

“EMPTY-HANDED FROM AN ORCHARD”
THE ROLE OF MUHAMMAD IQBAL’S
THOUGHT IN AWAKENING UNIVERSAL
SENSE OF JUSTICE ON JERUSALEM

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ABSTRACT

The struggle of Truth against falsehood and Virtue against vice and so forth has not come to an end in the history of Man. It continues to take different forms in different epochs and countries. The development of human consciousness both inwardly and outwardly has put an enormous responsibility on the shoulders of every person to stand for Truth. A tragic failure in this struggle has given rise to the problem of Jerusalem, which from the times of Caliph Umar has been mainly a sanctuary for the Muslims, Jews and Christians. The exploitive forces of modernism, in flagrant violation of the traditional principle of Justice (*Adl*), have sowed seeds of disunity and as a consequence have routed the centuries tested principle of peaceful coexistence. It is a decisive moment for us to reach out to the civil societies of the world by sensitising them on the issue of Jerusalem in the most befitting manner. We have to reiterate the traditional lesson that there is no spectator between the oppressor and the oppressed. Humanity has to realise that only a solution based on justice can be sustainable and guarantor of world peace. Pseudo-geography shaped by foreign interventions in the face of real history is condemned to wither away. The Muslims rightful claim on Jerusalem has to be acknowledged. Al-Quds has to be rightfully restored to the Muslims, who will regain its originality as the city of love. The Israeli attempts to change the structure of the city of al-Quds cannot change the structure of truth. The nature of truth is akin to the nature of light. It is destined to manifest itself.

The struggle of Truth against falsehood, Beauty against ugliness, Justice against injustice, Freedom against bondage, Light against darkness, Good against evil, Love against hate, Knowledge against ignorance, Reality against illusion and so forth has not come to an end in the history of Man. It continues to take different forms in different epochs and countries. The development of human consciousness both inwardly and outwardly has put an enormous responsibility on the shoulders of every person to stand for Truth, Beauty, Justice, Freedom, Light, Good, Love, Knowledge, Reality as against falsehood, ugliness, injustice, bondage, darkness, evil, hate, ignorance, and illusion respectively. Though Man has been blessed with sense-perception and heart-perception in order to remain journeying on the Straight path without going astray, and he has been endowed with freedom so that he could create goodness in the cosmos by virtue of his thought, feeling, word and deed yet he has miserably failed at times to live up to the higher possibilities of his existence. It has led to disequilibrium both in the individual and society.

One such tragic failure in the course of history has given rise to the problem of Jerusalem, which from the times of Caliph Umar has been mainly a sanctuary for the Muslims, Jews and Christians. The exploitive forces of modernism, in flagrant violation of the traditional principle of Justice (Adl), have sowed seeds of disunity and as a consequence have routed the centuries tested principle of peaceful coexistence. The peripheral approaches to the problem do not understand the essential issues involved because they do not go to the root of the problem. The problem has to be essentially understood against the background of modernism that has really caused it and is proving a stumbling block in its true solution. It has to be borne in mind that the traditional world comprising the great religious and metaphysical traditions of the world including Judaism, Christianity and Islam has been the repository of intellectual and spiritual heritage of mankind. The traditional world was ruptured when the modern West revolted against the ancient world and more specifically when it revolted against its own Christian Tradition in severing its links from Heavens. Resultantly, epistemology (science of knowledge) came to consider sense-experience as the sole source of knowledge and ontology (science of being) followed suit by

considering the visible world as the only level of being. The role of reason consisted in cohering data received from the empirical world. The vertical levels of knowledge and being were displaced by the horizontal levels of knowledge and being. The Western phenomena of Renaissance, Enlightenment and Reformation gave birth to the modern West, with its tool of modernism. The modern man cramped himself in his thought and emotion by becoming oblivious of the Transcendent, which he had banished both from knowledge and being.

Modernism displaced traditional ethics with modern ethics. The intellectual and spiritual principles of morality were negated and morality was tied to human finitude, which could not provide firm foundations and thereby pure objectivity to both ethics and morality. As a consequence, modernism started becoming irreverent to the metaphysical idea of traditional Vision. It enmeshed itself in the political philosophies of Power, instead. Nietzsche's philosophy spearheaded the modernist value of brute force, which ultimately led to an unbridgeable gulf between power and vision. Vision was displaced with power devoid of all reverence to the traditional values of Truth, Justice, Beauty, and Love. It was in this scenario that the nation-States resorted to the First World War and the Second one, the reverberations of which are still audible in the corridors of many nations and communities, suffering from this political oppression that continues in our contemporary times in different hidden and open forms. The sense of injustice done to the people in many parts of the world is not mere history but is a living reality of the oppressed people.

The dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the breaking of the Arabian world in fragments and the tearing apart of the Muslim fabric of being at the hands of the modernist forces, gave birth to a number of problems including the problem of Jerusalem. The straitened circumstances have not only caused perpetual sufferings to people but are bringing humanity to a brink of disaster. The thinkers of different ages and countries have been voicing their genuine concerns about Jerusalem, the plight of the Palestinians and the looming dangers of injustice perpetrated at such a large scale. One such voice is that of Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) who is one of the most dynamic thinkers in the world of Islam. He gave vision of an independent Muslim Sovereign State, which led to the creation of Pakistan. He combined in himself both traditional knowledge and modern learning. He was well-versed in Arabic language wherein he got to the primary sources and studied Qur'an, Hadith and Fiqah. By virtue of his deep knowledge of the Persian language, he got an

access to the Sufi literature and took Rumi as his guide. He was deeply steeped in the Eastern tradition and had a thorough grasp of Greek thought, Western philosophy and sciences. His major concern was 'The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam' in all its essential aspects.

He learnt many a lessons from the Philosophy of History. His primary task was to emancipate the Muslim Ummah in particular and human society in general and for this, he cautioned Muslims not to remain oblivious of their intellectual heritage and the advancements of modern scientific knowledge taking place in different parts of the world especially the West. However, he did not suggest an uncritical acceptance of the West. Rather, he stated:

Our duty is carefully to watch the progress of human thought and to maintain an independent critical attitude towards it.¹

The modernist political forces shaping themselves in his times made him see the modern West drunk with power and unleashing on different nations and communities. He presented a recipe to both East and West in these emphatic words:

Vision without power does bring moral elevation but cannot give a lasting culture. Power without vision tends to become destructive and inhuman. Both must combine for the spiritual expansion of humanity.²

Iqbal warned the Muslims against the designs of the Western powers and gave them a lesson to follow the spirit of religion. He says:

افغانی

دین و وطن

لُرد مغرب آن سراپا مکر و فن
اهل دین را داد تعلیم وطن
او ب فکر مرکز و تو در نفاق
بگذر از شام و فلسطین و عراق
تو اگر داری تمیز خوب و زشت
دل نبندی با کلوخ و سنگ و خشت
چیست دین برخاستن از روی خاک
تا ز خود آگاه گردد جان پاک³

Afghani
Religion and Country

The holder of the Western reins of power is completely clothed in the art of deceit. He is teaching country (as the basis of nationality) to the votaries of religion. He remains consolidated, while you are split up in Syria, Palestine and Iraq. If you can discern between the beneficial and the harmful, then you will not barter your inwardness for stones, brick and mortar. What is Religion? It is to rise above dust (earth-rootedness), so that the pure self attains self-realisation.⁴

Iqbal finds the modern man lost in the outward at the expense of the inward. He says:

Thus, wholly overshadowed by the results of his intellectual activity, the modern man has ceased to live soulfully, i.e. from within. In the domain of thought he is living in open conflict with himself; and in the domain of economic and political life he is living in open conflict with others. He finds himself unable to control his ruthless egoism and his infinite gold-hunger which is gradually killing all higher striving in him and bringing him nothing but life-weariness. Absorbed in the 'fact', that is to say, the optically present source of sensation, he is entirely cut off from the unplumbed depths of his own being.⁵

He considers spirituality essential for the survival and development of humanity. He says:

Humanity needs three things today - a spiritual interpretation of the universe, spiritual emancipation of the individual, and basic principles of a universal import directing the evolution of human society on a spiritual basis.⁶

Iqbal brings home the idea that the unity of mankind is grounded in the unity of God. He says:

The new culture finds the foundation of world-unity in the principle of Tauhid.⁷ 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. 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'an, is one of the greatest 'signs' of God, tend to immobilize what is essentially mobile in its nature. The failure of the Europe in political and social sciences illustrates the former principle; the immobility of Islam during the last five hundred years illustrates the latter.⁷

He considers the integration of the principles of permanence and change necessary for the survival and development of humanity.

Iqbal's attempt to awaken the higher consciousness on Jerusalem, through his prose and poetry, is grounded in the spirit of righteousness and sounds so contemporaneous in spite of the fact that many changes have taken place since his exit from the terrestrial world. His analysis of Jerusalem essentially remains principled in its pristine purity since it touches the root of the problem. It remains relevant for it cuts across pseudo theories and unjust solutions to the predicament of Palestine propounded by many Western and Eastern thinkers due to their vested interests or ignorance.

Iqbal voiced the thoughts and feelings of the Muslim Ummah in presenting the case of the Palestinians at that time. In a letter to Miss Farquharson on 20th July, 1937 he stated his views on the Palestine Report. He said:

....I think it is time for the National League of England to rise to the occasion and to save the British people from the great injustice to Arabs, to whom definite promises were given by British politicians in the name of British people. Through wisdom alone comes power; and when power abandons the ways of wisdom and relies upon itself alone, its end is death.

