

IQBAL'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE LIGHT OF ISLAMIC TRADITION

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Iqbal's works are replete with themes that are of a political nature and a plethora of works on his political philosophy have been done. Three generations since the passage of this eminent thinker, modernity itself has undergone major transformation in conditions and perceptions. This necessitates a re-appraisal of Iqbal's views. No critique of Iqbal exists from a traditional viewpoint. Most of the readings of Iqbal have served as an 'intellectual mirror' for Muslim modernists, as the latter interpreted Iqbal in the light of their favourite ideologies. Hence, several readings of Iqbal that range from Communist, Socialist, and Democratic, proliferate. Such readings have been mostly the work of modern social scientists who do not have training either in philosophy or religion (both Western and Islamic), subjects which Iqbal dealt with constantly.

This paper explores Iqbal's political philosophy from a traditional Islamic point of view. It endeavours not just to offer a critical appreciation of Iqbal in the light of Islamic tradition, it also contends to appropriate elements in Iqbal's philosophy that represent continuity with the tradition of Islamic intellectual heritage. After distilling Iqbal's essential spirit, his views on nationalism, state, democracy, sovereignty are analyzed. What emerges from the above mentioned is then looked at in the light of questions such as Iqbal's position on the relationship between religion and politics; points of convergence and divergence between Iqbal's political philosophy and modern Western political philosophy; and lastly, in the field of political philosophy a comparison of Iqbal's ideas with other contemporary Muslim thinkers.

Methodology to Study Iqbal's Political Philosophy

Iqbal was a prolific author. He has left us with moving and soul searching poetry, lectures, short monographs and his correspondence with the

luminaries and political leaders of that time. He was not only a philosopher, scholar and poet, but also a *social and political reformer*. The medium of poetry and his scholarly writings both contain elements essential to his philosophy. The reason he put some of his essential ideas in the medium of poetry keeps him in line with the Persian Islamic tradition, the purpose of which was to move the human soul and effect a spiritual transformation led by contemplation of his poetry. The efficacy of his ideas through the medium of poetry was compatible with the traditional Eastern Islamic genius. It is conventional in an average Persian household (literate or illiterate) where just about everyone knows by rote hundreds of verses of poetry, may those be the verses of Rumi, Hafiz or Sa'adi. The same is true of Iqbal. Many Muslims, especially Pakistanis (for whom he became the spiritual founder of a nation) know his beautiful poetry by heart. His poetry had a moving effect for not only the cognitive elite of Muslim India, but even for those who couldn't read could still memorize and quote Iqbal. His philosophical ideas would not have reverberated so much across the Muslim masses of South Asia if they only stayed in academic journal articles. His scholarly writings of course, written lucidly in excellent English contain more elaborate versions of his philosophical ideas, especially his political ideas.

The following question of heuristic interest must be answered by those scholars who are working on Iqbal's thought: Can we subject Iqbal's philosophical ideas in the form of scholarly articles and books to the same rules of appraisal as those found in his poetry? One would think that since ideas are ideas, such a uniform measure of assessment of his philosophy, both in poetry and scholarly writings is fair enough. Our stance differs from the above mentioned position and it is our submission that since there is no paucity of philosophical literature left behind by Iqbal, we should treat his poetical ideas differently. We should do so because the intended audience of his poetical imagination was the Muslim *Ummah*, particularly the Persian and the Indian Muslim world. His poetry is motivational for Muslims whose purpose is to awaken the Muslims' souls in a fashion in which music awakens the human soul. Because this has been performed as an art, to subject it to the logic of *wissenschaft*, would be unfairly reducing it in its scope. Therefore, the standard for appraisal of poetical literature has to be different than the standard with which to assess his other writings. It is important to state that by doing so, we would not risk compartmentalizing Iqbal and doing injustice

to the wholeness of his thought because to quite a large extent, his philosophical themes in poetry and prose mutually lend themselves to each other. Conversely, our aim to approach Iqbal in such a manner is so that Iqbal is not compartmentalized as he has been by many. One should look at the *spirit* behind his ideas and not get wedged between his seemingly contradictory ideas¹²⁸ that could be attributable to the times through which Iqbal wrote, his own stages of intellectual growth and the poetical medium of expression. Also, it prevents us from getting caught in the semantics and over-reading Iqbal's political ideas in poetry while the poet must adhere to the rules of his medium. Distilling the *spirit* of Iqbal's writings allows us to look at his political writings as a primary source of his political ideas, supplemented by the fiery warmth of his poetry that aimed at re-awakening the Muslims and inciting them to rise in the face of oppression. However, when it comes to the metaphysical component of his thought, the same standard of appraisal must be applied to evaluate his ideas, may it be poetry or prose, because there, one treads the ground of principles that are of a perennial and immutable nature. Lastly, even though we remain opposed to the historicist school of thought because of the relativity it infuses in the matters of principles, it may be necessary to apply a minor degree of historicism by Muslims of today in approaching Iqbal, so that Iqbal's words are seen in the light of the conditions of his day and age.

Iqbal on the Place of Religion in Politics

Iqbal was a religious thinker. His main source of personal identity and inspiration was Islam. He quoted frequently from the Qur'an. His 'perfect man' was none other than the Prophet of Islam. There was a strong influence of Muslim sages and scholars on him. He criticized secularism very harshly. Even if one picks up anything written by Iqbal randomly, one finds the

¹²⁸ Iqbal's treatment of democracy is a good example of this. He has emphatically asserted that Islam is democratic in nature, and asks Muslims to discover the democratic order of things. At the same time, he does not spare castigating democracy in the West. Because there was no homegrown example of the former in the modern period, Iqbal does not discuss the notion of democracy *qua* itself as it has been done by Greeks of antiquity such as Socrates and Plato, and medieval Muslims such as Al-Farabi, or the Shiite criticism of democratic attitudes and standards.

subject of religion and spirituality being employed full force for the uplift of Muslims of India. To ask whether he was religious or secular would be utterly redundant.

Religion *qua* religion can assist the study of politics involving religion. It is our contention that Iqbal was first a religious thinker and then a political thinker, for political thinking alone does not assist in the study of religion whereas the rigorous study of religion leads to tremendous assistance in the study of philosophy as well as politics. Iqbal's political philosophy is a by-product of his religious thinking. Conversely, his political thinking only reinforced his preoccupation with religion and did not minimize it.

The question whether Iqbal is modernist or traditionalist can be temporarily resolved. Iqbal can continue to be seen as a 'variant' of traditional Muslims thinking. Traditional Islamic philosophers always wrote philosophical subjects of metaphysical importance first in their works. The discussion of political philosophy and politics came much later if it ever did. Even though Iqbal's style of writing has not been a classical Islamic one, he is far-off from being purely modern in our opinion. The discussion of politics occurs frequently in his poetry and other writings, yet his scope cannot be reduced to that of a 'political philosopher' alone. Throughout Islamic history (and this is also true of other religious traditions), we rarely find philosophers who are only political philosophers and nothing else. What we do find in the Islamic Tradition, are philosophers who understand and deal with religious and metaphysical subjects, and later they also philosophize on the issues of society, history and politics. This is observable in the case of most Islamic philosophers, from al-Farabi to Ibn Sina to Mulla Sadra. In modern Europe, the sudden mushrooming of political philosophy alone in the modern age as a vocation after Machiavelli is a process that led to the development of the modern political scientist who is often unaware of the philosophical presuppositions of the paradigms he follows. Contemporary intellectual trends in the Muslim world began to be transformed because of modernity and the impact of modernism on Islamic ways of thinking. The modern Islamic world has seen different types of world conditions, and therefore different quality of political thinking and different quantity of political philosophy. Political philosophy in the contemporary Islamic world has become more prevalent as a consequence of conditions of modernity and

impact of modernism on the Islamic way of thinking. This has come to a point where the new Muslim political scientist whether trained in the Western academia or its inferior replicas in the Muslim world, is awestruck by the 'progress' and 'development' of the West. These new academic 'experts' do not care to know about the adverse effects of modern ways of living, and consequently cannot think beyond progress and development.

As the world enters a new Christian millennium, polarization between hardened secularists and hardened fundamentalists has ever sharpened. Because of the erosion of a middle ground, if Iqbal were alive today, it is conceivable that he would have been labelled as an 'Islamist' because he proposes Islam as a solution to many things.¹²⁹ Even though he is critical of the mullah as well as the mystic, it is important to note that he has elements of both present in him¹³⁰. It is clear that he went at lengths to criticize the 'godless' nature of modern politics. In his poem *la deen siyasat* or 'secular politics' he firmly rejects the secular creed saying that secular politics will eventually mortify human conscience:

جو بات حق ہو، وہ مجھ سے چھپی نہیں رہتی
 خدا نے مجھ کو دیا ہے دل خبیر و بصیر
 مری نگاہ میں ہے یہ سیاست لا دیں
 کنیز اہرن و دوں نہاد و مردہ ضمیر
 ہوئی ہے ترک کلیسا سے حاکمی زاد
 فرنگیوں کی سیاست ہے دیو بے زنجیر

¹²⁹ Add to this his admiration for al-Wahab, and his criticism of 'Pir Parasti' or saint worship.

¹³⁰ Iqbal remembers Mohammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab as the 'great puritan reformer' who sought to bring pure Islam after having seen the dilution of Islam in Persia (See *Reconstruction*, P. 142). The direction in which neo-Wahabism and salafism have developed is what is generally understood as fundamentalist. The people who espouse the political thinking linked to this variant of Islamic thinking are found in Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas and to a lesser extent Jamat-i-Islami of Pakistan and Jamat Islami in Indonesia.

متاع غیر پہ ہوتی ہے جب نظر اس کی
تو ہیں ہراول لشکر کلیسیا کے سفیر!

