeds on the lines of least resistance.[382] If the meaning of race and patriotism is understood properly then it is not difficult to see the attitude of Islam towards nationalist ideals, such as in the following statement: "Nationalism in the sense of love of one's country and even readiness to die for its honour is a part of the Muslim's faith; it comes into conflict with Islam only when it begins to play the role of a political concept and claims to be a principle of human solidarity demanding that Islam should recede to the background of a mere private opinion and cease to be a living factor in the national life."[383] Furthermore, it becomes a problem when it demands from people their complete self-effacement. Islam already accommodates nationalism, for Islam and nationalism are practically identical. It implies that for Iqbal the basis of the state and government is Islam. This means that the fundamentals of Islamic solidarity are not in any way shaken by any external or internal forces. The solidarity of Islam consists in a uniform belief in the two structural principles of Islam supplemented by the five well-known 'practices of the faith.' These are the first essentials of Islamic solidarity, which has, in this sense, existed ever since the days of the Holy Prophet, peace be up on him, until it was recently disturbed by the Bahais in Iran and the Qadianis in India. Politically, the solidarity of Islam is shaken only when Muslims states war on one another; religiously, it is shaken only when Muslims rebel against any of the basic beliefs and practices of the

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[380] *Ibid.*, p. 237.

[381] *Ibid.*, p. 252.

[382] *Ibid.*, p. 253.

[383] *Ibid.*, p. 254.

Faith. It is in the interest of this eternal solidarity that Islam cannot tolerate any rebellious groups within its fold.[384] As Iqbal understood, it is Islam which guarantees for a practically uniform spiritual atmosphere in the world of Islam. It facilitates the political combination of Muslim states; this combination may either assume the form of a world-state (ideal) or of a league of Muslim States, or of a number of independent states whose pacts and alliances are determined by purely economic and political considerations.[385]

One can see Iqbal delineated a peculiar conception of nationality. He asserted: "It is not the unity of language or of country or the identity of economic interests that constitutes the basic principle of our nationality. It is because we all believe in a certain view of the Universe, and participate in the same historical tradition that we are members of the society founded by the Prophet of Islam. Islam abhors all material limitations, and bases its nationality on a purely abstract idea objectified in a potentially expansive group of concrete personalities. It is not dependent for its life-principles on the character and genius of a particular people; in its true sense, it is non-temporal, non-spatial."[386] In his view even a mere belief in certain propositions of a metaphysical importance is the only thing that ultimately determines the structure of the Muslim community. For him "to try to convert religion into a system of speculative knowledge is absolutely useless and even absurd, since the objection of religion is not ' thinking about life'; its main purpose is 'to build up a coherent social whole,' for the gradual elevation of life."[387] It is so, because religion by itself is metaphysics, in so far as it calls up into being a new universe, with a view to suggest a new type of character, tending to universalize itself, in proportion to the force of the personality in which it originally embodies itself. It is self- evident that Islam has a far deeper significance for its followers than merely being religious; it has a peculiarly national meaning without which the communal life is unthinkable. It requires a firm grasp of Islamic principles. He said, "The idea of Islam is that our Eternal Home or Country, wherein we live, move and

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[384] *Ibid.*, p. 255.

[385] *Ibid.*, pp. 254-255.

[386] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

[387] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

have our being is Islam itself. To us it is above everything else as England is above all to the Englishman, and 'Deutschland unber alles' to the German: Islam is our homeland."[388]

Iqbal asserted that the unity of religious belief on which Muslim communal life depends is supplemented by the uniformity of the Muslim culture. Mere belief in Islam, though exceedingly important, is not sufficient. In order to participate in the life of the communal self, the individual mind must undergo a complete transformation. Just as the Muslim community does not recognize any ethnical differences, and aims at the subsuming of all races under the universal idea of humanity, so is its culture relatively universal and not indebted for its life and growth to the genius of one particular people.[389] In order to become a living member of the Muslim community, the individual, besides having an unconditional belief in the religious principle, must thoroughly assimilate the culture of Islam. The objection of this assimilation, as Iqbal maintained, is to create a uniform mental outlook, a peculiar way of looking at the world, a certain definite standpoint from which to judge the value of things, which sharply define community and transform it into a Corporate Individual, giving it a definite purpose and ideal of its own.[390]

