

MODERN INDIAN MUSLIMS AND IQBAL

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The book *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, also known as the Madras Lectures of Iqbal, has been translated into Urdu as *Tashkeel-e Jadid Ilahiyat-e Islamia*. In light of this work, I have chosen to address the topic: "Iqbal and the Concept of an Islamic State in Modern Times." First, however, it is necessary to give some background to Iqbal's lectures.

This book has remained the least noticed work of Iqbal, although it deserves much more attention. The main reason for this neglect is that these lectures were addressed to and later published for Muslims of the new generation. Iqbal was aware that these Muslims could not remain aloof from the values of modern western culture. It was therefore necessary for the Muslims to remain Muslim and, at the same time, to become modern. Since this book discussed modernity in Islam, the ulama were very annoyed with it. Its Urdu translation was delayed, because it was feared that the translation might provoke the ulama's wrath and that they might consider it a presentation of a new religion, like Akbar's Din-e Ilahi, or a distortion of religion under the pretext of reinterpretation. Many objections were raised. For instance, the late Sulaiman Nadvi wrote that it would have been better had this book not been published. Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi wrote:

I do not consider Iqbal an innocent and pious person or a religious guide or an Imam *Mujtahid*, nor do I cross the limits, as his staunch supporters do, while acknowledging and praising his works. I consider that Hakeem Sinai, Attar and Arif Rumi were far ahead of him in respecting and following the *Shariat*, uni-

formity in thought and deed, and harmony in precept and practice. Iqbal presented several interpretations of Islamic faith and philosophy, agreement with which seems very difficult. I am also not convinced, like some of the enthusiastic young men, that none had a better understanding of Islam than him or none could surpass him in the knowledge of Islamic sciences and historical facts. On the contrary, the truth is that all his life he kept on benefiting from his distinguished contemporaries. There are some drawbacks in his unique personality which do not quite match with the sweep of his knowledge, and the greatness of his message. Unfortunately he could not find an opportunity to get rid of them. There are many thoughts and views expressed in his *Modern Lectures* the interpretation of which conflicts with the collective convictions of the Sunnis It would have been better if these Lectures were not published.

The fact that emerges is that, owing to their conservatism, the ulama of the subcontinent were not ready to accept the change that had taken place in modern life. Even today, they believe that the Madras Lectures are a great danger to Islam in the future. If the society of which Iqbal spoke in these lectures and dreamed of creating had come into existence, then the face of Islam, particularly in regard to worldly affairs (*mu'āmalāt*), with which we are familiar, would not have remained the same. This is the reason the ulama strongly opposed this book of Iqbal. Recently, during a seminar held in Riyadh, it was emphasized that this book contains nothing except heresies and that Muslims must not read it.

Nevertheless, this is an extremely important book. Several eminent Muslim scholars whom I had the opportunity to meet in Istanbul, Damascus, and Cairo felt that it is so important because such a book has not been written in the Islamic world for the past three hundred years and that its importance is increasing in the world of Islam day by day.

The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam has been translated into Urdu as *Fikr-e-Islami ki Tashkeel-e Jadid*. In my opinion, this translation is more appropriate, because what is meant by "reconstruction" is the process of "correcting" or "reforming." It may be called either "modern reconstruction" or "reformation." However, it is not the reconstruction of Islam or the Islamic faith, as was the movement of Martin Luther in Christianity. Martin Luther's movement is called Reformation. What Luther meant by reformation was a new interpretation of Christianity that led to the establishment of a new school of thought or, rather, a new religion. The aim here is not the reconstruction of Islam, but the reconstruction of the religious thought of Islam.

Now the question arises as to when such reconstruction or reformation is required. Obviously, when decay takes place a revival or renaissance

sance becomes essential, for if the process of deterioration is allowed to continue, nations and communities cease to exist. As this is the era of the Muslim world's cultural and ideological revival, the book was written during this period because Iqbal belonged to that period of the subcontinent's history when the process of reformation had already commenced. After Shah Waliullah, Ahmed Shahid, Ahmed Khan, and Shibli Nomani were personalities who were senior to Iqbal and who had started the process of reconstructing Islamic thought. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī was also engaged in this task. In 1882, when al-Afghānī took shelter in Hyderabad Daccan, Iqbal was only twelve years old.

Following in the footsteps of his predecessors, Iqbal tried to study and apprise the Muslim community, in a very courageous manner, as to the causes of the decay of Muslim society. It is very interesting to note that, for the first time since the death of al-Ghazzālī nearly one thousand years ago, Iqbal disclosed that there were three negative forces against which jihad, in the sense of actual military struggle, should be waged: autocratic monarchy, ignorant Mullaism (Islamic priesthood), and decadent Sufism. According to Iqbal, the new Muslim society could be brought into being only after the eradication of these forces. In this context, he addresses the Muslims of India: *Ai Kushta-e Sultani-o Muilai-o Pir* (You are [nothing but] a crushed compound of autocratic monarchy, ignorant priesthood, and spiritual otherworldliness).

