

Views of 'Allā ma Muammad Iqbāl on some Religious Concepts: Tawhīd, Risālah, Ijtihād, and Ummah

Mosin Afzal Dīr*

ABSTRACT:

The poet-philosopher 'Allā ma Muammad Iqbāl (1877-1938), one of the most distinguished and dominant figures of 20th century, who belonged to a generation that was exposed to modern education, is one of those great scholars who have left a legacy behind to be followed by other scholars. He had a profound insight into the holy Qur'ān and Sunnah of the Prophet Muammad (PBUH) and had delved deep in the Western thought. His Islamic knowledge and his study of philosophy in the West equipped him with a good access to the sources of both Islam and Western modernism. His approach to Islam is thus on broader basis than that of the traditional theologians and the Western educated Muslims, as seen particularly in his "The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam".

In this direction, this paper discusses the views and thoughts, opinions and observations, of Iqbāl on four important Islamic concepts viz., Tawhīd, Risālah, Ijtihād (and Ijmā'), and Ummah respectively. All these concepts are of great importance in understanding Iqbāl's approach to Islam and Islamic fundamental and basic principles.

Key words: 'Allā ma Muammad Iqbāl, Islam, Tawhīd, Risālah, Ijtihād, Ijmā', Ummah.

Introduction:

'Allā ma Muammad Iqbāl (1877-1938) belonged to the age of early twentieth century. He had a profound insight into the holy Qur'ān and Sunnah of the Prophet Muammad (PBUH) and had delved deep in the Western thought. His Islamic knowledge and his study of philosophy in the West equipped him with a good access to the sources of both Islam and Western modernism. His approach to Islam is thus on broader basis than that of the traditional theologians and the Western educated Muslims. Iqbāl's later poetry particularly poetical works in Persian and the lectures, entitled "The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam" testifies to his objective and dynamics.

* Mosin Afzal Dīr, PhD Research Scholar, Department of Islamic Studies, Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), Aligarh – 202002, India. He is working on his PhD topic, from 2010, on "Concept of Religion in the Writings of 'Allā ma Muammad Iqbāl".

Keeping this in view, this paper discusses the views of Iqbal about four important Islamic concepts viz., *Tawhīd*, *Risālah*, *Ijtihād*, and *Ummah*. All these concepts are of great importance in understanding Iqbal's approach to Islam and Islamic fundamental and basic principles.

Iqbal's Views on the Concept of *Tawhīd*:

Islam is a revealed religion. God (Allah) revealed it through His Prophets from time to time and its final revelation came through Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It is based on the universal relation between God and man, God in His infinite nature and man in his profound human nature.

The primary and fundamental belief in Islam is the Unity and Sovereignty of Allah. He alone is the Creator and Maintainer of the whole world. He alone is worthy of all veneration, devotion and dedications. Every Muslim must seek His guidance and mercy because He is the only and Supreme Law-giver. His will is Supreme in this world and the world hereafter. He alone is the custodian and keeper of all sovereign prerogatives for a Muslim without any doubt. His control over the whole universe is complete and eternal.

The Qur'ān is full of references to the all-Pervading majesty and inalienable authority of God. It is to Him alone that heaven and earth, willingly or unwillingly must submit. His supremacy in every avenue of life is beyond any doubt. This reality is explained in the following verse of the holy Qur'ān:

“Lo: Your Lord is Allah who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then mounted He the Throne. He covereth the night with the day, which is in haste to follow it and hath made the sun and the moon and stars subservient by His command. His verily is all creation and commandment”.¹

The Omnipotence of God can be further illustrated by the fact that every chapter of the holy Qur'ān with the exception of the 9th, opens with the verse “In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful”.

The conception of God is a primordial concept which has existed in man right from his creation. The Greeks, Muslims and the modern Europe have evolved it in their own system of thought. Its theistic and philosophical approaches appeared from various quarters which got further reviewed and reinterpreted in the subsequent times. Muhammad Iqbal stands one among those geniuses whose attempts in this field are distinguished and significant.²

Iqbal's perception of God is the conception of God in Islam. As such he is a monotheist, and this monotheism, Unity of God, forms the central core of his philosophy. Though in the history of Muslim philosophy we find some

Muslims stressing upon some particular aspect of the Ultimate Reality, God, the comprehensive view of Islamic theism is not difficult to comprehend.³ In his conception of God, Iqbal rejects the traditional arguments of western thought – cosmological, ontological, and teleological arguments. He criticizes them on their having logical inconsistencies and deficient view of God.⁴

Islam stresses upon both the transcendent and immanent aspects of God. In Islam, God is transcendent as well as immanent, and yet neither one nor other. Of the two aspects Iqbal emphasizes transcendence over immanence, for immanence leads to denial of finite existence which is the basis of Iqbal's philosophy.

According to Iqbal, God is a person or an Ego. He says: "Our criticism of existence reveals the Ultimate Reality to be a rationally directed life which, in view of our existence of life, cannot be conceived except as an organic whole, a something closely knit together and possessing central point of reference".⁵

The personality of the Ultimate Ego involves creativeness, omniscience, omnipotence and eternity. God is essentially a creative reality and His creativeness is infinite. To God creation is the unfoldment of his own inner possibilities.⁶

God is Omniscient. This means that He sees the entire sweep of history in one indivisible act of perception. It does not mean that everything is already fixed and given and God has to take note of it. His perception is not a perception of something outside Himself. God is a living, creative being. He creates as He knows, and He knows, as He creates. His knowledge is creational.⁷

God is omnipotent. This means that He is the owner of unlimited power. But this power is not blind and capricious. In a sense He is also limited – limited by His wisdom and goodness. To quote Iqbal's own words: God's infinite power is not revealed in the arbitrary and the capricious but in the recurrent, the regular and the orderly.⁸ This limitation however, does not make Him impotent or powerless, because His power is inherently related to His wisdom and His goodness.