Based on his understanding and observation of modern realities of nationalism and nationalities and the understanding of the basis of unity and solidarity of a community, Iqbal rejected the so-called nationalism and geographical nationality. He realized that the idea of nationality based on race or territory was making headway in the world of Islam, and Muslims who have lost sight of their own ideal of a universal humanity, were being lured by the idea of a territorial nationality. He felt it was his duty as a Muslim and as a lover of all mankind, to remind them of their true function in the evolution of mankind. Tribal or national organizations on the lines of race or territory are only temporary phases in the unfolding and upbringing of collective life, and as such he had no quarrel with them, but he condemned them in the strongest possible terms when they were regarded as the ultimate expression

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[388] *Ibid.*

[389] *Ibid.*

[390] *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

of the life of mankind.[391] He said: "I have been repudiating the concept of nationalism since the time when it was not well known in India and the Muslim world. At the very start it had become clear to me from the writings of European authors that the imperialistic designs of Europe were in great need of this effective weapon--the propagation of the European conception of nationalism in Muslim countries--to shatter the religious unity of Islam to pieces. And the plan did succeed during the Great War."[392] Iqbal at this stage realized that it had now reached its climax in as much as some of the religious leaders lent their support to this conception. Strange indeed, he said, are the vicissitudes of time. Formerly, the half-westernized educated Muslims were under the spell of Europe: now the curse has descended upon religious leaders as a result of which they are unable to see the fact—an empirical fact. The land or geographical territory has no meaning. The word 'country' is merely a geographical term and as such, does not clash with Islam. Its boundaries change with time. Till recently those living in Burma were Indians; at present, they are Burmese. In this sense every human being loves the land of his birth and according to his capacity remains prepared to make sacrifices for it. Some unthinking persons support this by the saying "love of one's native country is a part of one's faith," which they think is a tradition of the Prophet, but this is hardly necessary. Iqbal believed that the love of one's native land is a natural instinct and requires no impressions to nourish it. In the present day political literature, however, the idea of 'nation' is not merely geographical; it is rather a principle of human society and as such a political concept. Since Islam is also a law of human society, the word 'country,' when used as a political concept, comes into conflict with Islam. One should know better that in its principles of human association Islam admits of no *modus vivendi* and is not prepared to compromise with any other law regulating human society. Indeed, it declares that every code of law other than that of Islam is inadequate and unacceptable.[393]

Iqbal simply asserted that besides rational arguments, experience also proves the truth of the abovementioned claim of Islam. He contended that if the purpose of human society is to ensure peace and security for the nations

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[391] Mohammad Iqbal in *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, op. cit., pp. 98-99.

[392] Mohammad Iqbal in *Speeches and Statements Of Iqbal*, op. cit., p. 224.

[393] *Ibid.*, p. 225.

and to transform their present social organism into a single social order, then one cannot think of any other social order than that of Islam. This is so because Islam does not aim at the moral reformation of the individual alone; it also aims at a gradual but fundamental revolution in the social life of mankind, which should altogether change its national and racial viewpoint and create in its place a pure human consciousness. Iqbal further developed his thought and claimed that the history of religions conclusively show that in ancient times religion was national as in the case of Egyptians, Greeks and Iranians. Later on, it became racial as that of the Jews. Christianity taught religion as an individual and private affair. With religion having become synonymous with private beliefs, Europe began to think that the state alone was responsible for the social life of man. Iqbal further advanced his idea and asserted that it is Islam and Islam alone which, for the first time, gives the message to mankind that religion is neither national and racial, nor individual and private, but purely human and that its purpose is to unite and organize mankind despite all its national distinctions. Such a system cannot be built on beliefs alone. This is the only way in which harmony and concord can be introduced in the sentiments and thoughts of mankind. This harmony is essential for the formation and preservation of a community.[394]

Iqbal observed that any other way will be irreligious and contrary to human dignity. He was convinced that the history of Europe is a testimony to this fact. The European found in nationality the basis of solidarity of European nations. But what has been the end of this choice?[395] It resulted in the form of rationalism and secularism, i.e., a war between the principles of religion and state and, finally, denial of spirituality. Where did these forces drive Europe to? To irreligiousness, religious skepticism and economic conflicts.[396] The land is not sufficient basis for a nation, there are a number of other forces which are necessary for the formation of a nation.[397] We must be fully aware of the consequences of this view of nationalism. No one should misunderstand that religion and nationalism may go hand in hand. If anyone thinks in this way then he should also understand that this course will

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[394] *Ibid.*, p. 226.

