

# The Concept of Pakistan and Iqbal's Philosophy

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Iqbal's name has become inalienably linked with the concept of Pakistan. He was, of course, one of the pioneers of the independence movement which is also called the Pakistan Movement. In fact, in my judgment, it would be correct to say that if there had been no Iqbal there might well have been no Pakistan. The influence which Iqbal wielded - both over leaders and masses of Indian Muslims - was tremendous. He made an almost-sensational debut in 1900 when he read his poem "*Nala-e-Yatim*" (The Orphan's Lament) at the fifteenth annual meeting of the *Anjuman-e-Himayat-e-Islam* at Lahore. "*Nala-e-Yatim*" which was not remarkable as a poem had a remarkable response because it articulated poignantly the unspoken feelings and thoughts of those who came to listen to it. The "Orphan's Lament" was also the lament of Indian Muslims who felt desolate and powerless in an atmosphere of political, economic and cultural bondage. From that time onward Iqbal became the spokesman of his community's deeply-felt emotional and psychological needs and aspirations. But his poems did much more than merely reflect what Indian Muslims felt and thought. They also inspired and mobilized Muslim masses towards greater effort to liberate themselves from internal and external shackles. Iqbal's greatest gift as a poet was undoubtedly his ability to transform the despondent and inert Muslim masses into a surging wave of energy and activity. He touched not only their minds but also their heart and spirits.

Whatever inconsistencies critical scholars might find in Iqbal's thought, this fact cannot be gainsaid: no modern Muslim poet can compare with Iqbal in terms of the profound power to move which his poetry possesses. If Tennyson was right in saying, "The song that nerves a nation's heart is in itself a deed," then Iqbal was indeed an activist of the highest order. Not only did he set before Muslims the loftiest Islamic ideals, he also gave them the will to attain these ideals, believing firmly that a determined, disciplined seeker could find anything including God.

It was as a poet that Iqbal won the hearts of Indian Muslims but he also won their respect and trust because he was a man who could not be bought. With his fantastic talents Iqbal could have amassed worldly goods, power and prestige beyond the reach of most of his contemporaries. But he chose to live simply,

disdaining a life of glitter and glamour, of luxury and pomp. He was a visionary with a message and a mission and he remained faithful to his calling through all the vicissitudes of a life which was, by no means, free of difficulties and disappointments, hardship and heartache.

That Iqbal, the poet, who also became involved in local and national politics, played a pivotal role in the Pakistan Movement must, therefore, be unequivocally affirmed. But in its enthusiasm to make a political idol out of this great iconoclast, the Pakistanis have often tended to brush aside the major portion of his political philosophy, concentrating only on a few political ideas. This way of looking at his thought may have given Iqbal a place of distinction in the popular imagination, but it has resulted - on the whole - in gross misunderstanding of his work as a philosopher (particularly as a political philosopher). Iqbal became involved in politics because the most burning questions of his day were related, directly or indirectly to politics, and as E.M. Forster observed in 1920, "Poets in India cannot be parted from politics. Would that they could; but there is no hope in the present circumstances, one could as easily part Dante from Florence."<sup>1</sup> However, it is important to remember that Iqbal's interest in politics was secondary and not primary. In his historic address at Lahore, in 1932, he made this clear. He said:

Politics have their roots in the spiritual life of Man. It is my belief that Islam is not a matter of private opinion. It is a society, or if you like, civic Church. It is because present-day political ideals, as they appear to be shaping themselves in India, may affect its original structure and character that I find myself interested in politics.<sup>2</sup>

Though Iqbal participated in politics and had a well-defined political philosophy, he could hardly be regarded as a typical politician whose utterances and policies are determined, to a large extent, by motives of political expediency. Iqbal's philosophy is not derived from his politics. Rather, his political ideas are an integral part of his total philosophy and can only be understood correctly if studied in this context.

It is common practice to divide Iqbal's political philosophy into three phases, e.g. the nationalistic phase, the pan-Islamic phase and the last phase in which he became a leader of the Muslim independence movement. Sometimes the formula "nationalist-antinationalist-nationalist" is also used to describe the three phases of Iqbal's political thought. If one regards each phase as being quite distinct from, and independent of, the other phases, one must reach the conclusion that either Iqbal changed his political views with a rapidity which

would be astonishing even for a politician, or that he could not make up his mind and was inconsistent in what he said. If instead of seeing Iqbal first as a young poet with rather narrow parochial sympathies which-gradually widened into love of homeland and then gave way to loyalty to Islam, one sees Iqbal as a visionary whose ideal from first to last was the realization of the Kingdom of God on Earth, one would, I believe, be able to see the integrity of Iqbal's political ideas. Therefore, discarding familiar categorizations, let us begin at the beginning and look anew at the writings of Iqbal.

