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OPENING ADDRESS

(IQBAL AND MYSTICISM)

DR. S. A. DURRANI

Your Excellency, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentle-men!

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you here today on behalf of the Iqbal Academy (UK) to take part in the Seminar on "Iqbal and Mysticism" − which is being held to commemorate the 110th birth anniversary of the Poet-Philosopher of the East − who died on the 21st April .1938 at Lahore,

Iqbal Academy (UK) was founded in 1972 by the late Mr. Saeed Hasan Butt to disseminate the message of Iqbal − which is the message of universal brotherhood, the spiritual re-awakening of humanity, and rebirth of self-confidence and self-respect amongst the subject nations of the world.

For today's Seminar, we have chosen the theme of "Iqbal and Mysticism" − about which I shall say a few words in a couple of minutes' time. But let me first of all begin by explaining the total canvas of today's proceedings.

Let me, at the outset, welcome H.E. the Ambassador of Pakistan, Mr. Shaharyar Muhammad Khan − whom I have had the pleasure and honour of knowing for over thirty years − ever since we were both students at Cambridge − Iqbal's old University. He comes from one of the most distinguished noble families of the sub-continent − his grandfather being the Nawab of Bhopal, Nawab Hameed Ullah Khan, a great leader of the Muslims of India, a great devotee of Iqbal who helped Iqbal through the crucial years of his last illness − and indeed to whom a number of Iqbal's poems are dedicated. Mr. Shaharyar Muhammad Khan, thus, has a personal family connection with Iqbal; and I am very pleased that you, Sir, have accepted our invitation to be with us today.

Our chief speaker today is Dr. Muhammad Ajmal − a distinguished philosopher and psychologist of Pakistan. During the course of a most lustrous career; he has been the Principal of Government College Lahore

Iqbal's old college − Vice Chancellor of the University of the Punjab at Lahore, the Federal Secretary for Education to the Government of Pakistan, a Member of the Public Service Commission, and, most recently, the Founder-Director of the National Institute of Psychology at Islamabad. He was also the first Iqbal Professor at the University of Heidelberg in 1979-80, where I had the pleasure of meeting him the day after he arrived there. We are most grateful to you, Sir, for having come all the way from Lahore to be with us today.

I shall introduce the other speakers as they come to speak. Let me now just say a few words, if I may, about the sequence of speakers and their topics, which should demonstrate the richness and the variety of the fare to be placed before you today. We have not confined the topics strictly to Iqbal and his philosophy; but have tried to place his distinctive standpoint in the larger perspective of mystical thought − both Christian and Muslim − which forms a background to it.

1. The first speaker will be Dr. Ziauddin Shakeb from London, and his topic − "Sources of Iqbal's Mystical Thought."
2. Second, Dr. Erica Hunter from Cambridge − on "Early Christian Mysticism" (in the Eastern Church).
3. Provost Peter Berry of Birmingham Cathedral − on "Christian Mystical Tradition".
4. Bishop Michael Nazir Ali of Oxford and Lambeth Palace − on "Iqbal and Rumi."
5. Dr. M. Ajmal − on "Iqbal and Mysticism."

……THEN BREAK FOR LUNCH 1.00 − 2.00 p.m……

After lunch:

6. Dr. David Kerr, Director of 'the Centre for the Study of Islam, Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham − on "Iqbal's Concept of Religion."
7. Mr. Abdullah Bawahab − on "Iqbal and Bergson."
8. Dr. Khalid Alavi, Director of the Central Mosque, Birmingham − on "Iqbal and Sufism."

And last but by no means least −

9. Dr. Christopher Lamb, Community Relations Adviser to the Bishop of Coventry − on "Relevance of Iqbal for Inter-Faith Dialogue."

It is with regret that I announce that two other distinguished speakers who were to address us today have had to withdraw at the eleventh hour. These are: Mr. Peter Avery, Reader in Persian, University of Cambridge, who was to speak on "Humanism and Sufism," and Professor Hasan Askari, Director, Inter-Religious Foundation, London, whose theme was Iqbal's Concept of Time. I am sorry we shall miss them; and I take this opportunity to send to Mr. Avery-the very best wishes from all of us here for the complete restoration of his health,

Now this, despite the absence of the last two speakers, is, from any point of view, a very full and fairly heavy programme − especially considering that not all those who are present here are specialists in metaphysics or mysticism.

To relieve the heavy and rather esoteric nature of the programme, we have arranged for Iqbal's poetry − in both Urdu and Persian − to be recited at intervals. This will not only entertain and provide light relief to the listeners − but will also underscore the point that Iqbal was not merely a philosopher, but also a poet − and an incomparable one. To convey some faint sense of that poetry, I have requested Dr. Lawrence Barfield (the grandson of Iqbal's illustrious mentor, Sir Thomas Arnold) and Dr. - Christopher Lamb to read out English translations of some of the poems being recited (− some of these translations being by your humble servant; the present speaker, and made in great haste, which cannot possibly do justice to Iqbal's enchanting and majestic poetry). Some other translations are by Professor Victor Kiernan, and are being incidentally, has also sent his best wishes for the success of today's seminar − as indeed have several other distinguished persons, including the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Birmingham, Professor M. Thompson; the Bishop of Coventry, Rt. Revd. Dr. Simon Bevington-Ward; the new Bishop of Birmingham, Rt. Revd. Dr. Mark Santer (who hopes to attend a part of today's proceedings); several Members of Parliament; and last, but not least, Dr. Ashiq Hussain Batalvi, now living in London.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I ask the speakers to present their contributions, I hope you will permit me to say a few words about the general theme of the Seminar. Why have we chosen the topic of the Seminar: "Iqbal and Mysticism?"

Iqbal's first research publication was Development of Meta-physics in Persia, which he wrote as his dissertation for the degree of B.A. from the University of Cambridge in June'1907, and then presented at the University of Munich for his degree of Ph.D. in November 1907 (about both of which theses I have myself done some detective work!). I believe that his interest in mysticism (and metaphysics in general) was greatly heightened and intensified at that time. Then, when he wrote his first seminal poetic work Asrar-i-Khudi (Secrets of the Self) in 1915 (in Persian) he really delved deep into the mystical tradition in Islam. It was about that time that he took Rumi, the great 13th century mystical poet − and a genius of all time − as his spiritual guide. (Later, when Iqbal wrote his great work Javed Nama "The Journey through Eternity", which has been likened to Dante's Divine Comedy, he took Rumi as his guide through the seven heavens, as Dante took Virgil as his guide.) But I leave the relationship between Iqbal and Rumi to be fully developed by Bishop Nazir-Ali.

All in all, however, Iqbal's attitude towards Sufism and Mysticism was rather ambivalent. To put it broadly − and rather crudely or superficially − he seemed to be for the Sufis, but against Sufism itself: or at least against some beliefs attributed to Sufism, and against some of the practices associated with its devotees. But I shall let greater students of Mysticism and Metaphysics than myself (for I am a mere physicist − not a metaphysicist!) amplify this theme − I leave it, namely, to the speakers in today's Seminar.

Let me end by reading out some excerpts from Aldous Huxley, taken from Chapter 1 of his book ***The Perennial Philosophy".***[1] This chapter entitled '**THAT ART THOU**', opens as follows:

"**IN STUDYING** ***The Perennial Philosophy*** we can begin either at the bottom, with practice and morality; or at the top, with a consideration of

[1] Huxley, A.: The Perennial Philosophy, Chatto and Windus, London (1946).

metaphysical truths; or, finally, in the middle, at the focal point where mind and matter, action and thought have their meeting place in human psychology.

The lower gate is that preferred by strictly practical teachers − men who, like Gautama Buddha, have no use for speculation and whose primary concern is to put out, in men's hearts, the hideous fires of greed, resentment and infatuation. Through the upper gate go those whose vocation it is to think and speculate the born philosophers and theologians. The middle gate gives entrance to the exponents of what has been called 'spiritual religion' − the devout contemplatives of India, the Sufis of Islam, the Catholic mystics of the later Middle Ages, and in the Protestant tradition, such men as Denk and Franck and Casteliio, as Everard and John Smith and the first Quakers and William Law.