This shows that Iqbal believed that it was necessary to reform these three forces so that they could bear positive results for the reconstruction. For example, he wanted to bring about changes in the teaching of Islamic theology through the introduction of a new *'ilm al-kalām* (scholastic religious thought), for the modern era had witnessed tremendous progress in empirical sciences. This being the case, and in the light of this advancement in human knowledge, a new scholastic philosophy was needed. Without a new approach in theology, it would not be possible to strengthen the faith of the new generation of Muslims. Similarly, he called for a revolution in the sphere of Sufism. When he wrote the Introduction to the publication of his Madras Lectures, he specifically mentioned the need for this revolution. His third important point was to do away with autocratic monarchy in Islam and to proceed toward democracy, which, according to him, was to return to the original purity of Islam.

After providing this background, I would like to discuss that aspect of Iqbal's philosophy known as *khudi* (self). Whether Iqbal talked in terms of individual self or collective self, his aim was to bring into being a new Muslim society through the development of the individual and the collective ego. In this respect, his thought is founded on three basic concepts: 1) Muslim nationality should be based not on commonness of color, race, language, or territory, but on a common spiritual aspiration;

2) Islam cannot be conceived of without *shauka* (power). In other words, the new Muslim society cannot be subjugated, but must be free and in a dominant position; and 3) if power is the ultimate aim, then a manifestation must be found for it. In his opinion, this manifestation is the creation of a state for the new Muslim society, for this would give it a "territorial specification." His writings and discourses prior to the famous Allahabad Address reveal that these three factors were always uppermost in his mind. He emphasized the state because power cannot be imagined in a state's absence and cannot be wielded if one is a minority. This was why the Prophet left Makkah and founded a state in Madinah.

In this context, let us consider the discussion that took place between Iqbal and Husain Ahmad Madani. Madani's point of view was that of an Indian nationalist, while Iqbal's was that of a Muslim nationalist. Madani held that as a nation Muslims were Indian, but as a community (*ummah/millah*) they were Muslim, whereas for Iqbal, nation and community were one and the same thing. It is surprising that most of the ulama who opposed the Pakistan movement and who rejected Iqbal's thesis were prepared to accept Muslims as part of the Indian nation in a secular set-up, but they were not prepared to accept Iqbal's concept of the creation of a new Muslim society in a politically free modern Islamic State of Pakistan. In other words, they were so attached to the conventional approach to Islam that they were willing to live under Indian secularism rather than to agree to accept a new *ijtihad* or a new approach.

In this connection, I have always used three terms. What Iqbal called the *mullah's approach* I call the *conventional* or *traditional approach* to Islam. What Iqbal called *puri-muridi* I call the *populist approach* to Islam. The founding fathers of Pakistan, including Iqbal, were the ones whose approach to Islam, I consider reformist. The social struggle being called for in all Muslim societies today is found among these three groups. The masses who represent populist Islam are passive in this struggle, but the conventionalists and reformists are fighting the battle as backward-looking romantics and forward-looking realists, respectively. Generally speaking, the masses of Islam can neither read nor understand the Qur'an. It is difficult to say whether they even know their prayers.

Therefore, a large majority of them depend on their spiritual guides, *pirs*, and saints who, they believe, can intercede with God on their behalf. Due to ignorance, this belief is implanted firmly in their minds. Perhaps at some time in the future, when education dissipates enlightenment, the present shape of the common person's Islam will change. But until then, this situation must be considered as prevalent and advantageous to politicians and protagonists of conventional Islam. However, the number of educated and enlightened Muslims who subscribe to reformist Islam is quite small, and some time is required for them to develop into a class that could command a position of influence and power.

What, according to Iqbal, are the constituent elements of the Muslim society? A serious consideration would reveal that Muslims are still far away from the reformist approach to Islam. Although the nation of Pakistan has come into existence for the Muslims of the subcontinent, it will take a long time to transform it into a modern Islamic state. We have talked about the differences between the approaches of Madani and Iqbal and have also taken note of the views of Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi regarding Iqbal. Now I venture to present another interesting extract on Iqbal, one from Najm-uddin, one of Madani's disciples. He states:

We consider it a religious crime to grant the late Dr. Iqbal the status of more than that a poet and a philosopher as we have studied his writings carefully. There is no exaggeration in saying that although hundreds and thousands of his verses are useful, there are many which openly strike at Islam and Islamic philosophy.¹ . . . The work of law making in Pakistan can certainly be undertaken in the light of Iqbal's thought because the Islam on the basis of which Pakistan has been founded is in fact the other name of Iqbal's philosophy.²

It is therefore evident that a group of ulama have always held that Pakistan was created in the name of a specific kind of Islam, which they considered as the other name of Iqbal's philosophy.

