

## BOOK REVIEW

*Dr. Badrudin Bhat\**

*Iqbal's Approach to Islam: A Study* by Dr. Abdur Rashid Bhat, published by Islamic Book Foundation, 1781 Hauz Suiwalan, New Delhi-110002, pp. 132. 1st ed. 1996, Price Rs. 250.

Islam has remained a vital source of human civilization through out the history. It comprises the doctrines and the laws, the former inspires the inner self of man while the latter shapes his practical life vis-a-vis his society. Efforts have been made to understand the message of Islam, contained in its main sources—the Qur'an and the Sunnah—right from the time of the Sahabah (companions of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم)) and the Tabā'un (successors of the companions). Down the ages the scholars brought out the explication of the teachings of Islam as per their calibre and erudition. Imam-i-Ghazzali, Ibn Taymiyah, Shah Wali-u-Allah Dehlvi are some of those outstanding scholars of Islam who made a remarkable contribution to the field. Iqbal, the renowned personality of the modern Indian subcontinent, belongs to this tradition of scholarship of Islam. Like the other classical Islamic scholars, Iqbal's writings depict his serious attempt to interpret and explain the message of Islam in the

light of the new predicament and challenges.

On Iqbal and his thought ample books have been written both in India and Pakistan. The general nature of these books is either biographical or dealing with poetry or prose writings of Iqbal. The books treating Iqbal's thought in an all-inclusive way, touching his thought as reflected in both poetical and the prose works, are rare. *Iqbal's Approach to Islam: A study* by Abdur Rashid Bhat is a welcome addition to this direction. It is an analytical study of Iqbal's approach to the basic principles of Islam — knowledge, God, Human self, Community, *Ijtihād*. The book consists of five chapters apart from introduction and .Bibliography..

The first chapter, Theory of Knowledge, treats the epistemological issues of Islam and explicates its system as an organic -whole consisting of rationalism, empiricism and intuition. The relevant verses of the Qur'an which Iqbal has referred to in his *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (to illustrate the emphasis of the Qur'an on seeking the rational and empirical knowledge) and the verses from his poetry are here quoted by the author to substantiate Iqbal's approach to Islamic theory of knowledge.

The second chapter deals with the conception of God. Here Iqbal's criticism of the traditional arguments of western thought—cosmological, ontological and teleological arguments—is treated and elaborates his conceiving of God as an all inclusive Ego—the Eternal, the Last, the visible, the Invisible, the all knowledge from Whom the other egos emanate without affecting His Individuality. To Iqbal the attitudes of God serve as a means to conceive God and when it is supported by ones psycho-spiritual experience, the understanding of the Divine Self becomes easier for man. It is followed by the chapter on human self, This chapter, in simple terms, deals with Iqbal's conception of man. Here the author deals with Iqbal's treatment of human self (ego) which, according to the latter, emanates from God (the Ultimate Ego) and is the recipient of the Divine direction ('*amr*'), To Iqbal man has creative and free nature and

the environment is the means of the actualisation of purpose. The self passes through evolution of confronting the various 'worlds'—pre-birth, the earth, the *barzakh* and the '*akhirah*'—and fulfilling the duties of *khilafah* is the perfect growth of self on earth and its recompensation in the later world depends mainly upon the realisation of this very responsibility of man. The author treats these themes cogently in the chapter while relying both on his *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* and the relevant passages from his poetical works.

The fourth and the fifth chapters are on the political and the legal aspects of Islam. In the fourth chapter theory of the community, as viewed by Iqbal, is discussed. Here Iqbal's stand that Islamic community is rooted in *Tawhid*, *Risalah* (Prophethood) and *Akhuwwah* (brotherhood) and the subsidiary principles are derived from this basic fabric of the community. Egalitarianism, social justice and freedom of expression are special characteristics of Islamic polity. A discussion on Iqbal's idea of the separate state of Muslims is also found in the chapter which shows Iqbal's concern with the realisation of Islamic ethos in a proper way which, according to him, was not possible under the rule of imperialists or indigenous dominant hostile forces. The chapter also reviews the flaws of western concept of nationalism and democracy which Iqbal has minutely analysed in his writings. In the last chapter, the author analyses the sources of *Ijihad*—the *Qur'an*, the *Hadith*, the *Ijma'* the *Qiyas*—in the light of Iqbal's observations and highlights Iqbal's concern for reshaping the corpus of Islamic laws in the broader framework to confront with the problems and challenges of the contemporary society. The chapter is very important as it provides the directions for the adjustment of Islam in the changing milieu of the times. The chapter is followed by Bibliography wherein the list of the books serving as the primary and the secondary sources of the work are enlisted.

On the whole the book, *Iqbal's Approach to Islam*, deals with Iqbal's treatment of the vital issues of Islam in an analytical manner, substantiated by the primary sources

on the subject. However one feels that the discussion on *khilāfah* in the third chapter is very precise and the discussion on *Ijma'* in the last chapter is not even elaborated in a detailed manner. These two themes are dominant in Iqbal's writings and one wishes that it should have been given more elaboration. Moreover, if Iqbal's conception of art; his conception of state, would have been also incorporated in the book, it would have enhanced its scope in the academic circles. Notwithstanding the minor shortcomings, the work of Dr. Bhat is a commendable contribution to the literature on Islamic thought in general and Iqbal's thought in particular. It is very useful for both the general readers as well as the scholars in the field.