It is through this central door, and just because it is central, that we shall make our entry into the subject matter of this book. The psychology of The Perennial Philosophy has its source in metaphysics and issues logically in a characteristic way of life and system of ethics. Starting from this mid-point of doctrine, it is easy for the mind to move in either direction…

Perennial Philosophy (relates) to the science, not of the personal ego, but of that Eternal Self in the depth of particular, individualised selves, and identical with, or at least akin to, the divine Ground. Based upon the direct experience of those who have fulfilled the necessary conditions of such knowledge, this teaching is expressed most succinctly in the Sanskrit formula, tat tvam asi ('That art thou'); the Atman, or immanent Eternal Self, is one with Brahman, the Absolute Principle of all existence; and the last end of every human being is to discover the fact for himself, to find out Who he really is.

'The more God is in all things, the more He is outside them.

The more He is within, the more without."

Eckhart

This statement of Meister Eckhart, the 13th-14th century German mystic, is very close to that of the Muslim Sufi, Bayazid of Bistun, who said:

"I went from God to God, until they cried from me in me, 'O thou I!' "

Bayazid of Bistun

Two of the recorded anecdotes about this Sufi saint deserve to be quoted here. 'When Bayazid was asked how old he was, he replied, "Four years". They said, "How can that be?" He answered, "l have been veiled from God by the world for seventy years, but I have seen Him during the last four years. The period during which one is veiled does not belong to one's life." '. On another occasion someone knocked at the saint's door and cried, 'Is Bayazid here?' Bayazid answered, 'Is anybody here except God?'

To gauge the soul we must gauge it with God, for the Ground of God and the Ground of the Soul are one and the same."

Eckhart

Ladies and Gentlemen, I feel I have taken enough of your time − and the few opening words that I have said should suffice to demonstrate that the tradition of mysticism is quite closely analogous − and indeed stems from the same roots − in all the various religions and philosophies of men. They are all aimed at answering the central questions: the nature of God, and of Man, and of relationships between God and Man and the universe and fellow creatures − the purpose and goals of Man and of all creation. These are fundamental and profound and difficult questions. Today we have gathered together to examine these questions with special reference to Iqbal and Mysticism in general.

With these words I close my introduction and call upon the various speakers to enlighten us on at least some aspects of these great questions − as well as some of the answers − as they see them, and as Iqbal, and various other great thinkers and mystics of the past, have seen them.

IQBAL AND MYSTICISM

DR. MUHAMMAD AJMAL

IQBAL AND MYSTICISM

F. Schuon has maintained that each Semitic religion has a dominant motif. The dominant motif in Judaism is Fear. The dominant motif in Christianity is Love. The dominant motif in Islam is Knowledge. This does not mean that all these motifs are not present in each of these religions. One motif is dominant. The other two have secondary importance.

Iqbal's main concern in his Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam is the adaptation of knowledge to Islam. According to Iqbal, there are three main sources of knowledge:

1. History,
2. Nature, and
3. Self.

When Iqbal talks about History, he does not mean stories of exploit of kings and conquerors and. the feelings and thoughts of saints, poets and thinkers, but his main pre-occupation is the historical process.

When he talks about Nature, he not only discusses sense-perception which provides us with the raw material of scientific knowledge, but also Nature as a living force.

The third source of knowledge is the human personality. Iqbal thinks that in Muslim history only the Sufis studied the human personality in its depth.

To Iqbal goes the credit of restoring the self-respect and self-regard of Muslims in the sub-continent. Colonialism had induced a sense of inadequacy and self-devaluation among the people. But Iqbal by expounding the philosophy of Ego emphasized the central importance of the Ego and tried especially through his great poetic genius, to make them realize that there were in-finite latent powers in the Ego. They only need to be explored, discovered and realized. In order to attain the full-flowering of the Ego, one

has to develop self-restraint, vigilance, perseverance, decisiveness and discipline. Nothing is beyond the reach of the Ego, even an encounter with God, where the finite greets the infinite.

This is a life-affirming and life-giving philosophy. Indeed it gives supreme value to man who, according to Foucault, "is an invention of the 19th century." Man, according to Iqbal, can elevate his ego to an extent that God Himself can ask man about the nature and direction of his destiny. He goes so far as to address man as "the seed, the field, and the harvest." Man is the root, the soil and the fruit. But he himself is the user. The one who benefits from the fruit.

In many poems he tried to obviate the sense of devaluation among the colonised peoples. It is true that the awareness of the people had been mangled and severely damaged by the colonisers. Iqbal tried to heal the wounds of the Muslims who had not only lost a Kingdom but were also groping for an awareness of self-identity. What havoc this sense of self-devaluation, induced by the colonial rule, can play has been portrayed by Frantz Fanoo in his Wretched of the Earth in a masterly fashion.

The first balm applied to those wounds was to kindle memories of their own history, their own tradition, their own culture. Iqbal thus gave a spiritual "space" to the Indian Muslims, and gave them boundaries, a home which, by definition, is a place where one can daydream, have a reverie. Thus he gave them space − which they could cultivate, cherish and fertilize -- in which they could live and breathe. Of course he gave them the idea of space but also provided them with an image of that space.

The Image of Pakistan

The Ego needed this kind of elevation. One expression of this elevation was the glorification of the past, the kings, the conquerors, saints and sufis, scholars and scientists.

This glorification was meant to awaken the Muslims to an awareness of the present realities and to adapt themselves to the, new developments in science and technology. Glorification of the Ego through a glorification of the past has its dangers. In a considerable portion of our past we encounter a

very strong streak of patriarchal and too masculine a trend of thinking in which passion for mastery and conquest is evident: The opposite of this trend is also found in the liberal and humanistic philosophy of sufis, saints and poets. If one strengthens the ego on this pattern, the ego can easily develop an inflated image of godlikeness. It can drive us to conquer, manipulate, subdue and oppress others. It does not see with Intelligence. It analyses, dissects and derives a diabolical delight in pulling things apart. It does not hesitate to desacrilise every thing. It does not create a "temenos" because temenos means escape, refuge and sometimes surrender to the higher realities. Surrender for an ego-inflated person, institution or a nation is an indication of weakness. Surrender even to God hurts their ego.

Desacrilization implies a total denuding of the nature of Beauty. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon his soul) has said; "The whole world is a mosque." In his lecture on "The meaning of Prayer" Iqbal thinks that when a scientist observes nature, he is praying i.e. he has an attitude of reverence towards nature. How far is it true of all scientists or all science we do not know.

Again in پیام مشرق he says:

ہوائے علم تا اُفتد بدامت
یقین کم کُن گرفتار شکے باش
عمل خواہی یقین را پختہ ترکُن
یکے بین و یکے جو ویکے باش
([2])

Here is to know is not to pray. There in order to know one must involve oneself in doubt and decrease the intensity of faith.

Iqbal admired the development of modern science, but could not swallow the Cartesian method of doubt. He, therefore, denounces reason or thought, quite often.

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[2] Kulliyat-e-Iqbal, (Persian), p. 211.

In his poetry one encounters quite often a serious devaluation of thought − that it can reach nowhere. Similar denunciations are found among other Sufis − for instance M. Ashraf Ali Thanvi, in his Basair-ud-Dawair, thinks that all thinking is circular − it begins where it ends and again reaches the same end and so the vicious circle goes on.

But at other times one notices in Iqbal the vital importance of thought and thinking. For example, in Secrets of the Self, he relates a story about Sheikh Ali Hujveri and the young man from Mery:

'I will tell a story of his perfection and enclose a whole rose-bed in a single bud.

A young man, Cypress-tall,

Came from the town of Mery to Lahore.