No truth from me can hide at all its face,
God gave me heart awake and wise, through
In my view statesmanship cut off from creed,
Is Satan's slave, has no qualms, but low breed.
By quitting Church, Europe has freedom gained,
This statesmanship is, like a giant unchained.
When their eyes on some weak domain alight,
Their Priests as vanguard act to wage the fight.¹³¹

Political Philosophy of Iqbal

It is difficult to demarcate Iqbal's political ideas distinct from other religious and philosophical ideas. His political thought flows out of his religious bent of mind. But upon careful scrutiny, it is often discernible that the deplorable social conditions of Muslims prompted him to embark upon the crusade of awakening them. To do that, he had to look into the historical and intellectual causes of what depressed them. While dealing with the latter in a causal relationship to the former, he diagnoses the pathology at the level of ideas, which once remedied would help the Indian Muslims out of depression. For example, he repeatedly identifies the otherworldliness of Islamic mysticism as the cause of Muslim subjugation. He privileges modern dynamism over traditional 'fixity or staticness'. These are intellectual subjects

¹³¹ Mohammad Iqbal, "Secular Politics" (*La Deen Siyasat: Zarb-i-Kaleem*) translation: <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>

that could be dealt with independently, but for Iqbal, the impetus came inductively from the society to which he gave his answers. Thus the ever recurring theme of decline of the Muslims constitutes the major element of his political worldview. Peripheral to the theme of the decline of Muslims in India, are the questions of nationalism, statehood and democracy. Also, remedial in his conception is his concept of Muslim unity and his desire to see a higher level of cooperation among Muslim states.

We shall deal with these themes individually in the political thought of Iqbal in a way that does not do injustice to the overall spirit of the works of Iqbal.

Nationalism and Iqbal

Iqbal's thought on the issue of nationalism has ranged from his soft view of nationalism to a critically hard one, especially when it came to European experience of nationalism. In his thought "the idea of nationality is certainly a healthy factor in the growth of communities. But it is apt to be exaggerated, and when exaggerated it has a tendency to kill the broad human elements in Art and Literature".¹³² Iqbal propounded the idea of religious nationalism. Because Muslims lived in the age of nationalism, it was apparent that to achieve independence from the British, mass movement had to be couched in the language that was comprehensible to the white man. If national self determination had to be the permit of emancipation of Muslims, *and*, it happened to run counter to the teachings of Islam, then nationalism in Iqbal's thought had to be Islamized:

The law of Islam does not recognize the apparently natural 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

¹³² Muhammad Iqbal, *Stray Reflections: The Private Note Book of Muhammad Iqbal* (Lahore: Reprinted by Iqbal Academy, 2006) p.86.

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'.¹³³

Iqbal, like many other religious thinkers of the Indian Sub-continent seems fully cognizant of the antagonistic relationship between Islam and the idea of modern secular nationalism. The idea of 'Islamic Nationalism' is philosophically speaking quite paradoxical. Islam does not recognize (as Iqbal says) the differences of race and geography because of its universality. Nationalism on the other hand is a product of 'particular' circumstances of modern European history and undercuts the foundation of universalism. Then how can the two be reconciled? Here it seems that Iqbal's position is not grounded in principles, rather pragmatics of engendering such a policy that would take at least geographically contiguous majorities of the sub-continent out of the precarious situation that existed for Indian Muslims. What would happen to all the other scattered minority Muslims throughout India is not dealt with in a spirit of realist politics. It is not conceivable that Iqbal was unaware of the merits of his opposing point of view of Indian Muslims remaining in a United India. Those who championed this point of view ranged from luminaries of his time like Allama Mashriqi, Sir Fazl-i-Hussain and various leaders of religious parties among the Muslims, and Gandhi's movement from the Hindu side.¹³⁴ It can be safely assumed that Iqbal sought to legitimize the nationalist movement of the North-western Indian Muslims. He realized that the Muslim disenfranchisement in India was due to the loss of power, which was attributable to a lack of their share in state services from which the Hindus benefited. If the Muslims in India had a

¹³³ Mohammad Iqbal, *Hindustan Review*, Vols. XXII & XXIII, 1910-1911. Reprinted in *Muslim Political Thought: A Reconstruction* (Islamabad; Alhamra Publications, 2002) P.117.

¹³⁴ It was Mahatama Gandhi alone who championed Indian unity in the face of British oppression. Mainstream Hindu politicians, whether belonging to the Arya Samaj or downright secular resisted formation of Pakistan not from the point of spirituality, like Gandhi, but because of strategic aspect of politics and economy. Through hindsight of more than half a century and the plight of Muslims in modern Nehruvian India, we know that Gandhi was right from his spiritual point of view and Iqbal was right from a policy point of view.

state of their own, at least a significant mass of Muslims could evade the structure of oppression from which Iqbal sought out at all cost. In his thought the Muslims of Northwest India, having a state of their own with good relations with their Persian neighbours (with whom they shared just about everything), would constitute a better option to empower Muslims rather than blindly gambling the Muslims' chances in a Hindu dominated democratic India. In his mind, if the British left India, the state structures they created would continue to discriminate against the Muslims for a few more generations. Iqbal in our opinion was exact in his foresight.

Because Indian Muslims today are almost just as disenfranchised and harassed as they were before the creation of Pakistan. This is not so only in the case of Muslims of modern India but also the lived experience of other minorities of contemporary India. Muslims of contemporary India are harassed compared to the Pakistani Muslims. A casual tour of Delhi can substantiate the above claim. Muslims in Delhi are relegated to a few quarters and other than their relics from the past (from which the Indian ministry of tourism benefits on a daily basis) the Muslims only nominally contribute to the culture of modern Hindu India. Save Deccan, this is true in other parts of India as well. With the advent of saffronization of India, Islam and Muslims are looked upon as the scapegoat to be blamed when things go wrong. The school history books of modern India are revisionist books that aim at eliminating to the extent possible, or at least present in a diminished and a secular way, the history of Islam in India.

Iqbal's idea of Muslim nationalism may not be defensible in the light of universal Islamic principles, but it certainly deserves merit because of being a perceptive *policy* that had to be legitimized for the sake of Muslims at that juncture of history. Muslim nationalism arose as a reactionary force against European colonial domination and its aim was the overthrow of European control. Nationalism as a force and sentiment also has a special affinity towards secularism. In the European case, gradual recession of religion transformed the society into a secular one and besides many other things nationalism was a political by-product of it. In the Muslim world however, the opposite has happened. Nationalism has been an instrument of self-determination from colonialism, but it has lent itself towards secularization of society. Z.A. Ansari has argued that:

In the Muslim world nationalism has... generally denoted the drive to get rid of alien control and dominance. It is nationalism in this sense that has been the most powerful driving force in the contemporary world of Islam. It is nationalism in this sense which has found a ready and enthusiastic response from the broad masses of Muslims in all parts of the Muslim world. However, in course of time there has also developed a nationalist ideology which, in its content, is hardly distinguishable from any other nationalist ideology and seems to take no notice of the peculiar ideas and institutions which characterize the Muslim society.¹³⁵

Iqbal never lived long enough to see the later changes brought about by nationalism in the Muslim world, especially in South Asia where nationalism led to irredentism in the case of Bangladesh. Further, nationalism in concomitance with nation-state as the unit of transnational politics has a special connection with the capitalist world economy. The capitalist world economy relies on a certain set of laws of secular origin to achieve its objectives. It seeks to remove religious and intellectual attitudes and institutional obstacles towards accumulation and profit that stand in its way.¹³⁶ Thus nationalism, nation-state and the world economy are linked and have proved to be a supporting force for secularism which Iqbal had not anticipated.

Perhaps it would have been better that Iqbal invented another word for what he visualized as 'the Islamic nation' or 'Muslim nationalism'. Just a few decades after Iqbal, we saw the Muslim world experiencing a wave of nationalism. The Indian, the Persian, the Afghan, the Turk and the Arab; all areas of *dar-ul-Islam* experienced this phenomenon in one way or the other. For the Indian it was more explicable because of the shackles of European colonialism. For the Arab however, it was more of a confounding experience. The Arab sought to throw off the Ottoman yoke in favour of European

¹³⁵ Zafar Ishaq Ansari, "Iqbal and Nationalism" in *Iqbal Review: Journal of the Iqbal Academy* Volume II, No. 1, April 1961, P. 65.

¹³⁶ See Ejaz Akram, "Globalization and the Muslim world" in *Islam, Fundamentalism and the Betrayal of Tradition*, Ed. Joseph Lumbard (Bloomington: World Wisdom Press, 2004)

domination, which he still has not been able to overthrow. Arab nationalism was initially ignited by Western educated Arabs mostly from Syria most of whom were Christians.¹³⁷ As Nasr has argued that Arab nationalism first helped bring about the breakup of the Ottoman Empire from an already 'unified' state and later sought to re-unify them again under the rubric of Arabism.¹³⁸ The new nationalism according to Nasr:

was originally of a purely Western and secularist origin, became gradually Muslimized as it penetrated the masses, to the extent that today Arabism, or '*Urubah*', is identified closely by the majority of the common people almost automatically with Islam.¹³⁹

Until recently, for many Arabs, categories of Muslim and Arab are almost used interchangeably and the boundaries between national and Islamic affiliations are rather loose. The Western educated elite in the Arab world however, much like the South Asians, have a special proclivity to become secular nationalist, which leads to a gradual erosion of their Islamic identities. For these Arabs the 'nationalization' of Islam leads to the view of the Prophet of Islam merely as an Arab hero and Islam as a historical product of Arab genius.¹⁴⁰ Unfortunately, for the secular nationalist Arabs the miracle of Islam is reduced to Mohammad as the 'racial hero' abdicating the substance of the Qur'an and the miracle of religion. Their South Asian counterparts of Marxist orientation have also tended to go along the same route. The effect of extreme nationalism on the Persians, however, has been quite the opposite. While the Arab looks at his Islamic heritage as an Arab, the Persian (and the Turkish) secular nationalists have sought to jettison their Islamic heritage by getting rid of Arabic heritage, realizing little that it was the Arabic

¹³⁷ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islam and the Plight of Modern Man*. (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1999) P 90

¹³⁸ Ibid. P. 90

¹³⁹ Ibid. P. 90

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. P. 119 Footnote 1.

impact on Persian that made it an ecumenical language of *dar-al-Islam* culturally and geographically.¹⁴¹ Something similar is being done by the modern Hindu in India as well. He too vies to get rid of Islam from his heritage. This has been done to a point that the ostensible lingua franca of India (Hindi or *Hindustani*) spoken in the media is almost incomprehensible to many South Asians because of the substitution of Arabic, Persian and Turkish words by Sanskrit words to the point that what is spoken on the streets and schools bears little resemblance to the official ‘cleansed’ Hindi.