Now let us examine the other dimension of the problem: What kind of sick society did Iqbal confront? He started formulating his thoughts in 1904. His first article, namely, "Quami Zindagi" (National Life), was written in 1904 and was published in *Makhzan*. Before quoting from this article, I would like to reemphasize that Iqbal was very much influenced by the factor of change. In his view, this strange factor of change distinguishes the present from the past. Commenting upon the progress made by other nations, Iqbal describes Muslim societies thus (I would urge you to tell me whether any change has since occurred):

I am sorry to say that, seen from this angle, the condition of the Muslims appears to be most deplorable. This unfortunate community has lost its political power, lost its craftsmanship, lost its commerce and trade, and now, unconcerned with the demands of time, and afflicted with the decease of poverty, it is leaning against the useless staff of vain hope. Other things apart, until now their religious differences have not been resolved. Every other day a new sect props up, proclaiming itself as the sole heir of paradise and denouncing the rest of the human species as the fuel for hell. In short this form of sectarianism has shattered the unity of the best of the communities in such a way that it is

impossible to reunite it as a single community The condition of our Maulvis (preachers) is such that if two of them happen to be present in the same town, they would exchange messages to meet and hold a discussion on the life of Jesus Christ or the revelation and cancellation of the Qur'anic verses. And if the discussion commences, as it often does, it leads to the exchange of such abuses that one has to seek refuge of God. The vastness of knowledge, tolerance and understanding which were the characteristics of the old savants of Islam exist not even in name There is however a list of Muslim Kafirs (nonbelievers) which goes on increasing as more names are being added to it with the vicious hand of our preachers The story of the decadent Muslim affluent class in different. By the Grace of God, four daughters and two sons are already there and yet the gentleman is in search of a third wife, and keeps on secretly sending a word here and there, taking every care that the existing two wives may not come to know about it. Sometimes, if he gets a respite from the domestic quarrels, he ventures to have a little fun with a prostitute in the street What to speak of the Muslim masses — someone would spend his life's earnings on the ritual of a child's circumcision, the other would withdraw his pampered child from the school because of the fear of the teacher, yet another one would finish his day's earnings in the evening and console himself by saying that God will take care of tomorrow. Somewhere a fortune is being wasted on litigation over a petty matter, while elsewhere properties are being destroyed in property-related quarrels The portrait of Muslim culture briefly is this: that girls are uneducated, boys are ignorant, and are unemployed. They are afraid of industry and commerce, and are ashamed of learning crafts. The number of divorce litigation is on the increase every day, and incidents of crime are going up. This is a very desperate situation and there seems to be no way out except that the entire community unitedly endeavours to put their minds and hearts in the direction of reform. No great task in this world can be completed without great effort. Even God does not change the condition of any community unless that community itself makes effort for its betterment.³

This is a very important quotation. It provides an idea of the direction in which Iqbal's thought was moving from 1904 onward. He realized that the reformation of Muslim culture was necessary and that this could be possible only if Islamic laws were reinterpreted. Iqbal kept on writing time and again on these topics. The extracts from his writings quoted in this article were published 1904 to 1938. An important aspect

of Iqbal's thought is that he genuinely believed that the revival of Islam could not be accomplished by the mere revival of the religion; it must be accompanied by the revival of Muslim culture.

Among the Muslims, the question of reforming their culture is in fact a religious question, because Muslim culture actually is the practical form of the religion of Islam. There is no aspect of our cultural life which can be detached from our religion. It is not my intention to discuss this important matter from the religious standpoint. Nevertheless, I will not hesitate to point out that due to the great change in the condition of our lives, certain new cultural necessities have emerged, that the principles devised by our jurists (*Fuqaha*) the collection of which is generally known as Islamic *shariah*, needs a revision. It is not my contention that there is some inherent flaw in the basic principles of our religion due to which it is not possible for us to resolve our contemporary cultural problems. On the contrary, my contention is that most of the interpretations of the Holy Qur'an and Hadith (Traditions of the Prophet) advanced by our jurists from time to time are such as were relevant & suitable for specific periods of time, but do not conform to modern needs and requirements of the Muslims Taking into consideration the modern need & requirements of the Muslim community we need not only a new theological approach (*Ilm-ul Kalaam*) in support of the principles of religion, but also, a great jurist who could reinterpret Islamic law, and grant such breadth to the rules, through his logic and implication, that they would fulfill all the possible demands and requirements of the present day Muslims. So far as I know, to date no such eminent jurist has been born in the Muslim world. If we are to consider the importance of this problem, it appears that more than one mind and a period of at least one century is required to complete this task.

In 1905, a revolution took place against the shah in Iran. Iqbal carefully watched this period of Iranian history, known generally as "The Era of Minor Tyranny" (*Daur-e-Istabad-e Saghir*). Muhammad Reza (later Reza Shah Pahlavi) was the leader of this revolution. In the early stages, he wanted to become the president of Iran and emulate the Turkish example and convert Iran into a modern democratic state. But the Shi'ah ulama opposed this conversion and advised him to adopt the title of shah (king). However, they retained for themselves the power of interpreting Islamic law as the successors of the Hidden Imam (*Imam-e Ghaib*) These moves caused Iqbal to conclude that Iran was heading gradually toward elections, although according to the Shi'ah theory of an Islamic state

there is a separation between the temporal power headed by the shah and the spiritual (juridical) power assumed by the Shi'ah Ulama Council.