During the earliest (pre-1905) phase of his literary career, Iqbal wrote much "patriotic" poetry. According to him, "Patriotism is a perfectly natural virtue and has a place in the moral life of Man."<sup>3</sup> That Iqbal the young poet was a patriot, of this his early poetry leaves no doubt. That he remained a patriot is sometimes forgotten. There is truth in the observation that "Iqbal sprang up in the realm of Indian poetry as a bard of India and even after so many vicissitudes in his career when he left this earth on 21<sup>st</sup> April, 1938, remained a truly patriotic poet of India."<sup>4</sup> K. G. Saiyidain also challenges those critics who accuse Iqbal of lack of patriotism.<sup>5</sup> In *Javid Nama*, Iqbal reserves his severest condemnation for Mir Ja'far and Nawab Sadiq who betrayed his homeland. Iqbal's patriotism, thus, cannot be questioned, but patriotism is to be differentiated from "nationalism" because the latter implies an awareness of, and an involvement with, political theory or practice which may be entirely absent from the former.

During the pre-1905 period, the two things which stand out foremost in Iqbal's "political" poetry are

- (a) his desire to see a self-governing and united India country free both of alien domination and inner dissensions, in particular the Hindu-Muslim conflict; and
- (b) his constant endeavour to draw attention to those agencies of decay and degeneration which caused the decline of the Muslims in India.

Iqbal, the young poet, was deeply disturbed by the communal discord and distrust which he saw all around him. With his usual eloquence he cried out against the forces of disruption. No one was spared. The *Mulla* and the Brahman were criticized equally ruthlessly. From their gods they had learnt only hatred and hostility. Since the places of worship had been defiled by bickering and bitterness, a New Temple - a sanctuary of Love - had to be erected wherein all could worship. In "*Naya Shiwala*" (The New Temple) the

poet addressed the keepers of the temple and the mosque

آ، غہریت کے پردے اک بار پھر اٹھا دیں      بجھڑوں کو پھر ملا دیں نقشِ دوئی مٹا دیں  
سوئی پڑ ہوئی ہے مدت سے دل کے بستی      آ اک، نیا سٹوال اس دیس میں بنا دیں

(Bang-e-Dara, p. 86)<sup>6</sup>

Although the theme of this poem recurs in Iqbal's early verse, yet this poem is unique because it embodies a vision of universal love which is articulated not in general terms, as it is elsewhere in Iqbal's poetry, but in specifically Hindu vocabulary. Obviously this poem indicates the poet's eagerness to establish a medium of communication and spiritual rapport between Hindus and Muslims.

In "*Taswir-e-Dard*" (The Portrait of Pain), the poet "weeps" for Hindustan - a country whose people are lost in "tales of ancient days" and do not indulge even in "the joys of complaint." The poet expresses determination to string together the separated beads of the rosary, the religious association of the rosary-image making it clear what kind of "separation" the poet had in mind. In the name of the all-embracing principle of human love, the poet urges his compatriots to transcend prejudice and attain true freedom:

حو تو سمجھے تو ازادی ہے پوشیدہ محبت میں  
غلامی ہے اسیر امتیازِ ما و تو رہے۔۔۔۔۔

(Bang-e-Dara, p. 69)<sup>8</sup>

The poet asks

میرے اہلِ وطن کے دل میں کچھ فکرِ وطن بھی ہے

(Bang-e-Dara, p. 71)<sup>9</sup>

having already said

نہ سمجھو مجھے تو مہِ حاؤں کے ہے ہندوستان والو

(Bang-e-Dara, p. 64)<sup>10</sup>

The lesson which the poet wishes the people of India to learn is the lesson of

love and faith. Many years later when speaking of the problems of India, Iqbal wrote:

It is, and has always been, a question of faith. Our faith too depends on affection and understanding...what we need for a swift solution of the political problem of India is faith.”<sup>11</sup>

The idea behind the rosary-image is repeated in “*Sada-e-Dard*”<sup>12</sup> (The Cry of Pain), when the poet expresses his own helplessness and inability to achieve anything positive in a society divided against itself. He bewails the disunity of the Indian peoples:

ایک ہی خرم کے دانوں میں جدا ہے غم و غم

(Bang-e-Dara, p. 27)<sup>13</sup>

It seems as if Iqbal had not yet come to believe in Syed Ahmad Khan's “two-nation” theory according to which Hindu and Muslims were not, in fact, the “grains” of the same “harvest.”