....We must not forget that Palestine does not belong to England. She is holding it under a mandate from the League of Nations, which Muslim Asia is now learning to regard as an Anglo-French institution invented for the purpose of dividing the territories of weaker Muslim peoples. Nor does Palestine belong to the Jews, who abandoned it of their own free will long before its possession by the Arabs....”⁸

He says:

شام و فلسطین

رندانِ فرانسیس کا میخانہ سلامت
پُر ہے کُرنِگ سے ہر شیشہِ حلب کا
ہے خاکِ فلسطین پہ یہودی کا اگر حق
ہسپانیہ پر حق نہیں کیوں اہلِ عرب کا
مقصد ہے ملوکیتِ انگلیس کا کچھ اور
قصہ نہیں نارنج کا یا شہد و زُطب کا⁹

Syria and Palestine

The tavern of the drunkard Frenchmen may last forever (a satire). The exceptional glass of Aleppo (Syrian city) is brimful with their red wine. If the Jews have right on the soil of Palestine, then why not the Arabs have a right on Spain? The British Imperialism has some other design (It wants to have its hold in the heart of the Middle East). It is not merely to get oranges, honey or dates.¹⁰

فلسطینی عرب سے

زمانہ اب بھی نہیں جس کے سوز سے فارغ
میں جانتا ہوں وہ آتش ترے وجود میں ہے
تری دوا نہ جینوا میں ہے، نہ لندن میں
فرنگ کی رگ جاں پنچہ یہود میں ہے
سنا ہے میں نے، غلامی سے اُمتوں کی نجات
خودی کی پرورش و لذت نمود میں ہے!¹¹

To the Palestinian Arabs

The world is still not devoid of passion. I know that your being is aflame with it. Your remedy lies neither in Geneva nor in London. The neck-vein of Europe is in the clutches of the Jews. I have heard that the deliverance of communities from servitude lies in the development of the self and tasting its fruitful realisation.¹²

یورپ

تاک میں بیٹھے ہیں مدت سے یہودی سود خوار
جن کی روباہی کے آگے چھ ہے زور پلنگ
خود بخود گرنے کو ہے پکے ہوئے پھل کی طرح
دیکھیے پڑتا ہے آخر کس کی جھولی میں فرنگ!¹³

Europe

The Jewish money-lenders are lying in wait for the hunt since long. The leopard's readiness is no match to their cunningness. Let's see, Europe eventually falls on whose lap, since she is eagerly on the verge of falling like ripen fruit.¹⁴

He further said: "...Nor is Zionism a religious movement. Apart from the movement, the Palestine Report itself has brought out this fact in a perfectly clear manner. Indeed the impression given to the unprejudiced reader is that Zionism as a movement was deliberately

created, not for the purpose of giving a National Home to the Jews but mainly for the purpose of giving a home to British Imperialism on the Mediterranean littoral...

The Report amounts, on the whole, to a sale under duress to the British of the Holy Places in the shape of the permanent mandate which the Commission has invented in order to cover their imperialist designs. The price of this sale is an amount of money to the Arabs plus an appeal to their generosity and a piece of land to the Jews. I do hope that British statesmen will abandon this policy of actual hostility to the Arabs and restore their country to them. I have no doubt that the Arabs will be ready to come to an understanding with the British and, if necessary, with the French also. If the British people are duped by propaganda against the Arabs, I fear the consequences of the present policy will be grave".¹⁵

He had fully opposed the Report, which recommended the idea of partitioning Palestine. He still had hopes that sense of justice and fair play will make the British abstain from doing injustice to the people of Palestine. He subsequently issued a statement in Lahore:

I assure the people that I feel the injustice done to the Arabs as keenly as anybody else who understands the situation in the Near East. I have no doubt that the British people can still be awakened to the fulfilment of the pledges given to the Arabs in the name of England. The British Parliament, I am glad to say, have in the recent Parliamentary debates left the question of partition open. This decision affords an excellent opportunity to the Muslims of the world to emphatically declare that the problem which the British statesmen are tackling is not one of Palestine only, but seriously affects the entire Muslim world.¹⁶

Iqbal had a keen insight into the history of the Jews, Christians and the Muslims. He had a very sharp vision to see that Palestine was a Muslim problem and not Jewish or Christian. He said:

The problem, studied in its historical perspective, is purely a Muslim problem. In the light of the history of Israel, Palestine ceased to be a Jewish problem long before the entry of Caliph 'Umar into Jerusalem more than 1300 years ago. Their dispersion, as Professor Hockings has pointed out, was perfectly voluntary and their scriptures were for the most part written outside Palestine. Nor was it ever a Christian problem. Modern historical research has doubted even the existence of Peter the Hermit. Even if we assume that the Crusades were an attempt to make Palestine a Christian problem, this attempt was defeated by the victories of Salah-ud-Din. I, therefore, regard Palestine as a purely Muslim problem.¹⁷

