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978-1-107-00886-1 - The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal: Islam and Nationalism in Late Colonial India

Iqbal Singh Sevea

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The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal

This book reflects upon the political philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal, a towering intellectual figure in South Asian history, revered by many for his poetry and thought. He lived in India in the twilight years of the British Empire, and, apart from a short but significant period studying in the West, he remained in Punjab until his death in 1938. The book studies Iqbal's critique of nationalist ideology and his attempts to chart a path for the development of the 'nation' by liberating it from the centralising and homogenising tendencies of the modern state structure. These were highly relevant and often controversial issues during the years leading up to independence, and Iqbal frequently clashed with his contemporaries over his view of nationalism as 'the greatest enemy of Islam.' In rejecting post-Enlightenment conceptions of religion, he constructed his own particular interpretation of Islam that would provide solutions to all political, social and economic ills. In many ways, his vision of Islam – forged through an interaction with Muslim thinkers and western intellectual traditions – was ahead of its time, and since his death both modernists and Islamists have continued to champion his legacy.

Iqbal Singh Sevea is Assistant Professor of History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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IQBAL SINGH SEVEA

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*Dedicated to the memory of my grandfather,
Hakim Baba, who would have been glad that
I finally took interest in the man he named me after*

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Acknowledgements

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Glossary

<i>adab/adabiyat</i>	etiquette
<i>akhlaq/akhlaqi</i>	ethics
<i>alim</i> (pl. ulama)	religious scholar trained in Islamic sciences
<i>aql</i>	knowledge, mind or rationality
<i>ashraf</i>	This term has been translated as Muslim nobility. It essentially refers to Muslims who trace their genealogy to communities from Arabia instead of the Indian communities who converted to Islam.
<i>asliyyat</i>	true essence or nature
<i>aurat</i>	woman
<i>azadi</i>	freedom
<i>bagawat</i>	rebellion
<i>ba'ya</i>	pledge of allegiance or the public acknowledgement of a caliph or ruler
<i>bekhudi</i>	used by Iqbal to describe the force that brings the individual ego in line with the social ego
<i>bida</i>	innovation, or the acceptance of un-Islamic practices
<i>biradari</i>	brotherhood
<i>debache</i>	preface
<i>dhimmi</i>	category of Islamic law signifying non-Muslims who were protected by a Muslim state. Though traditionally restricted to the ‘people of the Book’, namely the Jews and Christians, it has historically been expanded to include many other communities.
<i>dil</i>	heart

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Glossary

<i>din/diniyyat</i>	religion
<i>duniyal/duniya-i</i>	world/worldly
<i>fatwa</i> (pl. <i>fatawa</i>)	legal opinion issued by the ulama
<i>faqih</i> (pl. <i>fuqaha</i>)	one who partakes in <i>fiqh</i> , a legalist
<i>fitna</i>	apostasy
<i>fiqh</i>	Islamic jurisprudence
<i>ghazal</i>	poem made up of couplets or two-line stanzas. The poem may contain any number of couplets. There is a strict rhyme pattern – AA, BA, CA and so forth. Each couplet represents a different thought and does not need the previous or following two lines to be understood.
<i>hadith</i>	tradition, an account of what the Prophet Muhammad said or did, or of his tacit approval for something said or done in his presence.
<i>hijrat</i>	migration
<i>hukumiyyat</i>	It is widely held that the term appears in the Quran to mean justice. Maududi, however, translated it to mean the sovereignty of God.
<i>haq</i>	truth
<i>huriyyat</i>	freedom
<i>ijma</i>	ideally connotes the consensus of the Muslim community. It is generally used, however, to describe the consensus of the ulama.
<i>ijtihad</i>	lit. ‘exerting oneself’; used in Islamic law to refer to the use of independent reasoning in the interpretation of Islamic sources
<i>ilm</i>	knowledge
<i>inqilab</i>	revolution
<i>insan-i-kamil</i>	ideal man
<i>ishq</i>	love
<i>izzat</i>	pride or respect
<i>jadidiyyat</i>	modernist strand in Urdu literature which emerged in the early twentieth century.
<i>kalam</i>	theology
<i>kalima</i>	Islamic creed, ‘ <i>la illa il Allah</i> ’
<i>khanajangi</i>	internal feuds
<i>khatam-i-nabuyiyat</i>	culmination of the chain of prophethood in Muhammad
<i>khudi</i>	self, individual, ego