Iqbal felt that the Muslim society of which he was a member was a sick society. He desired to bring about the creation of a new society. Hence, he used to claim that his message or address was not meant for the intellectually disabled and the old, for such people are incapable of changing. He called himself the "poet of tomorrow." For this reason, he was more interested in, and directed his message to, those Muslim youths who could create the new Muslim society of his dreams.

In this context, and carrying the discussion further, I would like to present another extract from his writings, particularly because whenever I try to express my views respecting Iqbal's thought it has met with strong opposition from the conservative ulama who now claim to own Iqbal and contend that I misrepresent him. This passage has been taken from his "Muslim Community" lecture, which happens to be his third important paper on the subject. It was translated into Urdu by Zafar Ali Khan as *Millet-e Beza par ek Imrani Nazar* and was read in the Stretch Hall of the Aligarh Muslim University in 1910.

The establishment of a Muslim University in India is essential also for another reason. Who does not know that the task of giving moral education to the masses of our community is being performed by such Ulama and preachers who are not competent enough to perform this task. The reason is that the quantum of their knowledge about Islamic history and Islamic sciences is very limited. For the teaching of the main principles and offshoots of religion and morality the preacher of today, besides having [an] understanding of history, economics and sociology, should also have a complete acquaintance with the literature and aspirations of his community. Al-Nadwa, Aligarh College, Madrassa Deoband and similar other institutions which are functioning separately cannot fulfill this great need. There should be established one central *Dar-al-Ulum* of all these scattered educational entities where the members of the community should not only get an opportunity to knowledge in specific fields but also prepare a cultural frame into which the present day Indian Muslim can be adjusted.⁴

The "method" referred to here by Iqbal requires some attention. What he means is that a Muslim child should be identified as Muslim and also as modern. Unlike the old system of education, the Islamic *Dar-al-Ulum* (study center) must constitute an integral part of a modern university. Then, in what subjects should our preachers and missionaries be well-versed? Iqbal insists upon their command of national literature, eco-

nomics, and sociology. Thus it is evident that he wanted to see the Muslims remain Muslims and, at the same time, accept modernity.

Generally speaking, whatever Iqbal's dreams were, they have yet to be realized. I would add here that when Iqbal went to Madras to deliver these lectures, his host subscribed to the same views. Seth Jamal Mohammad used to spend a large amount of money every year on such lectures. Before Iqbal, he had invited Sulaiman Nadvi, who delivered lectures on Islamic culture, and, before him, Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall, who had translated the Qur'an into English, to deliver a series of lectures on Islam. Iqbal was the third in this series. Seth Jamal Mohammad wanted to create an environment in which Muslims could retain a strong faith and, at the same time, would not hesitate to become modern.

The writings of Iqbal indicate that, according to him, the political order recommended by the Qur'an was based on elections and the legal order was based on interpretations of Islamic law advanced by judges. The third important point is that he uses the expression "Muslim commonwealth" for the Islamic state.

We now turn to what Iqbal meant by the revival of Islamic culture. Why was it necessary and urgent? The Madras Lectures reveal that so long as Muslim intellectuals remained under the influence of Greek thinkers, they paid more attention to the speculative sciences. However, when they turned their attention to the Qur'anic teachings, they discovered that the Qur'an emphasized the experimental method, because God repeatedly commands human beings to apply reason, to think, to use their eyes and ears, and so on. This means that Muslims, through their sense perception, should evolve empirical sciences. According to Iqbal, it was in such an environment that Muslims developed the experimental method and laid the foundations of empirical sciences. Europe took these empirical sciences from the Muslims and developed them further into what is now known as modern science and technology. Thus Iqbal believed that Muslims were the original founders of science and that if they were to learn it afresh from the West, it was not an adoption of the sciences of an alien culture, but rather taking back from the West what the Muslim world had given to it when its civilization was flourishing.⁵

Based on this, Iqbal desired that the broken link between Islamic science and modern science should be reconnected. He was convinced that this was a very important aspect of the reconstruction of religious thought in Islam and that the new Muslim society could not be created unless Islamic science was recombined with modern science. Obviously, a study of the history of science would reveal that in the early stages of the development of empirical sciences, the names of Muslim scientists occur frequently. Even today, the true origin of some of these sciences are still acknowledged and retain their Arabic names. For instance, algebra, a branch of mathematics and a Muslim invention, still retains the

same name. The term *chemistry*, derived from the Arabic *al-Kimiya'*, is another case in point. There are numerous other terms, particularly in optics and physics, that are derived from Arabic and are still in use.

