

Role of Dr. Ali-Shariati and Allama Iqbal in the reconstruction of modern Islamic thought: A Sociological perspective.

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Abstract

Iqbal and Ali Shariati, the two most illustrious Muslim social reformers of contemporary Muslim Ummah, and the reliable commentators on the concept of culture, values, norms, traditions, modernity etc their thought can help us steer the past and face the challenges of new century. The paper will focus on the Iqbal's and Ali Shariati's about the future of mankind and concern about the clash of various civilizations. Ali Shariati's contribution to Muslim social reformation is immense. Their literary works, lectures and other prose works, makes me obsessed to study Allama Iqbal and Ali Shariati comparatively. In contemporary times, when the world at large are living in severe chaos and confusion distress and misery, the thought of Iqbal and Ali Shariati becomes ever more important, the world is in a critical need of a deep and philosophical thought based on comprehensive multifaceted philosophy. Iqbal's and Ali Shariati's multi-faceted philosophy, has contributed tirelessly to sociology of religion and culture, sociology of individual and society, sociology of gender justice, values and norms, culture and their concepts of various civilization have immense importance in the contemporary sociological thought, it becomes ever more important to study Iqbal and Ali Shariati, especially their sociological perspective. So the present paper will closely relate to the thought of Allama Iqbal and Ali Shariati, we shall analyze their concept of social change, simultaneously, we shall analyze the impact of Iqbal's readings on Ali Shariati. We shall also analyze their concept of change and revolution, and how can we utilize them as a renowned social reformers of 20th century, efforts will be made to study the relevance of Iqbal's and Shariati's social philosophy in the contemporary world.

Key words:

Contemporary, Civilization, Culture, Sociological, revolution, Social Philosophical, Social change, Values, Norms, Gender justice, Religion

Introduction

Ever since the end of Caliphate era in Turkey and the with the fall of the Mughal Empire in the 18th century and soon after the death of Aurangzeb the Muslim people of the subcontinent have been the Muslim people living through an age of crisis¹

It is not merely a crisis of our own situation in the subcontinent, but a universal crisis of the Muslim Ummah as a whole. While in the 18th century we were merely mourning the loss of our power and glory in India, in the 19th and 20th centuries we were faced with the prospect of the elimination of our political, economic, social and cultural independence throughout the world. One after another the imperialistic powers overpowered us kingdoms and states of the Muslims the various from the far east of Asia to the far west of Africa. In the 19th century we saw the great Ottoman empire of the Turkish Khalifas tottering to a fall before the combined onslaught of it in Europe and then in Asia and the west, at Africa as well. The process was completed at the end of the First World War, when the dominion of the Caliphate was partitioned amongst the victorious European powers²

The period between the two world wars was not so bad but their nature was different. From full of crisis in the far west in Morocco to the Far East in Indonesia, through Africa and Asia they were subjugated. Muslim people were rising in revolt against their western conquerors. These rebellions, again, finally brutally suppressed again and again attained their objectives in the decade after the end of world war. But the age of crisis for the Muslim Ummah was not yet over. Weakened, impoverished, divided as they were by long periods of alien rule and the free play of internal forces of decay and disintegration, the Muslim nations have become easy prey of western intrigue, continued to be an dictatorship and domination. While other nations,

¹ Farganis, James, "Readings in social theory", (2004, Tata, Mc Graw Hill) p-87.

² Ibid, p-78.

world, seem to be going ahead and even in the 3
reorganizing themselves for their independent role
in the world affairs, the Muslim people still seem to
nd in circles, and getting be going round and rou
deeper and deeper into the whirlpool of confusion
and despondency³ Iqbal in his book answer to the .
vehemently speaks about (*jawab shikwa*) complaint
the misery and chaos within the Muslim nations
:around the world

dab of falsehood who erased the
?from the pages of history
who liberated the human beings from
?the chains of slavery
On to the floors of my kabba
?who were those who clasped
?The Quran on to their breasts
;fathers-Indeed, they were thy fore
Tell us what are thyself, we say;
with idle hands thou sit and wait
.For the dawn of a better day