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<i>madrasa</i>	school or seminary
<i>mahdi</i>	prophet
<i>maktab</i>	school for young children
<i>maqalat</i>	texts
<i>maqulat</i>	rational sciences
<i>manqulat</i>	‘transmitted subjects’ such as <i>hadith</i> , <i>fiqh</i> and <i>tafsir</i>
<i>maslaha</i>	the recognition of the common interests of the community
<i>maslak</i>	way or path
<i>masnavi</i>	poem of indefinite number of verses in the rhyme scheme of AA, BB, CC. It is often narrative in style.
<i>mazhab</i>	refers to a school of thought or jurisprudence within Islam. A number of <i>mazhabs</i> emerged in the first two centuries after the birth of Islam. The four main remaining Sunni schools are the Hanafi, Hanbali, Maliki and Shafi. These schools should not be seen as separate sects as there are a number of points on which they are similar. The major remaining Shia <i>mazhab</i> is the Jafari school. Most South Asian Muslims subscribe to the Hanafi school.
<i>millat</i>	religious community
<i>miraj</i>	the accession of Muhammad to heaven
<i>mujtahid</i>	renewer of the age
<i>mulk</i>	country
<i>mulla</i>	term used to describe an alim, it can have a derogatory connotation in the South Asian context
<i>mutahida qawmiyyat</i>	composite or united nationalism
<i>nabi/nabuyiyat</i>	prophet/prophethood
<i>naqsh</i>	sublimation
<i>nasal</i>	race
<i>nizam</i>	order
<i>pargana</i>	fiscal and administrative unit which can loosely be translated as a sub-district
<i>pir/pirs</i>	saint/saints
<i>qawm/qawmiyyat</i>	community/community consciousness
<i>qismat</i>	fate

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<i>qiyas</i>	process of analogical reasoning in <i>fiqh</i>
<i>Rashidun</i> caliphs	the four 'orthodox caliphs' immediately following Muhammad – Abu Bakar, Umar, Usman and Ali
<i>risala</i>	journal or magazine
<i>risalat</i>	Prophethood of Muhammad
<i>rubaiyyat</i>	quatrain
<i>sacha</i>	true or real
<i>sahaba</i>	early Muslim community
<i>sajjada nashins</i>	descendants of Sufi saints who play an important institutional role linked to the administration of the Sufi shrines
<i>sharia</i>	Islamic law
<i>shura</i>	advisory board to the caliph
<i>siyasat/siyasa/siyasi</i>	politics/political
<i>sunna</i>	the practise of Prophet Muhammad
<i>tafsir bil ray</i>	interpretations of Islamic sources which were based solely on personal opinions and not on any recognised methodology
<i>tafsirs</i>	exegeses
<i>taqdir</i>	fate
<i>taqlid</i>	lit. imitation; refers to the acceptance of a religious ruling from someone who is regarded as a higher religious authority without necessarily asking for technical proof
<i>tarjuman</i>	interpretation
<i>tauhid</i>	unity of God
<i>tazkira</i>	collection of biographical notes
<i>tehzib</i>	culture
<i>thet</i>	real or authentic
<i>turath</i>	loosely translated as Muslim heritage
<i>umma</i>	generally used to refer to the worldwide community of Muslims
<i>wahdat al-wujud</i>	unity of being; a central tenet of many schools of Sufi philosophy
<i>wali</i>	saint or friend of God
<i>waliyat</i>	spiritual guardianship or trusteeship
<i>waqf</i> (pl. <i>aqwaf</i>)	endowment
<i>watan</i>	homeland
<i>zakat</i>	obligatory Islamic alms
<i>zaleel</i>	lowly or degenerate

Abbreviations

BL	British Library
IAP	Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore
NAI	National Archives of India
NML	Nehru Memorial Library

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Note on Translations and Transliterations

Many of the foreign words used in this monograph can be transliterated in multiple ways. A simplified style of transliteration without the dialectical marks has been employed. For purposes of standardisation, the *izafat* is indicated by an ‘-i-’ and ‘*iyya*’ is used in place of ‘*ia*’. In the case of the terms Jamaat-e-Islami and Tolu-e-Islam, however, the transliteration popularly employed by members of the said organisations has been retained. For the purposes of consistency, Persian words have also been transliterated as they are pronounced in Urdu. As far as possible, all personal names are cited as they have been spelt by the individuals themselves.

All foreign words used in this monograph, with the exception of sharia, alim and ulama, which are commonly used, have been italicised.

Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

