

## ALLAMA IQBAL AND PETER BERGER ON SECULARIZATION AND DE-SECULARIZATION THESIS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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### ABSTRACT

*Allama Iqbal and Peter Berger are the two illustrious social theorists of their respective times. Both of these philosophers have an immense contribution in their respective fields, as Iqbal is the world renowned poet-philosopher and religion was his desired topic, Peter Berger is living legend around the sociological and has a great authority on sociology of religion with his theories of Secularization and De-Secularization. The paper will focus on the comparative study of Iqbal's and Berger's philosophy of religion and will study comparatively the theory of secularization and de-Secularization. The paper will focus on the Iqbal's and Peter Berger's concern about the future of mankind and clash of various civilizations.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Secularization, De-Secularization, Religion, Sociology, Contemporary, Philosophy.*

Peter Ludwig Berger was born in March 17, 1929. He is an Austrian-born American sociologist known for his work in the sociology of Religion, and sociology of knowledge, study of modernization, and theoretical contributions to sociological theory. He is best known for his book, co-authored with Thomas Luckman, *The social construction of reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York, 1966), which is considered one of the most influential texts in the sociology of knowledge, and played a central role in the development of social constructionism. The book was named by the international sociological association as the fifth most influential book written in the field of sociology during the 20th century. Peter Berger is also known for his theories of secularization and de-Secularization thesis. On the other hand Allama Iqbal a well known poet-philosopher of 20<sup>th</sup> century has an immense contribution in the sociology of religion with his intriguing prose works, but he was not well introduced by the Iqbalain scholars, particularly, about his sociological thought. Iqbal was born in 1877 when the world at large was witnessing a paradigm change in its ideology at large, It was the period of enlightenment, industrialization, and renaissance, these revolutions had turned the world into a rational ball where there was an increasing propensity for scientific and rational inventions and general mind, particularly in the west people felt that god and religion is no longer relevant in the modern scientific world. Allama Iqbal stood firm from this sway of madness of scientific and technological race where everyone

was counted on rational basis and he categorically rejected this view of west. Religion, like metaphysics, has lost its prestige in the eyes of the western erudite, and has a genuine cause for bearing grudge against the scientific advancement of what may rightly be called the scientific era of Mankind. The present era has been marked by a significant shift in the direction of an excessive development of the analytic activity of man a belief in the gradual evolution of the higher forms from the lower physical as well as mental, a zest for discovering kindred facts from among the multiplicity and diversity; and classifying them to facilitate the process of forming general laws; which render them intelligible; and an attempt at reducing all phenomenon to a limited set of mechanical laws and to explaining them retrospectively. This shift has done much harm to religion and philosophy, which are activities of quite a different order, viz. synthetic and evaluative activities.

Religion has been a part of humanities existence since the beginning of time. There is no culture that has ever existed without some sort of belief system. This phenomenon of religion has infused the structure of human society in a very prominent manner throughout history. Rational minded intellectuals believed that religion is a major portion of human society that could very likely be a human creation. If this is true it did not stop religion from rising to positions of great prominence in the past. There was a period of time in which the Church, and subsequently religion, ruled society. Once nationality identified their religion and vice-versa, the

church made the laws; they arrested the criminals, and even carried out their punishment too. The church and its particular system of belief ruled society. But this did not last. Their came a time when people rebelled against the establishment of religion based society. This period has been called the Enlightenment. It was a time where people began to think for themselves and formulate their own beliefs. This began a movement that seemed to be end of religion. Society seemed to grow and thrive apart from the religious beliefs that had ruled for so long. People began to think that religion was part of humanities childhood and as we mature and grow as a race; religion will fade away as something that we don't need any more. However this has not been the case. There are many unanswered questions in the secularization debate. In a world that is allegedly becoming more secularized how do we account for religious resurgence? What is secularization, and is society becoming more secular? This paper will take a closer look at the Secularization Thesis, and the de-secularization of society and the relevance of Allama Iqbal, the poet of the east and unarguably the most eloquent poet-philosopher of 20th century.