In the contemporary world, when there is a
ing and general propensity for scientific reason
standards of life, with an increasing tendency
towards materialism, Iqbal's and Ali Sharaiti's
Reconstruction of Islamic thought carries great
value. Such a work involves a vast study of the
Quran, as well as modern thought. It is
dable attempt to reconstruct undoubtedly a lau
Islamic society and thought with due regard to past
.traditions in a progressive order⁴

thinkers who Iqbal and Ali Sharaiti, the two
may be counted amongst the most
influential social reformers of cotemporary
heir thought can help Muslim Ummah and t
us steer the past and face the challenges of
new century. They have creatively
person appropriated Islamic tradition; The
who is fully imbibed with the thought of Iqbal and
Ali Shariati, would be aware about the fact, that
h went through one of its most Muslim Umma
difficult and agonizing phases during their times
and it is obvious that the prevailing conditions of
any particular society are instrumental in shaping
the ideas of every social philosopher who attempts
e decay of Mughal Empire, most to study it. After th
states fell under the colonial rules, of the Muslim
which led to adopt its Western culture, law,
educational system, and ideologies. Muslim

³ Turner, H. Jonathan, "*The structural of sociological theory*", (2003, Thomson publications), p--134.

⁴ Dr. Abdul Aleem Hilal, "*Social philosophy of Sir Mohd Iqbal*" (1998, Adam Publishers), New Delhi. P- 78.

reformers were aware about the danger that Islamic
cay which states are facing and the moral de
penetrated Muslim lives. Muslim reformers are
critical about their rulers and accuse them of being
weak and close ally to the colonial masters. The
two Muslim reformers arose from this decay and
;despondency, through their writings and lecturers
they inspired many generations and awakened the
Muslim mass to face the corrupt rulers.
Muhammad Iqbal and Ali Shariati, are the two
known personalities of contemporary Muslim -well
world who fought against the tyranny governments
ries with the might of their in their respective count
championed the cause of freedom, Social pen. They
justice, world peace, unity of mankind and human
brotherhood with great vigour and eloquence.
Through their writings and speeches, they have
political -ociooutrightly challenged the existent s
order of their age. They were deeply and intimately
concerned with the contemporary social problems.
They urged and advised their youngsters to launch
out social political -a crusade against the worn
rs, they systems of their own time. As keen observe
closely studied the varied problems that confronted
the present society. They were shocked to see the
existing perilous conditions of the world full of
doubts, fear, hatred, suspicion, and the evils of war.
us of the They earnestly tried to make man conscio
evils that had crept into the society. They were not
satisfied with the modern way of life and felt that
there was something radically wrong with our way
of thinking. Poverty, economic exploitation,
,corruption, moral degradation, social injustice
narrow casteism, and the evils of war had cut deep
into the core of man's life; which had created an
unhealthy condition throughout the world. It was
primarily with such a state of social affairs that
Iqbal and Ali Shariati was deeply concerned.
inutely observed and examined the Having m
political, economic and religious -various socio
conditions of the Muslim world, they had formed a
firm view that the salvation of mankind lies in the
synthesis of Islamic institutions and following the
and revitalizing the traditional religious traditions
.institutions

Ali Sharaiti and Iqbal regarded as one of the
most influential scholars of modern Muslim world.
Both Iqbal and Shariati made commendable
contribution to modern Islamic thought by
speeches. Ali authoring dozens of books and
shariati and Iqbal emerged as serious and sensitive
scholars who viewed society in a distinct way. Ali
shariati has analysed the role of almost all the
religions of the world, particularly Islam, which
he history. have attracted sharp minds throughout t
During short span of his life, he touched myriad
topics like, Islam, philosophy of history, culture
and civilization, art and literature, sociology of
Islam, socialism, concept of social change, world
cularly movements and revolutions etc. He has parti

elaborated the role of religion in shaping the destiny of societies. Both, Iqbal and Shariati were two eminent sociologists. They tried to approach the subject in a context to highlight vitality in the new milieu

As sociologists Iqbal and Shariati find the present civilization of man on the verge of a collapse. Because of chronic vacillations of the intellectuals, its foundations are being eroded, and the mental and moral horizons of mankind seem to be engulfed with despair and disenchantment. Both Iqbal and Shariati find that Muslim societies are threatened with another paralytic phenomenon called modernization and westernization. They believed that man today reduced to a cog in the monstrous machine of a modern state, where he is vitalized by the insufferable monotony of ruthless bureaucracy. He has lost his individuality and the potential of his personality has been totally obliterated. From the above writings about the thought of Shariati and Iqbal, they believed that becomes abundantly clear that the European world is an economic conspiracy of the capitalistic countries, they are trying to intentionally change the tastes, the habits, and the rest of the cultural attributes of the stockpiled societies, so that they could sell consumer goods that are being continuously produced in their factories