He went to see the venerable saint,

That the sun might dispel his darkness.

"I am hemmed in" he said, "by foes;

I am as a glass in the midst of stones.

Do thou teach me, 0 sirs of heavenly rank,

How to lead my life amongst enemies!"

"The wise Director, in whose nature

Love had allied beauty with Majesty,

Answered: "Thou art unread in Life's lore,

Careless of its end and its beginning.

Be without fear of others!

Thou art a sleeping force: awake!

When the stone thought itself to be glass,

It became glass and got into the way of breaking,

If the traveler thinks weak,

He delivers his soul unto the brigand.

How long wilt thy regard thyself as water and clay?

Create from the clay a flaming Sinai!

Why be angry with mighty men?

Why complain of enemies?

I will declare the truth: thine enemy is thy friend;

His existence crowns the with glory.

Whosoever knows the states of the Self

Considers a powerful enemy to be a blessing from God.

To the seed of Man the enemy is as a rain-cloud.

He awakens its potentialities.

If thy spirit be strong, the stones in thy way are as water: What racks the torrent of the ups and downs of the road? The sword of resolution is whetted by the stones in the way and put to proof by traversing stage after stage.

What is the use of eating and sleeping like a beast?

What is the use of being, unless thou have strength in thyself?

When thou mak'st thyself strong with Self,

Thou wilt destroy the world at thy pleasure.

If thou wouldst pass away, become free of Self; If thou wouldst live, become full of Self! What is death? To become oblivious of Self.

Why imagine that it is the parting of soul and body? Abide in Self, like Joseph!

Advance from captivity to empire!

Think of Self and be a man of action

Be a man of God, bear mysteries within! "[3]

چوں شودا اندیشه قومے خراب
ناسره گردد بدستش سیم ناب

میرد اندر سینه اش قلب سلیم
درنگاه او کج آید مستقیم

بر کراں ازحرب و ضرب کائنات
چشم اُو اندر سکوں بیند حیات

موج از دریاش کم گردد بلند
گوہر او چوں خزف نا ارجمند

پس نخستیں بایدش تطہیر فکر بعد ازاں آساں شود تعمیر فکر

(4)

[3] R. A. Nicholson: The Secrets of The Self. pp. 95, 96, 97.

The story emphasizes two important points about human motivation. First is that thinking determines the nature and con-duct of your personality. He says: If you think, that you are weak, you will become weak, if you think that you are strong and powerful you will be strong and powerful. If you seriously ascribe any moral quality to your ego, and think about it persistently you are bound to develop that quality. He maintains a similar position in his other poems such as 'پس چه باید کرد' in which he ascribes the spiritual and material degeneration of the people of the East to their confused and timid thinking.

The second important point is that it is thinking which deter-mines the nature of your emotions. As you think so will you feel, and not the converse that as you feel, so shall you think.

Thinking involves concepts. Without conceptual thinking, science, philosophy, in fact, no academic discipline, except perhaps the fine arts, is possible. All Sufis denounce thinking in concepts when it is a question of being close to God. In fact they think that concepts are a veil which conceals the absolute from us. Unless you dissolve the concepts into experience, you cannot reach the station of closeness to God.

When thoughts are expressed in images, poetic images, mythological images, then one experiences the thoughts of the heart. The heart قلب which can exercise himmah, and become capable of perceiving spiritual realities.

It seems to me that Iqbal attaches considerable value to thinking but he cannot outgrow the Bergsonian ternary of instinct, intellect and intuition. The second category the intellect has to .be realized fully before you reach the station of intuition, or love. Intellect thus becomes the means to the stage of intuition or love. This is not the position of Sufis. They think that you develop love by constant invocation of the Supreme Name, reciting litanies, chanting hymns, and prayers. Intellect does not seem to relish prayers, and stronger the ego, the greater is the resistance to prayer.

Iqhal and Sufism

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[4] Kulliyat-e-lqbal, (Persian), p. 807.

While reading, Iqbal one gets the general impression that his attitude towards sufism was ambivalent. At one time he seems to condemn sufism and the sufi institutions, but at other times he seems to be a devotee of sufism − regarding it as the sole way out of that desperate spiritual state which Rene Guenon called "Dispersion into multiplicity." We have to find out exactly what he consistently condemns and what he admires or attaches value to in the sufi doctrines.

It might be a healthier approach to' the problem if I start with the consideration of Qalb' or heart. According to the Chishti Saint, Hazrat Nizamud-Din Aulia, heart is the abode of Allah. The point of beginning with this concept is that heart or love plays a central role in Iqbal's philosophy. Secondly in modern times heart has become the organ which is most in danger. Harvey's heart has an inherent dichotomy − right and left − and in modern times this cleavage has caused an alarming increase in the diseases of the heart. Heart has become the killer, a palpitator, a robber of health and poise, a disturber of sleep and an organ which mysteriously fails. It is not this heart that Iqbal and sufism regard as the abode of Allah.

One function of Qalb or heart is that it is capable of perceiving the inner being of reality. It does so by developing himmah, courage to break the conventional patterns of perception. Himmah develops when one dares to imagine, the highest stage of imagination is what Ibn-i-Arabi calls creative imagination. There is a valid distinction between true and false imagination.

Day dreams, reveries, idle fantasies, etc. are all instances of false imagination. True imagination is an instrument of perception, with which you perceive inner most being of Reality. In Jared .Nama, Iqbal tries to answer two questions: What is Being'? and what is good'? Are you alive, or dead, or dying'? For an answer to this question one must seek three witnesses:

The first witness is Consciousness of self, to see ourselves by one's own light, the second witness is other people's consciousness by whose light you see yourself. This other or others is vague. But is appears that Iqbal meant by other, ones spiritual mentors − not the people around you. Third witness is the consciousness of the Essence, of God, seeing oneself by the light of this Essence. If you do not shake and tremble and collapse, in front of this light,

you will reach eternity and self-sustenance. This is the abode of yourself. This is real life. Life means seeing the essence unveiled. Momin, the man of God is not satisfied with attributes. For Mustafa insisted on Sight.

Sight however means a longing for a witness who may testify thyself.

After giving the description of the development of spirituality, he writes a few verses which seem to contradict this description. He says: Thou seest the Lord through self and self through Him. Neither more nor less thou seest of God than that. Again in Piyam-i-Mashriq, he says:

"If you seek God, you will see nothing but yourself. If you seek yourself, you will find nothing but Him."[5]

The contradiction is that in first stage of development, one sees oneself by one's own light. The point is that one cannot see oneself except by the light of God. This is also the Sufi position. It is only through Mujahida that one can see God by looking into oneself, it is through introversion that Reality is revealed to you − we may take a term from sliberer and call it intro-determination. Introversion can be natural state, but intro-determination implies that one is determined to look within, to confront the witnesses the berrenness and the desert. This desert can only be converted into a perfumed garden if our efforts develop a response from barkah, the divine grace.

What does Iqbal means when he says that the first stage is when one sees oneself by one's own light, surely he is talking about ego. Iqbal- never makes a distinction between the ego and the self. The ego has its own light but it is different from the divine light. Very few people see the divine light without first receiving an injury to the ego. After the "I" is wounded. they start looking for the spirit generally under the guidance of a master − or mentor − there is also a mystic saying "one who is not injured, does not know what is to be healed." The fall of man contains the provision of his redemption. Iqbal himself has his master, Maulana Rumi, but he is a turbulent seeker, he makes nimble transitions from one master to the other.

It has become fashionable especially in the third world to label all spirituality as an escape. And Iqbal sometimes supports this view. It is very

[5] Kulliyat-e-Iqbal, (Persian), p. 222. (Translation Mine).

seldom specified; escape from what to what. It is generally said, it is an escape from reality, which reality? Surely they mean escape from external reality − socio-economic, political conditions etc. But we seldom realize; that a total pre-occupation with socio-economic reality might be an escape from the reality within, which might result in an escape from all intrinsic values, − Justice, Truth, Beauty and Love. Which escape is more rewarding? It is a difficult question.