The secularization thesis owes much of its development and propagation to Peter Berger one of the key spokesmen for the thesis in the 1960s and 70s. The term 'secularization' has had a somewhat adventurous history. This thesis states that as societies modernize they inevitably become more secular. This means that as society has progressed through the centuries it should be less and less visibly religious. The secularization Thesis entertains the idea that religion is almost a need that was experienced by humanity in its infant stages. Now that it industrializes and modernizes and becomes more mature there is an increasing rejection of religious faith by society as a whole. The cause for this phenomenon within culture can be attributed to the increased specialization of things such as education and health care, which has lead to a decrease in the influence of the church. Religion's role has also become increasingly specialized it deals with questions of meaning, rites of passage and private morality. The result is religion's influence declining in both society and the lives of individuals. In late 90's Peter Berger made whistleblower revelations on secularization as once he considered as the important factor for declining of religion, he gave a new theory De-secularization refers to the exact opposite of secularization. As the secularization Thesis notes an increasingly more secular society, de-secularization is the reversal of this process. It is characterized by the increase of religious practices and beliefs within society. While some parts of the world like Europe and North America are largely

secular, many other cultures have embraced modernization while resisting secularization. This is the characterization of de-secularization. Peter Berger ironically propagated de-secularization. In his 1999 publication about de-secularization, Peter Berger has showed that religion bounced back in many parts of the world despite the boom of rationalization. There has been growth in faiths such as Islam, and particularly, after 9/11. He also mentions the global occurrence of religious growth everywhere from China and Japan to European nations and the United States, post 9/11 people have seen an increase in global religion in and out of the United States. Sociologists even argue that in the world after September 11, 2001, secular and religious people in the west need one another if they are to put together all the elements of a sustainable humanistic culture, however, the face of the decaying secularization Thesis there are still groups that hold on with a belief that what it states is true. There is a following that still hopes to see global secularization, as it ought to be. And even though this secularization Thesis and the apparently rapid secularization of global society has become hard to see as fact there are still some portions of the world that have become secular and still remain that way in the face of growing religion.

In a world that is allegedly becoming more secularized how do we account for religious resurgence? What is secularization, and is society becoming more secular? The simple answer is not anymore. There was a time in which it seemed that secularization was becoming prevalent. History shows a brief direction toward secularism, but it also shows movements to de-secularize and a resurgence of religious devotion that outweighs secularizations claims. As outlined in the above sections, the secularization Thesis was only an idea that produced more discussion than visible realities; it was wishful thinking of the way things ought to be. The fact remains; humanity will always be asking ultimate questions that cannot be answered by anything other than some sort of belief that results in religiosity. Those who propagate it as truth, follow the idea of secularization religiously. From the above discussion it becomes evident that religion as the institution has once again growing at the national and inter-national level. When we talk about our eastern community, and particularly of India and Pakistan, It seems that there is a great change in the cultural traits and we still are under the impact of western culture. Our institutions are in shambles and we are heading towards Institutional crisis. We need iconoclast who can reconstruct our society from its basis.

As Peter berger had given his theory of de-secularization in western Europe and America and he reveled how religion bounced back and played a vital role in the day to day activities of the people, he emphasized that belief system exists and it will exist in the times to come. Allama Iqbal occupies an important position both as a poet. But Iqbal an scholars have not introduced him as philosopher and Multi-dimensional personality, Iqbal from the outset was highly religious and he couldn't think the existence of the world without religion. The philosophy of Iqbal, apart from its emphasis on the development of the self, does not ignore the social and religious aspects of human life, which gives birth to and controls the world forces. Religion was seen as illusion of people. But Iqbal was firm believer of the arrests of religion. He was of the opinion that religion is the only way forward. The de-secularization thesis of Peter Berger showed as that Iqbal was the right in his pursuits what he has said at that time is highly pertaining to the contemporary times. The necessity of unity among the Muslim nations was keenly felt by Iqbal. To attain this objective, he aimed at the awakening of the individual and consequently, the revival of society on the religious basis but he never ignored scientific development, Iqbal was the only philosopher of in that period, when the whole world was under the grip of scientific and industrial revolution, he made the great equilibrium between science and religion and that is evident from his concept of Ijtihad. Islam presented to him an ideal society and a religion based on the ultimate realities of life. De-secularization thesis of prominent sociologist of America Peter Berger, is of the view that religion has bounced back in world and particularly because the human society is in crises. We have everything at our disposal from a mega air craft to a small pin, but we have lost mental solace and the spirituality, people are becoming more deceitful and dreaded. Iqbal's zeal for Islamic revival does not make his humanistic thought any the less valuable. Through Islamic society, he speaks to the world at large beyond the narrow confines of nationalism.