According to them during the last five hundred years religious thought in Islam has been practically stationary. There was a time when Islam received inspiration from the European thought. The most remarkable phenomenon of modern history, however, is the enormous rapidity with which the world of Islam is spiritually moving towards the west. There is nothing wrong in this movement, for European culture on its intellectual side is only a further development of Islam. Our only fear is that the dazzling exterior of European culture may arrest our movements and we may fail to reach the true inwardness of that culture. During all the centuries of our intellectual coma, Europeans have been seriously thinking on the great problems in which the philosophers and scientists of Islam were so keenly interested. New points of view have been suggested, old problems restated in the light of fresh experience have been restated and new problems have arisen. It seems as if the intellect of man is outgrowing its own fundamental time, space and causality. With the advancement of scientific thought even our concept of time has undergone a change of intelligibility. The theory of Einstein has brought a new vision of the

⁵ Beg, A. Anwar, "The Poet of the East" (2004, Iqbal Academy Pakistan), p-98.

universe and suggests new way of looking at the problems, common to both religion and philosophy. No wonder then that the younger generation of Islam in Asia and Africa demand fresh orientation of their faith. With the awakening of Islam, therefore, it is necessary to examine in an independent spirit, what Europe has thought and how for the conclusions reached by her can help us in revision and if necessary reconstruction of theological thought in Islam⁶

From the preceding pages it is clear that both Iqbal and Ali Shariati were firm believers in religion without which the social system cannot work properly. That is why they focused their efforts on the revival of Islamic society. They believed Islam to be the most valuable contribution to world thought. It was a genuine concern for human destiny that they had the best part of his life to a careful study of Islam in the Muslims and a contented Endeavour to awaken⁷

Today when youth of our community are living in a society in which there is a gaping ethical vacuum, they are in critical need of a deep and comprehensive education based upon Iqbal's and Shariati's multifaceted philosophy. Their work can provide profound guidance to help young Muslims as they seek to understand the nature of their own identity and their own religion. Their powerful words challenge them to become a society which hunts for its food, rather than a *shaheen* culture, which preys on the dead⁸

Iqbal and Ali Shariati the undaunted thinkers, their philosophical thought urged the oppressed masses around the Muslim world of contemporary times, like, Afghanistan, Iraq, Chechnya, Kashmir, Burma, Middle East, and particularly the holy land to revolt against all forms of Palestinian religious, political, cultural, totalitarianism. It was the vital intellectual, economic or any other force that was needed to free the Muslims from their internal shackles and external bondage. But their message, constituted by their words, their voice wielders in around a grave threat to those powers of the world who wanted to keep the people subservient, so that they would not challenge them or claim their own rights. To ensure the fulfillment of Iqbal's and of their purposes they had to silence authoritarian voice as much as Shariati's anti-authoritarian voice⁹. The relegation of Iqbal's vision and message to obscurity in India and Pakistan was

⁶ Ibid-p-34.

⁷ Ibid, p-67.

⁸ Ibid, p-347.

⁹ Sayyid, Abdul, Wahid, "Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal" (1975, S.H. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, Pakistan. P-98.

therefore, not by accident, but by design. It is difficult to find a poet or thinker of Iqbal's and Sharaiti's caliber they have championed the cause of justice for the oppressed and wronged people of the world as passionately and consistently as they did. If we follow Iqbal's and Sharait's teachings, we can reverse the growing gap between the rich and traditional poor that helps fuel westernize fundamentalism¹⁰

From the readings of Ali Sharaiti and Iqbal the best weapon against fundamentalism is -enlightening Islam. The present crisis in middle east and the abrupt upsurge of (ISIS) Islamic state and Syria posing a great threat to the e of Iraq security and development of Muslims around the world. Fanatics on both sides of the argument need to be told about Islamic history, how other religions and other points of view were tolerated by Islam in hen Europe was ruled by bigotry and the days w ignorance. During what was known as the Golden eighth to the -age of Islam, from around the mid thirteenth century, the Muslim world, which -mid stretched from Iberia and North Africa across to was known for its ,west and central Asia-south spirit of intellectual discovery and religious tolerance. Islam never knew the savagery of the inquisition. The set of legal principles stated or implied in the Quran has a great capacity for ted expansion and development, as frequently poin .out by Iqbal and Ali Sharaiti¹¹