Three generations after the independence movements of nationalist dispensation in the Muslim world, the global Muslim community must also remember that by asserting one’s nationality at the cost of one’s religious identity has disastrous consequences for a higher level of cooperation and unity among Muslims. If one tread’s down the slope of nationalism, its steepest stage may precipitate an unrecoverable fall in which universal brotherhood soon becomes challenged by an overweening narcissistic ambition whose historical results were the two bloody wars of Europe. Irving Babbitt pointed out that secular politics have always blamed religion for being divisive and bloody and human brotherhood is stressed either in its ‘secular missionary’ form or its Marxist-Leninist form. The cost of discarding the sacred has resulted in more bloodshed and violence in the secular era of Europe than in Christian Europe:

By spreading ‘brotherhood,’ France ironically produced intense nationalism, both within France itself– as the European coalition fought to contain the ‘Christ of nations’ and reverse the revolution– and outside France as its mass army waged an ideological crusade and sparked nationalist resistance among its neighbours. Sentimental brotherhood in the eighteenth century had ended with all of Europe at war; the ‘will to brotherhood’ had been revealed as the ‘will to power,’ externally in

¹⁴¹ Ibid. P. 121. Footnote 23.

empire-building and internally in the ideological imperialism of the Reign of Terror.¹⁴²

Iqbal's view of nationalism radically departs from the European conception of nationalism for two reasons: Firstly, he was against secular politics and because of that he had disdain for the type of nationalism that emerged from Modern Europe. In *Zarb-i-Kaleem*, he exhorts:

God, the politics of the Franks, With your creative powers ranks

The rich alone and aristocrats, Obey its calls and dictates.

One Devil out of fire You raised, For Franks a track You have emblazed

The West has by its guile and art, Filled with Satans the human mart.¹⁴³

Secondly, nationalism for Iqbal is not an end in itself, but means to a greater end. This theme cannot be fully understood unless we look at his views on Muslim unity. Even in the case of the Indian Muslims, Pakistan was not sought by him as a secular nation, but a country where the Muslim way of life (including its laws and institutions) could be fully realized. To this end, it was an amalgamation of four major nationalities (Punjabi, Sindhi, Baluch and Pashtun) and other minor ethnic and religious nationalities such as the kafirs, shinna, Hindus and Christians, that were to comprise West Pakistan. Pakistan was to be a transnational union of geographically contiguous states that were ethnically and linguistically diverse. In the case of Bengal which was initially East Pakistan, the 'national' union even transcended geographical contiguity. The only thing that was a unifying force in bringing these diverse areas together was Islam. That is why Pakistan is studied for exceptional cases in comparative and cross-national studies because such cases in recent

¹⁴² See Joseph Baldacchino, "Can a Decadent Nation Impose International Peace" *Humanitas*, National Humanities Institute. <http://www.nhinet.org/decadent.htm>

¹⁴³Mohammad Iqbal, "Statesmanship [Politics] of Franks [White men or European Foreigners]" (*Siyasat-i-Afrang: Zarb-i-Kaleem*) translation: <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>

international history have been non-existent. One must credit Iqbal not for nationalism, but trans-nationalism.¹⁴⁴

In Iqbal's view nationalism that is territorial and not pegged in a religious worldview was nothing but fanaticism. Iqbal argues that European nationalism has objective bases, i.e. language, race and territory, in contrast to this, the Muslim view of what ought to constitute a nation was subjective in nature. It transcends limitations of territorial boundaries, race and language and is based upon an inter-subjective notion of space-time, a worldview that can only be understood in relation to Islamic beliefs and values. He states:

As a matter of fact all nations are fanatical. Criticise a Frenchman's religion; you do not very much rouse his feelings; since your criticism does not touch the life-principle of his nationality. But criticize his civilization, his country, or the corporate behaviour of his nation in any sphere of political activity and you will bring out his innate fanaticism. The reason is that his nationality does not depend on his religious belief; it has geographical basis— his country. His '*asabiyyat*' is then justly roused when you criticize the locality— which he has idealized as essential principle of his nationality. Our position, however, is essentially different. With us, nationality is a pure idea; it has no objective basis. Our only rallying-point, as a people, is a kind of purely subjective agreement in a certain view of the world. If then our '*asabiyyat*' is roused when our religion is criticized, I think we are as much justified in it as a Frenchman is when his country is denounced. The feeling in each case is the same though associated with different objects. '*asabiyyat*' is patriotism for religion; patriotism '*asabiyyat*' for country.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Ejaz Akram, "Unity or Uniformity: The Precursors of Islamic Unity in the Modern Age: Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Iqbal and Seyyed Hossein Nasr" in *Beacon of Knowledge: Essays in Honor of Seyyed Hossein Nasr* (Lexington: Fons Vitae, 2002)

¹⁴⁵ Muhammad Iqbal, *Stray Reflections: The Private Note Book of Muhammad Iqbal* (Lahore: Reprinted by Iqbal Academy, 2006) pp. 32-35.

Iqbal makes little distinction between European nationalism and patriotism here, as he sees the latter in the light of Khaldunian notion of *‘Asabiyyah*, which has received criticism by later day Muslim scholars because of its concatenation with nationalism. Perhaps ‘solidarity’ would express *‘Asabiyyah* more than nationalism. And if so, solidarity is not only a property of a family, large kin, nation, or even the Muslim *Ummah*. The Prophet of Islam is known to have said that the love of *watan* (one’s homeland) comes from *iman* (faith). Since in principle the issue of nationalism has been resolved in the Islamic tradition, it is rather superfluous to juxtapose it with modern secular nationalism. Throughout the history of Islam, the Turk has known that he is not Persian, and the Indian has known that he is not Malay and the Arab has known that he is not Chinese. Muslims have known and experienced larger ethnic and geographical factors of one’s identity, but never had they been reduced to just that. Therefore, Iqbal is right in pointing out towards the subjective basis of identity formation among Muslims.

Further, in order to fully understand Iqbal’s position on nationalism and trans-nationalism, one must look at his philosophy of the state and its relation with the principle of elective democracy and his views on the institution of caliphate in the modern age.

State and Sovereignty in Iqbal

In Iqbal’s famous Allahabad presidential address, he stated:

... I, therefore, demand the formation of a consolidated Muslim state in the best interests 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 laws, its education, its culture, and to bring them into closer contact with its own original spirit and with the spirit of modern times.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ Presidential speech delivered to the annual session of Muslim League at Allahabad. 1930

Unfortunately, ‘modern times’ are characterized in the traditional light of thinking as those that lack spirit and it is difficult to see how ‘modern times’ can accommodate the totality of Islamic thinking. Iqbal said that “politics have their roots in the spiritual life of man”.¹⁴⁷ Muslims had a homeland in India, but he championed the cause of a separate Muslim *state* because he sought to safeguard the spiritual life of Muslims in a culture that seemed doubly perverted to Iqbal. On the one hand, he saw the British who had broken down the institutional framework of Mughal India. This had direct bearings on the Muslim way of life, due to which the Muslims felt anguish and anxiety. He sought to protect Muslim culture from un-Islamic influences and rapid influx of foreign elements.¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, he saw the ‘new Hindu’ who had already welcomed the end of Muslim rule in India and now seemed happy with the prospects of self-rule after many centuries without realizing the damage that was being done to him:

The modern Hindu is quite a phenomenon. To me his behaviour is more of a psychological than a political study. It seems that the ideal of political freedom which is an absolutely *new* experience to him has seized his entire soul, turning the various streams of his energy from their wonted channels and bringing them to pour forth their whole force into this new channel of activity. When he has passed through this experience he will realize his loss. He will be transformed into an absolutely new people— new in the sense that he will no longer find himself dominated by the ethical ideals of his ancestors whose sublime fancies have been a course of perpetual consolation to many a distressed mind.¹⁴⁹

With the advent of the *Arya Samaj* movement, the headlong radicalization of Hindus became apparent to Iqbal quite early on. This is one of the major

¹⁴⁷ Muhammad Iqbal, “Toward Separate Muslim Homelands” *Presidential Address delivered at the Annual Session of the All-India Muslim Conference*, Lahore. March 21st, 1932.