According to Iqbal, the character and general structure of the universe, its relation to and the kind of conduct that befits his dignity are some other aspects of the basic enquiry that can best be elucidated through religion. As religion has guided men since the dawn of humanity, his religious experience has a reliable value as a natural source of knowledge. Experience in its various stages takes different names. The religious experience of a Prophet is the coldest approach to truth when he is in touch with reality; hence the peculiar position of a Prophet makes him the fittest person to convey his knowledge gained through revelation to humanity for its guidance. A mode of economizing individual thought

and choices, and ways of action. The object of Muhammad's (on whom be peace and blessings of Allah) Prophet-hood was to lay the foundation of human freedom, equality and brotherhood and it is the duty of every Muslim to support these fundamental principles of Islamic society. The Prophet was a perfect model for the world and as such, the beauty of the inner self of society depends on copying the prophet's mode of living and social manners.

In modern times, we have seen the wave of renaissance is passing all over the Muslim world and particularly, to out eastern societies. Western materialism is influencing the eastern mind, it is very essential to keep pace with modern inventions and discoveries, and in order to guard Islam as a living Force it is far more essential to bring our religious thought up-to-date, as the basis of our civilization and culture is religious, and history commands us to meet new situations and fresh problems.

During the secularization Thesis period, when there is a general propensity for scientific reasoning and standards of life, with an increasing tendency towards materialism, Iqbal's reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam carries great value. Such a work involves a vast study of the Quran, as well as modern thought. It is undoubtedly a laudable attempt to reconstruct Islamic society and thought with due regard to past traditions in a progressive order. The study of Iqbal's Reconstruction of Religion thought in Islam is the scanning of the philosopher's intellectual horizon as well as the working of the modern mind of Islam which is destined to give a lead to a universal movement.

According to Iqbal during the last five hundred years religious thought in Islam has been practically stationary. There was a time when European though received inspiration from the world of Islam. 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 some of the most important phases of the culture 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 have been restated in the light of fresh experience and new problems have arisen. It seems as if the intellect of man is outgrowing its own fundamental categories-time, space and causality. With the advancement

of scientific thought even our concept of intelligibility has undergone a change. "The theory of Einstein has brought a new vision of the universe and suggest 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 a fresh orientation of their faith. With the awakening of Islam, therefore, it is necessary to examine in an independent spirit, that Europeans have thought and how for the conclusions reached by her can help us in revision all if necessary reconstruction, of theological thought in Islam.

Is Religion Possible? Asked Iqbal in the last of the lectures on The Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam. He asked the question in face of the challenge of modern science and philosophy which has grown immeasurably more powerful in our own times. Religion's ultimate possibility, Iqbal argued, rests not upon adherence to outward form and discipline, valid as these are in giving direction to the lives of the individual and communities. Nor necessary as these are for an intelligent view of the universe with God as its creator. What makes religion possible in the final analysis is the spirit of discovery, the spirit which gives each of us the courage and freedom to experience what Iqbal termed direct contact with the ultimate Reality. The reality of Religion, and that which makes it not only possible but necessary, is a search for a larger life. In this search religion may not immunize itself against the discoveries of modern science or the discussion of modern philosophy, but must seek to penetrate through them in the certainty that the essence of all reality is spiritual. From the proceeding pages it is clear that Iqbal was a firm believer in religion without which the social system cannot work properly. That is why he focused his efforts on the revival of Islam and the protection of Islamic society. He believed Islam to be the most valuable contribution to world thought. It was a genuine concern for human destiny that he had the best part of his life to a careful study of Islam and a content Endeavour to awaken the Muslims.

The principles of dubious value that are governing western society and which gave birth to modern civilization and culture are the basis of all criticism that Iqbal has leveled against them. Iqbal was a devout believer in religion of living. Not only have this; his philosophy and teachings had a direct reference to religion which is defined by the poet as a mode of living. Inner experience, being the bias of religion, yields a kind of knowledge which may be tested and has almost scientific thinking of the west, which is responsible for the mentality of modern society. As a result, religion has been totally ignored today. Iqbal, on the contrary to the above

verse, and complementary to the Emile Durkheim, regards religion as a potential force, essential to make society a functioning whole, though they differ in their basic thought.

Iqbal's whole thought has a great relevance in the contemporary world. What de-secularisation philosophers said now, Allama Iqbal has said it seventy years before. The question, 'do we need Iqbal today?' The reply is a clear 'YES'. It is a need of the time, because the honour of humanity is at stake. The preachers of human rights are abusing humanity. Mankind being trampled ruthlessly under the heavy and cruel feet of the powerful. There is dearth of love, humanity and respect in the contemporary world. Iqbal is a messenger of love. His message of love is universal, the humanity needs him. We do need him without any doubt.

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