In the eighteenth and nineteenth century when Indian Muslims, confronted with serious external and internal impediments, the rallying cry of the modernist reformers, from sayyid Ahmad Khan to ti was 'Back to the Quran, Iqbal and Ali Sharai back to the Quran meant the ,*Ijtihad* forward with rediscovery of the fundamental teachings and *Ijtihad* principles of the Quran, and forward with meant the mental effort made to form an atindependent judgments on a legal point so th normative Islamic principles could be applied in modern times. Both these philosophers were acutely conscious of the stagnation and decadence that had sapped the creative energy of Muslim societies. Therefore, while strongly advocating a uran, which he regarded as the return to the Q osla itiarahS dna labql ,malsI ot latnemadnuf infuse the dynamism of original Islam -sought to re which they regarded as the ,*Ijtihad* through .principles of movement in the structure of Islam¹²

and Iqbal, such was According to Ali Sharaiti fear about the future of Islam that the conservative thinkers of Islam focused on preserving a uniform social life for the people by a jealous exclusion of as expounded *Sharia* all innovation in the laws of They believed that .by the early doctors of Islam the ultimate fate of a people does not depend so much on organization as on the worth and power of organized society the -individual men. In an over individual is altogether crushed out of existence. under the weight Iqbal felt that a man lost his soul of such conformism and that a false reverence for past history and its artificial resurrection was no remedy for a people's decay. He maintained that the power that counteracts the forces of decay was of Islam and freedom of thought, the inner impulse that the only alternative given to us is to tear off from Islam the hard crust that has immobilized an discover -essentially dynamic outlook on life and re the original verities of freedom, equality and al, social solidarity with a view to rebuild our mor and political ideals out of their original simplicity .and universality¹³

Iqbal pointed out in ,*Ijtihad* n the context of of his outstanding lectures on the -his sixth lecture that -Reconstruction of religious thought in Islam things had changed and the in the modern period world of Islam is today confronted and affected by new forces set free by the extraordinary development of human thought in all its directions. He went on to make a statement that has an for us, the extraordinary significance and relevance claim of the present generation of Muslims liberals interpret the foundational legal principles, in -to re the light of their own experience and altered condition of modern life, perfectly justified. The cess of teachings of the Quran that life is a pro progressive creation necessitates that each generation guided but unhampered by the work of its predecessors, should be permitted to solve its .own problems¹⁴

Iqbal once wrote that 'all searches for knowledge are essentially a form of prayer'. Far rom dismissing western scientific advances, he f believed we should study them and incorporate their positive content in our paradigm for a new country that would be informed by Islamic ideals as well as modern knowledge. Instead, we allowed

¹⁰nal A perso -natsikaP“ ,Khan, Imran Transworld Publishers), London, ,2011) *History*”, .349-England. P

¹¹ Ibid, p-367.

¹² Ibid, p-56.

¹³ *The poet -labql“* ,Khawaja, Abdur, Rahim Iqbal Academy Pakistan), ,2004) *of Tomorrow*”, .89-Lahore, Pakistan.p

¹⁴ Ibid, p-97.

gnateto sta *Ummah* our¹⁵The westernized elite who took over from the departing British colonial rulers had little interest in seeking this fusion of Islamic ideals and scientific progress. Rather they adopted a system that allowed them to perpetuate ever allowing true themselves in power, n democracy to flourish. Our reactionary mullahs promoted a medieval attitude to religion that grew ever more distorted as Islam was hijacked as a *Ijtihad* political tool. Iqbal stressed the need to use in the light *riaSha* with a view to rebuild the Law of of modern thought and experience. He had pointed out that just as the European Renaissance and reformation were inspired by the acquisition of knowledge from the Muslim universities of Spain and the Middle East during the Crusades, orary Muslims should use western contemp knowledge in their reconstruction of their own .religious thought¹⁶This ever agitating wish of Iqbal as to the revival of Islam takes the form of a . prayer