Several of Iqbal’s poems addressed to children also embodied his belief that without national unity his larger purposes could not be actualized. The vision celebrated in “*Hindustani Bachon Ka Qaumi Geet*”<sup>14</sup> is again of the universal love, peace and goodwill. His “*Tarana-e-Hindi*”<sup>15</sup> (The Song of India) became the national anthem of India and according to Iqbal’s noted biographer Iqbal Singh, “remains to this day the best patriotic poem written by any Indian poet in modern times...nearest in fact, to a truly non-communal, national anthem of India.”<sup>16</sup> This poem did not contain a new message but its words were more explicit than they had been before:

مذہب نہیں سکھاتا آپر میں بے رکھنا  
ہندی ہیں ہم ، وطن ہے ہندوستان ہمارا

(Bang-e-Dara, p. 80)<sup>17</sup>

Perhaps it was the tragedy of Iqbal’s youth that the India mother-of-all ideal which meant so much to him was shattered before the children who sang his patriotic anthems grew to adulthood. Disillusionment came, as it must, when the fragile, starry-eyed idealism of youth is touched by the coldness of concrete reality.

While it is true that a number of Iqbal's early writings were devoted to the subject of India, it is not true that this is the only theme which interested him in the pre-1905 period. From 1900 to 1904, Iqbal read a poem at every annual meeting of the *Anjuman-e-Himayat-e-Islam* before large numbers of Muslims whose ideals and realities figured significantly in these poems.

Just as it is possible to glimpse Shelley's vision of Love through the turbulent pages of his first great poem "*Queen Mab*," it is possible to see Iqbal's vision of Love underlying the different poems of his youth. The young poet believed above all things in the principle of Love. When he looked around himself, he was struck most of all by two things - the hostility between Hindus and Muslims, and the political bondage of his Indian homeland. His vision of Love - of universal Love - could not be implemented, he thought, until Hindus and Muslims were able to resolve their differences, and until his country was free. (He was also inclined to think that the second was dependent on the first). The songs which he wrote on the theme of Hindu-Muslim unity, filled with the ardour of his feeling soul, resounded throughout the length and breadth of India.

The Temple of Love may be said to symbolize the first "phase" of Iqbal's writing career. E.M. Forster has not quite understood the nature of Iqbal's vision as bodied forth in this symbol for he described the New Temple as "The Temple of India" and observes, "the glory of the courtyard from Mecca shall inhabit the temple; the image in its shrine shall be gold inscribed Hindustan, shall wear both the Brahman thread and the Moslem rosary, and the *Muezzin* shall call Worshipers to prayer upon a horn."<sup>18</sup> The New Temple is in India, but it is not of India. Nor is it conceived by Iqbal as being emblematic of a faith composed of elements taken from different faiths, for such a faith would not be an organic unity, yet it would destroy the distinctness of either faith. The Temple is raised not to Hindustan, but to Love, which transcends the image in which it is expressed.

It is often said that Iqbal's thinking was completely changed by his confrontation with the Western civilization, that he gave up his "nationalism" in favour of "Pan-Islamism" more or less as a reaction to Western political theory and practice. A study of Iqbal's poetry written during the second phase of his writing (1905-1908) certainly shows signs of his recoil from the glamorous and materially prosperous West which he saw - with remarkable foresight - precariously poised on the verge of a cataclysm. To the inhabitants of the West, Iqbal made a prediction which came true to the last bitter syllable:

تمہاری تہذیب اپنے خنجر سے آپ ہی خود کشی کرے گی  
جو شاخ نازک پہ آشیانہ بنے گا ، ناپائیدار ہو گا