Surely there is nothing intrinsically wrong in escape. You sense the presence of a dangerous animal in the jungle, it would be wise to flee and take to one's heels, if possible not to hold back.

Almost the first sentence in the prayer when we start praying is that we seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Satan. Marco Pallis writing in his fascinating book Peaks and Lamas, states that he once asked the most venerable Lama in one of the monasteries in Tibet, "What is the essence of Buddhism?" The Lama gave a laconic reply "Refuge". F. B. Skinner in a thought-provoking essay called "Flight from Laboratory", in which he contends that brilliant people succumb to the blandishments of popular acclaim when they desert laboratories, and start doing social service and social welfare work. He criticizes Albert Schweitzer that he involved himself with social reform and wasted his talents which it they were expressed in a laboratory might have produced some-thing which is beneficial to the entire humanity. But Skinner forgets that just as there are some people who flee from laboratories, there are others who flee into laboratories. They are so frightened of having contact with real people that they seek refuge in the. Closed walls of a laboratory. Sometimes thinking may be an escape from feeling.

Thought is one of the points on which lqbal always dwells on with eloquence but with a considerable degree of ambivalence. Quite early in his lecture on "Knowledge and Religious Experience" he maintains that in its deeper movement unfolding thought is capable of reaching an immanent infinite in whose self unfolding movement the various finite concepts are merely moments. Later, he elevates the capacity of thinking to a still higher level, he says: "Its movement becomes possible only because of the implicit presence in its finite individuality of the infinite which keeps alive within it the flame of aspiration and sustains it in its endless pursuit. It is a mistake to

regard it as inconclusive for it too, in its own way, in a greeting of the finite with the infinite"[6].

Iqbal speaks about the unity of human consciousness. By unity, I think, he means the inter-relatedness of mental events. My toothache is related to my frustrations and anxiety, that is, both belong to the same organic whole. My toothache cannot in the same way be related to another person's anxiety, − although his anxiety may be about my toothache. Iqbal says:

"Devotional Sufism alone tried to understand the meaning of the unity of human experience which the Quran declares to be one of the three sources of knowledge,[7]

"In the higher Sufis of Islam unitive experience is not the finite ego effacing its own identity, by some sort of absorption into the infinite ego' it is rather the infinite passing into the loving embrace of the finite, as Rumi says:

علم حق در علم صوفی گم شود
ایں سخن کے باور مردم شود

Divine knowledge is lost in the knowledge of the saint. How is it possible for people to believe in such a thing?"[8]

What is the difference between the finite being absorbed in the infinite, and the infinite flowing into the finite − or the infinite embracing the finite? How does the latter unity differ from the unity attained in the former case? Is it a difference between "consciousness and Ecstasy" − is it that, in the former case, the general attitude of the person concerned is that of lassitude and passive fatalism and in the latter case it is dynamism vigilance and initiative. Iqbal demands of sufism, a revolutionary outlook, which actively fights the evils of the world, take up arms in defence of the oppressed and wipes out the sense of self-devaluation from their souls. Self respect and self regard and intrinsic values for him, and he does not like to see a human being bow before anyone but God. It is this picture of combativeness against −

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[6] Sir Mohammad Iqbal: The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, 1982, p. 7.
[7] Ibid., p. 96.
[8] Ibid., p. 110.

oppression, of keeping how to become aware of his dignity, which distinguish Iqbal from other Sufi thinkers.

Iqbal endorses Rumi when he says:

مصلحت در دین عیسے غار دکوہ
مصلحت دردین ما جنگ و شکوہ
([9])

The significant word is that is a strategy, and not the essence. The strategy in Islam is war and glory. The strategy is Christianity is caves and mountains.

Strategies differ in two religions, but not their essence. The essence is the same − both are manifestations of the Divine, revelations from the divine fountain head.

The interesting point is that sometimes Iqbal also glorifies the cave and the mountain. In a lovely poem he has a verse which says:

حسن بے پروا کو اپنی بے نقابی کے لیے
ہوں اگر شہروں سے بن پیارے تو شہر اچھے کہ بن
([10])

If the independent Beauty (God) likes to reveal itself in deserts, which is better, city or a desert?'

The words which invite us to think are a greeting of the finite with the Infinite. Is it a one-sided greeting and or is it mutual? Does the finite only greet or does the Infinite respond, But since the Infinite is potentially present in the finite thought it becomes a greeting of the Infinite with the Infinite, greeting of the potential with the actual.

One wonders here that Iqbal, who consistently devalues thinking comparing it with intuition and Love in his poetry, what kind of thought is

[9] Musnavi-e-Molvi, Ed., Nicholson: Vol. 6, p. 300.
[10] Kulliyat-e-Iqbal, (Urdu), p. 31. ,

he talking about. Is he talking about the thought of the heart, when thought is not the Harvey's heart which in the words of James Hillman is a killer? Or is it the Qalb, the heart which is abode of God. When Qalb is moved by the Himmah, it expresses itself in thought which perceives the imaginal and not the imaginary. It is the creative act of the Qalb or thought. It is certainly not the discursive thinking, or retrocession of the mind, and it certainly does not express itself in concepts. It expresses itself in images which may later be embodied in concepts for purposes of logical statements,

Even in his poetry Iqbal assigns considerable value to thinking. He regards thinking as an agent of internal change, as a trans-former of personality − almost like stoics and in our own times like Albert Ellis, or Sheikh Ali Hujviri and the young man from Merv, and the opening lines of

پس چه باید کردائے اقوام شرق

Throughout his poetry, however, he eulogizes "Love" Love as "the great healer of all ailments." His eloquence is unsurpassed when he contemplates his "heart".

"O' My heart, 0 my heart, my ocean, my ship, my harbor, did you drop on my dust like dew? Did you reveal yourself like a blossom on my clay"? Love; when it fills a heart must lead to "the sacrifice of the superior function." Without this sacrifice nothing is achieved. I will cite here Iqbal understands of some of Rumi's Verses:

The Sufis book is not composed of ink and letters, it is not but a heart white as snow."

The scholars' possession is pen-marks. What is the Sufis' possession? − Footmarks.

The Sufi stalks the game like a hunter, he sees the musk-deers' track and follows the footprints.

For some while the track of the deer is the proper clue for him, but afterwards it is the musk gland that is his guide.

To get to the stage guided by the musk gland is better than a hundred stages of following the track and roaming about."

Iqbal explains the verses in his own way:

"The scientific observer of Nature is a kind of mystic seeker in the act of prayer. Although at present he follows only the footprints of the deer… his thirst for knowledge is eventually sure to lead him to footprints of the deer.

The inability to sacrifice one's superior function has been very well described by 'Attar' in Mantiq-ut-tair.

"The nightingale cannot leave for the quest of Seemurgh, be-cause it is attached to the rose too much. The duck cannot leave water, because it is addicted to water. The hawk cannot leave its prey." These are examples of not being able to sacrifice the superior function. The concept of found in Iqbal emphasizes the same concept. But somehow Iqbal did not formulate the concept of sacrifice of superior function for spiritual growth, clearly. There is a Sufi saying:

گر	راه	بر	تُست	عادت	خویش
مردود	و	منافق	نه	درویش	

The explanation of Rumi's verses does not seem to be in consonance with the general trend of Rumi's thought, or for that matter, Sufi thought. A scholar follows the footmarks by his thinking. According to Rumi, one who follows the footmarks − does so endlessly and wanders about. The transition is from the observation of the footmarks to the perception of the musk in the deer's track. This change of perceptual mode is what we can call "sacrifice of the superior function;" The scholars'. approach is based upon the superiority of the thinking function. Rumi contends that the superior function has to be sacrificed so that other functions, which are consciously regarded as "inferior", are also awakened to enrich the life of the spirit, without this sacrifice, nothing can be achieved. It is this emphasis on sacrifice which is present as conversion of feelings into their opposites.