God is eternal. Eternity as applied to God means time without beginning and end. Time as applied to phenomena means change and succession. This is serial time. But time in relation to God is pure duration time without change. In relation to Him there is neither beginning nor end of time. He is an all comprehensive self who holds the entire sweep of history as a moment in His inner life.⁹

In his illustration of the conception of God, Iqbal substantiates his arguments through the Qur'anic verses, in the very beginning of his second lecture in the *Reconstruction*;¹⁰ he refers to the following verse of the Qur'an to

point out the all-embracing nature of God: "He is the First, and the Last and the Evident and the Hidden and He is the Knower of everything."¹¹

The above verse provides a clue to Iqbḡl in conceiving God as an all-inclusive Ego, Who is the Eternal, the last, the visible, the invisible and the all knowledge.¹²

In short, thus, for Iqbḡl God is an Absolute Ego, ever active and creative from eternity. Every moment He is in a new state of glory. The movement of His action is not from less perfect, His is the perfection of creativity and dynamic activity themselves. Iqbḡl's God is not an absentee Lord in the sense that He created the universe once for all and is now on a long holiday. He adds to His creation what He wills, and He is perpetually creating the universe anew, every moment of His being.

Precisely, it can be said that Iqbḡl elucidates his conception of God through ontological and teleological arguments but with a different spirit which is not found in their traditional western orientation. He individualizes existence in terms of the ego and conceives God as Supreme Ego, who is further perceived in terms of His attributes of Eternity, omnipotence, omniscience, Love and creativity.¹³

Iqbḡl glorifies eternal creativity of God and the continuous growing of the universe. God's attributes of knowledge, love, beauty, etc., are revelations and manifestations of Divine Reality. The self disclosure of Divine personality imparts existence of finite reality, not as His opposite 'other self' but an organic unity. In spite of this, Divine Reality is wholly perfect, all-embracing and transcendental and stands over and above to the finite whom it directs and sustains vitally and purposefully.¹⁴

According to Iqbḡl, *Tawḡīd* is not merely an abstract phenomenon, meant for theological hair-splitting. It is a principle which can be usefully implemented in the life of the *Ummah* (community). *Tawḡīd* preserves the religious entity of the Muslim community, and the community exists to translate the concept into reality. In Iqbḡl's opinion, a faith in the unity and sovereignty of God, assures oneness and harmony among human beings. Iqbḡl had summed up this aspect of *Tawḡīd* in the following words:

"The new culture finds the foundation of world-unity in the principles of '*Tawḡīd*'. Islam, as a polity, is only a practical means of making this principle a living factor in the intellectual and emotional life of mankind. It demands loyalty to God, not to thrones. And since God is the ultimate spiritual basis of all life, loyalty to God virtually amounts to

man's loyalty to his own ideal nature".¹⁵

'There is no god but God' is the glorious principle of a Muslim's life. Iqbal is never tired of emphasizing this. In this brief statement of an invigorating principle he finds infinite wisdom and eternal instruction for mankind. For an individual Oneness (*Tawhīd*) of God guarantees independence from human will. A person with a firm faith in God cannot be intimidated by any human being. Fear of any other kind except of God, has been denounced by Iqbal in unequivocal terms. Fear of God creates a purpose in life, while fear of others starves life of all its meaning and purpose. Fear of God is the essence of Faith. *Tawhīd* in essence is the core of religion, and religion according to Iqbal is synonymous with life itself.

Iqbal's faith in God was so complete and firm that if he ever came to know or heard that Muslims were deviating from the right path or drifting towards unbelief, he felt deeply distressed. He once came to know that at Aligarh an 'Anti-God' society had been found. In a letter to Syed Nazim he admitted that the news kept him awake the whole night and after morning prayers, out of sheer helplessness and agony, he wept.¹⁶

Iqbal's Stand on Concept of the Prophethood (*Nabuwah*)

As a scholar of Islamic ideology, Iqbal speculated deeply on the life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). As his thought built up and matured, the character and personality of the Prophet became the primal subject of his poetic and philosophic brilliance. Especially during the final stage of his life, his correspondence, private debates and poetry largely revolved around the Prophet as a perfect human being.