(Bang-e-Dara, p. 146)<sup>19</sup>

It is also apparent that during his stay in Europe, Iqbal thought much about the nature of Islamic community. However the most important point about Iqbal's second phase of writing - according to my judgment - is that almost all the poems written during this period are concerned with Love. This is no accident. As a poet, Iqbal believed in Love as a principle of eternity which in a world of ever-changing flux gave meaning and stability to human life. In the West, he became aware of the importance of Love, not only as a poetical, but also as a philosophical, concept. It was Love that was to be the informing vision giving unity to all his diverse writings. The young Iqbal had visualized a particular fulfilment of his universal vision of love in a united India. As his muse and his philosophic thought grew older he realized that unity in order to be real had to be organic. Even if it were possible to impose some kind of unity on the naturally ill-adjusted multiplicities of India, such unity would neither be real nor lasting. In his search for group with an inner cohesion, Iqbal began to concentrate more and more on the Islamic community. It was then that he wrote:

مہ جہند کے فرقہ ساز اقبالیال آدری مگر رہے ہیں سویا  
بجا کے دامن بتوں سے اپنا غبار راہ حجاز ہو جا

(Bang-e-Dara, p. 134)<sup>20</sup>

Between 1908 and 1938, Iqbal wrote all his major poetical works and his Lectures on *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. When he returned from Europe in 1908, a number of his most significant ideas had already emerged but these had yet to be developed into a consistent philosophy of life. He did not cease entirely to work and hope for the unification of India but now he could not think in terms of an "Indian" nation" "in view of India's infinite variety of climates, races, languages, and social systems."<sup>21</sup> Soon after his return to India, Iqbal wrote:

Islam is something more than a creed, it is also a community, a nation. The membership of Islam as a community is not determined by birth, locality or

naturalization. The expression “ Indian Muhammadan” however convenient it may be, is a contradiction in terms, since Islam in its essence is above all conditions of time and space. Nationality with us is a pure idea, it has no geographical basis. But in as much as the average man demands a material centre or nationality the Muslim looks for it in the Holy town of Mecca, so that the basis of Muslim nationality combines the real and ideal, the concrete and the abstract.<sup>22</sup>

The transition from India to Hijaz has been made and Iqbal has arrived, quite conclusively, at what is perhaps the most significant idea in his political philosophy - the extra-territorial, supra-national character of the Islamic community.

The obvious first corollary of this idea is the rejection of a social order which is subject to the limitations of territory or is nationalistic in outlook. But Iqbal was loath to reject anything outright. He admitted that “the idea of nationality is certainly a healthy factor in the growth of communities”<sup>23</sup> and also that it was not necessary to reject nationalism in all cases for it was not always inconsistent or incompatible with Islam. He said:

(Nationalism) comes into conflict with Islam only when it begins to play the role of a political concept and claims to be a principle of human solidarity demanding that Islam should recede to the background of mere private opinion and cease to be a living factor in the national life. In Turkey, Persia, Egypt, and other Muslim countries the Muslims constitute an over-whelming majority and their minorities, e.g., Jews, Christian and Zoroastrians, according to the law of Islam, are either “People of the Book” or “like the People of the Book,” with whom the law of Islam allows free alliances. It becomes a problem only in countries where they happen to be in a minority and nationalism, demands their complete self-effacement. In majority countries, Islam accommodates nationalism, for there Islam and nationalism are practically identical. In minority countries it is justified in seeking self-determination as a cultural unit. In either case it is thoroughly consistent with itself.<sup>24</sup>

One can think of many reasons for Iqbal’s repudiation of nationalism. The ravages of fierce nationalism which he had witnessed in the West had certainly something to do with it. Nationalism was considered by Iqbal to be “subtle form



of idolatry, a deification of a material object”<sup>25</sup> and consequently “what was to be demolished by Islam could not be made the very principle of its structure as a political community.”<sup>26</sup> Iqbal also considered nationalism a weapon of European imperialism whose aim was “to shatter the religious unity of Islam to pieces.”<sup>27</sup> There were, thus, several reasons for Iqbal’s negative attitude towards nationalism but perhaps his greatest difficulty in accepting the concept was due to the fact that “from nationalism thoughts naturally turn more towards the ideas that mankind has been so sharply divided into nations that it is impossible to bring about unity among them.”<sup>28</sup> Such a concept could not but be opposed to the universal nature of his vision.