He critically examined the Report of the Royal Commission and discovered the sinister designs of the British to hold a footing in the heart of the Muslim homeland. He said:

Never were the motives of British imperialism as regards the Muslim people of the Near East so completely unmasked as in the Report of

the Royal Commission. The idea of a national home for the Jews in Palestine was only a device. In fact, British imperialism sought a home for itself in the form of a permanent mandate in the religious home of the Muslims. This is indeed a dangerous experiment, as a member of British Parliament has rightly described it, and can never lead to a solution of the British problem in the Mediterranean. Far from being a solution of the British problem in the Mediterranean it is really the beginning of the future difficulties of British imperialism. The sale of the Holy Land, including the Mosque of 'Umar, inflicted on the Arabs with the threat of martial law and softened by an appeal to their generosity, reveals bankruptcy of statesmanship rather than its achievement. The offer of a piece of rich land to the Jews and the rocky desert plus cash to the Arabs is no political wisdom. It is a low transaction unworthy and damaging to the honour of a great people in whose name definite promises of liberty and confederation were given to the Arabs.¹⁸

Iqbal was a great advocate of the unity of Muslim Ummah. He wanted 'immediate reunion' of the Turks and the Arabs keeping in view the urgent requirements of the Near East. He said:

Experience has made it abundantly clear that the political integrity of the peoples of the Near East lies in the immediate reunion of the Turks and the Arabs. The policy of isolating the Turks from the rest of the Muslim world is still in action. We hear now and then that the Turks are repudiating Islam. A greater lie was never told. Only those who have no idea of the history of the concepts of Islamic jurisprudence fall an easy prey to this sort of mischievous propaganda. The Arabs, whose religious consciousness gave birth to Islam (which united the various races of Asia with remarkable success), must never forget the consequences arising out of their deserting the Turks in their hour of trial.¹⁹

He warned them to decide the issue by rising to the occasion in a spirit of independence. He said

.... the Arab people must further remember that they cannot afford to rely on the advice of those Arab kings who are not in a position to arrive at an independent judgment in the matter of Palestine with an independent conscience. Whatever they decide they should decide on their own initiative after a full understanding of the problem before them.²⁰

He simultaneously warned different non-Arab Muslim leaders of the grave threat to the Muslim world by the Western powers and wished them to explore the possibility of forming an independent forum. He said:

.... the present moment is also a moment of trial for the Muslim statesmen of the free non-Arab Muslim countries of Asia. Since the abolition of the Caliphate this is the first serious international problem of both a religious and political nature which historical forces are compelling them to face. The possibilities of the Palestine problem may

eventually compel them seriously to consider their position as members of that Anglo-French institution, miscalled the League of Nations, and to explore practical means for the formation of an Eastern League of Nations".²¹

جمعیت اقوام

بیچاری کئی روز سے دم توڑ رہی ہے
ڈر ہے خبر بد نہ مرے منہ سے نکل جائے
تقدیر تو مبرم نظر آتی ہے و لیکن
پیرانِ کلیسا کی دُعا یہ ہے کہ ٹل جائے
ممکن ہے کہ یہ دہشتہ پیرکِ افرنگ
ابلیس کے تعویذ سے کچھ روز سنبھل جائے²²

LEAGUE OF NATIONS

It is since long that the pitiable is on the verge of death. I fear that I may not hurriedly announce bad news. Her destiny is written on the wall but the Church Fathers (sovereigns) pray it to be averted. It is possible that this concubine of the lustful old Europe gets some lease of life by the amulet of the Satan.²³

Iqbal, in spite of his great reservations, again wrote to Miss Farquharson about the Palestine Problem on 6th September, 1937. He still hoped that the British will refrain from partitioning Palestine and thereby losing the friendship of the Arabs. He said:

...I am very glad to see that the National League is taking a keen interest in the matter of Palestine and I have no doubt that the League will eventually succeed in making the British people realise the true meaning of the situation and the political consequences which may follow in case Britain loses the friendship of the Arabs. I have been more or less in touch with Egypt, Syria and Iraq. I also received letters from Najaf. You must have read that the Shi'as of Kerbala and Najaf have made a strong protest against the partition of Palestine. The Persian Prime Minister and the President of the Turkish Republic have also spoken and protested.

In India too the feeling is rapidly growing more and more intense. The other day 50,000 Muslims met at Delhi and protested against the Palestine Commission. It is further reported in the Press that some Muslims have been arrested in Cawnpore in connection with the Palestine question. It is now perfectly clear that the entire Muslim world is united on this question.