Within the general mass of mankind, the founders of great religions absorb a place of predominant grandness. Their messages, the ways of their worldly existence, their sayings, character and behaviour, all establish a repeated source of enlightenment and guidance to their followers. In the existing history of humans, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad (PBUH) are the great historical figures, whose teachings guide the huge majority of people in the world. At several places in the Qur'an a reference is made to many Prophets who come to guide humankind:

"When Allah made (His) covenant with the Prophets, (He said): Behold that which I have given you of the scripture and knowledge".¹⁷

"And when we exacted a covenant from the Prophets, and from thee (O Muhammad) and from Noah and Abraham and Moses and Jesus son of Mary, we took from them a solemn covenant".¹⁸

The main mission of a Prophet is to encounter and fight against the powers of darkness and vice to guide people to the ideals of highest good in life. Bliss Kathleen has outlined this mission by stating that “the task of the Prophet is to recall man to religion in its highest form and aspiration towards the love of the good and the pursuit of it by hard endeavour”.¹⁹

Every *Nabī* (Prophet) is a reformer, but not every reformer is a *Nabī* (Prophet). Ghazālī has expressed that Prophets are chosen by God by His own Divine will to inform people about the spirit of the conditions, so that they can lead a life of happiness. He states:

“Since God on High and Predestined that some of a man’s actions and circumstances will cause him happiness and others unhappiness, and since no man can himself recognize which these actions and circumstances are, God on High in the exercise of His favour and mercy created angels and commanded them to disclose this secret to persons whose happiness He had determined since eternity, namely Prophets”.²⁰

At other place Ghazālī has remarked that *Nabuwwah* (Prophethood) is a grace of God. It cannot be assumed by human efforts: “*Nabuwwah* (Prophethood) is above the general mass of humanity in manner as human beings are superior to animals – it is a benediction of God, it cannot be acquired by hard work, cultivation and education”.²¹ The holy Qur’ān has justified the superiority and importance of the Prophet in the life of the Believers as follows: “The Prophet is closer to the believers than their selves”.²²

The Muslims are profoundly attached to the Prophet, because the Prophet’s life grasped all aspects of human world. His figure is more than that of a mere revealer of the truth of God and a re-claimer of evil-doers to the path of uprightness. He led the humankind in all the aspects of life. As a leader of men, a commander of armies, a statesman *par-excellence*, a communicator of pacts, a moralist of the highest standard, and a humanist who always believed in terms of the sake of humanity, he left a lasting label on all working aspects of Muslim society.

Iqbāl in his very early career was certain that the holy Prophet was the greatest liberator of mankind. He expressed his faith in an article entitled *Qaumī Zindagī* (National life) in the following words:

“The Prophet of Arabia was the first to preach man’s natural right to freedom and issued injunctions, that the rights and privileges of masters and slaves were the same. This was a

social revolution, whose impact is being felt even in the world of today. What was the result of this auspicious teaching of the Prophet? In Muslim history slaves became kings and Prime Ministers".²³

At the early age of Islam, the social system of world was herded with injustices. The holy Prophet destroyed all obstacles to human equality. He brought back unity. His message terminated anarchy, trouble, and disorder, which resulted from inequalities based on race, heredity and other traditional kinships.²⁴

Iqbal believes with firmness that no community can live on without prophetic mission. Even if the people of a community are educated in highly organized academics, their minds and souls can still be best taught by the guidance and direction of a Prophet. Iqbal's thought about Prophethood was that a Prophet while putting the base of a community perceives entirely the spiritual and real aspects of life.²⁵

Iqbal had firm faith in the mission and intent of his community. According to him the Muslim Community is the last of the great communities to emerge out of the Prophetic mission, and he was of the firm belief of its existence to be the watermark of human achievements.²⁶

There is another work in which Iqbal approached to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), entitled "*Pas Cheh Bayed Kard*".²⁷ In this *Mathnawi*, Iqbal analysed the educational and instructional aspects of Prophethood under the title *Hikmat-i-Kalim*. The initial sixteen verses are dedicated to Prophethood while the remaining sixteen verses emphasized that if the Muslims really want to achieve the destination they must act upon the commandments or teachings of the holy Prophet. This poem completely incarnates some of the prominent aspects of Iqbal's philosophy about Prophethood.

Iqbal perceived the holy Prophet as *Insaan-i-Kamil* (The Perfect Man) and *Nabuwwah* as a lively root of direction and guidance to Muslims for all times to come. Iqbal was intellectually true in stating that he was not a theologian or jurist as understood in the technical vocabulary of Islam, but his comprehension of the circumstances of the Muslim world was mysterious and wide enough to affirm his belief that Prophethood was a sheer requirement for Islam, though the Prophet had to have the magnificence of achievements and the core of these achievements was power and determination.²⁸

Iqbal remained an ardent advocate of the Perfection of the Prophethood and his teachings and message in his entire life. He never tolerated any attack on the character of the holy Prophet or any heretical interpretation of the meanings of the holy Qur'an. Iqbal as a sincere follower and devotee had

a firm trust in the finality of Prophethood.²⁹ According to Iqbal, the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) is an ideal to be followed in leading a life of virtue, goodness and courage. The blessings and excellences of the Prophet (PBUH) constitute an ever-lasting source of aspiration for humanity.

Iqbal came to the conclusion that the Muslims should gain power and success and in order to gain a distinct place for themselves in this world and hereafter, they must have faith in God and follow the life of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH).³⁰

Iqbal's Observations on *Ijtihad* and *Ijmā'*:

Iqbal is undoubtedly among the greatest advocates of *Ijtihad*. In his writings he has examined this theme very frequently, and considers that failure to practice *Ijtihad* has been one of the major causes of the decline of the Muslims.