Why did Iqbal move away from the concept of nationalism towards the concept of the Islamic community as a step towards the realization of his universal ideal? He did so because he believed that the Islamic “*millat*” “in its essence is non-temporal, non-spatial”<sup>29</sup> and possessed homogeneity. He said:

The Law of Islam does not recognize the apparent natural differences of race nor the historical differences of nationality. The political ideal of Islam consists in the creation of a people born of 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 particular people. The inner cohesion of such a nation could consist not in ethnic or geographic unity, not in the unity of language or social tradition but in the unity of the religious and political idea; or in the psychological fact of “like-mindedness.”<sup>30</sup>

This “like mindedness” of which Iqbal speaks, is a necessary condition for the fulfilment of his ideal. It was the lack of his “like-mindedness” - which implied unanimity of aim and purpose as well as mutual faith and goodwill - that made Iqbal doubt the efficacy of the ideal of nationhood for India. In 1909 he had written:

I have myself been of the view that religious differences should disappear from this country (India), and even now act on this principle in my private life. But now I think that the preservation of their separate national entities is desirable for both the Hindus and the Muslims. The vision of a common nationhood for India has a poetic appeal, but looking to the present conditions and the

unconscious trend of the two-communities, appears incapable of fulfillment.<sup>31</sup>

In 1927, he repeated the same thought: “The talk of a united nationalism is futile and will perhaps remain so for a long time to come. The word has existed on the lips of the people of this country for the last fifty years, and like a hen it has cackled a great deal without laying a single egg.”<sup>32</sup> The hen could lay no egg for “in this country one community is always aiming at the destruction of the other community. The present state of things is such that the communities do not trust each other, they have no faith in each other.”<sup>33</sup>

Having found no “like-mindedness” in India, Iqbal was driven to ask himself an important question: “Look at the history of mankind, it is an unending succession of deadly combats, blood feuds and internecine wars. Now the question arises as to whether in those circumstances it is possible to bring forth a community, the basis of whose collective life will be peace and goodwill.”<sup>34</sup> For reasons already mentioned, Iqbal came to believe that the Islamic community was such a community.

Iqbal had chosen the Islamic community as a gradual working out of his vision because “the ideal territory for this nation would be the whole earth,” but, surprisingly enough, for some it made his philosophy narrower in scope. For instance, Lowes Dickinson reviewing Iqbal’s *Asrar-e-Khudi*, said:

Thus while Mr Iqbal’s philosophy is universal, his application of it is particular and exclusive. Only Moslems are worthy of the Kingdom. The rest of the World is either to be absorbed or excluded.<sup>35</sup>

This, in fact, is not Iqbal’s position, for he says:

The humanitarian deal is always universal in poetry and philosophy, but if you make it an effective ideal and work it out in actual life you must start, not with poets and philosophers, but with a society exclusive in the sense of having a creed and well-defined outline, but ever-enlarging its limits by example and persuasion. Such a society according to my belief is Islam. This society has so far proved itself a more successful opponent of the race-idea which is probably the hardest barrier in the way of the humanitarian ideal...it is in view of practical and not patriotic considerations that I was compelled to start

with a specific society (e.g. Islam) which, among the societies of the world, happens to be the only one suitable to my purpose. All men and not Muslims alone are meant for the Kingdom of God on earth, provided they say goodbye to their idols of race and nationality and treat one another as personalities. The object of my Persian poems is not to make out a case for Islam; my aim is simply to discover a universal social reconstruction, and in this endeavour, I find it philosophically impossible to ignore a social system which exists with the express object of doing away with all the distinctions of caste, rank and race.<sup>36</sup>

Iqbal, then, sees no conflict between his commitment to Islam and his universal ideals because to him Islam is universal in essence. There still remains the question of the role he played in the Muslim political movement in India. How in the final analysis is it possible for his universalism to be compatible with nationalism and separatism which resulted in the creation of Pakistan? The answer to this question seems, in my opinion, to be as follows; having willed the end, he had to will the means to achieve the end.