¹⁴⁸ Muhammad Iqbal, Lecture Extracts printed in *Report on the Census of India*, 1911, Volume XIV, pp. 162

¹⁴⁹ *Stray Reflections*, P. 39

reasons why he sought to empower Muslims. He foresaw the shadow of Hindu fascism and tyranny of Hindu dominated democracy. While coexistence with the traditional Hindu was a possibility, as it had been realized in Muslim history, with the modern Hindu, Iqbal saw no such chances of existence based on mutual acceptance and respect. To this end, he visualized for Indian Muslims a state of their own whose economy and defence was in their own hands. Iqbal's idea of the creation of Pakistan was not a search for a homeland but a state. Muslims already had a homeland in India. Even the Indian Muslims today have a homeland, but what the contemporary Indian Muslims do not have (which Pakistanis do to a considerable extent), is a much greater level of political control over their own destinies. Despite all the things that may have gone wrong in the modern state of Pakistan, this is more or less what Iqbal visualized and his dream was indeed a gift that was eventually realized. Achieving power, especially state power was deemed essential by Iqbal to steer a significant mass of Indian Muslims out of a dangerous impasse:

To my mind, government, whatever its form, is one of the determining forces of a people's character. Loss of political power is equally ruinous to nations' character. Ever since their political fall the Musalmans of India have undergone a rapid ethical deterioration. Of all the Muslim communities of the world they are probably the meanest in point of character. I do not mean to deplore our former greatness in this country, for, I confess, I am almost a fatalist in regard to the various forces that ultimately decide the destinies of nations. As a political force we are perhaps no longer required; but we are, I believe, still indispensable to the world as the only testimony to the absolute Unity of God— Our value among nations, then, is purely evidential.¹⁵⁰

Gaining political power to spread the truth was essential in modern times according to Iqbal. He echoes Maududi in this view, who said that nothing worthwhile can grow on a tree that has rotten roots. Gaining political power, according to Maududi was absolutely necessary to make sure that the state remained a safeguard of the Islamic way of life. Whereas Iqbal hatched the

¹⁵⁰ *Stray Reflections*. P.27

idea of Pakistan which would be a state that assures no hindrance in an Islamic way of life, Maududi sought to further Islamize Pakistan because he saw that the un-Islamic foreign influence was too strong that needed to be checked. According to Iqbal the degeneration of the Indian Muslim's ethic was primarily due to the loss of his political power which enabled the foreign rule which had altered the Muslim's course of destiny. Iqbal is said to have remarked: "Power toucheth falsehood, and lo! it is transformed into Truth".¹⁵¹ In order to create an ambience that favoured a Muslim way of life, a Muslim state was indispensable in Iqbal's view. Civilization in his view was merely a 'thought' of a powerful man because the powerful man creates environment and the feeble have to adjust themselves to it.¹⁵²

Even though we find in Iqbal's thought the necessity for Muslims of South Asia to have a state of their own, what kind of state that would be in its ideological orientations is not talked about much. This is perhaps because Iqbal died too soon. He missed the seven year period between the Objectives Resolution of 1940 to the independence and creation of Pakistan in 1947. This was the period of most intense struggle for separate statehood for Indian Muslims. It is conceivable that had Iqbal been alive at that juncture, his counsel into shaping the Pakistani constitution would have been most sought after. In his commentary on the 'forms of government' we find that he talks of democracy at length in his writings as well as his poetry. He cites al-Mawardi in the principle of election when it comes to the issue of governance, but one can conjecture that since Iqbal wanted an independent state for Muslims and his ethos was inseparable from the basic teachings of the Qur'an, he would have proposed an 'Islamic' ideology for Pakistan. After all, that was the *raison d'être* of Pakistan.

It is important to note that the state is situated in Iqbal's thought *below* religion. He rejects the distinction between spiritual and temporal domains: "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

¹⁵¹ Stray Reflections. P. 83

¹⁵² Ibid. P.82 & 84

attitude of mind with which the agent does it”.¹⁵³ Iqbal rejected the dualistic western view in which the temporal and spiritual constituted separate spheres. He said: “In Islam, it is the same reality which appears as Church looked at from one point of view and State from another”.¹⁵⁴

Islam according to Iqbal was a single ‘unanalysable’ reality and in his view the state (and state sovereignty), like other institutions in Muslim societies must bear the stamp of Islam:

The essence of *Taubid* 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. It is in this sense alone that the state in Islam is a theocracy... The Ultimate Reality, according to Qur’an, is spiritual, and its life consists in its temporal activity... The state according to Islam, is only an effort to realize the spiritual in human organization [and] in this sense all state, not based on mere domination and aiming at the realization of ideal principles, is theocratic”.¹⁵⁵

Iqbal took to task the ‘Turkish reformers’ view of state and criticized it saying that “the nationalist theory of state, therefore, is misleading inasmuch as it suggests a dualism which does not exist in Islam”.¹⁵⁶ He corroborates the views of Turk poet Ziya Pasha who suggested that all Muslim states must first achieve independence of statehood and then range themselves under an acceptable Caliph, and if such a thing is not possible at this moment in

¹⁵³ Reconstruction, P. 122

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. 122.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. 122-123

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. 123

history, then they must wait.¹⁵⁷ Iqbal recognized this as the forthcoming trend in Modern Islam.

State sovereignty however, as in the traditional line of thinking belonged to God with man as his vassal. In *Javid Nama's* "Divine Government" he advocates:

The servant of God has no need of any station,
no man is his slave, and he is the slave of none;
the servant of God is a free man, that is all,
his kingdom and laws are given by God alone,
his customs, his way, his faith, his laws are of God...
when other than God determines the aye and nay
then the strong man tyrannises over the weak;
in this world command is rooted in naked power;
mastery drawn from other than God is pure unbelief¹⁵⁸

It is quite evident the state and religion in Iqbal's view were absolutely inseparable:

"the *Id* of the free people is the glory of State and religion,
the *Id* of the slaves is but a congregation of Muslims"¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. 126

¹⁵⁸ "Divine Government" *Javid Nama*

Iqbal wanted to assure the Muslim way of life in Pakistan. Any scholar of Islam knows that the Muslim way of life is intricately related to the Divine Law or *shariah*. It is inconceivable that Iqbal would want to jettison *shariah* in favour of any other law, whether it came to prisoner's rights, inheritance or divorce. Whose *shariah* would rule the new state of Pakistan is obviously not talked about, because it would have been premature to do so in Iqbal's later days. The task of building the state first was more urgent. Most likely, Iqbal would have proposed a *fiqh* council in which the common denominator of all sects would be inviolable and other differences may be allowed to exist. If in Iqbal's Pakistan *shariah* could not be bypassed, before it could have bearings on the political life of Muslims, it would have first surfaced in the social and *economic* issues of Muslims. Iqbal may be celebrated by many as a modernist, but as long as any policy maker distilled and converted his economic thought into policy, he would remain very much in line with the traditional Islamic line of reasoning.

Iqbal did not have a positive view of the modern economy that was implanted by the Europeans in India as in the rest of the world. About the capitalist world economy, he said:

The people of Asia are bound to rise against the acquisitive economy which the West has developed and imposed on the nations of the East. Asia cannot comprehend modern Western capitalism with its undisciplined individualism... both Muslim and non-Muslims have yet to discover the infinite value of the legal literature of Islam and its significance for a capitalistic world whose ethical standards have long abdicated from the control of man's economic conduct.¹⁶⁰

Discussing the role of Jews in European economy in *Zarb-i-Kalim*, he says:

¹⁵⁹ "What Should Then Be Done O People Of The East" *Pas Chih Bayad Kard Ay Aqwam-I Sharq*

¹⁶⁰ Muhammad Iqbal, "Toward Separate Muslim Homelands" *Presidential Address delivered at the Annual Session of the All-India Muslim Conference, Lahore. March 21st, 1932 in Muslim Political Thought: A Reconstruction* (Lahore: Alhamra, 2002) pp. 215 & 222.

یہ عیش فراوان، یہ حکومت، یہ تجارت
دل سینہٴ بے نور میں محروم تسلی
تاریک ہے افرنگ مشینوں کے دھویں سے
یہ وادی ایمن نہیں شایان تجلی

Great luxury, government and trade

Prevail in countries of the West

Their hearts are quite devoid of light,

Their breasts are blank of case and rest.¹⁶¹

He was equally suspicious of the communist economic propaganda.
About Karl Marx, he wrote:

تری کتابوں میں اے حکیم معاش رکھا ہی کیا ہے اآخر
خطوط خم دار کی نمائش، مریز و کج دار کی نمائش

O wise economist, the books you write

Are quite devoid of useful aim:

They have twisted lines with orders strange

No warmth for labour, though they claim.¹⁶²

In his poem 'Lenin Before God' in *Bal-i-Jibreel*, he said:

¹⁶¹ "Europe and Jews" Zarb-i-Kalim

¹⁶² "Karl Marx", Zarb-i-Kalim

یہ علم، یہ حکمت، یہ تدبیر، یہ حکومت
پیتے ہیں لہو، دیتے ہیں تعلیم مساوات

بے کاری و عریانی و مے خواری و افلاس
کیا کم ہیں فرنگی مدنیت کے فتوحات
وہ قوم کہ فیضان سماوی سے ہو محروم
حد اس کے کمالات کی ہے برق و بخارات
ہے دل کے لیے موت مشینوں کی حکومت
احساس مروت کو کچل دیتے ہیں اَلات

...There science, philosophy, scholarship, government,

Preach man's equality and drink men's blood;

Naked debauch, and want, and unemployment

Are these mean triumphs of the Frankish arts

...Denied celestial grace a nation goes

No further than electricity or steam

Death to the heart, machines stand sovereign,

Engines that crush all sense of human kindness.¹⁶³

Martin Lings in an essay titled "The Political Extreme"¹⁶⁴ writes that the modern age has abdicated the middle ground which is a key for moderation

¹⁶³"Lenin Before God" Bal-i-Jibreel

¹⁶⁴ See Martin Lings, "The Eleventh Hour"

and avoidance of extremes demanded by the teachings of Islam. He argued that on the one hand there is the liberal secular world with its predatory economy and on the other, there is the promise of charity, albeit without Christ. This is a dilemma for the whole of the modern Muslim world. How does one bring about a *shariah*-compliant economy? The answer to this is not easy. For Iqbal again, the answer is in empowerment to an extent that you can change all that one day. The Soviet Union tried to change that but soon realized that it was an isolated island that was engulfed with capitalism and was nothing but a defiant player with the rules that were actually set in the capitalist world system.¹⁶⁵ It is now apparent to us (as it was to Iqbal) that the Muslim way of life is not linked with political power and proprietorship of the state alone, it is also linked with the type of economy that operates in the Muslim areas. The Muslim world is full of Muslims running their own states, but not a single one of them have achieved an alternative to this. One reason for that is that even though Muslims have their own states, tremendous resources, enormous human capital, they have not achieved a high level of cooperation amongst each other. Had Iqbal been alive to see the formation of the European Union, he would have written another poem in praise of the devil eulogizing the ‘godless’ achieving unity while the *taubidi* Muslims who emphasize unity most, in all walks of life, are utterly scattered. If Muslim states today were each other’s major trading partners, it is conceivable that they could form a monetary union of their own in which the instruments of a *shariah*-compliant economy can gradually be instituted that would combine rules of private property recognized by Islam and also a mechanism of charity (socialism) albeit from within the Qur’an.