Ijtihad in general means the Arabic word that denotes the utmost effort, physical or mental, expended in a particular activity. In its technical legal connotation, it denotes the thorough exertion of the jurist's mental faculty in finding a solution for a case of law.³¹

Iqbal has taught us to accept the doctrine of *Ijtihad* as the "Principle of movement in the structure of Islam" and it is our duty to think clearly about the validity of some of the 'solutions' of our present day problems that are being daily advertised for our acceptance.³²

According to Iqbal, *Ijtihad* is a dynamism, mobility and creative spirit of Islam. To him, it reconciles the categories of permanence and change in life and represents spiritual eternity which manifests through variety and change. The principle of movement in the structure of Islam is entitled by Iqbal as *Ijtihad*. Iqbal defines *Ijtihad* both literally and as a legal term of Islam. According to Iqbal, the word literally means "to exert. In the terminology of Islamic law it means to exert with a view to form an independent judgment on a legal question".³³

Regarding *Ijtihad*, Iqbal traces its origin from a well-known Qur'anic verse: "And to those who exert We show Our Path".³⁴

He also quotes a *hadith* of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) as to illustrate the meaning of *Ijtihad*. In this *hadith* when Ḥārith Muḥadh was appointed ruler of Yemen, the Prophet is reported to have asked him as to how he would decide matters coming up before him. Ḥārith Muḥadh replied "I will judge matters according to the book of God". The Prophet (PBUH) asked him, "If the Book of God contains nothing to guide you?" "Then I will act on the Precedents of the Prophet of God". "But if the Precedents fail?" "Then I will exert

to form my own judgment.”³⁵ This exertion to form independent judgment on a situation is the essence of *Ijtihād* to Iqbal. This independent thinking does not mean its independence of the Qur’ān and the Sunnah. The Qur’ān and the Sunnah are its proper limits.³⁶

It is a well-known fact that Iqbal was a great philosopher and poet. Regarding *Ijtihād*, Iqbal’s views are vast. According to Iqbal,

“The ultimate spiritual basis of all life, as conceived by Islam, is eternal and reveals itself in variety and change. A society based on such a conception of Reality must reconcile, in its life, the categories of permanence and change. It must possess eternal principles to regulate its collective life; for the eternal gives us a foothold in the world of perpetual change. But eternal principles when they are understood to exclude all possibilities of change which, according to the Qur’ān, is one of the greatest ‘signs’ of God, tend to immobilize what is essentially mobile in its nature. The failure of Europe in the political and social science illustrates the former principle, the immobility of Islam during the last 500 years illustrates the latter. What, then, is the principle of movement in the structure of Islam? This is known as ‘*Ijtihād*’.”³⁷

The general belief among Muslims is that *Ijtihād* initiated with the formation of *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence) under the founders of the four schools of *Fiqh*. It is a well known fact that from the very beginning of Islam, some learned companions of the Prophet (PBUH) did exercise independent judgment. Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and Ali did exercise *Ijtihād*. ‘Aḥmad ḥanafī, Ibn ‘Abbās and Ibn ‘Umar are among the earliest *mujtahids* of Islam. The decisions they made were not contrary to the Qur’ān and Sunnah of the Prophet.³⁸

This is a well known fact that in the second century AH, there arose the four great schools of Muslim jurisprudence which made great use of *Ijtihād* and evolved several methods of exerting independent judgment. They are namely as: ḥanafī (founded by Abū ḥanafī); Malīkī (founded by Imam Mālik); Shafī‘ī (founded by Imam Shafī‘ī); and Hanbalī (founded by Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal). But the more tragic incident in the history of Islam after them was the closing of so-called the “door of *Ijtihād*”.

It is not possible to find out why after the third century AH, *Ijtihād* disappeared. But this is quite certain that later for centuries scholars refused to interpret the law according to their own reason. They completely relied on the earlier *mujtahids*. Later Ibn Taymiyyah (d.728) made a great effort to revive

Ijtihād. For every Judgment he went back to the original sources.³⁹ But after his death, till the middle of the eighteenth century the Muslims did not produce any special exponent of *Ijtihād*.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, Shāh Waliullah Dehlawi tried to reinstate reason and individual judgment. It is generally regarded that Iqbal was influenced by Shah Waliullah's movement.

Iqbal had a good Qur'ānic knowledge; he never professed himself as a theologian. He was too rational, and his thinking too poetic and imaginative. His professional and poetic quests did not give him enough time to search the depths of religious disputations, which had been ramping in Islamic history for centuries. On religious issues he always consulted the 'ulamā' and sought their advice and guidance. He remained in perpetual touch with Syed Sulaymān Nadvi. Most of his letters he used to send to Syed Sulaymān Nadvi consisted enquiries on religious matters.⁴⁰

According to Iqbal, religion is a vitalizing force. It provides stability and adaptability to society. After observing the situation of the Muslims, Iqbal sees *Ijtihād* the only way to save Muslims from the stagnation which had divested them in the world.⁴¹ Iqbal always believed the scope of *Ijtihād* is enormous. Justice, equity, public opinion, public interest, social usage and customary behaviour are all proper areas from which a *mujtahid*, in the light of his elucidate common sense and knowledge of the fundamentals of the Islamic law, can derive relevant information to reinterpret the religious and social matters.