There is another ambivalence which projects itself into Iqbal' thought. Talking about Sheikh Ahmad of Sirhind, he quotes a passage from him which delineates stations of the Qalb (The Heart). After mentioning the first station, he goes on to say: Beyond this there are other stations known as Ruh, Sir Khafi and Akhfa; each of these stations, which together constitute what is technically called Alam-i-Amr has its own characteristic states and experiences after having passed through these stations, the seeker of truth gradually receives the illumination of "Divine Names" and "Divine attributes," and finally the illuminations of the Divine essence.

Iqbal quotes this passage with approval but he castigates modern psychology for not having touched even the outer fringes of the subject. He looks to psychology for developing a new technique better suited to the temper of our times. It appears that Iqbal wants a psychological apologetic to be developed for religion. The concepts used by Sheikh Ahmad are archaic from his point of view. He demands that someone like Nietzsche should emerge − though he was a failure.

A critique of this passage shows Iqbal's contempt for tradition, and traditional nomenclature. He does not say even once, that modern psychology, since it is not supported by a meta-physics is concerned largely with trivialities or authoritarian techniques of controlling other human beings. No amount of apologetics will help, and the language used by Sheikh Ahmad is the language of the soul, suited Jo spiritual aspirations. True, when he says: "Medieval mysticism has done greater havoc in the Muslim East than anywhere else." Far from preparing the Muslims for participation in the march of history, it has taught him a false renunciation, and made him perfectly contented with his ignorance and spiritual thralldom.

This is a strong denunciation of mysticism. But it is not the mystic who obstructed the march of history but colonialism which infused a sense of self devaluation among the people. Sufis are, − perhaps, the only people who refuse to copy the modern West. Hence they give the appearance of a smug quietude, which now and then erupts into states of ecatasy. For Iqbal, national-ism is a menace, but sufis are the only people who openly pro-claim the ideal of Universal Love, irrespective of caste, creed or nation. Iqbal himself waxes eloquent about the contrast between the worldly life and spiritual life.

Throughout Iqbal's poetry one sees the theme of loneliness, a hunger for solitude − it is a shrieking, screeming loneliness which gnaws at his heart and expresses itself in plaintive melody.

In Armughan-i-Hijaz, he devotes some quatrains to addressing the Holy Prophet, Muhammad. In one of the quatrains he cries out,

دے بر کف نہادم، دلبرے نیست
متاعے داشتم، غارت گرے نیست
درون سینہ من منزلے گیر
مسلمانے زمن تنہا ترے نیست

([11])

I placed my heart on my palm but there is no beloved.

I have a treasure but there is no robber.

Please take abode in my heart.

No Muslim is lonelier than I am.

So with all this concern for Jihad and ceaseless social activity, he quite often expresses himself in an agony of loneliness − and seeks witnesses when he would enjoy solitude and have a direct communion with God,

He says:

سخن بے پردہ گو باما، شدآں روز کم آمیزی
کہ می گفتند تو مارا چنیں خواہی، چناں خواہی

([12])

Loneliness means being unaware of aspects of Self, or being unaware of God. Even when you are alone, you are with God,

Maulana Rumi says:

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[11] Kulliyat-e-Iqbal, (Persian), p. 938.
[12] Ibid., p. 135.

خلوت از اغیار باید نے زیار
پوستیں بہر دے آمدنے بہار

It seems that there are two streaks of mysticism in Iqbal.

One is the mysticism through thinking − in which the thought goes deeper and deeper and reaches the light. As Karl Jasper said that Kant was an intellectual mystic, who reached the unknowable through his thinking − thinking obstinately.

The other streak is mysticism which one reaches by a direct appeal to heart − through Love and Invocation of the Supreme Name.

There is a difference between the two streaks − examples are Avicenna, Sheikh Ahmad Al 'Alawi, and Jung.

Avicenna said "what I know, Abu Said Abul Khair sees."

The same thing was said by Sheikh Ahmad Al 'Alawi. And when Jung was asked − Do you believe in God, Jung replied, "Why believe − I know."

The soul is born in beauty and feeds on beauty and requires beauty for its life. Beauty and Soul can unite only in the experience of God.

IQBAL AND RUMI

BISHOP MICHAEL J. NAZIR-ALI

IQBAL AND RUMI

اسلام علیکم، پاکستان زندہ باد

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In my talk today I should like to bring out just one aspect, if I may, of Iqbal's work; the deep influence of Islamic philosophical and theological traditions on Iqbal and some of his ideas. Iqbal was exposed quite early in life to traditional Islamic thought. He was exposed to three main traditions within Islamic thought:

1. Kalam or formal theology,
2. Philosophy written in Arabic or Persian within the Darul-Islam (Abode of Peace) i.e. the Islamic World.
3. Tasawwuf or Mysticism.

1. . Taking the last first, before and during his European period, Iqbal tended towards the pantheistic tradition within Islamic Mysticism. Thus in his doctoral dissertation, Iqbal interpreted both Rumi's and Hallaj's work in a pantheistic light.[13] Similarly, in his early article on Al-Jili Iqbal interprets Al-Jili's doctrine in monistic terms. On his return from Europe, however, a sudden change took place and Iqbal began interpreting the work of these three mystics in particular and of other mystics in general, within the framework of personal idealism. For example, Iqbal began emphasising parts of Rumi's work where activism is espoused. The following verses are put in Rumi's mouth:

مومن از عزم و توکل قاہر است
گرند ارد ایں و وجوہر، کافر است
کو ہسار از ضربت او ریزریز
درگر ییانش ہزاراں رستخیر

[13] The Development of Metaphysics in Persia, Lahore, 1964, p. 89f.

"The believer is powerful through a sense of purpose and trust in God. If he does not have these two essential qualities he is an unbeliever, Mountains crumble into little pieces by his blow, Within his breast are a thousand Resurrections".[14]

The verses are a re-working of certain ideas which occur again and again in Rumi's work. For example, the following verses seem to echo the same sentiment:

قول بنده ایش شاءالله کاں
بہرآں نبود که تنبل کن درآں
بلک تحریض است براخلاص وجد
که درآں خدمت فزدں شومستعد

"The saying of (God's) servant, whatever God wills came to pass 'does not signify' be lazy in that!

Nay, it is an encouragement to total devotion and exertion. Meaning 'make you exceedingly ready to perform that service".[15]

And again,

دوست داردیار ایں آشفتگی
کوشش بہیودہ براز خفتگی

"The friend loves this agitation: it is better to struggle vainly than to lie still."[16]

Also,

گر توکل می کُنی در کا رکُن
کشت کُن پس تکیه برجبار کُن

"Tf you are putting trust in God, put trust (in Him) as regards work, sow (the seed), then rely upon the Almighty."[17] The language used by Iqbal in

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[14] Mathnawi Pas che bayad kard, Lahore, 1936, p. 6.
[15] Mathnawi (Maulana Rum). V 3111-3112.
[16] Mathnawi I, 1822.

his Persian work to refer to the worth and the immortality of the individual is also borrowed from Rumi. Both affirm the doctrine of بقا بند الفنار (survival after anihillation), i.e. after the loss of autonomy for the lowerself, the true self which is illumined by the Divine Light comes into its own. Both refer to Hallaj as the examplar of this new, true self.[18] In his dissertation[19] Iqbal implies that Hallaj was influenced during his travels in India by the monist Vedanta school and interprets Hallaj's famous cry, انا الحق

(I am the Truth) in a pantheistic sense. In his later work, however, as has already been noted, he resiles on his earlier assessment and refers to Hallaj's work thus:

"The true interpretation of his experience, therefore, is not the drop slipping into the sea, but the realization and bold affirmation in an undying phrase of the reality and the permanence of the human ego in a profounder personality. The phrase of Hallaj seems almost a challenge flung against the Mutakallimin. The difficulty of modern students of religion, however, is that this type of experience, though perhaps perfectly normal in its beginnings, points, in its maturity, to unknown levels of consciousness."[20]

In this regard Iqbal refers explicitly to the work of Prof. Massignon in the re-interpretation of Hallaj as one who did not mean to deny either the transcendence of God or the reality of the human personality.[21] It is significant, however, that certain lines of Rumi's about Hallaj are also capable of bearing this interpretation. For example:

در	قلزم	نیستی	خود	غوطه	بخورد
آنکه	پس	ازآں	در	اناالحق	آورد

"He dived into the sea,

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[17] Mathnawi I, 947.