I have every reason to believe that the National League will save England from the grave political blunder and in so doing it will serve both England and the Muslim world....²⁴

Iqbal was pinning his hopes on the inherent goodness of man and the political sagacity of the Western powers, which unfortunately did not fructify. Iqbal New Year Message of 1st January 1938 was broadcasted from the Lahore station. It reflects the fruit of his mature thought and is instrumental in understanding the plight of the modern man and the way to achieve real unity of mankind. His Message is so vital and contemporaneous that it needs to be quoted at length. He says:

The modern age prides itself on its progress in knowledge and its matchless scientific developments. No doubt, the pride is justified. Today space and time are being annihilated and man is achieving amazing successes in unveiling the secrets of nature and harnessing its forces to his own service. But in spite of all these developments, the tyranny of imperialism struts abroad, covering its face in the masks of Democracy, Nationalism, Communism, Fascism and heaven knows what else besides. Under these masks, in every corner of the earth, the spirit of freedom and the dignity of man are being trampled underfoot in a way of which not even the darkest period of human history presents a parallel. The so-called statesmen to whom government and leadership of men was entrusted have proved demons of bloodshed, tyranny and oppression. The rulers whose duty it was to protect and cherish those ideals which go to form a higher humanity, to prevent man's oppression of man and to elevate the moral and intellectual level of mankind, have, in their hunger for dominion and imperial possessions, shed the blood of millions and reduced millions to servitude simply in order to pander to the greed and avarice of their own particular groups. After subjugating and establishing their dominion over weaker peoples, they have robbed them of their religions, their morals, of their cultural traditions and their literatures. Then they sowed divisions among them that they should shed one another's blood and go to sleep under the opiate of serfdom, so that the leech of imperialism might go on sucking their blood without interruption. As I look back on the year that has passed and as I look at the world in the midst of the New Year's rejoicings, it may be Abyssinia or Palestine, Spain or China,* the same misery prevails in every corner of man's earthly home, and hundreds of thousands of men are being butchered mercilessly. Engines of destruction created by science are wiping out the great landmarks of man's cultural achievements. The governments which are not themselves engaged in this drama of fire and blood are sucking the blood of the weaker peoples economically. It is as if the day of doom had come upon the earth, in which each looks after the safety of his own skin, and in which no voice of human sympathy or fellowship is audible. The world's thinkers are stricken dumb. Is this going to the end of all this progress and evolution of civilisation, they ask, that men should destroy one another in mutual hatred and make human habitation impossible on this earth?

Remember, man can he maintained on this earth only by honouring mankind, and this world will remain a battle ground of ferocious beasts of prey unless and until the educational forces of the whole world are directed to inculcating in man respect for mankind. Do you not see that the people of Spain, though they have the same common bond by one race, one nationality, one language and one religion, are cutting one another's throats and destroying their culture and civilisation by their own hands owing to difference in their economic creed? This one event shows clearly that national unity too is not a very durable force. Only one unity is dependable, and that unity is the brotherhood of man, which is above race, nationality, colour or language. So long as this so-called democracy, this accursed nationalism and this degraded imperialism are not shattered, so long as men do not demonstrate by their actions that they believe that the whole world is the family of God, so long as distinctions of race, colour and geographical nationalities are not wiped out completely, they will never be able to lead a happy and contended life and the beautiful ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity will never materialise. Let us therefore begin the New Year with the prayer that God Almighty may grant humanity to those who are in places of power and government and teach them to cherish mankind.²⁵

Iqbal died on 21st April, 1938 while the British were still in control of Palestine under the Mandate system (1922-1948) of the League of Nations, and promoting wider scale immigration of the Jews into Palestine in line with the Balfour Declaration. He did not live to see the perpetration of grave injustice of partitioning Palestine in 1948 by a Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly and the establishment of Jewish State of Israel. The Palestinian Arabs, constituting more than two third majority of the Palestine population at that time, were of no democratic consideration for modern democracies. It was not only what was done by the Western Powers including United States but the way it was done drew a big question mark on the integrity of modern world institutions and their capacity to provide justice. The forewarnings of Iqbal, among other things, fell on deaf ears. The events started unfolding themselves in a terrible shape. The perpetual injustices perpetrated against them by Israel on backing of the Western powers led to the First Arab-Israel War of 1948, Suez Crisis of 1956, the Third Arab-Israel War of 1967, the Fourth Arab-Israel War of 1973 and the subsequent skirmishes and conflicts till present times. It is very pertinent to point out that the standpoint taken by Iqbal on the problem of Palestine was fully adopted by Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the Founder of Pakistan, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, the First Prime Minister of Pakistan and it has ever remained the voice of our political leadership and the civil society.

The injustices inflicted on the Palestinian Arabs at such a large scale need to be registered by the world-conscience, which can ultimately help in resolving this problem. But it is again the forces of modernism, which obstruct the presentation of the issue in its true perspective and thwart the rectifying of wrongs done to the people of Palestine. It is exceedingly imperative to know that modernism did not remain restricted to the modern West. It started invading the traditional societies and weakening their religious and metaphysical traditions. The votaries of the traditional world did not fully understand the modern onslaught and they started importing modern ideas and appropriating them in their traditional matrix. One of the most harmful effects of this imitation has been exhibited in clinging to the exoteric aspect of religion at the cost of its spiritual dimension. It led to conflicts of various religious perspectives, inconsonant with the idea of 'the transcendent unity of religions' and the metaphysical principle of 'unity in diversity.'