Iqbal emphasized the need of stability and adaptability of Islamic doctrines in modern times. In his *Reconstruction*, he has talked about the *Ijtihād* with considerable expression and originality, specifying it as "the principle of movement in the structure of Islam".⁴² Iqbal points out that the four schools of Muslim jurisprudence recognize the following three degrees of *Ijtihād*:

1. Complete authority in legislation which is practically confined to the founders of schools;
2. Relative authority which is to be exercised within the limits of a particular school; and
3. Special authority which relates to the determining of the law applicable to a particular case left undermined by the founders.⁴³

Iqbal's concern is here with the first degree, that is, complete authority in legislation. Such authority in his opinion is accepted by the Sunnis, but no individual has exercised it since the establishment of the schools of *Fiqh*. He points out that "such an attitude seems exceedingly strange in a system of law

based mainly on the ground work provided by the Qur'ān which embodies an essentially dynamic outlook on life."⁴⁴

Iqbal is of the opinion that human affairs cannot be conducted by eternally rigid principles. According to him, there should be certain permanent values, but at the same time there ought to be a provision for change, so that life does not stagnate.⁴⁵

Iqbal sees the modern Turkish Liberal Movement with great interest and anxiety. He welcomes its religio-political thought which was put forward by the Religious Reform party of Turkey as against the Turkish Nationalist party. The latter stood for the separation of religion from politics. The opinions of the leader of Turkish Religious party, Syed Halim Pasha, on Islamic dynamism and universalism are accepted by Iqbal, but he is not satisfied with their direction of *Ijtihad*. On the whole, Iqbal is optimistic towards this liberal movement of Turkey and sees it as an inspiration to the re-operating of the door of *Ijtihad* in the modern times.⁴⁶ Regarding this Turkish experiment, Iqbal concludes his remarks by saying: "The truth is that among the Muslim nations of today, Turkey alone has shaken off its dogmatic slumber, and attained to self-consciousness".⁴⁷

Thus, without any doubt, it can be said that *Taqid* (Blind following) is contrary to religion, after analyzing Iqbal's writings. Iqbal is of the opinion that the finality of the Qur'ānic message did not intend that the contingents which were exercised to apply the basics of Islam in the past, under different circumstances, were to be binding for all times to come.⁴⁸ He is of the opinion that *Ijtihad* is an integral part of the principle of movement.

Iqbal also accepted *Ijma'* as the "most important legal notion in Islam",⁴⁹ which remained practically a mere idea, and rarely assumed the form of a permanent institution in any Islamic country. It is, however, extremely satisfactory to note, argues Iqbal, that the "pressure of new world forces and the experience of European nations are impressing on the mind of modern Islam the value and possibilities of the idea of *Ijma'*".⁵⁰ That is to say, Iqbal interpreted and redefined *Ijtihad* and *Ijma'*, suggesting that the right to interpret Islam for the community be transferred from the *'ulama* to a national assembly or legislature. This collective or corporate consensus would then constitute the authoritative consensus of the community. In his own words:

"The transfer of the power of *Ijtihad* from individual representatives of [classical] schools [of law] to a Muslim legislative assembly which, in view of the growth of opposing sects, is the only possible from *Ijma'* can take in modern

times, will secure contributions to legal discussion from laymen who happen to possess a keen insight into the affairs".⁵¹

This, he considers, is the only way towards new avenues, new opportunities and new possibilities. Iqbal's special contribution to the development of Muslim legal thought was the re-establishment of the principle he advocated, i.e. the enlargement of the scope and authority of *Ijmā'*. His view was quickly accepted by the Westernized Muslim intelligentsia in the Sub-Continent and came to be equated with public opinion and parliamentary institutions.

Thus, Iqbal, like other Muslim modernist thinkers, was determined and strong-minded and he stimulated, in the real sense, new thinking on contemporary issues demonstrating that Islam is a dynamic religion that calls for continuing intellectual review of both normative and historical Islam. Iqbal enshrined the progressive spirit of Islam, for the intellectual, moral and social regeneration, in the hearts of millions through his passionate poems; and he remains, even to this day, a source of inspiration and empowerment for those who want to create communities and societies that embody the highest ideals and best practices of Islam. Iqbal's special contribution to the development of Muslim legal thought was the re-establishment of the right to interpret Islam through *Ijtihād*, "the principle of movement in Islam" and the enlargement of the scope and authority of *Ijmā'*, "the most important legal notion in Islam".

Iqbal recommended reinterpretation of the Islamic principles so that they could guide mankind under changed conditions. According to Iqbal, *Ijtihād* is a tool of modification, a movement towards advancement and a joint between lasting values and demands of the varying surroundings of life.

Iqbal's Concept of *Ummah*:

The term *Ummah*, frequently interpreted as "Muslim community", designates a basic concept in Islam. The Qur'anic concept of *Ummah*, occurring sixty four times in the holy Qur'an, mostly designates a people to whom a Prophet was sent by God or a people who are objects of a divine plan of salvation. According to these analyses, the term *Ummah* refers to a single group sharing commonly religious orientation.⁵²

As Community is generally defined a group of people organized together in a space-time, so the Islamic community is one where its members share Islamic principles and duties in common. It is different from 'nationality' in the western sense of the term because it is against the territorial boundaries.⁵³ The Qur'anic words for Islamic community are '*ummah*' and '*millah*'. Following

verse of the Qur'ān bear the wide and comprehensive nature of Islamic community: "Let there be of you an ummah which calls for the good, enjoins the good workers and prohibits the works of evil. Those are truly felicitous."⁵⁴

According to Iqbal "Islam is non-territorial in character, and its aim is to furnish a model for the final combination of humanity".⁵⁵ This community is of unique character in terms of its good and felicity and has its heritage in the past traditions of Prophets (AS). Iqbal's use of 'millah' in his Urdu and Persian poetical works and 'community' in his English writings is in this Qur'ānic sense.