is in dire need of *Ummah* Today the Muslim and wisdom of the modernist reclaiming the vision Islamic reformers who paved the way for the We need *Ummah* creation and upbringing of this to do this because we badly need cultural, intellectual and moral renaissance in our community so that we are able to create societies nd communities that are educated and enlightened, a -looking and life-just and compassionate, forward affirming. We need to utilize our rational faculties and engage in scholarly discussion and reflection to find a solution to contemporary issues such as the blending of the positive aspects of western culture with Islam. The new renaissance must also offer an alternative to the western materialism and consumerism that has been totally imbibed by our ruling classes and which our country cannot .afford¹⁷

nd Ali Sharaiti and other modernist Iqbal a thinkers had been deeply concerned about the reluctance of many Muslims to respond positively to western culture, in particular the rigidity of the mullahs whose mindset had been fossilized in

¹⁵ Umar Muhammad Suheyl “*Iqbal Review Journal of the Iqbal*” (1997, Iqbal Academy Pakistan), p-46.

¹⁶ Ibid, p-78.

¹⁷ Saddiqui Mazharuddin “*Concept of Muslim culture in Iqbal*” (1983, Islamic Research Institute), Islamabad, p-23.

tion of ruling medieval times. The combina oligarchies and a rigid religious mindset had stopped the forward movement of rational, academic and scientific interaction with the changing world, which would have led to a dynamic Islamic culture. Unfortunately, that is why is so absent, not just in our *Ijtihad* the concept of country, but in the Muslim world at large. Democracy and freedom of speech have been stifled for decades. Moreover education, research and the quest for knowledge are simply not pe for a true priorities. That is why the greatest ho Islamic renaissance lies with Islamic scholars in the western countries who are neither afraid of oppressive Muslim regimes nor of the religious bigots who claim a monopoly on Islam. While western countries forge ahead in every field of edge, the Muslim world seems to have given knowl feeding whatever -up and relies on being spoon .knowledge is passed on by the west¹⁸

Iqbal and Ali Sharaiti called for Muslims to interpretation of the -keep their minds open to re remained Quran and Islamic law so that they changing world. They also strong -relevant in a fast making Mullahs -in their condemnation of the myth who were not equipped to answer the questions of the modern Muslims on contemporary issues. They ce were apprehensive of their bigotry and intoleran against science, Art, and original thought and and *Ulema* wanted to set up a university for religious scholars to equip them with the modern tools of knowledge. They believed that rather than spurning the discoveries of the modern world as Muslim world should use the Islamic the-un technological and scientific discoveries of the west without subordinating itself to western values and culture. Iqbal and Ali Sharaiti has a special significance for young men who often lack the d possess none of the virtues of their forefathers an good qualities of the dominating races of Asia and Europe. They have forgotten all about Islam as well as the golden history of their past glory and general .prosperity¹⁹

Iqbal and Ali Sharaiti being thorough that these tasks could not be revolutionaries knew interpretation of the -accomplished without a re received Islamic doctrines. Much of their poetry and the whole of their prose is an attempt at such a interpretation. Unfortunately this essential aspect -re t been given the attention it of their work has no deserves, especially by the younger generation. The task has to be undertaken if we are to emerge from

¹⁸ Masud Muhammad Khalid “*Iqbal’s Reconstruction of Ijtihad*”, (1995, Islamic Research Institute), Lahore.p-90.

¹⁹ Ibid, p-89.

the slough of despondence into which we have sunk on account of repeated failures of the Muslims of the time. Instead to meet the challenge *Ummah* it is the only way, Iqbal and Sharaiti did not believe in any rigid system of philosophy simply conceived as the result of abstract reasoning, Iqbal and Ali Sharaiti turned from the decadent old hat could system and looked for a personality to build a new world²⁰:

From the above discussion it becomes crystal clear that the thought of Iqbal and Ali Shariati has a great relevance in the contemporary world. Because the honour of humanity is at stake. The preachers of human rights are abusing humanity. We being trampled ruthlessly under Masses of men at the heavy feet of the powerful. There is dearth of love in the world these days, chaos and confusion, distress and misery have deeply eroded in the Muslim societies. They were the messengers of love universal, the love. Their message of love humanity needs them. We do need them without any doubt

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²⁰ Dar Bashir Ahmad, “*Articles on Iqbal*” (1994, Iqbal Academy Lahore), Pakistan. P-123.

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