[395] *Ibid.*, p. 227.

[396] *Ibid.*

[397] *Ibid.*

ultimately lead to irreligiousness. And if this does not happen, then, Islam will be reduced to an ethical ideal, indifference to its social order as an inevitable consequence.[398] Islam rejects totally the idea that religion and politics are entirely separate and emphasizes the need to maintain the Islamic cultural identity. Religion cannot be a private affair; "it is neither mere thought, nor mere feeling, nor mere action; it is an expression of the whole man." The real question here is this: Are Muslims collectively a single, united and definite party founded on the unity of God and the finality of Prophethood as its basis, or are they a party which owing to the requirements of race, nation, and colour can, leaving aside their religious unity, adopt some other social order based upon a different system and law?[399]

Iqbal asserted that if we look in the Qur'an we would find that the Qur'an uses the word *'qawm'* hundreds of times. The Qur'an also uses the word *'Millah'* repeatedly. What do *qawm* and *millah* mean in the Qur'an? Is not the word *'ummah'* also used in addition to these two words to denote the followers of the Prophet? Are these words so divergent in meaning that because of this difference one single nation can have different aspects, so much so that in matters of religion and law, it should observe the divine code, while from the viewpoint of nationality it should follow a system which may be opposed to the religious system?[400] Iqbal contended that wherever the Qur'an calls upon the people to follow and join the Muslim party, the word *'millah'* or *'ummah'* is used.[401] He questioned: "What I have said above means that, so far as I have been able to see, no other word except *ummah* has been used for Muslims in the Holy Qur'an. If it is otherwise I would very much like to know it. *Qawm* means a party of men, and this party can come into being in a thousand places and in a thousand forms upon the basis of tribes, race, colour, language, land and ethical code. *Millah*, on the contrary, will carve out of the different parties a new and common party. In other words, *millah* or *ummah* embraces nations but cannot be merged in them."[402]

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[398] *Ibid.*, p. 228.
[399] *Ibid.*, p. 231.
[400] *Ibid.*, p. 230.
[401] *Ibid.*, p. 231.
[402] *Ibid.*, p. 233.

It was quite clear to Iqbal that the name of the faith which the Muslim community professes is 'al-Dīn al-qayyim' in which term lies concealed a remarkable Qur'anic point, namely, that it is this religion alone in which is vested the responsibility of sustaining the present and future life of a group of people which surrenders its individual and social life to its system. In other words, according to the Qur'an, Iqbal believed, it is the religion of Islam alone which sustains a nation in its true cultural or political sense. It is for this reason that the Qur'an openly declares that any system other than that of Islam must be deprecated and rejected.[403] For Iqbal, to ignore the Muslims or to make them subservient to some other social order and then to seek some other kind of freedom was simple meaningless.[404] The ultimate purpose of the Prophetic mission of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, he argued, was to create a society which follows the Divine law which the Prophet received from God. In other words, the objective is to purify the nations of the world of the abuses which go by the name of time, place, land, nation, race, genealogy, country, etc., although the differences of nations, tribes, colours, and languages are at the same time acknowledged.[405] What Iqbal argued was that history is a witness to the fact that it was Islam which removed the material differences from the nations of the world and brought about harmony among them in spite of their differences in nations, tribes, races, colours, and languages. Islam has done something in thirteen hundred years what other religions could not do in three thousand years.