The end for Iqbal is, of course, the perfection of the ego - both individual and communal. This perfection can be attained only through the development of the total Self. One of the special virtues of Islam - as Iqbal sees it - is that it does account of the organic unity of human life and does not seek to divide it into spiritual and material spheres. Islam, thus, was not "the private affair of the individual"<sup>37</sup> having nothing to do with temporal life, but "an individual experience creative of a social order."<sup>38</sup> Iqbal was convinced that "The religious ideal of Islam is organically related to the social order which is created. The rejection of one will eventually involve rejection of the other."<sup>39</sup>

For Iqbal "the ideal nation does already exist in germ"<sup>40</sup> but the germ had to grow. The seed needed air and sunshine in order to develop, and the individual needed the social security provided by the community. The community also needed something in order to develop itself. The development of the communal ego was similar to the development of ego-consciousness:

Just as in the individual life the acquisition of gain, protection against injury, determination for action and appreciation of higher values, are all dependent upon the

gradual development of the ego-consciousness, its continuity, enhancement and consolidation, similarly the secret of the life of nations and people depends on the same process, which can be described as the development, preservation and consolidation of the communal ego.<sup>41</sup>

Under what conditions could the communal ego develop itself? Iqbal believed that “Muslim society with its remarkable homogeneity and inner unity, has grown to be what it is under the pressure of the laws and institutions associated with the culture of Islam.”<sup>42</sup>

In an environment in which the spirit of the culture of Islam could not be fostered, the individual could not become “a living member of the Muslim community”<sup>43</sup> for in order to be that he “must thoroughly assimilate the culture of Islam. The object of the assimilation is to create a uniform mental outlook, a peculiar way of looking at the world, a certain standpoint from where to judge the value of things which sharply defines our community, and transforms it into a corporate individual giving it a definite purpose and ideal of its own.”<sup>44</sup>

The individual belonging to the Muslim community had also to preserve and imbibe its historical traditions for “the outfit of the individual belonging to the Muslim community must be mainly formed out of the material which the intellectual energy of his forefathers has produced so that he may be made to feel the continuity of the present with the past and the future.”<sup>45</sup>

The corner-stone of Iqbal’s philosophy is respect for humanity. He wanted to see human life take a stand on its own dignity. He had a horror of slavery and considered nothing so degrading and harmful for human personality as the domination of one person or group or nation by another. He says:

بتدگی میں گھٹ کر رہ جاتی ہے اک جوئے کم آب  
اور آزادی میں بحر بیکران ہے زندگی!

(Bang-e-Dara, p. 287)<sup>46</sup>

Iqbal’s ideal was universal and he wanted to see humanity linked together by ties of love and goodwill in spite of its distribution into groups by the exigencies of time and space. But in order to achieve this ideal it was necessary for each group to have self-determination. And owing to the social and political conditions that prevailed in the sub-continent, a community or group could be oppressed and

suppressed not only by a foreign imperialist power but also by another community or group within the country. Iqbal was convinced that it was necessary for Muslims in the sub-continent that they should be allowed to live their own lives preserving their religious and cultural identity. He once remarked:

It cannot be denied that Islam, regarded as an ethical ideal plus a certain kind of polity - by which expression I mean a social structure regulated by a legal system and animated by a specific ethical ideal - has been the chief formative factor in the life history of the Muslims of India. It has furnished these basic emotions and loyalties which gradually unify scattered individuals and groups and finally transform them into a well-defined people. Indeed it is no exaggeration to say that India is perhaps the only country in the world where Islam as a society is almost entirely due to the working of Islam as a culture, inspired by a specific ethical ideal.<sup>47</sup>

As is very obvious from Iqbal's writings, he felt very strongly about the preservation of cultural identity. For him "that which really matters is a man's faith, his culture, his historical tradition. These are the things which in my eyes, are worth living for and dying for, and not the piece of earth with which the spirit of man happens to be temporarily associated."<sup>48</sup>

Referring to a statement by J. L. Nehru, Iqbal said that if Nehru meant by nationalism, "the fusion of the communities in a biological sense," he could not subscribe to the idea of such a nation since he believed in the principle "that each group is entitled to free development on its own lines."<sup>50</sup> He attached so much importance to the preservation of cultural identity that he wrote, "In so far as India is concerned I can say with perfect confidence that the Muslims of India will not submit to any kind of political idealism which would seek to annihilate their cultural entity."<sup>51</sup>

To make possible the development of the communal ego of Muslims in India, it was necessary to achieve "self determination as a cultural unit"<sup>52</sup> for the Muslim community. One might say that to seek a cultural unit is, in fact, the same thing as seeking a political unit, if it involves distribution of territory. But there is a difference in intent. Political autonomy may be sought as an end in itself. On the other hand, it may be sought as a means to an end. For Iqbal, political power was not an end in itself. Rather, it was a means to secure for Indian Islam "opportunities to fulfil her destiny in this country."<sup>53</sup>