Khawaja Ghulam Farid, a Sufi belonging to the Saraiki belt of Southern Punjab, Pakistan reiterates the principle of transcendence, which is the unifying basis of the metaphysical and religious traditions of the world. He says:

پدھ مجوس یہود نصارا ہندو تے دیندار
آکھن پاک منزہ ہے بے انت الکھ اپار²⁶

The Buddhists, Zoroastrians, Jews, Christians, Hindus and the People of the Tradition say that He (the Absolute) is Pure, Perfect, Unlimited, Transcendent and Infinite.

The need of the hour is that every religion concentrates on its spiritual element, which is harbinger of hope for religious communities. Iqbal significantly brings out the place of spirituality in the religion of Islam. He says:

In Islam prophecy reaches its perfection in discovering the need of its own abolition. This involves the keen perception that life cannot for ever be kept in leading strings; that, in order to achieve full self-consciousness, man must finally be thrown back on his own resources. The abolition of priesthood and hereditary kingship in Islam, the constant appeal to reason and experience in the Qur'an, and the emphasis that it lays on Nature and History as sources of human knowledge, are all different aspects of the same idea of finality. The idea, however, does not mean that mystic experience, which qualitatively does not differ from the experience of the prophet, has now ceased to exist as a vital fact. Indeed the Qur'an regards both *Anfus* (self) and *Afaq* (world) as sources of knowledge.⁵ God reveals His signs in inner as well as outer experience, and it is the duty of man to judge the knowledge-yielding capacity of all aspects of experience. The idea of

finality, therefore, should not be taken to suggest that the ultimate fate of life is complete displacement of emotion by reason. Such a thing is neither possible nor desirable. The intellectual value of the idea is that it tends to create an independent critical attitude towards mystic experience by generating the belief that all personal authority, claiming a supernatural origin, has come to an end in the history of man. This kind of belief is a psychological force which inhibits the growth of such authority. The function of the idea is to open up fresh vistas of knowledge in the domain of man's inner experience..... Mystic experience, then, however unusual and abnormal, must now be regarded by a Muslim as a perfectly natural experience, open to critical scrutiny like other aspects of human experience.²⁷

He further says:

...saints in the psychological sense of the word or men of saintly character will always appear... Indeed as long as the spiritual capacity of mankind endures, they will arise among nations and countries in order to show better ideals of life to man. To hold otherwise would be to fly in the face of human experience. The only difference is that the modern man has the right to critical examination of their mystic experiences. The Finality of the Prophethood means, among other things, that all personal authority in religious life, denial of which involves damnation, has come to an end.²⁸

Khawaja Ghulam Farid beautifully expresses his love of God and the holy prophet in his poetry. He lauds the holy land of Arabia for being the recipient of the universal message of *Tawhid* (unity of God) and *Risalat* (Prophecy), which is a harbinger of freedom for mankind. He says:

مذہب مشرب لا مذہب دا لب ہے سارے آرث عرب دا
شہادہ درس حدیث قرآن²⁹

The religious tradition of 'negation' (Islamic Shahadah) is the kernel of the entire Arab heritage. It is evident in the teachings, Hadith and the Qur'an.

بطن بطون توں ظاہر ہويا عربی تھی کر ملک توں موہیا
رسم رسالت رسدا (ڈھولا ماہی)³⁰

He manifested from the most invisible realm. He manifested himself in the form of an Arab (Arabian prophet) and captivated the dominion. He has perfectly conducted the tradition of prophecy (in the form of Muhammad as messenger), my beloved friend.

دیس عرب دا ملک طرب دا سارا باغ بہار³¹

The Arabian territory is the land of happiness that is fully blossoming.

واہ دیس عرب دیاں چالیں خوش طرحیں خوب خصالیں
گیاں و سر وطن دیاں گاہیں کیا خویش قبیلے سکے

I laud the styles of the Arabian land. They are pleasing and highly qualitative. I have forgotten the characteristics of my own native town, my close relatives and kith and kin.

ہے ملک مقدس نوری ہے جنت حور قصوری
بن عاشق پاک حضوری بیا کون قدم اتھ رکھے

This land is holy and shining. It is a paradise of beautiful houries. Who can step in without love and pure presence?

و نچ ڈھم مدینہ عالی جتھ کون و مکان دا والی
ہے دھرتی عیبوں خالی پیا نور رسالت چھلے

I went and saw the majesty of Medina. There lies the custodian of the universe. The place is free of any imperfection. The light of prophecy is shining forth.