On the basis of this Qur'ānic version Iqbal develops his theory of Islamic community in logical and systematic manner and exposes its dynamics both to psychological and moral spheres of life for the actualization of the will of God.

Iqbal believes in the universality of the *Ummah* (Muslim community) and is of the view that the body and soul of the *Ummah* are composed of a belief in the unity of God, and this very unity is the basis of the affinity of thought among Muslims. In similar manner *Risālah* (Prophethood) creates a spirit of oneness among the Muslims. It is because the Muslims received the message of God and the mission of life through the Holy Prophet. In the view of Iqbal the commonness and solidarity of the Muslim *Ummah* depends on Prophethood and that millions of Believers and joined together into one religion because of the Holy Prophet. The whole Muslim *Ummah* draws inspiration from him.⁵⁶

The main result of *Tawhīd* and *Risālah* is that the *Ummah* is not circumscribed by territorial limitations. A Muslim does not belong to India, Rome, or Syria. His destiny is Islam; in other words, the *Ummah* demands unity of hearts and belief rather than that of race or territory.⁵⁷

This shows that Iqbal's concept of *Ummah* is a universal community of Believers, crossing all barriers of caste, colour, race, nationality and territory.

According to Iqbal, the community is an entity which all its functions and activities is motivated by power and a spirit of triumph. The unity acquired through the emergence of several individuals gives the community a unique personality of its own.⁵⁸ Iqbal's theory of *Ummah* owes much to his concept of ego (self). Ego to Iqbal is the awareness of the individual about his own position and potentialities.⁵⁹ According to him, a nation also has its Ego, which has all the attributes of the individual Ego. Vigour, force, power, determination, will to rise and move forward, and courage to fight, are the characteristics of the collective Ego of the community. Iqbal has drawn a graphic picture of the Muslim community in his famous poem entitled *Shikwah* (Complaint). In this poem he states that the Muslim *Ummah* at the time when it was endowed with a sense of

purpose and spirit of triumph, during this period, though small in number, the Muslims fought with power and vigour to spread the message of God. They never hesitated to shed their blood provided the cause was righteous and the mission devoid of all ulterior motives.⁶⁰

Iqbal put forward ideals and the principles of Muslim *Ummah* with full efficacy in his poetical and prose works. In the eye of Iqbal, *Tawḥīd* (oneness of God), *Risālah* (prophethood) and *Akhuwwah* (brotherhood) are the foundational principles of Muslim *Ummah*.

Regarding *Tawḥīd*, Iqbal means stickness to the belief in one God (Allah), single value, single truth and moving forward to this single Divine goal. *Tawḥīd*, states Iqbal, is the fundamental principle that unites Muslims in a single community where they can have a proper and full expression of their divinely conscious life. Firm faith in *Tawḥīd* transforms uniformity in both thought and deeds of the members of the community.⁶¹ Following verse of the holy Qur'ān refer to this ideal of the community: "Truly, this your *Ummah* is one religion, and I am your Lord, therefore worship Me."⁶²

According to Iqbal, *Tawḥīd* is the basic and fundamental principle that unites the entire Islamic world. Iqbal's second basic guiding principle of Muslim *ummaḥ* is *Risālah* (Prophethood). Iqbal had a firm conviction in *Risālah*.⁶³ Iqbal views that it is an important duty to illustrate the truth and the validity of prophethood and its finality in the raising of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH).⁶⁴ Iqbal was against the materialistic ideals of the secular community, based on country, race and language and stands for *Tawḥīd* preached by Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) and considers it the solid and valid fabric of Islamic community.⁶⁵

Iqbal considers the basis of Muslim *Ummah* in the adherence to Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) by stating:

"The essential difference between the Muslim community and other communities of the world consists in our peculiar conception of nationality. It is not the unity of language or country or the identity of economic interest that constitutes the basic principle of our nationality. It is because we all believe in a certain view of the universe, and participate in the same historical tradition that we are members of the society founded by the Prophet of Islam. Islam abhors all material limitations, and bases its nationality on a purely abstract idea, objectified in a potentially expansive group of concrete personalities. It is not dependent for its life

principle on the character and genuine of a particular people, in its essence it is non-temporal, non-spatial".⁶⁶

Another basic and important principle of Muslim *Ummah* is *Akhuwwah* (Brotherhood). Humankind, an entity of interrelationships and the Islam's guidance, is of full significance in this domain. *Akhuwwah* (Brotherhood) is thus taught to make more firm equality, peace and harmony in the world. It teaches love and brotherhood among believers and is sought to realize the God's will in all spheres of life harmoniously. *Akhuwwah* does not teach material dominance and pride of one over the other Muslim. In terms of faith and moral obligations the whole Muslim world is interrelated.⁶⁷ This ideal of *Akhuwwah* is repeatedly propounded in the writings of Iqbal both in poetry and prose.