How could the destiny of Islam be fulfilled in India? The answer was not quite simple. There were socio-economic interests to be safeguarded, but there is no doubt as to the interest which Iqbal had upper-most in his mind. To M. A. Jinnah he wrote: "It is absolutely necessary to tell the world both inside and outside India, that the economic problem is not the only problem in this country. From the Muslim point of view the cultural problem is of much greater consequence to most Indian Muslims."<sup>54</sup>

Iqbal believed that "the Indian Muslim is entitled to full and free development on the lines of his own culture and tradition in his own Indian homelands."<sup>55</sup> But could this "right" be exercised in India? Less than a year before his death, Iqbal wrote to Jinnah: "the enforcement and development of the *Shar'iat* of Islam is impossible in this country without a free Muslim state or States."<sup>56</sup>

This realization inevitably led to another one: "the life of Islam as a cultural force in this country very largely depends on its centralization in a specified territory."<sup>57</sup> This centralization in a specified territory did not, however, extend as far as a sovereign state. The "consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State"<sup>58</sup> which appeared to Iqbal "to be the final destiny of Muslims at least of North-West India"<sup>59</sup> was to be part of a confederation, or a "Muslim India within India."<sup>60</sup>

As may be deduced from the foregoing account, In Iqbal's judgment there were substantial reasons for demanding a division of the sub-continent and a homeland for Muslims. First of all there was the question of religious protection for a community of over 80 millions, then there was a question of cultural protection and finally there was the question of state polity. Hindu leaders were keen on a secular state which meant a bifurcation between State and Church which was not acceptable to Muslims. However, even when faced with a desperate situation and with no alternative except the division of the country, Iqbal tried his best to discover alternatives. In a statement issued on 6, December, 1933 explaining the attitude of Muslim delegates to the Round Table Conference, Iqbal said: The Muslim wants safeguards not because he is afraid of democracy but because he has reason to be afraid of communal oligarchy in the garb of democracy in India. He wants to ensure the substance of democracy even at the expense of its conventional form."<sup>61</sup>

Iqbal went on to say:

In conclusion I must put a straight question to Pandit Jawaharlal. How is India's problem to be solved if the minority community will neither concede the minimum safeguards necessary for the protection of a minority of 80

million people nor accept the award of a third party; but continue to talk of a kind of nationalism which works out only to its own benefits? This position can admit of only two alternatives. Either the Indian majority community will have to accept for itself the permanent position of an agent of British Imperialism in the East or the country will have to be redistributed on a basis of religious, historical and cultural affinities so as to do away with the question of electorates and the communal problems in its present form.<sup>62</sup>

Since Iqbal was not alive in 1947 to see the actual creation of Pakistan, the question of whether he would have supported the idea of a sovereign Islamic state, must, in a sense, remain hypothetical. However, keeping in mind all that he wrote, it is almost certain that he would have done so. The question with him, had he been living in 1947, would not have been - as it had never been - of simply choosing between his loyalty to his Indian homeland and his loyalty to his co-religionists. Islam, to Iqbal, was the basis of an ideal society because it transcended all divisions and ideologies which divided humankind into belligerent camps. In India, Islam was in danger of being crushed out of existence and it was essential for the continuance and well-being of Islam in India that Muslims were allowed to preserve their cultural identity. Iqbal could not accept "a polity on national lines if it means a displacement of the Islamic principle of solidarity."<sup>63</sup> In his view such a polity would be "simply unthinkable to a Muslim."<sup>64</sup>

Referring to Iqbal, J.L. Nehru said: "Iqbal was one of the early advocates of Pakistan ... (but) His whole outlook on life does not fit in with the subsequent development of the idea of Pakistan or the division of India."<sup>65</sup> By "his whole outlook" Nehru probably meant Iqbal's constant reference to the universality of his ideal and his condemnation of nationalism as narrow political concept. But the idea of Pakistan as Iqbal conceived it did fit in with "his whole outlook" for it was a gradual working out of his ideal. To say that Iqbal is the "spiritual" founder of Pakistan is, therefore, justifiable. In the last, bitter years of his life, the preservation of Muslim identity in India did become Iqbal's overriding concern and he made vitally important contributions towards bringing about the intellectual and emotional awareness that led to the creation of Pakistan. It must be remembered, however, that Iqbal would not have regarded the creation of Pakistan as an end in itself. It would have been but a means to the end of realizing a universal vision of love and goodwill amongst all people. Just as Keats had continued to believe the principle of Beauty even as sickness and sorrow consumed his mortal self, so Iqbal continued to believe in the principle of Love through a life filled with many disappointments. The vision which animated him

remained constant though his voice became more solemn as the full-throated ease of the first fresh notes of his melody became laden with experience and the burden of prophecy.<sup>66</sup>