عرب شریف دی سوہٹی ریتے لاوے دل نوں پریم پلیتے
دسرے چاچڑ صدقے کیتے آصلوں محض نہ بھاندے ہن

The tradition of holy Arabia is lovely. It kindles the wick of love in one's heart. I have forgotten Chachar (my native abode) and sacrificed it (for the sake of my friend). It has ceased to truly appeal me.

سجھ سونے دا ابھریا ڈھٹرا نیک مہینہ

The golden sun (moment of bliss) has risen. I have witnessed the month of blessings.

حرم معلیٰ روشن ہے نوری آئینہ

The Sanctuary of the Prophet is shining. It is a mirror of light.

عرب دی ساری دھرتی سوہٹی صاف نگینہ³²

The whole land of Arabia is a beautiful transparent jewel.

ارض مقدس ملک عرب دی ہر ہر وادی فرح طرب دی
منزل منزل طرح عجب دی ساری وضع سنگار دی ہے

The Arabian land is holy. There is a state of blooming, happiness in each and every valley. The beauty of the way is being strangely reflected at each and every stage.

ہر ہر قطرہ آب ہے کوثر گرد و غبار ہے مشک تے عنبر
کرڑ کنڈا شمشاد صنوبر خار وی شکل بہار دی ہے

Here, each and every drop of water is blessed. The cloudy dust is perfume and ambergris. Thorny shrubs and thorns are bon-tree and a bearing tree. The thorn (autumn) looks like spring.

عرب شریف ہے، سوہٹی ساری نازک نازو تے متواری
تھیواں واری لکھ لکھ واری دار نبی مختار دی ہے

The sacred Arabia is all beauties. It is tendered, elegant and graceful. I may sacrifice myself countless times on it. It is the dwelling of the sovereign prophet.

Khawaja Ghulam Farid translates his spiritual love of God and the prophet into spiritual love of humanity. He desires humanity to emancipate itself from all forms of oppressions. He counsels Sadiq Muhammad Khan, the Nawab of Bahawalpur State, for example, to attain political and cultural freedom by struggling against the British colonial masters. He says:

سہجوں پھلوں سیجھ سہا توں بخت تے تخت کوں جوڑ چھکاتوں
اچھے ملک کوں آپ وساتوں پیٹ انگریزی تھائے³³

You readily choose to grace your seat with fortune and establish yourself in full power. You make your dominion prosper with your own hands and uproot the seats of colonial oppression.

It is not only a call to his people but is a universal call to the oppressed people of all times. People have to free themselves from all forms of subjugation including the political one. This call of a Sufi touches on a vital facet of spirituality. The Sufi tradition does not teach passivity in the face of exploitation. It aspires for emancipation from every form of bondage, instead. Universal love necessitates just struggle against oppression. But the struggle against dark forces is not bereft of light. It remains grounded in spirituality without transgressing the bounds of tradition.

The religious world, under the metamorphic influence of modernism, is becoming oblivious of its own spiritual essence. The clerics---the conventional and the militant ones--- are subtly appropriating modernism themselves, and are unconsciously using its very tools even in their struggle against modernism itself. Tradition, for example, has never legitimised violence or offence in exercise of one's right of self-defence or sanctified 'private judgement' as against the institutionalised one. It has always warranted justification of ends and means in simultaneity. It has supported just struggle but has taught 'absolute moral constraint' even in the most trying and testing circumstances. A traditional man is bound to act; he never reacts. The ongoing banishment of the traditional view or spiritual

dimension from the mainstream of our intellectual and political life, among other things, has made us liable to fall in the snare of a modernist view of life. Religions need to open spiritual channels to their respective votaries, which will help in understanding other religious and metaphysical traditions of the world, which will be ultimately helpful in resolving the modern crises in different spheres including the social and the political ones. It is essential to open a real Dialogue with people of different traditions and to remind them of their spiritual heritage.

The religious differentiations among the Jews, Christians and Muslims has been traditional and a family affair in Palestine for a greater part of several centuries. It is modernism, which initiated a political divide amongst them in utter disregard of the traditional spirit. We have to go beyond modernism to the principles of our traditions to find answers of problems confronting us in our times. It is heartening to note that the process of inter-faith Dialogue has started amongst these traditions, which can help the votaries to understand each other in an amicable spirit. However, the real success of Dialogue can be achieved if each religious tradition brings to forefront its respective spiritual dimension, which is its essence. A religion, which becomes oblivious of its spiritual foundations has a greater risk of aligning itself with the self-defeating forces of modernism, which is so detrimental both for the individual and society. The psychic forces tend to become self-destructive unless they undergo spiritual transformation. Spirituality teaches us that mere Religious Dialogue at the exoteric level alone cannot reach the heart of reality. It is to be complemented by the esoteric or spiritual level, which essentially unifies diversified religious perspectives. The modern Western society, on the other hand, has to be constantly reminded of her enormous responsibility to humanity. The world essentially requires spiritual awakening to rectify injustices done to the people of Palestine. The Orchard of Jerusalem needs to regain its fragrance.