About interest in modern economics, Iqbal said:

Usury darkens the soul, hardens the heart like a stone,
makes man a ravening beast, without fangs and claws.

It is lawful to draw one’s sustenance from the soil—

¹⁶⁵ For a pithy discussion of this, see Immanuel Wallerstein’s “Capitalist World System”.

this is man's 'enjoyment', the property of God.

The believer is the trustee, God is the possessor;¹⁶⁶

It is therefore safe to assume that Iqbal saw politics and economics not as separate spheres but mutually constitutive, and sought to empower Muslims on both fronts before they could take control of their own history.

Linked to the discussion of state and its economy is the question of governance about which Iqbal wrote plenty. It is therefore exigent that one critically evaluates his notion of democracy, since he condoned it and refuted it at the same time.

Iqbal and Democracy

Now we venture into an area where Iqbal represents a break from the Islamic intellectual tradition of hundreds of years. Iqbal has insisted at several places in his works that democracy and equality are the true Islamic systems. This claim we find is very hard to defend on Iqbal's behalf. However, it is important to take both the early and later works of Iqbal and compare them together to see what best captures the ethos of Iqbal. Iqbal rejected the divine right of kings to rule.¹⁶⁷ He did so taking the examples of the English kings and negating the Persian Islamic concept of *zill-i-Ilahi* in which the emperor is seen as the 'shadow of God'. Iqbal did not compare monarchy with other forms of government such as aristocracy, timocracy, oligarchy, democracy and anarchy. It is our own reading of Iqbal by transcending his terminology and by intuitively knowing his ethos, that Iqbal's favourable type

¹⁶⁶ "Afghani's Message to the Russian People", *Javed Nama*

¹⁶⁷ Muhammad Iqbal, "Divine Right to Rule" in *Muslim Political Thought: A Reconstruction* (Lahore: Alhamra, 2002) pp. 106-112.

of government was neither monarchy, nor democracy, but platonic timocracy.¹⁶⁸

In the light of some passages by Iqbal, we shall critically appraise his views on democracy.

In his essay “Muslim Political Thought in Islam”, Iqbal asserted that:

1. ...the Muslim Commonwealth should be based on the principle of equality, there is no privileged class, no priesthood, no caste system...
2. The law of Islam does not recognize the apparent natural difference of race, nor the historical differences of nationality...
3. The life of modern political communities finds expression, to a great extent, in common institutions, Law and Government... the Caliph is not necessarily the high-priest of Islam; he is not the representative of God on earth...
4. The Prophet himself is not regarded as absolutely infallible by many Muhammadan theologians [and he cites Abu Ishaq and al-Tabari]...
5. It is clear that the fundamental principle laid down in the Qur’an is the principle of election... Unfortunately, however, the idea of election did not develop on strictly democratic lines...¹⁶⁹

The above mentioned way of thinking in Iqbal was in 1910-11, when he had returned from London and taught as an Assistant Professor in Government College, Lahore. For the sake of juxtaposition, let's take a look at the later views of Iqbal, that represent the absolutely ‘ripe Iqbal’

¹⁶⁸ By Timocracy, Plato meant the rule of the ‘brave’ who are marked neither by supreme knowledge (as in the case of the philosopher-king), nor by adhering to the Original Principles (as in the case of the aristocrats), but those who are marked and moved by *valor and honor*, as distinct from those below such as the oligarchs who are moved by personal interests and profit, and distinct from the democrats, who are moved by demagoguery and hedonism.

¹⁶⁹ Muhammad Iqbal, *Hindustan Review*, Vols. XXII & XXIII, 1910-1911. Reprinted in *Muslim Political Thought: A Reconstruction* (Lahore: Alhamra, 2002).

representing the apex of his intellectual development. Two years before his death, in *Zarb-i-Kalim*, he wrote a poem by the title of *Kingship*, as follows:

خودی کو جب نظر اَتی ہے قاہری اپنی
یہی مقام ہے کہتے ہیں جس کو سلطانی
یہی مقام ہے مومن کی قوتوں کا عیار
اسی مقام سے اَدم ہے ظل سبحانی

When Selfhood sees its sway and upper hand,

This exalted state the folk as kingship brand.

"This rank gives verdict of a Muslim's worth,

And makes him vicegerent of God on earth."¹⁷⁰

In the *Reconstruction*, Iqbal concludes his essay "The Principle of Movement in the Structure of Islam" by saying: "Let the Muslim of today appreciate his position, reconstruct his social life in the light of ultimate principles, and evolve, out of the hitherto partially revealed purpose of Islam, that *spiritual democracy* which is the ultimate aim of Islam".¹⁷¹ In 1917, Iqbal remarks about democracy with some ambivalence: "Democracy has a tendency to foster the spirit of legality. This is not in itself bad; but unfortunately it tends to displace the purely moral standpoint, and [makes] the *illegal* and *wrong* identical in meaning".¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰"Kingship" *Zarab-i-Kaleem*

¹⁷¹ *Reconstruction*, P. 142.

¹⁷² *Stray Reflections*, P. 108. (Note: words 'wrong' and 'illegal' in this quote have been italicized by the author to ensure clarity of meaning. The original quotation was as follows: "Democracy has a tendency to foster the spirit of legality. This is not in itself bad; but

It can be seen that Iqbal gradually moved away from modernism in his political thinking. Initially he emphasized equality and democracy, but later after having witnessed the bloodbath of European democracies, he turned towards the idea of ‘spiritual democracy’ rather than democracy as such. Just like his views on nationalism stipulated that Muslim nationalism is not like the European nationalism, but a special one, so too was democracy supposed to be a Muslim democracy. His ambivalence about the chances of democracy in a secular set (like that of Europe) gradually grew, which is apparent in the following verses:

Woe to the constitution of the democracy of Europe!
The sound of that trumpet renders the dead still deader;
those tricksters, treacherous as the revolving spheres,
have played the nations by their own rules, and swept the board!
Robbers they, this one wealthy, that one a toiler,
all the time lurking in ambush one for another;
I will take nothing from Europe except-a warning!
You enchained to the imitation of Europe, be free,
clutch the skirt of the Koran, and be free!¹⁷³
In *Zarb-i-Kalim*, Iqbal sums up his view on democracy:

unfortunately it tends to displace the purely moral standpoint, and to make the illegal and wrong identical in meaning”.)

¹⁷³ “Divine Government” *Javed Nama*.

جمہوریت اک طرز حکومت ہے کہ جس میں
بندوں کو گنا کرتے ہیں، تولا نہیں کرتے!

Democracy means a mode

To rule the common man

No doubt, they count the votes,

But conduct do not scan.¹⁷⁴

The above verse surely carries the spirit of Plato in it. Democracy in this sense is the rule of quantity, and not quality. Since there exists an opposition between quantity and quality, this form of rule will always undercut the chances of developing a qualitative character among Muslims for modernity is nothing but a reign of quantity.¹⁷⁵ Iqbal gradually grew quite cynical and critical of all the modern ideologies including democracy. Just three months before his death, he remarked:

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... national unity too is not very durable force. Only one unity is dependable, and that unity is the brotherhood of man, which is above race, nationality, colour, or language. So long as this so-called democracy, this accursed nationalism

¹⁷⁴ "Democracy" *Zarb-i-Kalim*

¹⁷⁵ Rene Guenon, "Quantity and Quality" in *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of Times*, (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1999/ Reprint) P. 10 and 19-24

and this degraded imperialism are not shattered, so long as men do not demonstrate by their actions that they believe that the whole world is the family of God, so long as distinctions of race, colour and geographical nationalities are not wiped out completely, they will never be able to lead a happy and contented life...¹⁷⁶

Because the Western democracies in Iqbal's view have lent themselves to imperialism, they cannot form a good role model for the Muslim world. Their causal relationship with secularism, nationalism and the institution of the nation-state has made them bereft of any universality, yet these structural units of modernity parade as universal.

When we look at the trajectory of development of Iqbal's thought, it becomes quite apparent that in his later years he reformed his notions of democracy. Since the death of Iqbal, we can analyze a few cases of democracy and see which one has fared better for Muslims, keeping in mind that owing to different conditions, an experiment in one part of the Muslim world may not be applicable in the other. We have states like Iran, which are more democratic than today's America for example, if we look at the percentage of population voting and sanctioning mandate to the ruling authority. The West is not happy with this obviously because of what it construes as the union of state and clergy; it is deemed a theocracy. That is precisely what Iqbal had in mind, minus the Shiite factor of legitimacy in Iran¹⁷⁷. Next we find states like Turkey that albeit democratic are not democratic enough for the European Union. Third, we find states like Malaysia that have fared well lately, yet considered autocratic by Western standards. Then, we have Pakistan whose democracy has been at the mercy of the whims and interests of the West to a large degree and finally we have the Arab world, where in just about all of the 22 Arab states, we find autocratic governments. The concept of spiritual democracy by Iqbal in my opinion is not tied to a merely 'procedural' democracy but a 'substantive'

¹⁷⁶ New Year's message broadcast from All India Radio, Lahore Station. January 1st 1938. *Reconstruction of Muslim Political Thought*, pp. 230-232.