## END NOTES

1. Forster, E.M., "The Poetry of Iqbal," (Review of *The Secrets of the Self*), in *The Sword and the Sceptre*, edited by Riffat Hassan, Lahore, 1977, p. 279.
2. Vahid, S. A. (Editor), *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, Lahore, 1964, p. 288.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 197.
4. Chopra, H.L., "Iqbal and India," *Indo-Iranica*, Calcutta, June, 1961, Volume XV, p. 33.
5. Saiyidain, K.G., *Iqbal's Educational Philosophy*, Lahore 1961, p.227.
6. Come, let us lift the curtain of estrangement once again  
unite the parted ones once more, erase duality's stain;  
since long deserted are the dwelling-places of the heart,  
O come and let us, in this land, a New Temple erect.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.
8. In Love is hidden Liberty, if only you could see,  
and bondage is discrimination between you and me.
9. Have dwellers of my land any concern about their land?
10. If you do not learn, you will be annihilated, O People of India!
11. "Shamloo," (Editor), *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, Lahore, 1948, p.169.
12. pp. 29-30.
13. Woe, that there should be separation in one harvest's grains!
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 87-88.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
16. Singh, I., *The Ardent Pilgrim*, London 1951, pp. 24-25.

17. Religion does not teach that human beings should hate each other - all of us are Indians and our land is Hindustan.
18. "The Poetry of Iqbal," p. 281.
19. Your civilization with its own dagger will stab itself to death -  
A nest which is built on a feeble bough cannot be permanent
20. Idolatrous like Azar are the sect-makers of Hind;  
avoiding idols, in humility turn to Hijaz.
21. *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, p. 173.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
23. Iqbal, J., (Editor), *Stray Reflections*, Lahore, 1961, p. 95.
24. *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, pp. 287-88.
25. *Stray Reflections*, p. 26.
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, p. 237.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, p. 376.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
31. Iqbal quoted by Javid Iqbal in Introduction to *Stray Reflections*, p. xxi.
32. *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, p. 71.
33. *Ibid.*, pp 72-73.
34. Iqbal quoted by Vahid, S. A., in *Iqbal: His Art and Thought*, London, 1959, p. 237.
35. Dickinson, L., Review of *The Secrets of Self* in *The Sword and the Sceptre*, p. 289.

36. *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, pp. 98-99.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 163.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
41. Iqbal quoted in *Iqbal : His Art and Thought*, p.234.
42. *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, p. 162.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 379.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*, p. 381.
46. Enslaved, life is a little stream,  
but free, an ocean infinite
47. *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, p. 162.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 197.
49. *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, p.210.
50. *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, p.169.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 289.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 288.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 214
54. Jinnah, M.A., (Editor) *Iqbal's Letters to Jinnah*, Lahore, 1965, p. 14.
55. *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, p. 169.

56. *Iqbal's Letters to Jinnah*, p.18.
57. *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, p.171.
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*
60. *Ibid.*, p. 170.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 367
62. *Ibid.*
63. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
64. *Ibid.*
65. Nehru, J.L., *Discovery of India*, London, 1947, p. 298.
66. Hassan, R., *An Iqbal Primer*, Lahore, 1979, p. 244.

“The Concept of Pakistan and Iqbal's Philosophy,” in *Iqbal Congress Papers* (presented at the Second International Congress on Allama Muhammad Iqbal, 9-11 November, 1983), Punjab University, Lahore, November 1983, Volume II, pp. 283-303. A segment of this article had been published under the title “The Idea of Pakistan and Iqbal's Universalism” in *The Pakistan Review*, Lahore, Pakistan, Volume XVII, No. 4, April 1970, pp 10-13, and under the title of “Iqbal's Political Philosophy and the Concept of Islam,” in *The Muslim*, Islamabad, Pakistan, November 9, 1983, pp. 4-5.