Although Iqbal was a critic of western civilization, he was not opposed to modernity. However, he did distinguish between the two. To him westernization was the imitation of an alien culture, for which he criticized the Turks, whereas modernism was the acceptance of the reality of change. According to Iqbal, the Qur'an commanded the acceptance of the reality of change for the progress of Muslims in all spheres and fields; otherwise, they would be left behind. The Muslims could achieve power (*shauka*) in the new Muslim society only when they reestablished the link between Islamic and modern science, and the processes of research, creativity, innovation and invention can be recommenced.

One can see that Iqbal, in almost all of his writings, particularly his poetry, is obsessed with "the absolutely new." He asks for a new world and a new universe, as he is fed up with the old. Even his Satan pleads to God and begs for the creation of a new Adam, since he is disgusted with the present one, who cannot bear his single blow. He pleads that it is insulting for him to be pitted against a very weak rival. So even Satan demands a new Adam.⁶

What Iqbal means by a "new man" or a "new Muslim society" is that the creative potentialities of the Muslim community must be reviewed. In the context of creativity, Iqbal uses the term *innovation*. He regarded 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb as the first Muslim innovator because of the changes he introduced, particularly his inclusion of equity (*istiḥsān*) into the Islamic law of inheritance. Objections were raised against him for introducing something new into the Islamic legal code. In his defense, he replied that there are two types of novelty: *bid'ah ḥasanah* (a commendable novelty) and *bid'ah sayy'iah* (a condemnable novelty). Iqbal endorsed the former and considered it a positive or commendable innovation. Iqbal was of the opinion that contemporary Muslims could make progress only if they acquired a similar mentality and that they should not become prisoners of the "text" of the Qur'an. In other words, their interpretation must be in accord with the "spirit" of the Qur'an. Thus, according to him, a commendable innovation is worthy of consideration and should be adopted as a methodology for modern-day *ijtihād* (interpretation of Islamic law).

Now I turn to the topic of Iqbal and the concept of an Islamic state in the modern age. I have explained already that Iqbal gives priority to the principle of Muslim nationhood for the establishment of a modern Muslim society. His second principle is that Islam is unthinkable without power. If Muslims do not have power, they are Muslim in name only, despite all of their protestations to the contrary. Economic and technological freedom must be achieved, along with political freedom, to con-

stitute power. In their absence, people are nothing but slaves and, in this state, the people can accomplish nothing. Iqbal narrates that a Turkish freedom fighter once accompanied him to offer prayers in the mosque. This man was perturbed to notice that Indian Muslims, while offering prayers, remained for a long time in the position of prostration (*sajdah*). When he asked Iqbal what was the reason behind this practice, Iqbal replied that there was no need to be surprised, because poor slaves have nothing else to do but prostration (*Kaha Mujahid-e Turki ne mujh se bad-e Namaz, Taveel-e sajda hain kyon is qadar tumhare Imam. Tanveel-e sajda agar hain to kya ta'ajjub hai, Vara-e sajda ghareebon ko aur kya hai kam*).⁷ Therefore prolonged prostration, according to Iqbal, is of no use; prayer must accompany power.

After interpreting the two major principles of Muslim nationhood and power, Iqbal presented his concept of a modern Islamic state in his sixth lecture, entitled "The Principle of Movement in the Social Structure of Islam." This lecture is not only important but also controversial, as most of the objections raised against the Madras Lectures pertain particularly to this lecture. Its topic is *ijtihad* (effort, struggle [to understand Islam]). I will discuss only the section that relates to the construction of a state, or rather how Iqbal envisions the creation of a modern Islamic state.

In this connection, the first thing to remember is that whenever Iqbal speaks of a modern Islamic state, he envisions traditional models of Islamic states that have appeared throughout history: caliphate, imamate, amirate, or various forms of monarchy. Iqbal does not recommend the revival of any of these models. Rather, his concept of a modern Islamic state is based on three principles.

Before discussing this issue, I would like to point out that Iqbal associates state with law making. He wrote several letters to Sulaiman Nadvi and posed many questions in this regard. An examination of these questions and the answers given by Sulaiman Nadvi provide very interesting and useful information. I have collected and studied these questions thoroughly in order to find out what was in his mind. In fact, his questions are the same as those that disturb Muslim youth today, and I suppose a satisfactory and convincing solution to these problems still eludes our *ulama* even today.

For example, one of Iqbal's questions makes it abundantly clear why he attached so much importance to the consensus of the *ummah* (*ijma-e umma*) and its connection to the democratic order of a modern Islamic state. He asks: "Can *ijma-e umma* [consensus of the *ummah*] repeal *nass-e Qurani* [a Qur'anic text with a clear meaning]? For instance, a mother can breastfeed her child only for two years according to the *nass-e Qurani*. Can this period be reduced or extended?" Then he asks: "Can consensus change the Qur'anic rules of inheritance? Some *hunafa'* and *mutazilah* [names of two schools of Islamic legal thought] believe

that it is possible through *ijma-e umma*. Does any such reference exist in the literature of Fiqh (Law)?" Such interesting questions could only be asked by Iqbal.