¹⁷⁷ Vilayat I Faqih. Oliver Straw

democracy. Procedural democracy is that of elections and ballots (like India), while economic and political injustice abounds. Substantive democracies are those where the citizens do not lead the life of fear and justice abounds, whether there are elections or no elections. In the case of the Muslim world, as Seyyed Hossein Nasr has put it, there is a social system which is democracy of married monks. From the traditional Muslim point of view, democracy at best is irrelevant and especially today, it may not be suitable at all. It is important to note that just like in the pre-independence era of modern Muslim period, nationalism became a buzzword for 'self-determination', in the post-independence era it is democracy that has assumed the same position. In the post-independence era, we have seen that in most places of the Muslim world the West has preferred to impose dictatorial regimes because they are expedient tools of neo-colonialism. If the Muslims have sought to protect and evade the illegitimate policies of World Bank and America, they hide behind democracy because that helps silence the West. The West itself is not too fond of democracy anymore, given the sweeping forthcoming demographic change inside the West. The white population of the West, which is not reproducing much, may become minorities in their own countries within a generation or two. If that happens under the democratic setup, democracy may allow power to be hi-jacked to non-whites or people of non-Western origin. Therefore, the Western cognitive elite is ambivalent about democracy even within the West, and outside the West, their track record of supporting dictatorships in the Muslim world is crystal clear. While criticizing the connection of Western imperialism and its relationship with democracy, Iqbal said:

The imperial ambitions of the various nations of Europe indicate that the Westerners are tired of Democracy. The reaction against Democracy in England and France is a very significant phenomenon. But in order to grasp the meaning of this phenomenon the student of political sciences should not content himself merely with the investigation and discovery of the purely historical causes which have brought it about; he must go deeper and search the psychological causes of this reaction.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁸ Muhammad Iqbal, *Stray Reflections*, P. 109.

Even though the English and the French reaction Iqbal is talking about is from the interwar period after which both experienced democratic governance for many years, Iqbal's view is almost prophetic in light of the incipient fear of democracy that has developed in the West because of the changes mentioned above. Criticizing the so-called pluralism in the modern Western states, Iqbal said:

It characterized State as multi-national,
and thus covered its trickery under this naïve phrase.
One can hardly move about freely in its environment,
no door can be opened by its keys.
It said to the bird in cage, 'O sorrow-stricken bird,
build thy nest in the house of the hunter;
he who builds his nest in meadows and gardens
cannot be secure from falcon and hawk.'¹⁷⁹

Iqbal has plenty of references in his poetry on the issue of democracy, but he has failed to do so from a purely traditional Islamic point of view. It is true that primary Islamic sources (such as the Qur'an and Hadith) have said nothing against democracy. However, it should be noted that democracy as it exists in the modern world was not known to the Arabs among whom Islam came, because the modern notions of democracy are linked to structural changes in society that only happened in the very recent phase of world history. However, the notion of democracy, long before the Arabs and Persians, had been dealt with in the Greek tradition. From Plotinus until Aristotle, the Greek philosophers dealt with this concept. Its best

¹⁷⁹ "What Should They Be Done O People Of The East" *Pas Chih Bayad Kard Ay Aqwam-I Sharq*

articulation is found in Plato's representation of Socratic thought. The Muslim scholars throughout Islamic history knew about it and endorsed the Platonic view that democracy was one of the least desirable forms of government. We know that Iqbal was cynical of Plato and his ideas, but it is surprising that Iqbal quoted from al-Mawardi (only because of his emphasis on electoral college for the election of the Caliph) but chose to ignore the towering figures of al-Farabi, Ibn Bajjah, al-Dawwani, Ibn Masarrah, Ibn Tufayl, Imam Ghazali, Nizam-ul-mulk and the entire corpus of the Shiite tradition! Even al-Mawardi if studied carefully lends no support to modern democracy because he does not talk of a 'universal suffrage', but decisions taken by notables only from certain quarters of the seat of caliphate, which during his time, was Baghdad.

The Traditional Islamic view on who is the legitimate authority, who should wield state power, is linked to knowledge and piety. The biggest difference among the Shiites and Sunnis also lay not on who should be the caliph or imam, but the qualifications necessary for the office of the caliph or the imam. The classical spirit of Islam asserted that the person who is fit for rule, is the one who knows most, who has a scholarly command of *shariah*, the one who is free of physical and mental defects and the one who is also known for his honesty and piety. In other words, that person should be the most perfect in society compared to others.

Different Islamic philosophers have stipulated different theories of election/selection of such a person, but even if consultative election is recommended between contenders, the electoral college can only consist of those whose opinion carries more weight than the others. Masses are not part of any such election. The Shiite tradition further demands that since the Imam is unerring and *ma'sum* or innocent, he cannot be elected because those who are 'below' him in everything do not have the sanction to elect him. The imam in the Shiite tradition therefore was selected by investiture by the previous imam when the imams were living, and never elected. After the 12th imam (Mahdi) who went into occultation, the science of eschatology developed that he will return as the precursor of Jesus Christ and short of the grand apocalypse, the battle between Truth and falsity, the Truth will prevail. Iqbal is either silent or dismissive of this eschatology because his progressive view has produced a view of the possible restoration of Muslim grandeur,

without the ultimate telos. These ideas in Iqbal's opinion belong to the old baggage of the Magian crust that has eclipsed true Islam. About Mahdi, Iqbal says: "Now this doctrine of the absence of the Imam has a very important political aspect which few students of Islam have fully appreciated. Whether the Imam really disappeared or not, I do not know; but it is obvious that the dogma is a clever way of separating the Church and the State".¹⁸⁰ In the personal reflections, he also said: "Give up waiting for the Mehdi— the personification of *Power*. Go and *create* him".¹⁸¹ This undercuts the spirit of an important Islamic eschatological doctrine of Islam, which is not exclusively believed only by the Shiites, but also by many Sunnis.

Traditional Islamic thinking, in the lines of Plato's concept of the Philosopher-King saw the perfect type of rule in the covenant of Medina and associated it with the rule of the Prophet-Statesman, the Prophet of Islam. For the modern Islamic philosopher, from the end of the era of the 'rightly guided Caliphs' the good period of Islamic history screeches itself to halt! From then on the kingships and sultanates in consorts with Sufism become the scapegoat that caused the downfall of the Muslim world. Iqbal, too, has fallen in this trap. It is important to remember that just like Islam says nothing against democracy, it says nothing against kingship, or other forms of government. The referent object of good statesmanship and sensible government is *justice*, regardless of the form of government. Equality, not being the same thing as justice has never been important, (see section on Iqbal and Modernism).

In the modern period particularly, it is next to impossible to talk in favour of kingships or against Montesquieu's theory of separation of powers. All power in Islam in its perfection belongs to God.¹⁸² Among humans, the power and the sanction of law belongs to the law of God, the *shariah*. The

¹⁸⁰ Muhammad Iqbal, *Hindustan Review*, Vols. XXII & XXIII, 1910-1911. Reprinted in *Muslim Political Thought: A Reconstruction* (Lahore: Alhamra, 2002). Pp. 129-130

¹⁸¹ "Waiting for the Mehdi", *Stray Reflections* P. 85.

¹⁸² *La quwa ila billab*. There is no power save God.

duty of King, Caliph, Sultan, Imam or a parliament is to make sure that the law of God is promulgated and there is no hindrance in practicing it. The moment one splits the tawhid of power, the more difficult it becomes to practice the *shariah*. At the summit of human custody of power, all powers should convene and be consolidated, not separated. The moment the theory of separation of power became fashionable in Europe, the old order crumbled and especially in France, a reign of terror ensued. Even in Europe, it was Napoleon's monarchy that gave a temporary respite to incessant bloodshed. In Spain, Franco's monarchy proved instrumental in saving Spain from the clutches of communism. And one can go on with such examples. Conversely, there are plenty of examples when democracies such as Hitler's German republic have committed horrendous crimes against innocent people, not to mention the military or ideological assault of the Western democracies in the Non-West, particularly the Muslim World.

As mentioned above, it seems apparent to us through the ethos of Iqbal that his notion of democracy, like nationalism, was merely an instrument of awakening Muslim masses and their mobilization for the sake of collective action and not a cardinal principle of Iqbal's worldview. While studying the vast corpus of Iqbal, it is important to distinguish between his unwavering principles and his policy recommendations. As many 'politically active' Muslim political thinkers have experienced that modernity has forced Muslims to take short term decisions that may seem counter to the traditional spirit of Islam for the sake of the greater good, the *maslahat-i-Ummah*. Khomeini promised the spill over his revolution, but decided otherwise, Maududi opposed the formation of Pakistan on grounds of Islamic principles, but accepted Pakistan and migrated there. Similarly, a person of Iqbal's calibre knew Islam's position on nationalism, nation-state and democracy, but realized the nature of transformation that had already taken place in the Muslim world, and in order to protect Muslim interests he sought to Islamize them.

