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### IQBAL'S IDEOLOGY AND THE PROBLEMS OF RECONSTRUCTION OF AFGHANISTAN

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Syed Jamaluddin Afghani and Allama Iqbal can rightly be credited as being the unparalleled great philosophers of modern Islamic ideology and advocates of the unity of Muslim Ummah. Through their enlightened thoughts and teachings, they not only analyzed the shortcomings of the Muslim rulers, scholars and political leaders but also provided a manifest roadmap for the renaissance of the Islamic world, besides suggesting a solution for excluding ideological slavery and the exploitative despotic political and imperialistic hegemony imposed on the Islamic world by Western powers and the enemies of Islam. In the backdrop of historical events especially the struggle of the brave Afghan nation against two great superpowers of the USSR and the USA in the past, as well as the huge political, economic and survival challenges faced by the current regime of Taliban in Afghanistan, this article attempts to establish the striking relevance and the much-needed compliance with the great teachings of the revolutionary and visionary sages and reformers of the Islamic Ummah, Jamaluddin Afghani and Allama Iqbal.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Syed Jamaluddin Afghani (1839-1897) was one of the great leaders of Afghanistan in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Allama Iqbal was greatly influenced by his efforts and ideas. He has repeatedly mentioned Jamaluddin Afghani in his writings and statements and praised his diverse and revolutionary services. Iqbal considered him as the founder of the Muslim renaissance. So, in a letter, he writes:

“Nowadays, if anyone deserves to be called a Mujaddid (revivalist), it is only Jamaluddin Afghani. If anyone writes about the history of the Muslims of Egypt, Iran, Turkey, and India, he must first mention Abdul Wahab Najdi and

then Jamaluddin Afghani. Rather, the latter is actually the founder of the renaissance of the Muslims of the present age” (1).

Afghani called for the unity of the Islamic Ummah. He wanted the eastern nations to struggle for freedom from the oppressive rule of Europe. He visited India several times in this regard. Dr Javed Iqbal writes that Jamaluddin Afghani's international Ittihad-e-Islami was warmly welcomed in India. So, whenever he went back from here, he left behind a group of his followers in India. Iqbal was also a member of this group like the Muslim youth, who were influenced by Jamaluddin Afghani's concept of Muslim Ummah (2).

Iqbal highly admired Afghani's movement of Muslim unity. In his English Khutbahs (sermons), Iqbal writes:

“It is our duty to reconsider Islam as a system of thought without severing our ties with the past. It was probably Shah Waliullah Dehlavi who first felt the awakening of the new spirit. But it was actually Syed Jamaluddin Afghani who knew the true importance and wide scope of this great duty, who besides having a deep insight into the history of intellectual and national life of Islam, had a good experience of different people and their habits and traits” (3).

Though Syed Jamaluddin Afghani is considered as the leader of Afghanistan, his thoughts and ideas also impacted the national movements of Turkey, Iran and North Africa. The word Pan-Islamism (forced imposition of Islam) was used to discredit his movement. Iqbal issued a statement opposing the notion that “the word Pan-Islamism is the invention of the French press and that this word was used, as believed by those who coined as an alleged conspiracy which the Islamic countries were hatching against the non-Muslim nations and in particular Europe. Professor Brown and others later proved after a thorough investigation that this was a fabricated story. The only intention of those who created the propaganda of Pan-Islamism was to legitimize under its cover the European invasion and excesses that were going on in the Islamic countries” (4).

***Dr Muhammad Riaz writes:***

“Afghani, followed by Shaykh Mohammad Abduh and Syed Halim Pasha, is probably the great thinker who has spent immense energy on Pan-Islamism, and the same was duly pointed out by the late Allama in almost all poetry and prose works. They both had the same thoughts about Islamic Ijtihad and its ideology. Allama was greatly influenced by Afghani, both intellectually and practically, as clearly reflected in Javed Nama” (5).

Javed Nama is Iqbal's poetic work in which Iqbal theoretically journeys into the heavens, wherein he meets the spirits of many great personalities. In the above work, when Iqbal, accompanied by Maulana Rumi, reaches the planet, Mercury, transiting through the planet Moon, he meets there Jamaluddin Afghani and Turkish leader Saeed Halim Pasha. Introducing Afghani to Iqbal, Maulana Rumi says that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, no other person was born in Asia better than these two men, as they have offered the solution to all our political,

civilizational and economic problems, thanks to their religious wisdom and personal ability. The speeches of Jamaluddin were full of enthusiasm and fervor which could infuse life even into the hearts which are as dead as stones. On the Mercury, Iqbal offered prayer under the leadership of Afghani and kissed his hands while expressing his devotion to him:

گفت مشرق زین دوکس بہتر نژاد  
ناخن شان عُقد ہائے ما کشاد

سید السادات مولانا جلال  
زنده از گفتار اورسنگ و سقال (6)

When Jamaluddin Afghani asked Iqbal during their meeting at the Mercury about the state of Muslims, Iqbal replied that because of the weakness of faith, the soul of Muslims had died in their bodies. Therefore, they are deprived of their religion's strength. The infighting in the Muslim world is going on because of religion and land. Iranians, Egyptians, Arabs, Afghans and Indians are under the deep influence of European thoughts. On the other hand, the European nations are enslaving Muslims politically and economically under communism. On hearing this, Afghani comments about the flag bearer of communism Karl Marx and his book "Capital: Critique of Political Economy". Karl Marx desired to cure the economic and political sufferings of humanity, but his mistake was that considering religion and the world as separate from each other, he made materialism his destination.

صاحب سرمایہ از نسل خلیل  
یعنی آن پیغمبر بے جبرئیل

زانکہ حق و باطل او مضمّر است  
قلب او مومن دماغش کا فر است (7)

After that, Iqbal gives a message in Javed Nama's part of "Paigam-e-Afghani ba Millat-e-Roosia" to the Russian nation. That was the time when Russia was witnessing the Russian Revolution, and it had adopted communism, replacing capitalism. Khalifa Abdul Hakim sheds light on that message as follows:

"In this message, Iqbal has presented with great clarity the points of convergence and difference between Islam and Communism. Communism has been quite successful in destroying old gods and obsolete institutions. He has thoroughly mentioned it. However, at the same time, he has warned the Muslim Ummah of the dangers that could threaten the revolutionary culture and civilization" (8).

Undoubtedly, this message of Iqbal was for the Russian nation on behalf of Afghani, but the universal importance of this message cannot be denied. If this message is seen in the context of the current revolutionary situation in Afghanistan today, this message has great significance and striking relevance. If this message is evaluated in the current political situation in Afghanistan, the incumbent government of Afghanistan can hugely benefit from the thoughts of Jamaluddin Afghani.

The message above comprises 50 couplets, which are divided into six stanzas. It compares Islam and Communism and the political, social and economic teachings of Islam are described with great skill that even the non-Muslims can improve their political, economic and social situation by following these teachings. In the first stanza, Iqbal writes on behalf of Afghani that currently, Muslims do not seem to follow the teachings of the Qur'an.

بنده مومن ز قرآن بر نخورد  
در ایغ او نه مے دیدم نه درد (9)

Jamaluddin Afghani says in one of his articles "H'fazat-e-Hakoomat":

"If we read the Qur'anic verses carefully and take a look at the incidents that have happened to the Islamic nation and the Islamic countries, we know that there are many of us who have abandoned the commandments of Allah the Almighty and followed the wrong path, and have strayed from the straight path of Allah which was ordained for us" (10).

Dr Ghulam Hussain Zulfiqar writes that Afghans have always resented monarchy because it contradicted the Islamic spirit of freedom of thought. Rather, because of their bitter experiences, Afghans had ultimately become strongly opposed to the monarchy (11). The Russian nation ended Caesarism and monarchy through the Russian revolution. Afghani appreciates this revolutionary act of Russia and says, "O Russia! you have presented a new order and turned your back on the old western constitution as if you have also broken the bones of Caesarism like the Muslims:

تو که طرح دیگر اندا ختی  
دل زد دستور کہن پر داختی

ہمچو اسلامیاں اندر جہاں  
قیصریت را شکستی استخوان (12)

Afghani then makes it clear to the Russian nation that you must avoid the mistakes that Muslims have made. The Muslims had destroyed the monarchy, but finally, the monarchy prevailed again with its ugly tricks, the phenomenon of which has been presented by Khalifa Abdul Hakim as follows:

"The revolution of Islam was nullified by the monarchy. The tyrant ad despotic sultans became "Zilul-Allah" and the corrupt scholars became their tools by becoming jurists and fatwa sellers. Just like the emperor of Great Rome, who became a god whose worship was obligatory on every individual. In the same way, the Muslim sultans started to let the scholars perform prostration on them. They got a decree that this prostration is, in fact, out of respect and not worship" (13).

Therefore, Afghani says, "O people of Russia, you have accomplished the same feat that the Muslims had performed by starting by saying "La" (no)". Now, you have to start your journey towards "Illa" (except), so don't look

towards the West which couldn't complete this journey and got trapped in materialism. You should benefit from the Holy Quran to avoid the obsolete tradition.

