

## Allama Iqbal's Message to Us

Muhammad Iqbal was born on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1877 in Sialkot, Punjab. He was not only a great poet (*Shair-e-Mashriq* – Poet of the East) but also a great thinker and philosopher (*Hakeem-ul-Ummat*—Sage of the Ummah) who particularly energised Indian Muslims of British India. He dedicated himself for the uplift of the Muslim Ummah. As a politician his vision of an independent state for Indian Muslims inspired the creation of Pakistan and he is known as the *Mufakkir-e-Pakistan* (The Thinker of Pakistan).

After initial schooling in Sialkot he studied philosophy, English literature and Arabic at Government College, Lahore. It was here that Sir Thomas Arnold who was the Professor of Philosophy at the college exposed Allama Iqbal to western philosophy. Iqbal then proceeded to Trinity College Cambridge and simultaneously studied law at Lincoln's Inn.

Iqbal saw that the spiritual and material decay of Muslims was not due to any defect in Islamic teaching itself. Imam Ghazali had refuted Greek philosophy but Iqbal did not feel that Muslims had to fear modern science and philosophy. He took up a critical study of western philosophy. He saw rationalists like Descartes and Spinoza attempting a philosophical basis of the Judeo-Christian metaphysics. Iqbal studied Maulana Jalal-ud-Din Rumi and learnt about the superiority of intuition over intellect. Subsequent western philosophers like Goethe had also suggested that. In Munich, Iqbal published "*The development of metaphysics in Persia*" as the thesis for which he was awarded his doctorate.

In modern western philosophers like Nietzsche and Bergson, Iqbal found a similarity with earlier Islamic and Persian mystic writers. Nietzsche had presented the concept of evolution of humanity from a lower state to the Perfect Man or "*Urbemensch*". Iqbal recognised the concept of emergent evolution in the "*Insaan-e-kamil*" of Maulana Rumi in the *Mathnawi-e-Rumi*. In 1923, Allama Iqbal was awarded Knighthood for *Israr-e-Khudi* (Secrets of the self).

It was in 1930 in Lahore that Allama Iqbal presented the philosophical basis of Islam in his book "*The Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam*".

Sir Muhammad Allama Iqbal passed away April 21, 1938 before the creation of Pakistan but his message lives in the hearts of all Pakistanis.