A fair and judicious analysis of Iqbal's thought remains incomplete without answering the following questions: Firstly, where does one see the points of convergence and divergence between Iqbal's political philosophy and modern Western political philosophy? Secondly, how does Iqbal's political philosophy compare with other political thinkers of the contemporary Muslim world?¹⁸³

The answer to the first question, in our view is the following: The essence of Iqbal's thinking, inasmuch as it is wed to the Islamic tradition, there is not much of a middle ground between the philosophical presuppositions (and the worldview it has produced) held by the major strands of modern/Western political philosophy. Perhaps the only common area where Iqbal lends himself to the modern political philosophy is his anti-imperialism about which scholars of critical theory such as Foucault, Habermas, Ashis Nandy and Immanuel Wallerstein would share a common ground. With all of the above, however, Iqbal would radically depart over issues such as secularism and promulgation of Divine Law in the public sphere. Convergence between Iqbal's Islamic political thought and modern political philosophy is only temporary. Justice as the perennial theme in Islamic political philosophy is more often substituted with 'equality' with which modern philosophy confounds it. It is true that Iqbal emphasized equality, but it is well known that the political lessons drawn from the Qur'an are not because it is *kitab-al-masawaat* (book of equality), rather it is *kitab-al-insaf* (book of justice). Iqbal's own later views on quality versus quantity in the context of democracy validate that. Modern worldviews that mutually constitute modernity and the essential ethos of religious worldviews in our view are irreconcilable. They can only tolerate each other, not mutually accept each other. Especially the issue of modern economy and the lifestyle it has generated is seminal in this debate. Iqbal views with disdain both the type of economic systems the West has offered and seeks to empower the Muslim *Ummah* to an extent that they become a catalyst in overthrowing both the systems because they cannot be merely reformed. They must be shaken from their roots, which is very difficult, given the strength of political forces ready to protect them. In our opinion, even those Muslims who want so-called

¹⁸³ Suheyf Umar, Personal correspondence.

reform, do so to protect the 'form'. It is altogether another matter that on the slippery slope of reform they may come to a point where the form is no longer there.

To answer the second question, if we compare Iqbal to the contemporary Muslim thinkers (20th/21st Christian centuries), we find that Iqbal has much more in common with the worldview and concerns of people like Maududi, Khomeini and other 'politically active' scholars such as Rachid Ghanouchi. With minor modifications, this will be so in all of the categories of modern political philosophy discussed above such as the issue of nationalism, democracy, state, sovereignty. It is not easy to stay wed to traditional Islamic principles and make policies and plans of action for Muslim societies that stay in consonance with traditional principles. The nature and condition of the modern world is such that it will force you to depart from them. This has been the challenge for modern philosopher-statesmen like Iqbal, Maududi and Khomeini. On the other hand if we compare Iqbal to 'non-politically active' contemporary *traditionalist* Muslim scholars, such as Rene Guenon, Frithjof Schuon, Martin Lings and Seyyed Hossein Nasr, we find significant differences. Firstly, we find difference in the use of language and terminology. For the traditionalist scholars Iqbal would be considered mostly an exoteric scholar of Islam who has given in to the ideology of progress and deviates often from the traditional elements of Islamic political philosophy. They would look at him in the light of the Hindu doctrine of caste and assign him a category of that kashatriya who is still respectful of the Brahman. At best, he could be compared to Julius Evola from the Christian Tradition because of his emphasis on dynamism vis-à-vis contemplation. Even with Evola one could see a difference. Evola, like the other scholars of Islam mentioned above, was interested very much in the esoteric doctrines of the Eastern religious tradition. His mastery of Hindu esoteric doctrines was impressive and perhaps Rene Guenon influenced him. Iqbal did not employ to discover a universal metaphysic and studied Islam somewhat on exclusive grounds. In Iqbal, we rarely find the knowledge of Unitarian doctrines in Hinduism that corroborate Tawhid, instead we see him lamenting the modern Hindu from whose mischief he seeks relief. Iqbal is similar to Evola because of his emphasis on heroism and dynamism within the context of a religious tradition.

II

A related issue to the above questions should also be answered. Modern Western academics have pointed out toward a 'paradigmatic crisis' in contemporary thought which also spills over in the field of political philosophy. Does Iqbal's thought offer anything that speaks to this crisis and make a contribution to its resolution?¹⁸⁴

In our view, Iqbal does not want his political philosophy to be merely an addendum of what he considered the sickening Western world. Instead, he wants to use the challenge of modernity to give Muslims a wake up call. In *Arghman-i-Hejaz*, he says:

The Muslim draws content and kingship close,

He views the man and God in a close pose.

From this Age but I wished to run away,

Who has mixed the kingship with Satan's way¹⁸⁵

Iqbal never intended to produce a secular, liberal and consumerist society, which lives by bread alone, rather he wanted a society of Muslims which lives by the spirit of the heart. He intended to cultivate the 'Alamgiri' type character who he describes as the Muslim type.¹⁸⁶ Alamgiri character is associated with the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb Alamgir who was known for his military genius, discipline, austerity and piety. It is important to note that Aurangzeb is a villain in modern Hindu history. He is considered as a fanatic who imprisoned his father and blinded his brother Dara Shikoh because of his lust for power. Instead, modern Hindus remember Mughal emperor

¹⁸⁴ Suheyl Umar, Personal Correspondence.

¹⁸⁵ *Arghman-i-Hejaz*.

¹⁸⁶ *Muslim Political Thought: A Reconstruction*, p.180.

Akbar as the paragon of ecumenism because he innovated (without success) a new religion and married a Hindu woman. Before discovering universality in Iqbal vis-à-vis the West, it should be noted that his favourite hero is not universally accepted to the moderns of his own abode, India. Iqbal could have used the example of Akbar instead of Aurangzeb, for he was after all the apex of Muslim rule in India, but Akbar was not austere enough for Iqbal's taste. Central in Iqbal's thought is acquisition of political power by Muslims without sacrificing the essentials of Islam that can only be superficially seen as modern, but in their essence corroborate other religious traditions and not modernism. This is of course not highlighted in Iqbal's thought, as it is with its full elaboration by the scholars of the contemporary school of Traditionalism.

III

It is arguable that if it hadn't been for the idea of Pakistan, Iqbal would not have been any more popular than Bediuzzeman Said Nursi of modern Turkey or Fazalur Rahman of modern Pakistan or Jalal Aal-i-Ahmed of modern Iran. The same goes for Maududi and Khomeini; had they not stepped into the political arena, they wouldn't have been studied as they are now. Iqbal has gained his popularity in approximately half a billion Muslims in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh today, only secondarily because of his philosophy, but primarily because of his poetry, the idea of Muslim nationalism and Pakistan, which was perhaps the need of the Muslims of Indian Sub-continent at that point in history. If this weren't so, his popularity in the Persian or Arab speaking part of the Muslim world would be the same as in South Asia, which is not the case. Thus, Iqbal's idea of Pakistan, along with his political philosophy, are the major reason why Iqbal is 'over-studied'¹⁸⁷ and a much bigger philosophical giant like Mulla Sadra is virtually unknown to a vast majority of the educated elite of South Asia, and hence understudied.

¹⁸⁷ By over-studied, we mean here the number of people who have approached Iqbal from one point of view or the other. Perhaps he is understudied in a more qualitative fashion. Further, criticizing Iqbal inside Pakistan is equivalent of burning the star-spangled banner in America.

The impact of Iqbal has been significantly more than many other thinkers of the same era. As mentioned earlier, this is primarily attributable to the idea of Pakistan, the scope of his poetical writings and also because of the ability of the masses to grasp Iqbal's thought and its relevance to their conditions. It is difficult for ordinary people to grasp the subtleties of Ibn Sina or Mulla Sadra, figures of much higher importance in the intellectual history of Islam. This goes to show that there is no democracy of knowledge. There are levels of understanding and those who are able to grasp the highest are often few. Modern proponents who may believe in democracy of knowledge often argue that it is the ability of a thinker to make comprehensible, sublime knowledge to the masses. But that element of Iqbal which is intellectually accessible to the general public is often political and social rather than spiritual in the metaphysical sense the term.

Iqbal seemingly offers to bridge the modernity/tradition divide in his political thinking but he himself acknowledges that he has nothing new to offer.¹⁸⁸ Iqbal fundamentally remained pegged in the Islamic tradition and the legitimacy of his thought comes from that source alone. Modernism in Iqbal's thought is only due to the circumstances of those times and nothing more. It is not essential to the thought of Iqbal, rather it was the need of the hour. Incidentally for many this has added to the charm of Iqbal's thought; while the traditional Muslim can understand where Iqbal is coming from, his modern counterpart can also accept him as 'creative, fresh and new', elements that he deems essential for an anticipated reform of Islam.

There are limits to reconciliation of religion and modernity in general and Islam being the last frontier that modernity wants to conquer, there are major limits to a conclusive reconciliation between them. Modernity only tolerates religion and does not accept it fully. It views religion as such, as a backward form of human consciousness. The Modern west particularly views Islam as backward and as a threat to human civilization. Thanks to the presence of minority of sane voices in the West who do not think so, but they are marginalized in their societies from the government policies and media that shape their masses' view of Islam. Samuel Huntington in our opinion, is at

¹⁸⁸ *Muslim Political Thought: A Reconstruction*. P. 210.

least half right in claiming that there is a clash, although it may not be between civilizations.¹⁸⁹ The onus of success in a political dialogue (leave alone a religious and intellectual one) depends not on the intellectuals and scholars of the Muslim world, like Iqbal, but on the West itself. Since the West wields the sword in the world arena and Muslims are politically weak, the chances of dialogue are slim. Either the Muslim world has to become powerful enough that the West will ‘need’ a dialogue or the West itself has to become enlightened enough so that it respects and values Muslims and offers a dialogue. For dialogue of any kind to happen, either the parties engaged in a dialogue must be at parity, or if there is disparity, both the parties should be enlightened. If both the parties are enlightened, any friction between them will be of a temporary nature and will soon be resolved because of their enlightenment. The sustained Western push into the Muslim world for the last two hundred years is indicative of the fact that the West is not interested in a dialogue with the Muslim world as long as they can enforce their favourable terms and conditions on the Muslims according to their whims. The West is interested in dialogue with China and Russia, but not the Muslim world, and as said earlier, the reasons for that are obvious. Iqbal’s greatest contribution in my opinion was convincing Muslims that they must empower themselves because Western policies towards Muslims are unethical:

فساد قلب و نظر ہے فرنگ کی تہذیب
 کہ روح اس مدنیت کی رہ سکی نہ عقیف
 رہے نہ روح میں پاکیزگی تو ہے ناپید
 ضمیر پاک و خیال بلند و ذوق لطیف