کرده کار خداوندان تمام  
بگذر از لا جانب الا خرام

داستان کهنه شستی باب باب  
فکر را روشن کن از ام الكتاب (14)

Afghani was basically an advocate of the unity of the Muslim world and wanted the Islamic renaissance. He had the realization that Muslims can regain their dignity only by acting upon the teachings of the Quran. Therefore, at one point, he writes that as long as there remains in this world the Holy Qur'an, which was the true leader of the Muslims and the foremost reason for the great height and glory of Muslims in the first century, we have no reason be the despair of progressing again and will ultimately achieve our lost glory" (15).

Today, after a long struggle, the Afghan nation has destroyed colonialism and imperialism in Afghanistan. It is not an uncomplicated task to force a superpower like Russia and the United States to leave Afghanistan. In this regard, the thoughts of Jamaluddin Afghani can be made use of. Thus, he writes in one place, "abandoning the right principles and sticking to unseen paths is the reason for the weakness of the state and the fall of rulers. But then, if the class of Muslim rulers again starts following the rules of the Sharia and following the path of their predecessors, they can in a short span of time regain the same status as of the rightly guided Caliphs" (16).

The general opinion about the Taliban government is that when they started the struggle against Najibullah's puppet government, it was the graduates of madrasahs wherein education in science and other modern disciplines were neglected. The current Taliban government has to pay special attention to both religious education and modern sciences. They will have to establish universities and other institutions under modern requirements.

After the Taliban revolution, the future of Afghanistan's economy has become more uncertain because the financial aid it has so far been receiving is not likely to continue in the future as well. In the initial few months after the Taliban took over, the World Bank presented a disturbing analysis of Afghanistan's economy, saying that Afghanistan may face a serious financial crisis. The IMF and other international financial institutions have suspended aid in view of the fast-changing situation in Afghanistan. In the given circumstances, there is a dire need to adopt a comprehensive economic plan and policy.

It is not the task of a single person or even a few individuals to establish a modern state in this modern era. Currently, the Afghan government is at a stage where it has to legislate. It should also benefit from the experiences of countries like Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey. If the Taliban do not do this, they might fail and collapse owing to their certain wrong decisions.

*Afghani writes:*

“If a single person has been given responsibility by Allah to lead, rule and protect the entire nation, then surely such a person is more in dire need of seeking advice and consultation from experienced people and he should benefit from their opinions. Despite the fact that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was innocent, for our education and learning, Allah instructed him, “Consult with them in the matter”. Similarly, it has been said in praise of the believers: “mutual consultation decides their matters” (17).

The Taliban government of Afghanistan, which, while facing today the threat of internal conspiracies, should also know the intrigues of foreign countries. When Russia and the United States attacked Afghanistan, Afghanistan did not have a powerful army. On the contrary, the US did not dare to attack Iran. One of the main reasons for this is that Iran possesses a strong defense system and modern force. Afghanistan has to develop a strong army to ensure its defense and protection. In the past, the Taliban didn't face much difficulty in taking over from Ashraf Ghani only because he failed to establish strong armed forces.

A meeting of OIC was held in Pakistan in the recent past to support Afghanistan in its current dire economic situation. Pakistan tried to convince the world that Afghanistan should not be left alone. Pakistan played an important role in organizing the said meeting, but pro-American leaders like Hamid Karzai called Pakistan's sincere act as interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs.

Jamaluddin Afghani while advising us to be aware of such mean-spirited leaders had said that if the ruler of the nation happens to be ignorant, ill-mannered, low-spirited and coward, they will put veils of ignorance over the eyes of his nation (18). Afghanistan will always have to be wary of such mean and Western-influenced leaders.

Afghani was the biggest and most important advocate of Muslim unity and this, precisely, has remained the main goal of his efforts and struggle. In his article “Wahdat-e-Millat-e-Islamiah”, he writes Muslims are the sons of a brave and self-respecting zealous nation. Their territories spread from Adria Noel to Peshawar. They all believe in the Holy Quran. Then why it is not possible that they all unite and get together to protect their religion and Ummah (19)? Allama Iqbal also taught Muslims to get united from across the shores of the Nile to Kashgar. If Afghanistan doesn't extend its hand of friendship towards the Islamic countries, it will ultimately be left alone. This is what exactly the powerful non-Muslim states want so that Afghanistan falls into their lap like a ripe fruit.

Today's Afghanistan can benefit from the thoughts and advice of Jamaluddin Afghani and Allama Iqbal. Both leaders aspired for the renaissance of Islam as they were revolutionary thinkers. Based on the teachings and philosophy of both great leaders, the edifice of a modern Islamic state can be built. In fact,

after Afghani, Iqbal is the only visionary leader who not only provided a solid and workable ideology for the renaissance of Islam but also gave a clear and effective message for real freedom, sovereignty and a bright future of the Islamic world. The regime of today's Afghanistan can and must benefit from this great message (20).

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