The creation of the State of Israel, by dint of a manoeuvred Resolution of the UN, is being widely condemned as an injustice primarily committed by the Zionists on behest of the Western powers. The foundation of this State has no moral authority. It is in utter disregard to the Jewish tradition itself. The problem of Jerusalem has no durable solution within the ambit of pragmatism. The philosophy of pragmatism is inimical to truth itself. It is only concerned with the workability of an idea. It tends to treat an idea as a commodity, which has a price in the market but no value in the hearts of men.

In the end, we have to realise that the world is watching with great interest the phenomenon of the Arab Awakening. We have to rise to the occasion and spiritedly set our own house in order. We have to struggle against internal and external oppression in the spirit of righteousness without resorting to violence on either side. Violence begets violence and sows the seeds of hatred, discord and disharmony. It sends a negative message to the world community, which further alienates us from the world forces of righteousness.. If we want the world to understand us, then we have to speak the language of humanity. It is a decisive moment for us to reach out to the civil societies of the world by sensitising them on the issue of Jerusalem in the most befitting manner. We have to reiterate the traditional lesson that there is no spectator between the oppressor and the oppressed. Humanity has to realise that only a solution based on justice can be sustainable and guarantor of world peace. Pseudo-geography shaped by foreign interventions in the face of real history is condemned to wither away. The Muslims rightful claim on Jerusalem has to be acknowledged. Al-Quds has to be rightfully restored to the Muslims, who will regain its originality as the city of love. The Israeli attempts to change the structure of the city of al-Quds cannot change the structure of truth. The nature of truth is akin to the nature of light. It is destined to manifest itself. The Doha Declaration 2012 is a step forward in reaching our destination. We have simultaneously to take creative steps to awaken the younger generations of Jews, Christians and Muslims to their common spiritual ancestry in the tradition of Ibrahim (Abraham), which will lead to primordial harmony. The ultimate solution of the problem of Jerusalem has to come spiritually from within Jerusalem.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

¹ *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Allama Muhammad Iqbal, edited and annotated, by M. Saeed Sheikh, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1989, p. xxii.

² *Ibid.*, p. 92.

³ *Kuliyat-i-Iqbal* (Farsi), Allama Muhammad Iqbal, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, pp. 534-535.

⁴ Translation is my own.

⁵ *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Allama Iqbal, edited and annotated, by M. Sheikh, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1989, p. 148

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

7. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Allama Iqbal, edited and annotated, by M. Sheikh, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1989, p. 117.

8. *Speeches, Writings & Statement of Iqbal*, compiled and edited by Latif Ahmad Sherwani, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 2009, pp. 292-293.

9. *Kuliyat-i-Iqbal* (Urdu), Allama Muhammad Iqbal, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 2004, p. 668.

¹⁰ Translation is my own.

¹¹ *Kuliyat-i-Iqbal* (Urdu), Allama Muhammad Iqbal, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 2004, p. 671.

¹² Translation is my own.

¹³ *Kuliyat-i-Iqbal* (Urdu), Allama Muhammad Iqbal, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 2004, p. 497.

¹⁴ Translation is my own.

¹⁵ *Speeches, Writings & Statement of Iqbal*, compiled and edited by Latif Ahmad Sherwani, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 2009, pp.292-293.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 293.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 293-294.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 294.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp.294-295.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 295.

²¹ Ibid., p. 295

²² *Kuliyat-i-Iqbal* (Urdu), Allama Muhammad Iqbal, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 2004, p. 668.

²³ Translation is my own.

²⁴ *Speeches, Writings & Statement of Iqbal*, compiled and edited by Latif Ahmad Sherwani, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 2009, p. 296.

* The references here are to Italy's invasion of Abyssinia, the unrest in Palestine resulting from the Peel Commission's recommendation to partition Palestine, Civil War in Spain and the invasion of China by Japan. (Ed.)

²⁵ *Speeches, Writings & Statement of Iqbal*, compiled and edited by Latif Ahmad Sherwani, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 2009, pp. 298-300.

²⁶ Tahir Mehmood Koreja, *Divan-i-Khawaja Farid*, Al-Faisal Nashran-o-Tajran Kutb, Lahore, 2011, Kafi 269.

²⁷ *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Allama Muhammad Iqbal, edited and annotated, by M. Saeed Sheikh, Iqbal Academy Pakistan 1989, p. 101.

²⁸ *Speeches, Writings & Statement of Iqbal*, compiled and edited by Latif Ahmad Sherwani, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 2009, p. 207.

²⁹ *Divan-i-Khawaja Farid*, Kafi 134.

³⁰ Ibid., Kafi 226.

³¹ Ibid., Kafi 145.

³² Ibid., Kafi 153.

³³ Ibid., Kafi 239.