

Fazlur Rahman

## MUHAMMAD IQBĀL AND ATATURK'S REFORMS

TURKEY and her fortunes occupied an important place in the thought of Muhammad Iqbāl (1877-1938), as it did for most Indian Muslims and their leaders in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Not only the seat of the Caliphate, it was the only Muslim country that had managed to preserve its independence in the face of European colonialism. For Muhammad Iqbāl, in whose philosophy individual and collective freedom occupied a place of central importance, as it was a *sine qua non* for the development of proper human 'self-hood' (*khudī*), Turkey's independence meant the ground from which a new Islamic self-hood could originate. Hence, it is not surprising that Iqbāl addressed a poem to Atatürk in July 1922, just after the Turks defeated the Greeks (in 1921). Because this poem presupposes knowledge of and actually applies Iqbāl's basic philosophy, initially formulated in his *Asrār-I Khudī*,<sup>1</sup> I shall analyze the latter briefly here. We shall need this analysis further as we try to understand Iqbāl's later statements on Atatürk and his reforms, for if these statements are considered in isolation, without reference to this philosophical background, they appear quite contradictory.

is a doubter. "I think, therefore, I am" The passing state of doubting cannot yield a substantial self.

Bertrand Russel detected a logical flaw in the proposition: "I think, therefore, I am". The flaw was that Descartes began his thinking with doubting everything, his perceptions, his memory, his volitions, etc. But when he says, "I am," he has to doubt the proposition "I think" because "I think" has become a memory. In this manner Descartes certainty becomes an unreasonable certainty.

Similarly Imam Ghazali reached his certainties through doubting. It is quite likely that Descartes was influenced by Imam Ghazali's thinking. But if we think about the culture we are living in, we find that it is not a very healthy culture. It is a culture which creates nothing new, nothing extraordinary, and nothing remarkable. It has not produced anything startling—no great man or woman, no great book, no great painting. The quantity of products is quite large but the quality is mediocre. In the words of Rene Gnenon, there is a reign of quantity in the modern civilization. Only if we could have another Rene Gnenon. Perhaps we could hope with Shariat that mankind's evolution will bring forward more persons like Rene Gnenon.

To be cultured as scientists would imply to be above class and grade distinction. The strict hierarchy in bureaucracy depends upon ordering by the high-up, and obeying by the low level subordinate. There is a pecking order in bureaucracy. If the scientists became cultured they would revolt against all pecking and all rigid hierarchies. They would demand equality of consideration.

he works. In other words, does he have team spirit? Does he have the humility to admit his own mistakes before other scientists, especially his own colleagues? Does he have a genuine respect for excellence when he sees it in one of his colleagues? Is he prepared to help others when they need it? Does he have the courage to give full expression to his views especially when they are based upon direct observation? Does he have the courage to love others? Is he prepared to combat his feelings of hate towards his fellow human beings?

Oswald Spengler in his book *Decline of the West* makes a distinction between "Culture and Civilization". "Culture entails firm belief in the meta physical ideals and a readiness to fight for them. Civilization implies skepticism, cynicism and a lack of dynamism in connection with moral ideals. Civilization represents a moral weakness and a frailty of human fibre. It is ready to doubt and sometimes revels in doubt. "The worst doubter is he who doubts his own doubt," said Ibsen. The man who doubts his own doubt is a person whose passion is doubting and not knowledge or truth. One who is cultured enjoys his certainties, can like risks when danger confronts him knowing that his certainties strengthen him and give him the courage to burn his boats, if necessary, in an encounter.

Descartes thought that doubting all certainties will take him to a proposition which cannot be doubted. According to his own thinking he discovered the inevitable certainty in "I am." The fact of doubting implies that there

complaining about the scientists contempt for literature and for arts and the artists' hostility to science and the scientists' lifeless and dry pursuits.

In a Democratic society there are chances that people will be fair and that people will be cultured, but there is no such possibility in a fascist society. In a fascist society culture is there as a nimble persona too ready to burst but with no substance. That is why genuine persons like Thomas Mann could not live and create in a Germany ruled by Hitler. They decided to live outside Germany. Though they were patriotic Germans. They loved Germany too much to see its cultural disintegration taking place before their own eyes.

There is scarcely any difference between being virtuous and being cultured. A person may be very pious but if he does not help others who are in distress, he is not truly virtuous. A person may not be regarded as cultured if though he has read Shakespeare, Goethe and Iqbal, he does not extend a helping hand to those who are in a state of misery.