Iqbal asked his people to take for granted that the religion of Islam is an imperceptible biological-psychological activity which is capable of influencing the thoughts and actions of mankind without any missionary efforts. Remember that those who try to invalidate such an activity by the innovations of present day political ideas, in fact, create violence to mankind as well as to the universality of the Prophetic mission which gave birth to it. By accepting nationalism, on one hand, we accept that mankind is divided into several conflicting nations and, on the other, we will find it impossible to bring about unity among them. It also gives birth to the conception of the relativity of religions, i.e., the religion of a land belongs to that land alone and

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[403] *Ibid.*, pp. 234-235.
[404] *Ibid.*, p. 235.
[405] *Ibid.*, p. 236.

does not suit the temperaments of other nations of other times. This led to irreligiousness and scepticism.[406] There is no doubt that the history of mankind is an infinite process of mutual conflicts, sanguine battles and civil wars. Does it mean that under these circumstances we cannot have among mankind a constitution which can guarantee at the social level peace, security and prosperity? The Qur'anic answer is: No. We can have a constitution which can guarantee peace, security and prosperity provided man takes for his ideal the propagation of the unity of God in the thoughts and actions of mankind. The search for such an ideal and its maintenance is no miracle of political manoeuvring. It was empirically proven by the Prophet that based on the unity of God, he practically destroyed self-invented distinctions and superiority complexes of nations of the world and there emerged a community which manifested solidarity, peace, security and prosperity at social and political levels, while maintaining the civil and political rights of the individual and the rule of law for centuries.[407]

Conclusion

This exploration into several dimensions of Iqbal's thoughts including his political thought clearly illustrates that from the very beginning Iqbal was sure that the denial of spirituality and acceptance of materialism by both the east and the west were based on false foundations which gave rise to destructive ideologies such as secularism and nationalism. The present day crisis and chaos in human life are basically caused by this false understanding of the nature of the universe and man. It was also made clear by Iqbal that except for Islam there is no other religion or ideology which can provide spiritual principles upon which a healthy society can be developed. All other religions and ideologies, unfortunately, have rejected reality and insisted on falsehood. This is very clear from their fragmented approach to life and society. Religions in reality have accepted comprehensive secularism. Iqbal, therefore, was convinced that Islam, being an authentic divine source of spirituality, is the only way of life which can provide a solid foundation for the organization of life and society as it defines them as an undivided single unit. With this firm conviction he wanted to develop the society and state on

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[406] *Ibid.*, pp. 237-238.
[407] *Ibid.*, p. 238.

the basis of Islamic spirituality. Hence, he made it very clear when he first issued his statement that he wanted to create a separate state for Muslims in India–an Islamic state. He said: "I therefore demand the formation of a consolidated Muslim state in the best interest of India and Islam. For India it means security and peace resulting from an internal balance of power; for Islam an opportunity to rid itself of the stamp that Arabian imperialism was forced to give it, to mobilize its law, its education, its culture, and to bring them into closer contact with its own original spirit and with the spirit of modern times."[408] This statement is a further evidence that Iqbal wanted to revive Islam and Islamic civilization for the sake of the safety of humanity. He, therefore, made it clearer that the creation of a separate Islamic state does not mean in any way the formation of a rigid, fanatic and fundamentalist religious state. He observed that no one should misunderstand "that the creation of autonomous Muslim states will mean the introduction of a kind of religious rule in such states."[409] Iqbal argued that the formation of an Islamic state on certain issues is directly in line with the thinking of modern age wherein freedom of the individual and representative governments are considered fundamental institutions of modern life. An Islamic state would be a welfare state. It stands for peace, security and prosperity of the people. It comes into existence with the consent of the people. It runs on the basis of a constitution and rule of law. He, therefore, elaborated as we have discussed above different aspects of Islamic political system and its principles.

What Iqbal said and suggested of the formation of Islamic state seems to be relevant even with the passage of time. Since the Muslim political leadership of the world did not take seriously the establishment of Islamic states for their own interest in their countries, therefore, the cherished goals of peace, security and prosperity for all are not yet realized. On the part of Muslims, they not only ignored Iqbal's advice but they also adopted all Western models and institutions based on the Western thought that with this false expectation they will achieve real development. However, the realities of the Muslim countries manifest that even after a passage of fifty years, they are still dependent on the developed West. Not only are they undeveloped