He derives the principle of election in an Islamic state from Qur'an 42:38, which states that Muslims are those who conduct their affairs by mutual consultation. The word *shura* is used in this verse and may be interpreted either as "advisory assembly" or "consultative assembly." If the meaning of advisory body is adopted, then the problem of the absoluteness of the executive authority, which would not be bound by the advisory body's opinion, will arise. (This is what happened during the history of Islam, and it led to the establishment of the most perverse form of autocracy.) But if it is interpreted as a consultative body, then, for the purpose of law making, it is identical to an elected assembly. Iqbal considers this law-interpreting assembly the modern form of consensus. In other words, the elected representatives are authorized to make or interpret law, and their law-making process becomes a kind of *ijma-e umma*. The ulama, however, reject such an interpretation. One reason may be their awareness of Iqbal's desire to remove the right of *ijtihad* (interpretation of law) from individual jurists (*mujtahidūn*) and give it to an elected Muslim assembly. This is a kind of revolution that our conservative ulama are not prepared to accept.

Before talking about the three foundational principles on which a modern Islamic state can be built, as propounded by Iqbal, I would like to refer to the last paragraph of his sixth lecture, in which he defines Islamic state as a "spiritual democracy." He states:

In view of the basic idea of Islam that there can be no further revelation binding on man, we (Muslims) ought to be spiritually one of the most emancipated peoples on earth. Early Muslims emerging out of the spiritual slavery of pre-Islamic Asia were not in a position to realize the true significance of this basic idea. Let the Muslim of today appreciate his position, reconstruct his social life in the light of ultimate principles and evolve, out of the hither partially revealed purpose of Islam, that spiritual democracy which is the ultimate aim of Islam.⁸

According to Iqbal the ultimate aim of Islam, the establishment of "spiritual democracy," remains essentially unrealized. If it has been realized at all, it has only been achieved in a partial manner.

Now I come to the three foundational principles of a modern state from the Islamic standpoint as propounded by Iqbal: human solidarity, equality, and freedom. Iqbal opines that Muslims must aspire for and realize these great and ideal principles in space-time forces, because these very principles constitute the essence of the unity (*tawhīd*) of God.

The question is, why does Iqbal refer to “human solidarity” and not “Muslim solidarity”? The answer is that he had a vision of a modern Islamic state as a spiritual democracy. As for religious tolerance in this state, Iqbal points out that the Qur’an commands Muslims, and thereby makes it a religious obligation upon them, to protect non-Muslim places of worship. Given this background, when Iqbal talks about human solidarity he means Muslim unity based on a common spiritual aspiration and solidarity with non-Muslim citizens on the basis of common national and patriotic considerations. Thus, in a modern Islamic state, common spiritual aspirations coupled with common national and patriotic considerations can make it possible to realize the ideal of human solidarity. Iqbal cites Qur’an 22:40, which commands Muslims to protect non-Muslim places of worship:

If God had not created a group (of Muslims) to ward off the others from aggression, then churches, synagogues, oratories, and mosques where God is worshipped most, would have been destroyed.

In this verse, the term *masājid* (mosques) occurs at the end in a descending order. First Christian churches are mentioned, then Jewish synagogues, then the monasteries or oratories of the hermits, and, lastly, Muslim mosques. How did the jurists interpret this verse? Early jurists thought that only the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) came under this protective clause. But when Iran was conquered, Parsees and Zoroastrians were included under it because they were *kamithl-e ahl-e kitab* (like the People of the Book). The same principle was applied in India. During the reign of the Mughals, some Muslim jurists included the Hindus in the list of those who were *kamithl-e ahl-e kitab* and bound the Mughal state to protect their places of worship and culture.

To conclude, when the Muslims had self-confidence and were powerful, their jurists could “extend” a Qur’anic rule of law if the conditions so demanded, just as they could “restrict” its application through a temporary suspension if there was a fear that it could lead to trouble. These processes of extension (*tawzī’*) and restriction (*taḥdīd*) are acknowledged principles in Islamic jurisprudence. Iqbal is of the view that, in accordance with the needs and requirement of the present time, Qur’anic rules of law pertaining to worldly affairs (*mu’āmalāt*) can be extended or restricted. But such a power cannot be exercised by an individual or a dictator, for it was his desire to give it to the elected representatives of the Muslims in the form of consensus.

While discussing these principles, I do not want to be misunderstood. I am not arguing that a modern Islamic state can be regarded as a secular state. This is not my thesis, although I am inclined to put the word

“ideal” before it. If, according to Iqbal, the ultimate aim of Islam is to establish a spiritual democracy and not a theocracy, then how can it be defined except as an ideal secular state? I do not call it a secular state, because no genuine secular state exists anywhere in the world. So-called secular states are really based on hypocrisy. Is the United States a secular state, when color-based discrimination still exists there? Are Britain, France, and Germany truly secular states? Is India, where Muslims are periodically massacred for one excuse or another, really a secular state?