Culture implies a firm faith in human decency, an altruism which can go as far as self-denial (where self-denial) means denying ego-gratification but affording satisfaction to your integrity and conscience).

Do scientists realize the values implied in the pursuit of knowledge where knowledge itself is a value? One of the principal values in the acquisition of knowledge is living amicably with others, especially those with whom

They would organize a group of about 40 people suffering from neurotic ailments, including psychosomate diseases. They would take them to a resort where they would live with all the possible and feasible comforts. But they were prohibited from saying anything which they had not observed themselves.

All lies develop out of phantasy whether you lie with the intention of deceiving someone, or you lie for the sake of making an impression on others. You lie because you are fascinated by your phantasy. If you prepare an introspective report about your phantasies, you will be regarding your phantasies as phantasies and not as facts. It is only when you confuse phantasies with facts, that you lie. What these psychologists maintain is that when you talk to someone you only report what you have observed, not what you have phantasised about. This reporting should be free from any element of imagination. Only pure observation is needed. When you report only pure observation, you are on the way to mental health. When the personal relations of the scientists are healthy with other scientists, they are likely to be more cultured in their attitude. If his relations are based more on cooperation than on competitiveness, if he is more agreeable to enter into team spirit without a sense of rivalry, he is likely to be more cultured. If he loves more than he hates, he has imbibed the spirit of culture.

When GP Snow talks about two cultures, one for the scientist, and the other for the artist, he is trying to create a dichotomy between two cultures. He seems to be

become administrators were far more authoritarian than the regular administrators. It appears that administration was their "inferior function" and when they performed this function, they behaved in an inferior way.

The basic feature of all sciences is observation and experiment. Whatever can be observed directly, confirming or disconfirming a hypothesis, is the only data of science. If you are an animal scientist, you have to observe animals and not depend upon hearsay or gossip about them nor can your own phantasies about animals be your data. In the medieval times philosophers sat down to discuss the number of teeth a horse has. They discussed the problem for a long time. No one stood up to open up a horse's mouth and count the number of his teeth. If some one had stood up to count the horse's teeth, the matter would have been resolved in no time. There was no need for this endless disputation.

Observation and experiment form the basis of scientific culture. When one scientist talks to another, if he is a true scientist, he will talk to him about what he has observed himself. In his conversation, there would be no interpolation of imagination, gossip, rumour or hearsay. Only what you have observed yourself, should be the only foundation for a tete-à-tete. Some psychologists have performed this experiment with some neurotics. They think that when the mind is controlled by phantasy that it becomes subject to neurosis. If it is regulated by observation, it remains in a normal or healthy condition.

Dr. Muhammad Ajmal

## ON SCIENTIFIC CULTURE

During a Group discussion among the research scientists about the "linkages and relationships between scientists and support services staff, the problems of the support services" authoritarianism emerged as an important issue to be analysed. One of the scientists themselves become authoritarian when they are assigned administrative duties. He said that it was the absence of "Scientific Culture" among the scientists which make them worse administrators than the permanent administrators. What is the scientific culture that he talked about? He was obviously referring to the presence of culture among the scientists.

There are certain intrinsic values which compose a culture. These values are truth, beauty, goodness and justice. The value which occupies a supreme position is love. These values are implied in all moral behaviour. They are specially present in all scientific pursuits.

I acted as Director of Education (Lahore Region) for sometime. I noted that the teachers who were on deputation to the Directorate, hated their previous colleagues with contempt and disdain and kept their files with them for a longer period than was absolutely necessary. I discovered to my despair that the lecturers who

the press—like myself. I was then *Press Trust of India* correspondent.

On arrival at the airport, Liaquat, puffing at his cigarette would head straight for Altaf, give a broad smile to the journalists, ignore the Cabinet Ministers and board the plane. On one occasion, after the plane had taken off, I saw Altaf tell one of the Cabinet Ministers: come and look me up later on today in my office. So that was Altaf, the all powerful editor of *Dawn*.

Since I have touched on Jinnah and Pakistan, let me bring in Indira Gandhi which has a Jinnah connection. Jaiboy says he was 'stunned' on receiving a personal note from Indira Gandhi on the passing away of PJ in Bangalore in 1972. Jaiboy says he had been harbouring a feeling that following PJ's association with Jinnah, PJ's relations with the Nehru family had been obscured and eclipsed and even completely destroyed. Jaiboy says that when PJ died, Indira telephoned a cousin of his – who was then working in the Indian Foreign Office in New Delhi—and asked about the whereabouts of PJ's children and got Jaiboy's address. That was Indira Gandhi – the greatness of hers.