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[408] *Ibid.*, p. 15.
[409] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

but their position in international politics is also insignificant. Iqbal thought that Muslims will not only achieve development but they will also be able to save humanity by way of practicing in the state and government the spiritual principles of Islam. But the rejection and denial of Muslims of the revival of Islam and Islamic civilization as a whole has brought them into this unfortunate state of affairs. Is it not a fact that the *Ummah* at the moment stands at the lowest rung of the ladder of other nations? In the last century, no other communities have been subjected to comparable defeats or humiliations as the Muslims. Iqbal noted that: "Muslims were defeated, massacred, double-crossed, colonized and exploited, proselytized, forced or bribed into conversion to other faiths. They were secularized, Westernized, and de-Islamized by internal and external agents of their enemies."[410] In today's world Muslims are presented as aggressors, destructive elements, terrorists, uncivilized, lawless people, fanatic, fundamentalist, backward and undeveloped. All this is caused by secular states and secular leadership. Secular regimes and rulers have become biggest obstacles towards the formation of Islamic states. It was under the colonial rule that a number of institutions based on Western models were first imposed upon Muslim communities as part of the 'civilizing mission' of the colonialists of the West, which in fact was the worst part of imperialism. Law, judiciary, economy, education, administration, language, literature, arts, architecture, in short all elements of society and culture are subjected to westernization. As part of the strategy of the rulers of Western countries, there emerged the so-called independent Muslim countries that are, in fact, a breakdown of the Muslim power into sovereign nation-states with a new type of leadership imposed upon Muslims. This leadership carries the names of Muslims but is completely loyal to the Western imperialist rulers' interests. These are the rulers, not the masses, of the Western countries, who have imperialist tendencies for their political interests and not national interests, and cause all sorts of problems to the people of the east and the west. The new leadership of the Muslim countries is committed to secularization and modernization of Muslim societies on western lines to please and get support of the rulers of the Western world. This new leadership is not a true representative of the Muslim masses; it came to power with the help of Western rulers. People in the East and in the West are misguided in the name of national interest. In

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[410] *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan*, IIIT, Herndon, 1989, p. 1.

fact, it is not the national interest but the interest of the rulers. As a result, the leaders try to develop values and concepts of the Western powers, as asserted by Iqbal: "It was Muslim rulers who wanted to modernize their countries, as well as personally to enjoy European comforts; and these Muslim rulers did not hesitate to get themselves and their countries involved as debtors in the world financial system or entangled in the web spun by Western spiders."[411] They knew very well that this would eventually create great social upheavals in their countries, but they continued this because that was the main source of their grip on power. To consolidate their power, along with other strategies, they also used the secular educational system as the main source of further disunity and fragmentation of Muslim societies. Through the uncritical introduction of the modern Western secular educational system, Muslims were divided into traditionalists, modernists, liberals and secularists and even westernized Muslims. In this way they fulfilled the interests of the rulers of the Western powers. Consequently, in many countries, leaders have almost lost the consent and support of the people for the legitimacy of their rule. For the sake of their own interests, Western rulers, who continued their imperialist tendencies, supported these unjust and illegitimate rulers and sacrificed democratic goals. In this way, the Western rulers have committed, and are still committing a crime against humanity and the price is being paid by the innocent masses of these Western countries that they are now unable to enjoy peace and security in their own homes. The Western major powers who claim to uphold and promote democracy and democratization support undemocratic rulers and deny the democratic rights of the people in the Muslim world. Muslim rulers still continue to deny the rights of the people for a representative government of the people. If any where this right was exercised, it was within the framework of the secular system. Organizations and individuals who stand for democratic principles within the framework of Islamic spirituality are labeled as 'fundamentalists' or 'militants' and finally are suppressed by force. These Muslim rulers have committed a double crime. On the one hand, they refuse the fundamental rights of the people of the formation of the representative government on the basis of free and fair elections; on the other, they label the Islamists as fundamentalists and suppress them. All this

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[411] William Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Fundamentalism and Modernity,* Routledge, London, 1988, p. 46.

is done with the blessings of the imperialist rulers of the West–the so-called champions of democracy and human rights. Finally, a big gap emerged between rulers and the masses in the Muslim world. Even today, many Muslim political leaders who hold power do not represent the voice of the people and depend totally on the support of the Western major powers. If Muslims want to change this state of affairs, as envisioned by Iqbal and other Islamic revivalists, then there is no other way for them except to work hard, sincerely, wisely and intelligently for the reconstruction of the Islamic thought, strategic struggle for the formation of Islamic states and representative governments, for the revival of Islam and Islamic civilization which would mean establishing peace, security and prosperity for humanity.