Actually, no secular state exists anywhere in the world, although there are several types of hypocritical states. For example, the secular state of the former Soviet Union was established on the basis of atheism. It was an antireligion state. Similarly, western capitalist secular democracies are indifferent to religion, as they are essentially market societies interested in selling their merchandise. But if there exists a state that respects every religion or whose aim is to establish a genuine spiritual democracy, what name could be given to it? I happened to meet a Hindu scholar in a conference. He explained to me that a secular state does not mean a state that is indifferent to religion, in the sense that we call it in Urdu *la deen riyast* or a “nonreligious state.” He disclosed that India is not such a secular state, but that every religion within it is accorded full respect. I replied that if that were really the case, then India would be an Islamic state as contemplated by Iqbal. Furthermore, there would have been no periodic massacres of Muslims or a need for Pakistan.

Now let us turn to Iqbal’s second principle: equality in the modern Islamic state. To grasp it, we must consider his social and economic ideas. For example, he believes that the Qur’an has prescribed the best remedy for all of humanity’s economic concerns. He opposes capitalism with the same vigor as he opposes socialism. But he did not approve of the total expulsion of the forces of capital in an economic order; he wanted to confine it to certain specific limits. In the case of Muslims he recommends a strict implementation of Islamic inheritance law and the collection of *zakat*, *ushr*, and *ṣadaqah* by the state. Furthermore, he wished to utilize *ijtihād* to reinterpret other Qur’anic laws pertaining to taxation. For example, there is the Qur’anic command of *kullal afwa* (to give away all that one has earned above one’s needs for the benefit of the community). But no one will be inclined to give away surplus wealth voluntarily for public benefit unless the state compels him to do so. In his poem on the Russian revolution, Iqbal insists that Muslims delve deep in the Qur’an in order to discover the wisdom of God regarding *kullal afwa*. On the basis of this Qur’anic command, he expects the modern Islamic state to improve taxation laws in order to create, in essence, a welfare state in which the ideal of equality could be realized.

He has also some suggestions pertaining to the distribution of land. According to his interpretation of Islamic law, a landlord can only hold

as much land as he can cultivate himself; the surplus must be turned over to the state for distribution among landless tenants. Iqbal also recommends the imposition of agricultural tax on landholdings in parity with the ratio of income tax. Moreover, he advocates the implementation of other laws to prohibit the hoarding of wealth (which means that collective rights are ignored), accumulating wealth through illegal and illegitimate economic sources, dealing in interest, and indulging in gambling. Iqbal's concept of equality in a modern Islamic state is more or less identical to the contemporary economic ideal of a mixed economy. It implies that the state should invest in important public-sector industries and, at the same time, accept a free economy to a certain extent by encouraging individual investment in the private sector. However, the state must not nationalize the industries.

Now we can consider Iqbal's third principle: freedom (*hurriyat*). I have already mentioned that he regards the elections of legislative assemblies in Muslim states as a return to the original purity of Islam. What does Iqbal mean by *democracy*? Based on his writings, he obviously meant representative or elected assemblies, for such assemblies came into existence via electoral contests among different political parties.

Iqbal states that three political parties emerged during the time of the Prophet's four immediate political successors (*al-khulafā' al-rāshidūn*). One political group consisted of the Anṣār, whose candidate competed against Abū Bakr. Similarly, another political faction was that of the Muhājirūn who, for the first time, advanced the argument that the Arabs would refuse to accept the leadership of any person who did not belong to the tribe of Quraysh. This reasoning is said to have silenced the Anṣār, whose claim to leadership was that they had constituted the armies of Islam and that therefore the caliph elected should be one of their own. The Muhājirūn countered that their candidate would not be acceptable to all of the Arab tribes because they did not belong to the Quraysh. Hence, the caliph must be a Qurayshī. The third political faction was that of Banū Hāshim, who believed that the caliph must come from the descendents of the Prophet. This group was solidly behind 'Alī ibn Abū Ṭālib.

It is interesting to note that during the electoral confrontation (or rather competition), no party sought the support of the Qur'an or the hadith (tradition) of the Prophet. The appointment of the Prophet's political successor (*khalīfah*) was a political matter and was to be resolved in a political manner. Their approach was pragmatic and republican as well as flexible, since it did not follow rigidly any set precedent. With this background in mind, Iqbal gives priority to consensus (*ijmā'*), the present form of which is an elected Muslim assembly. Consensus is one of the foundational principles of *ijtihād*, the others being the Qur'an, hadith, and analogy (*qiyās*). Iqbal thinks that the right of reinterpreting Islamic law and giving it the shape of modern legislation must reside in an elected

Muslim assembly. He also holds that a body of ulama could be nominated to assist the assembly, as the assembly may face difficulties in understanding the intricate *fiqhī* points. However, he does not give the ulama the right to veto, for that could cause their mutual differences to lead to a legislative crisis. His solution is that assembly members should be acquainted with *fiqh* and modern jurisprudence. In other words, candidates for the assembly in a modern Islamic state should be lawyers and jurists who possess a solid grounding in *fiqh*, because only such people can reinterpret Islamic law and its connected legislation.