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Jaiboy recalls coming across a long, hand-written, letter addressed to PJ by one of Jinnah's 'fanatic admirers'. The letter pointedly told PJ that even though he was paid a fabulous salary – rupees three thousand per month – PJ did not refer to 'Jinnah Sahib' as 'Quaid-e-Azam'. PJ used to refer to him as 'Mister Jinnah'. PJ passed on the letter to Jinnah and Jinnah returned it to PJ with the remark: 'Ignore it'.

Jaiboy also recalls that when Gandhiji went on a fast. PJ through the editorial columns of the *Dawn*, demanded Gandhiji's release. This went against the grain of some of the Muslim Leaguers but Jinnah let PJ exercise his editorial prerogative.

When I asked Jaiboy if PJ wielded influence by virtue of the fact that he was the editor of *Dawn*, he said: People thought so, but that was not true.

At this point, let me interject my personal experience of Altaf Hussain, who succeeded PJ as the editor of *Dawn*.

I knew Altaf, in Karachi, in the early fifties and I dare say: Altaf was a strong man in Pakistan.

Here is a typical scene. Pakistan Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan flying out from the Karachi airport to Rawalpindi for a brief visit.

Gathered at the airport, to see off Liaquat, would be Altaf Hussain, Pakistan Cabinet ministers, and members of

because there was a limit beyond which he could not stretch his logic about Partition of India or the creation of Pakistan.

Jaiboy recalls his father telling him that once there was a 'heated discussion' between Jinnah and himself and when he asked Jinnah whether Pakistan was a feasible proposition, Jinnah paused for a moment and then said: Joseph, do you think the British are really going to leave India in a hurry?

Before joining *Dawn*, PJ had been the editor of the *Hindustan Times* which was later edited by Mahatma Gandhi's son Devadas Gandhi. When Mahatma Gandhi learnt of PJ joining the Dawn, Gandhiji sent a note to PJ reading:

Dear Pothan,

I understand you have joined Jinnah's *Dawn*. Please send me a copy. You know I am a poor man.

Mohandas Karam Chand Gandhi.

When I asked Jaiboy how he interpreted that note of Gandhiji, he said he was not sure but he did feel that Gandhiji was being sarcastic to PJ because PJ had all along championed nationalistic causes.

And when I queried Jaiboy as to how could Jinnah have a non-Muslim – PJ was a Kerala Christian – as the editor of his official journal? Jaiboy said Jinnah was not a fanatic and he gave PJ full editorial freedom.

pull them up for their cowardice, they shouted him down and told him that surely he did not expect them to bear the lathis for a payment of a mere eight annas per head.

The next day, we the journalists, met Jinnah...

I had forgotten about all this until the other day – almost 40 years later – when my columnist friend Jaiboy Joseph and I happened to be touring in eastern India and we got to reminiscing about Pakistan. The Pakistan connection was:

- a) Jaiboy's father, the celebrated journalist Pothan Joseph (PJ), was the first editor, in the early 40s of Jinnah's *Dawn*, the official English daily of the Muslim League and then published from Delhi and
- b) I had been posted to Karachi, the capital of newly-created Pakistan, as a *Press Trust of India* correspondent following the Nehru-Liaquat Pact of 1950.

I had always harboured the feeling that Jinnah was not too hot on Pakistan and Jaiboy confirmed this – through the medium of his father.

I dug into Jaiboy and he has yielded interesting sidelights into Jinnah and Pakistan. Here is a sampling.

In fact, when PJ resigned as the editor of *Dawn*, in 1944, he sent a note to Jinnah stating he was quitting

Hiro Shroff

## IN PRAISE OF JINNAH

*Sahib, ath anna men kiya karega?* That was my first brush with Pakistan—or rather, the advent of Pakistan.

That was way back around 1946 and the location was Karachi. I was s' "I a student in Karachi and a freelance journalist.

Jinnah was on a visit to Karachi and the local Muslim League leader thought he would organize a demonstration in favour of the demand for Pakistan on the lines of the Congress demonstrations calling for independence of India from the British.

The Sind Legislative Assembly was on and the local Muslim league leader and a handful of his so-called supporters had gathered inside the Assembly compound. They were raising pro-Pakistan slogans but when a police van arrived and even before the lathiwielding policemen could alight from the van, the mob, dead scared, had fled. This was in sharp contrast to the Congress, where, its demonstrators, faced the lathis and the bullets.

Crestfallen, the local Muslim league leader walked across to the nearby residences of his so-called demonstrators. And here I witnessed what might he called attack is the best form of defence. Before the leader could

