

SOCIAL STABILITY AND CHANGE IN MUSLIM PERSPECTIVE

It is in the nature of life to express itself creatively and spontaneously. But this creative and spontaneous self-expression is subject to the factor of restraint. The former accounts for the phenomenon of change, while the latter for stability. A seed which is the heart of spontaneous and creative self expression in potency requires a fixed ground for realizing its possibilities as such through a process of becoming in the direction of being a seed. Change in terms of innovation and movement towards greater and greater self-realization is not only natural and desirable, it is an essential concomitant of the march of life on the straight path of evolution. A community whose 'yesterday' and 'tomorrow' are similar in point of progress is dubbed by the Holy Prophet as *maghboon i. e.*, in deficit

(مَنْ أَسْتَوَى يَوْمَاهُ فَهُوَ مَغْبُونٌ)

The Holy Quran which takes a prospective view of life and cosmos expresses the same truth but in a different way. It draws the attention of humans to natural phenomena such as the evening twilight, the night and the moon when it is full, and then addresses them saying in a very optimistic vein:

لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَنْ طَبَقٍ

"You shall certainly and necessarily continue climbing one peak after another". This is a picturesque description of the onward march of humans in an ascending fashion, wherein time-factor plays a determining role. But the time-factor does not work in an abstract isolation; it rather co-operates with humans in bringing any change in human society. It would not be out of place to mention here that the Holy Prophet once referred to time as something identical with God Himself.

First change takes place in the psychological realm of humans, then it seeks projection into social channels. The Quran refers to this

very fact when it state:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ

"Allah does not change the condition of a nation until it takes the initiative to change what is in its psychological realm". Psychological change and social change are, therefore, interrelated.

Subscribing to the view that human society is an organism, we may say that it retains its identity despite a series of changes taking place therein in the same way as human organism endures through manifold changes which overtake it. What endures is human personality which Nikolai A. Berdyaev (1874-1948) defines as "changeless in change". Social organism retains its stability amidst the changes which it continues undergoing. Iqbal refers to this phenomena in terms of permanence and change. Social stability is analogous to his concept of permanence amidst host of changes taking place within and without.