Iqbal's concept of legislation is based on his philosophy of permanence-in-change. What is permanent and what is subject to change? He explains that only religious obligations (*'ibādāt*) are permanent and cannot be changed. On the other hand, worldly affairs (*mu'āmalāt*) are subject to the law of change. For instance, the times of prayer and the period of fasting during Ramadan cannot be changed. But all laws pertaining to civil and criminal matters fall in the category of worldly affairs and, therefore, are subject to the law of change and reinterpretation in accordance with the changed condition and needs, as well as requirements, of the Muslim community. Iqbal wants to give this right to a popularly elected assembly, parliament, or *majlis-e shura*.

The task of this new *majlis-e shura* is not to advise the ruler, but to rule. It is allowed to function in three fields: to amend existing laws so that they conform to Islamic injunctions, to implement Islamic laws that are not being enforced, and to establish new laws that are not repugnant to the injunctions of Islam. The third field is more important, because it is more extensive. Iqbal contends that contemporary Muslims ought to follow 'Umar in achieving their objectives of comprehending the spirit of the Qur'an and the real message of Islam for humanity.

Iqbal insists that the right of *ijtihād* should be transferred from individual ulama to an elected assembly, which then should be the sole law-making body. He notes that, despite the ulama's conservatism, Muslims of the subcontinent are moving forward and it is the Shari'ah that has been made static or lagging behind. What he means here is that whenever Muslims raised their voices for the reconstruction or reinterpretation of Islamic law to suit the needs and requirements of the community, the ulama opposed them tooth and nail. As a result, and despite the ulama's opposition, Muslims have proceeded to move ahead, whereas the ulama have been left behind. Whenever Iqbal proclaims that Muslims are marching forward while the Shari'ah is static, he means that Muslims are not taking the Shari'ah along with them.

Iqbal is convinced that Islam contains a dynamic spirit within itself and that no one, with artificially imposed restrictions, can hinder its progress. He states categorically:

The claim of the present generation of Muslim liberals to reinterpret the foundational legal principles, in the light of their own experience and the altered conditions of modern life is, in my opinion, perfectly justified. The teaching of the Qur'an that life is a process of progressive creation necessitates that each generation, guided but unhampered by the works of its predecessors, should be permitted to solve its own problems.⁹

Who are the Muslim liberals? It appears that, for Iqbal, these are those Muslims who have a reformist approach toward the evolution of Islamic law. Anyway, whatever has been stated in this passage is unacceptable to any 'alim who has a conventional approach toward Islamic law. Therefore, Iqbal's proposed path for the freedom of ijtihad in the form of consensus and the dissemination of an enlightened or dynamic outlook in our legislative assemblies is, at this stage, not acceptable to our ulama, to the members of our law-making bodies, or to the Muslim masses. Muslims of the subcontinent may have attained political freedom, but their mentalities are still enslaved by their past. They are hostages of the needs and requirements of a Muslim community that existed centuries ago. When I proclaim that Imām Abū Ḥanīfah has stated thus regarding a particular legal issue, it means that Muslims do not need to go beyond his ruling on the matter, for he has already pondered the matter for all of us and for all time. But if I disagree and say that Muslims must exert, reconsider, and reinterpret that particular ruling because it is a problem specific to our age, I am confronted with a deluge of objections.

Although we claim that we are devoted to Islam, our community survives on double standards, for we are not courageous enough to pull ourselves out of the pit into which we have fallen and, at the same time, we do not like being considered cowards. Nations do not become emancipated only through attaining political freedom; real emancipation is achieved through the freedom of the mind, and that is the secret of the progress of nations.

Endnotes

1. Najmuddin Islahi, *Maktubat-e Sheikh-ul Islam* (Lahore: 1944), 3:141.
2. Ibid.
3. Makhzan (Lahore) October 1904. This article was reproduced in the Oriental College Magazine *Jashn-e Iqbal*, no., p. 19 (compiled by Dr. Ibadat Bareilly).
4. I could not find the original English version of this lecture. The English version presented in this article is from the Urdu translation.
5. Chaudhry A. L. Lalif, *Speeches, Writings, and Statements of Iqbal* (1974), 107-20.
6. See Iqbal's poem "Nala-e Iblees," *Javid Nama* (Lahore: Kulliyat-e Farsi, 1981), 725.
7. *Ghulamun ki Namaz* (Lahore: Zarb-e Kaleem Kulyat-e Urdu, 1984), 61-62.
8. *Reconstruction Lectures*, 179, 180.
9. *Reconstruction Lectures*, 168.