The culture that prevails in West,

Corrupts the heart and gaze of man

¹⁸⁹ For somewhat detailed discussion of this, see Ejaz Akram, “Religion as a Source of Reconciliation Between Civilizations”, in *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* (Herndon, IIT, Volume18:3)

Its soil is full of stains and spots
That at leisure one can scan.
If soul of man becomes defiled,
Of conscience clean it gets bereft
It soon forgets high aims and ends,
No taste refined in it is left.¹⁹⁰

As mentioned earlier, Iqbal's modernism is only incidental and instrumental for the sake of *collective action* on behalf of the Muslims. Because the contemporary Muslim world is also *in* the modern world, even if not a product of it properly speaking, therefore every action Muslims propose to protect themselves will require modernization. If Muslims seek to protect themselves and their homelands, resources and their states, they will need an army. To face other modern armies they must have the same tools of armed resistance as their opponents. In order to do that, they must have sophisticated tanks and aircrafts. If they cannot 'import' them from their conceived enemies, then they have to make those themselves. This requires industrialization of their economies. Industrialism requires either a command economy or capitalist one that works on the profit motive but also produces fungible technologies. To achieve the former in the Soviet, Chinese or Cuban style, many societies have had to lose God which the Muslims are not willing to do. In order to acquire them like the capitalists, one must give up Iqbal's '*ilmul iqtisad*' and the principles that govern Muslims' economic attitudes that he talked about. If we embark upon the latter route, the societies may not become Godless overnight (as in the communist case) but they will surely secularize in the long-run. Even the so-called Islamic states (such as Iran, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan to some extent) have found it difficult to bring

¹⁹⁰ "Western Culture", *Zarb-i-Kaleem*.

all of contemporary laws and practices in conformity to the fundamental values of Islam. This is especially true in the economic arena.

Knowing Iqbal's essential ethos, it is clear that he is not ready to sacrifice Islamic heritage in the process of empowerment so much so that the Muslims lose the very essence that makes them Muslims. Iqbal admonishes the Muslims not to become like the West in all walks of life:

ترا وجود سراپا تجلی افرنگ
کہ تو وہاں کے عمارت گروں کی ہے تعمیر
مگر یہ پیکر خاکی خودی سے ہے خالی
فقط نیام ہے تو، زرنگار و بے شمشیر!

Your being whole from head to foot reflects the West,

Her masons in you have shown their art at best.

Devoid of Self, your frame from clay and water made,

Is like a spangled sheath that has no steel or blade.¹⁹¹

The question 'what must be done' for the Muslims to protect their bodies, resources and countries while protecting their beliefs and values is a difficult one, which cannot be answered that easily. Perhaps at this point in history no one can answer it. Only time will tell. For the short run, however, an Iranian style 'modern state' seems like a viable path to take, with an alternative mechanism of conferring legitimacy other than the concept of *vilayat-i-faqih*, so that it may also suit the Sunni dominated areas.

Conclusion

¹⁹¹ "Bewitched by West", *Zarub-i-Kaleem*

If Iqbal veered into modernism and departed from the Islamic tradition, it was not for the sake of modernity itself but for the safeguard of *tradition*, which in his foresight was clearly in danger.

In this paper we analyzed Iqbal's views on nationalism, state, state sovereignty and democracy. Leaving the strategic and visionary elements of Iqbal besides, in the case of state and state sovereignty, his philosophical position does not depart significantly from the traditional Islamic point of view. God Almighty is seen as the Sovereign and humans as the custodians of power entrusted by God. In the case of nationalism and democracy, he departs from the classical Islamic position but returns back to it. A nation in his view is an organic sub-category of *Ummah* and *millah*. A workable idea to mobilize the 'nation' for achieving statehood is his visionary policy. At the same time he does not spare nationalism as it created havoc among the Europeans. If Iqbal changed the word 'nation' to describe the Muslim *Ummah*, and coined another term instead, all would be fine. However, because of the use of modern terminology the confusion arises initially. However, the confusion soon subsides because the content of Iqbal's nationalism is not really nationalism as it is understood in cross-national studies, a sub-discipline of political science that studies just nationalism. Similarly, Iqbal begins with stating that democratic principles are Islamic, but coming back full circle where he castigates the producers of the new democracy and contrasting 'Islamic democracy' with the modern Western one as a 'spiritual democracy'. The question whether spiritual democracy is only an attitude or a structural form of governance is vague. It is our contention that Iqbal ventures to tread modern ground only because of necessity and not because he was in need of borrowing new principles. The essential principles that govern his ethos all come from sources that are the seminal sources of Islamic Tradition.

POSTSCRIPT

Had Iqbal Been Alive Today

Judging through the essential values of Iqbal, he would have been happy to see the formation of Pakistan. He would have been sad at the cessation of Bangladesh. He would have been happy that Pakistan, albeit a poor state, is

relatively strong, given its military. He would have been unhappy about Afghanistan. He would have been unhappy to see the level of crime and fraud in Pakistan. His remedy for that would not have been more liberalism, but more Islam. Compared to Pakistan and Afghanistan, he would have been happy to see Iran because of Iranian defiance against imperialism. He would have been unhappy to see how the Muslim world is still suffering from neo-colonialism. He would have been appalled at sectarianism. He would have been pessimistic about degradation of life and human ecology and thus chances of modernity to emancipate mankind, and may have revised his views on human 'progress'.

Pakistan: A Secular or an Islamic State

In contemporary Pakistan it has become fashionable to argue whether Pakistan was intended by its founders (the leaders along with the masses who were led) to be a secular state or an Islamic one. This debate that lay dormant for decades has been revived at the behest of those who harbour a secular agenda either due to their personal proclivities or from those who are following directives from their masters residing in Western nations. If we reduce the debate to its binary opposites, we find the pseudo liberal who parades as liberal, but in the superficial element of his outlook is ostensibly secular (and materialist to the hilt) is on one side of the fence. Generally speaking, the latter is neither cognizant of the consequences of the secular experience of the West, nor is he concerned about the role of ethics and the deleterious effect of development on human society and ecology. On the other side of the fence we find a figure, known in the West by the name of 'Islamist'¹⁹². The outlook of the Islamist is that of a bearded looking restive fellow, who, due to the lack of nuanced knowledge of his own tradition, appears exclusivist and reactionary in nature. But the Islamist gains respect from certain quarters of the society because of his recourse to the discourse

¹⁹² It is curious to note that whereas the translation for the word 'fundamentalist' has come about somewhat belatedly in the Muslim world in general (in Urdu, *bunyad parast*), a comparable word for the term 'Islamist' is yet to be coined in the Urdu media. In the Western use, the difference between the two may be none, whereas in the Muslim world both terms before their Western inceptions were positive and laudatory.

of Islam. Save the exceptions of Iran and Saudi Arabia¹⁹³, secularists in the Muslim world are running their countries while the Islamists are mostly in opposition movements and contentious political parties, sometimes allowed and often banned by the states. The pushers for a secular Pakistan present the straw man of the Islamist as a horrific alternative to a secular state and want the public to jump on the secular bandwagon, realizing little the dangers of throwing away the baby with the bathwater. Moreover, the secularists have the national and international civil, military and media establishments to back them up. It is unfortunate that the debate has been framed in a way that evades the middle ground, which is neither represented by the secularist nor the fiery fundamentalist. But so is the nature of the times we live in. The middle ground in our opinion is within traditional Islam that transcends both, albeit its spirit remains antagonistic with the structures and ethos created by the modern world. Intellectually and spiritually the traditionalist proponents of this middle ground remains one of the few intellectual challengers of the modern worldview. Because of power in numbers and the nature of modern Muslim mass society, politically and militarily this challenge to modernity, through modernity itself, has become the prerogative of the fundamentalist.

At this point in history, whether an Islamic state brings about Islamization of people or the Islamicness of people gives birth to a state that is Islam conscious is redundant. Maududi and Khomeini would argue that a state must directly enforce an Islamic way of life in order to counter the anti-spiritual tendencies of the modern, secular, liberal, Western world. In this view, protecting the Muslim way of life through certain institutions and laws, the state must play an active role. The liberal/modern Muslims would argue otherwise. If both agree that the Islamicness of society is at stake, the debate becomes redundant because both are mutually constitutive. Both diagnoses presented above of erosion of Islamic ethics in public life may be valid. Therefore, it can be safely assumed that an Islamizing state shaping people's socio-religious moorings *and* Islamically inspired people giving birth to an Islamic order, feed each other. In a country like Pakistan, from either of the two routes, the state in the end does become more or less Islamized.

¹⁹³ And to a lesser degree, Sudan, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Are Deplorable Conditions of Indian Muslims Cause or Effect of Partition?

All those causes that led to the formation of Pakistan out of the Indian Sub-Continent still exist in the modern state of India. With the advent of saffronization of India, the Muslims feel ever uncomfortable and disenfranchised. This puts the Indian Muslims in a difficult predicament. Since the creation of Pakistan, the Muslims in India have been mistrusted because of their cosy relationship with Pakistan. This relationship was primarily due to the earlier cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy, i.e., transnational solidarity with oppressed Muslims around the world. This support ranged between Indian Muslims in Hyderabad cheering for the Pakistani cricket team to Pakistan's support for Kashmiri self-determination in Indian-held Kashmir. Gradually, however, the Indian Muslims seem to be under more pressure to distance themselves from Pakistan. Indian Muslims' sympathy for Pakistan is viewed with suspicion by the Hindus. Many Indian Muslims develop a disdain for Pakistan either because of envy or because of an effort to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the Hindus. Notwithstanding the ifs and buts of history, it is safe to conjecture that if Pakistani Muslims remained a part of India, their conditions would have been more or less the same as their subjugated and demoralized Indian counterparts. Out of all of India's neighbours that are often bullied by India only because of its size, only Pakistan has stood up to India. Due to this, people of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan are on good terms with Pakistan.

W'Allahu Alim, and God knows best!