[18] Kulliyat-e-Shams-E-Tabrizi (ed. M. Dervish) Vol. 3, Teheran, 1341. H. S. Pg. 76cf. Darb-e-Kalim. p. 107.

[19] The Development of Metaphysics in Persia, Lahore, 1964, p. 83.

[20] Reconstruction, reprinted 1971, p. 96.

[21] Reconstruction, p. 96. See further L. Marrignon, Kitab at tavvasin (ed.), Paris 1913, Le Diwan d'al-Hallaj (ed.), Paris, 1931. La Passion de Hallaj, Vols. I--IV, Paris, 1975.

of his non-entity,

And won for me and you −

This pearl 'I am the true'[22]

And again,

آں	انا	بے	وقت	گفتن	لعنت	است
آں	انا	در	وقت	گفتن	رحمت	است
آں	انا	منصور	رحمت	شد	یقیں	
آں	انا	فرعون	لعنت	شد	ببیں	

"To say 'I' out of the proper time is a curse;

to say 'I' at the proper time is a mercy.

The 'I' of Mansur (Hallaj) certainly became a mercy; The 'I' of Pharoah becomes a curse. Mark this![23]

In this connection it is interesting to note that Rumi refers to Sahl Ibn 'Abdullah Tustari, Hallaj's spiritual mentor, in a discussion on selfhood:

سهل	ابن	عبدالله	تستری	رحمته	الله	علیه	گفت	
مومن	برستی	آنکس	است	که	از	نفس	خود	و دل خود غافل نیست.

"Sahl Ibn 'Abdullah Tustari (God's mercy on him) said, in truth the believer is one who is not heedless of his own soul and his own heart."[24] This in turn is an allusion to the famous Hadith,

من عرف نفسه فقه عر ربه

He who knows himself, Verily, he knows his Lord".

Iqbal stresses the continuity of his thought with that of Rumi and Hallaj, and also their agreement with each other on this matter by employing the

[22] Kulliyat, p. 76 trans. (A. J. Arberry) Ruba'iyat of Rumi, London, 1949', p. 31.
[23] Mathnawi II. 2522-23.
[24] Fihi ma Fihi, Teheran, 1959, p. 269.

literary device of a report of a conversation in heaven between Rumi and Hallaj:

حلاج کی لیکن یہ روایت ہے کہ آخر
اک مرد قلندر نے کیا راز خودی فاش

"But Hallaj says (to Rumi). 'At last the secret of the self has been revealed to the world by a man of God (Iqbal)"[25]

Iqbal wished to stress the primacy of the spiritual over the material, and in this connection he quotes from Rumi:

پیکر از ماہت شد، نے ما ازو
بادہ از ما مست شد، نے ما ازو

"The body came into being from us, not we from it; Wine became intoxicated from us, not we from it."[26]

It is surprising to note, however, that although elements of pampsychism are to be found in Rumi (Mathnawi I: 838, IV 3532-3533, Fihi Pg. 69 based on Quran 17:45 etc.,), Iqbal does not use the terminology found there in his Persian verses dealing with this doctrine.[27]

As far as Al-Jili is concerned, the doctrine of the Perfect Man is rescued from its neo-Platonic setting and re-interpreted in terms of strict ethical monotheism: The Perfect Man is not one who has, through a process of meditation, realised his unity with the Absolute. He is, rather, one who has through self control and obedience to the shari'ah attained the status of the Vicegerent of God in accordance with the Quranic Promise (Q II:30, 33, 72).[28]

Iqbal was aware, too, of the various mystical systems which were declared heretical by the orthodox, but which had grown up under the tutelage of Sufism. One such system that of Bahaullah, with its similarity to

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[25] Kulliyat Iqbal (Urdu), p. 58.
[26] Reconstruction reprint 1971, p. 71 cf. Mathnawi I, 1812.
[27] See further, Chapter I, "Pampsychism".
[28] Kulliyat Iqbal (persian), p. 46.

McTaggart's pluralism, has already been noted. Another was the system of Ishraqi Maqtul. The central idea in 'Ishraqi's very complex cosmogony is that the ultimate fact of the universe is An Absolute Light (Nur Al-Qahir). The essence of Light, according to Ishraqi, is manifestation; and it is this manifestation which initiates a process of emanation which accounts for the totality of existence. In his dissertation, Iqbal devotes twenty odd pages to Ishraqi's thought, and it seems as if Ishraqi's identification of the Absolute with Light remained with him. In The Reconstruction, while commenting upon the famous "Light" verse of the Quran (24:36), Iqbal remarks that even according to modern science, Light is the nearest approach to the Absolute, as its velocity cannot be exceeded and is the same for all observers whatever their own system of movement.[29]

References to philosophers writing in Arabic and Persian under the influence of the Aristotalian corpus (which in fact also contained Neo-Platonic material) also occur in Iqbal's work. Iqbal pays particular attention to two philosophers: Ibn Maskawaih (C.Xl.th.C.A.D.) and Ibn Sina (Avicenna, C.Xl.th.C.A.D.). Iqbal was particularly impressed by Ibn Maskawaih's[30] then unfashionable argument that matter is not eternal, since matter and form are inseparable and form can be demonstrably shown to be not eternal. Iqbal was, here, not so much impressed by the logic of the argument as he was by the fact that this was a subtle defence of the Quranic doctrine of Creation at a time when the doctrine was being vigorously denied. Another doctrine of Ibn Maskawaih noticed by Iqbal is his doctrine of evolution, which is the other side of his Neo-Platonic doctrine of emanation. Iqbal sees here as he does in Rumi[31] the very first glimmerings of the idea that Man emerges from lower beings. The difference between Rumi's and Maskawaih's doctrine on the one hand and the modern theory of evolution (at any rate as understood by Iqbal cf. Re-construction, pg. 187) on the other hand is that the former does not treat Man as the last word in evolution but looks forward to the development of higher beings from the present homo sapiens. As far as Ibn Maskawaih's psychology is concerned,

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[29] Reconstruction, 1971, pp. 63-64.

[30] See his Al fauz Al-Asghar, Beirut 1319 cf. See also the article bearing his name in Da'ira Ma'arif-i-Islamia, Lahore, 1964.

[31] Mathnawi III: 3901 ff cf. Reconstruction, pp. 186f: also Mathnawi IV: 3637–3641, 3646–3648 cf. Reconstruction p. 121 f.

Iqbal points out that Ibn Maskawaih regarded the soul as non-material, because in perception the soul can assimilate and retain a number of forms simultaneously, whereas matter is capable of having only one form at a time. Similarly, the soul cannot be regarded as a form of matter since it assumes different forms and states and therefore cannot be a form or a state itself, Matter in itself is inert, the power of life which animates and organises our bodies must, therefore, be immaterial. Furthermore, abstract thought is itself immaterial and cannot be shown to be a function of matter. It must, therefore, belong to the soul.[32]

Iqbal's attention to Ibn Sina's work is confined to two doctrines: that love is the guiding force of evolution, and that the soul does not need a material accompaniment to survive.[33] The Force of love was regarded by Ibn Sina as the initiator of movement in the Universe: each object strives towards attaining its own ideality which it loves. To make continuous evolution possible, however, ideals must not be fixed but as evolution proceeds the ideals must change and become higher and higher. All things move towards the Ultimate Ideal: The Divine Beloved; and in the end the worth of a thing is to be decided by its distance from or nearness to the Divine Beloved.