Iqbal states in this regard in the following verse:

This is the destiny of nature; this is the secret of Islam;
World-wide brotherhood and abundance of love;
Break the idols of colour and blood and become lost in the
community;
Let neither || urrians, nor Iranians nor do Afghans remain.⁶⁸

Iqbal talks of this ideal dynamically and vigorously. In his "Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal", he states:

"Islam is a unity in which there is no distinction, and this unity is secured by making men believe in two simple propositions – the unity of God and the mission of the Prophet propositions which are certainly of supernatural character but which, based as they are on the general religious experience of mankind, are intensely true to average human nature. Now this principle of equality of all believers made early Muslims the greatest political power in the world. Islam worked as a living force; it gave the individual a sense of his inward power; it elevated those who were socially low".⁶⁹

This is how Iqbal defines the Muslim *Ummah*.

Conclusion:

From the above assessment of Iqbal's views on various religious concepts, it is obvious that his great emphasis on *Tawhīd* can acquire better perspective. Religion is a collection of Divine commands and injunctions, as such ethical values enunciated by it are bound to be eternal. The fear of God would be a constant check upon human conscience to remain within the limits set by the high principles of morality.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), according to Iqbal, is an ideal to be

followed in leading a life of virtue, goodness and courage. The blessings and excellences of the Prophet (PBUH) constitute an ever-lasting source of aspiration for humanity. Iqbal concluded that the Muslims should gain power and success and in order to gain a distinct place for themselves in this world and hereafter, they must have faith in God and follow the life of the Prophet Muḥammad.

Regarding *Ijtihād* and *Ijmā'*, Iqbal, like other Muslim modernist thinkers of his era, was determined and strong-minded and he stimulated, in the real sense, new thinking on contemporary issues demonstrating that Islam is a dynamic religion that calls for continuing intellectual review of both normative and historical Islam. Iqbal enshrined the progressive spirit of Islam, for the intellectual, moral and social regeneration, in the hearts of millions through his passionate poems; and he remains, even to this day, a source of inspiration and empowerment for many as well, across the globe. Iqbal's special contribution to the development of Muslim legal thought was the re-establishment of the right to interpret Islam through *Ijtihād*, "the principle of movement in Islam" and the enlargement of the scope and authority of *Ijmā'*, "the most important legal notion in Islam".

Iqbal recommended reinterpretation, as becomes clear by his views, of the Islamic principles so that they could guide mankind under changed conditions. According to Iqbal, *Ijtihād* is a tool of modification, a movement towards advancement and a joint between lasting values and demands of the varying surroundings of life.

Finally, Iqbal defines *Tawhīd*, *Risālah*, and *Akhuwwah* as the foundational and basic principles of *Ummah* (Muslim community). For him, if a community deviates from any of these principles, it will deviate from the actual goals.

Thus, Iqbal was the most dynamic scholar-philosopher of the twentieth century, who gave many valuable ideas and vehemently emphasized that Muslims should hold fast to teachings of the Qur'ān in order to progress in life.

REFERENCES/ENDNOTES:

¹ *The Holy Qur'ān*, 7: 54

² Abdur Rashid Bhat, *Iqbal's Approach to Islam : A Study*, New Delhi: Islamic Book Foundation, 1996, p. 45

³ Syed Abdul Hai, *Iqbal the Philosopher*, Chittagong, Bangladesh: Islamic Foundation, 1980, pp. 24, 25

⁴ Bhat, *loc. cit.*,

- ⁵ Mu F ammad Iqbāl, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, London: Oxford University Press, 1934, p.74
- ⁶ M.M. Sharif, *About Iqbāl and His Thought*, Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1964, pp.18, 19
- ⁷ Asloob Ahmad Ansari, *Iqbāl the Visionary*, Aligarh: Universal Book House, 2008, p. 7
- ⁸ Iqbāl, *op. cit.*, p.76
- ⁹ Hai, *op. cit.*, p. 28
- ¹⁰ Bhat, *op.cit.*, p. 50
- ¹¹ *The Holy Qur'ān*, 57: 3
- ¹² Bhat, *loc. cit.*,
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 61
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 62
- ¹⁵ Iqbāl, *op. cit.*, p. 140
- ¹⁶ Syed Nazir Niazi, *Maktubat-i-Iqbāl*, Karachi, 1957, p. 202
- ¹⁷ *The Holy Qur'ān*, 111: 81
- ¹⁸ *The Holy Qur'ān*, 33: 7
- ¹⁹ Bliss Kathleen, "The Role of Religion in the Pursuit of Freedom" in K. A. Jelenski (ed.) *History and Hope*, London, 1962, p. 149
- ²⁰ Al- Ghazālī, *Nasihat al-Muluk (Council for Kings)* trans. by F. R. C. Begley, London, 1964, p. 12
- ²¹ Vide Sayyid Suleyman Nadvi, *Sirat-un-Nabī*, vol. IV, Azamgarh, 1959, p. 4
- ²² *The Holy Qur'ān*, 33: 6
- ²³ Iqbāl, "Qaumi Zindagi" in *Mazamin-i-Iqbāl*, Hyderabad (Deccan), 1362 A.H., p. 31.
- ²⁴ Iqbāl, *Asrar-o-Rumuz*, Kutub Khana Naziriya, Delhi, 1971, p. 19
- آتشِ ادا میں خس و خاشاکِ سوخت امتیازاتِ نسبِ راپاکِ سوخت
اوست جانِ این نظامِ واو یکسیت چون گلِ صدرِ برگِ مارا بویکسیت
- ²⁵ Shaikh Akhbar Ali, *Iqbāl: Us Ki Shairi aur Paygham (Iqbāl: His Poetry and Message)*, Lahore, 1946, p. 335
- ²⁶ Iqbāl, *Asrar-o-Rumuz*, p. 73
- اے تراحقِ خاتمِ اقوامِ کرد بر توہر آغازِ انجامِ کرد
- ²⁷ Iqbāl, *Pas chih Bayad Kard Ai-Aqwam-i-Sharq (What should be done O Nations of the East?)*, Lahore, 1936
- ²⁸ Iqbāl, *Zarb-i-Kalim*, Hyderabad: Commercial Book Depot, n.d., p. 53
- میں نہ عارف نہ مجدد نہ محدث نہ فقیہ مجھ کو نہیں معلوم کیا ہے نبوت کا مقام
ہاں مگر عالمِ اسلام پہ رکھتا ہوں نظر فاش ہے مجھ پہ ضمیرِ فلکِ نیلی فام
عصرِ حاضر کی شبِ تاریں دیکھی میں نے یہ حقیقت کہ ہے روشن صفتِ ماہِ تمام
وہ نبوت ہے مسلمان کے لئے برگِ حشیش جس نبوت میں نہیں قوت و شوکت کا پیام
- ²⁹ Iqbāl, *Asrar-i-Rumuz*, p. 93
- پس خدا بر ماثرِ شریعت ختمِ کرد بر رسولِ ما رسالت ختمِ کرد