It is the soul (or-Nafs) which is the subject of evolution and Ibn Sina tries to show that the soul can survive without a body. The fact that the soul is immediately self-conscious of itself through itself is conclusive proof that the soul does not require a body to exist. This argument was primarily directed against the doctrines of metaphysics which were becoming popular mainly through Indian influence. After attaining freedom from the body, the soul continues its journey, back to the Beloved. As is well known, Ibn Sina's ideas about love made a deep and lasting impression on Iqbal's mind, and Ibn Sina's influence can be discerned not only in the Asrar but also in all of Iqbal's Persian and Urdu work.

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[32] The Development of Metaphysics in Persia, pp. 29ff.

[33] The Development of Metaphysics in Persia, pp. 32ff cf. The collected works of Avicenna (ed. N. A. F. Mehren) Leiden 1894 (Fragment on Love) and Yuhanna Qamir, "Ibn Sina", Vol. II. Catholic Press, Beirut, 1956 for a' convenient summary of Ibn Sina's Psychology with detailed references to his works.

Another important philosopher is the 13th C. radical, Wahid Mahmud. whose thought was regarded by Iqbal as a reaction to وحدت الوجود or contemporary Sufi Monism.[34] Anticipating Leibniz, Wahid Mahmud taught that the universe is composed of individuals (Afrad) which have existed from all eternity and have life. The Universe, moreover, is an evolving Universe; and this evolution is largely (though not exclusively) due to the environment of the organism. It is to be noted that in a letter to Dr. Nicholson Iqbal claims continuity with the thought of Wahid Mahmud as far as his own pluralism is concerned.[35] It is difficult, however, to see where the continuity lies, unless it' be the very fact of a reactionary pluralism itself. In points of detail, Iqbal would reject the eternity of Mahmud's selves, he would reject the postulate that evolution is largely due to the food that organisms assimilate, and he would reject the doctrine of eternal recurrence which is so basic to Mahmud's cosmogony.

Iqbal shows no awareness of Mahmud's work in his pre-European works, and it is likely that he came upon it during his researches in preparation for his dissertation and saw in it a striking similarity, at least in general outline, to the Pluralism he had encountered at Cambridge. In the realm of classical theology (or Kalam), Iqbal pays attention to both the Mu'tazila (Rationalists) and the Ash'arites (the Orthodox):[36]

As far as the Mu'tazila are concerned, Iqbal regarded two aspects of the movement as having Metaphysical significance, viz., their conception of God and their theory of matter.[37]

According to the Mu'tazila, God's attributes are His essentially, i.e. they are His by definition. Espousing the separate reality of God's attributes which are held merely to belong to Him is a kind of shirk (or polytheism) and militates against the pure unity of God. In its later development, it was

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[34] The Development of Metaphysics 93f. See also the Dabistan Madhabib (Trans. D. Shea and A. Troyer), Lahore, 1973, pp. 337t.

[35] Lahore, 24-1-1921 Reprinted in Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal, p. 93.f.

[36] For a convenient summary of Mutazila and Ash'arite theology see D. B. MacDonald, Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory, Lahore, 1972, pp. 119ff.

[37] The Development of Metaphysics, pp. 40ff.

hold that one cannot speak of God's attributes at all except analogically, e.g. when we say God is Power; we simply mean that He is the giver of power. The theory was supposed to 'protect' God from contingency and also go guard against the tendency to 'personalize' God's attributes; e.g. His wisdom or His presence.

Their theory of matter was formed to exclude all arbitrariness from the course of Nature. The ground of all independent, individual phenomena is matter. The-material atoms have all their qualities intrinsically, and the activity of God consists solely in making them perceptible. This theory was designed to protect God from too much intercourse with the material world, so that His Absolute Unity would not be compromised.

The Mu'tazila referred to themselves as the ahl at-tauhid Wal 'Adl (the party of God's Unity and Justice). Their stress on God's Unity we have already noted; their belief in God's justice led them to uphold the freedom of the will−A just God can only reward or punish men if they are responsible for their actions. Iqbal must have had a great deal of sympathy for the Mu'tazila in their struggle to maintain this doctrine against stiff opposition, for Iqbal had himself much the same experience. Curiously enough, however, Iqbal defines his own position in terms of the Hadith that the true faith is between Jabr (Necessitarianism) and

Qadr (in his context standing for the Free-will which is a con-sequence of God's just decree).[38]

Iqbal's interpretation of this tradition is inspired by Ward: the self is determined by its 'capacity', its realizable possibilities. This is what is meant by destiny (Taqdir). It is also determined to some extent by its social and physical environment. The freedom of the self, however, is part of its Taqdir. It is part of God's purpose for each self that it should enjoy a certain amount of freedom within its social and physical setting. This freedom can be augmented by striving against the limiting and determining factors.[39] There is, however, another element in Iqbal's interpretation of this tradition; and that

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[38] The tradition is quoted by Iqbal in the introduction to The Secrets of Self, Trans. R. A. Nicholson, MacMillan, 1920, p. 15.

[39] Ward, The Realm of Ends, pp. 315f, The Reconstruction, pp. 50f, 116f. See further the chapter on Freedom.

is drawn from Rumi. In Fihi ma Fihi, Rumi says that Predestination consists in the creation of a moral order by which good is rewarded and evil is punished and not in individual election or reprobation regard less of ethical considerations.[40]

Iqbal echoes this belief in an Urdu verse in Armughan-e-Hijaz: "Destiny is a name for recompense of deeds."[41]

تقدیر ہے اک نام مکافات عمل کو

The ego is free to choose whether to obey the moral law or not. However, the consequences of its choice are already deter-mined. It it chooses to obey it will be-rewarded; if it disobeys it will be punished. It is clear that Ward's emphasis on the freedom of the self is on natural freedom (although he by no means ignores ethical freedom). This is a freedom that is possible for all selves however high or low in the scale of existence. For Ward, life itself implies a degree of freedom. Rumi's emphasis is on ethical freedom, and this is clearly restricted to self-conscious, moral beings. Iqbal relies heavily on Ward in discussing natural freedom, and relies heavily on Rumi in discussing ethical free-dom.

Mu'tazilite Rationalism provoked a reaction, and Iqbal studies this reaction in the life and work of two men: Al-Ash'ari and Al-Ghazzali. The movement led by Al-Ash'ari transferred the dialectical method of the Rationalists to the defence of the authority of Divine Revelation. In opposition to the Mu'tazila the Asli'arites maintained and embellished the doctrine of God's attributes and, as far as the Free-will controversy is concerned, they developed the doctrine of Iqtisab or Acquisition, and held that the power of choice as well as all human actions (or, to take a more charitable view, the possibilities of human actions) have been created by God, and that man has been given the power of appropriating whichever course of action he chooses. The existence of God is proved, apart from the argument from motion from the diversity of empirical reality. That things should have such different qualities needs an explanation, and the Ash'arites found this in the activity of God. Also, it was held that the Universe is

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[40] Fihi ma Fihi, p. 92.

[41] Kulliyat, (Urdu), p. 687.

contingent. This was shown by the over-popular argument among Muslim theologians (already mentioned in connection with Ibn Maskawaih's thought) that form and matters are inseparable, and since form or quality is certainly not eternal, matter could not be either. The obvious criticism of this view, that matter could have an endless succession of non-eternal forms and therefore could be eternal, seems not to have struck them. The confusion is, of course, between forms as such and any particular form. Matter always has some form but not necessarily any particular form; it may lose one form and appropriate another, in any cases. it was held that the material universe had a beginning in time and therefore required a cause. This cause is God. Not only did God create the Universe, but it is kept in being at every instant by Him. The Universe is a mere show of ordered subjectivities which finds its ultimate explanation in the Will of God.