- ³⁰ Iqbāl, *Armughan-i-Hijaz*, Delhi: Kutub Khana Naziriya, 1967, p. 81
مقام خویش اگر خواهی دریں دیر
تحت دل بند و راه مصطفیٰ رو!
- ³¹ Wael B. Hallaq, "Ijtihād", in John L. Esposito (ed.) *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, 2: 178-181, p. 178
- ³² A. K. Brohi, "Iqbāl ian ijtehad and the Concept of Islamic Socialism" *Iqbāl I Review*, April 1968, pp. 38-39
- ³³ Iqbāl, *op.cit.*, p. 141
- ³⁴ *The Holy Qur'ān*, 29: 69
- ³⁵ Abul Dawud, *Kitab al Sunnah*, 4 vols. Trans. Ahmad Hassan, Lahore 1984, No. 11
- ³⁶ Bhat, *op.cit.*, p. 11
- ³⁷ Iqbāl, *op.cit.*, pp. 140-1
- ³⁸ Rashid Akhtar Nadvi, *Tahzib-o-Tamaddun-i-Islami*, Lahore, 1955, pp. 139-42
- ³⁹ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, London, 1966, p. 114
- ⁴⁰ *Iqbāl I Nama*, vol. I contains seventy letters written by Iqbāl to Syed Sulayman Nadvi, pp. 75-205
- ⁴¹ Abdullah Syed, *Maqamat-i-Iqbāl I*, Lahore, 1964, p. 220
- ⁴² Iqbāl, *op.cit.*, p. 141
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*,
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 149
- ⁴⁵ Mohammad Ahmad, *Iqbāl I and the Recent Exposition of Islamic Political Thought*, Lahore, 1950, p. 31
- ⁴⁶ Bhat, *op.cit.*, p. 113
- ⁴⁷ Iqbāl, *op.cit.*, p. 154
- ⁴⁸ Ghulam Ahmad Parvez, *Iqbāl I-aur- Qur'ān*, Karachi, 1953, p. 127
- ⁴⁹ Iqbāl, *The Reconstruction*, p. 164
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 165
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁵² Ahmad S. Dallal "Ummah", in Esposito, *op.cit.*, 4: 267-270, p. 267
- ⁵³ Bhat, *op.cit.*, p. 84
- ⁵⁴ *The Holy Qur'ān*, 3: 14
- ⁵⁵ Iqbāl, *The Reconstruction*, p. 158
- ⁵⁶ Iqbāl, *Asrar-o-Rumuz*, pp. 92-93
آن کہ شانِ اوست یہدیٰ من یرید
از رسالت حلقہ گردما کشید و
ایں گہر از بحر بے پایانِ اوست
ما کہ یکجا نیم از احسانِ اوست
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 102
- ⁵⁸ S.A.V. Moeeni, *Maqalat-i-Iqbāl I*, Lahore, 1963, p. 118
- ⁵⁹ Bhat, *op.cit.*, p. 85
- ⁶⁰ Iqbāl, *Bang-i-Dara*, Aligarh: Educational Book House, 1975, p. 165
نقش توحید کا ہر دل پہ بٹھایا ہم نے
زیر خنجر بھی یہ پیغام سنایا ہم نے

⁶¹ Bhat, *op.cit.*, p. 87

⁶² *The Holy Qur'an*, 21: 92

⁶³ Bhat, *op.cit.*, p. 90

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 91

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 93-94

⁶⁶ Latif Ahmad Sherwani, *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal 1*, New Delhi, Adam Publishers, 2008, p. 121

⁶⁷ Bhat, *op.cit.*, p. 95

⁶⁸ D. J. Mathews, *Iqbal 1: A Selection of the Urdu Verse, Text and Translation*, New Delhi, 1993, p. 78-79

اخوت کی جہا نگیری، محبت کی فراوانی

نہ تورانی رہے باقی، نہ ایرانی، نہ افغانی

یہی مقصود فطرت ہے یہی رمز مسلمانی

بتان رنگ و خون کو توڑ کر ملت میں گم ہو جا

⁶⁹ Sherwani, *op.cit.*, p. 116