Iqbal pays particular attention to the pluralism of the Ash'arites: The world is composed of Jawahir, or atoms; and since the creative activity of God is ceaseless (Quran 35:2); the number of atoms cannot be finite. Fresh atoms are constantly coming into being and the Universe is a growing one.

According to Iqbal, Ash'arite pluralism can serve as a basis for an Islamic system of metaphysics, provided that it is purged of its materialism and its occasionalism, i.e. if the soul is no longer regarded as a finer kind of matter, rather the atom is regarded as a basic kind of soul: in other words, if the priority of the spiritual is recognised. Again, as far as occasionalism is concerned, the Ash'arite doctrine would need to be abandoned and replaced by a doctrine which recognises at least the relative permanence of individuals, while at the same time safeguarding the belief in their ultimate dependence upon God.[42]

Al-Ghazzali re-affirmed and strengthened the Ash'arite thesis that, as long as human reason alone is used in argument, the issues between the rationalists and the orthodox will remain undecided. Ghazzali used the methods of dialectical philosophy to confound the philosophers. He had, in the beginning, tried to find certainty in Kalam (formal theology), but became increasingly dissatisfied with the lack of coherence and firmness in the theology of his time. After a period of extreme scepticism he had a radical

[42] The Development of Metaphysics, pp. 52ff, The Reconstruction, pp. 68ff.

conversion experience, which led him to give up his prestigious teaching at Baghdad and to adopt the life of a wandering dervish, or mendicant contemplative. From now on the denied the possibility of attaining to certainty in religious matters through philosophy and formal theology. The basis for all religious certainty, he held, is an immediate and overwhelming experience of the Divine (this can be an experience either of great love or, as in his own case, one of extreme fear).

According to Iqbal, in his mystical work, Mishkat al-Anwar, Ghazzali, who was Persian, returns to purely Persian categories of thought: God is light, darkness is non-existence, the existence of the Universe is due to God's 'lent' light. The physical eye sees only the external manifestation of the Real Light. The internal or spiritual eye, however, discerns the spiritual light by which God enlightens those who search for him.

If I may digress here a little: Although Iqbal does not mention this aspect of the matter, my teacher, the late Professor R. C. Zaehner, held that Ghazzali's Persian work, the Kimiya ye Sa'adat, showed traces of Zoroastrian influence, particularly in the use of parables.[43] Iqbal was quite taken by Ghazzali's emphasis on the immediacy of the sells encounter with God.

Iqbal elaborated his own analogy to account for such an encounter. According to him, the self's encounter with God may be compared to our encounter with other finite minds in this world. We never perceive another self directly through sense-perception alone. The most we can say on the basis of mere sense-data is that we infer the presence of another conscious being from movements similar to our own. Our experience of other minds, nevertheless, is not simply inferential: it is some sense immediate, and the immediacy is an immediacy of response. An-other mind makes itself known to us by responding to our signals. It is communication which convinces us of the presence of an-other mind. For Iqbal, it is the response of the Ultimate Self to the signals of a religious seeker which results in an

[43] The Development of Metaphysics, pp. 58ff, Reconstruction, 4ff, 100f, 129. For Ghazzali's refutation of the philosophers see his Tahafut Al-Falasifa (Trans. S. A. Kamali). Lahore 1963. For an account of his conversion see his Al-munqidh min ad-dalal, Damascus, 1934. For an appreciation of his Persian work see his Kimiya ye Sa'adat, Teheran, 1940. For a discussions of Ghazzali's contribution in the context of Islamic theology and mysticism see my Islam; A Christian Perspective, Exeter, 1982.

experience of God. Iqbal refers to prayer and contemplation as possible models for the sorts of signals which could evoke such a response.

In very general terms, then, it may be said that Iqbal's philosophy was an attempt to understand and to interpret Quranic Islam in terms of modern philosophical thought. His method and the substance of his argument was, on the whole, of Western inspiration, with frequent referrals back to the traditional Islamic thought, of which Iqbal had formidable knowledge, to give his message a certain 'rootedness' in the culture to which he was preaching.

MUHAMMAD IQBAL: ON RELIGION

DR. DAVID A. KERR

Introduction

For all who are interested in, and concerned with, contemporary religious thought in Islam, it must be immensely encouraging that the IQBAL ACADEMY (UK) has organized in 1987 not one but two seminars in the West Midlands devoted to Iqbal's ideas expressed in poetry and prose. The first was held in the City of Coventry where the Academy was founded and where the Iqbal Library continues to find its home in the Cathedral. Symbolizing the nature of the Academy as an enterprise of Muslim-Christian cooperation. The second took place in the City of Birmingham where the Academy's Chairperson and principal Iqbal scholar, Dr. Saeed Durrani, energetically inspires the Academy's activities from his base in the University with cooperation from the Cathedral and the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations in the Selly Oak Colleges. In my capacity at that time as Director of that Centre it was my privilege to address fellow members of the Academy and other guests on both Muslim Colleagues who invited me to speak on the specifically religious themes in Iqbal's thought. In responding to the invitation to record the content of my lectures in writing, I admit again my inadequacies as a scholar of Iqbal. Yet I draw strength from the assurance of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that intention is the greater part of the act. I confess that my intention is inspired by the hope of making a humble but useful contribution to interfaith discussion of the universally-important issues to which Iqbal draws our minds and hearts.

Iqbal: A Man of our Time

It is extremely difficult to speak of a man of the immensity of intellectual and moral stature of Muhammad Iqbal: a poet of consummate skills; a philosopher-theologian with a subtlety o thought which easily eludes our lesser minds; a political visionary and activist who is rightly esteemed as the political visionary and activist who is rightly esteemed as the Father of Pakistan. Bu what makes it so important that we should try to take the measure of the man and his ideas is that Iqbal struggled wit] what Dr. Abid

Husain has insightfully termed "a crisis of life' He did so with all the individual particularity of an Indian Muslim caught up in an historic moment in the modern evolution o his people, his religion and his hind. In these specifics we may feel that he is distant from our situation in the West Midland: and you may judge from mine in particular. But precisely because his was a struggle of life. I find it to be one of a universe significance in which others of us may still share, whether we are Muslim, Indian, Pakistani, English or Christian. Truly Iqbal was man of our age, and the best way we can esteem his thought is to engage creatively with it.

Iqbal: An Invitation to Interfaith Dialogue

Iqbal's concern for religion permeates the totality of his writing, whether we turn to the most lyrical of his verses or the dens systematic discussion of his famous lectures on The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam. The more I have become familiar with his thought, the more am I convinced that h expresses a profound understanding of Islamic orthodox) enriched by a passionate personal piety which gives authenticity to the often-novel ways in which he restates Islamic tradition ft the modern age. Moreover I find myself interacting with his ideas not merely as a student of Islamic thought, but as a Christ a concerned intellectually and spiritually with many of the same issues as he rises. His abiding significance is that he challenges us all to think of religion not simply in terms of our own religious confessions or traditions, important though these were for Iqbal and rightly are for ourselves. Beyond these, however, he struggled with the meaning of religion in its universal and cosmic sense, dealing with issues which challenge religions and religious people everywhere, Truly he was a man of religion, and the breadth of his thinking and the depth of his piety throws light o many of the contemporary concerns we have as Muslims and as Christians.

I believe we should face these together, and alongside people of other religious traditions, in the multi-religious society which we enjoy in the West Midlands and in so many others parts of Britain today. In his own life Iqbal was, I believe, a man of dialogue, if not in the way we have the opportunity to be in Britain today, yet in such manner and quality to challenge us in out con temporary situation,

The Possibility and Necessity of Religion

"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. Like Iqbal we want to say "yes", but we do well to remind ourselves of the conditions upon which he argued his affirmative reply. Religion's ultimate possibility rests not upon adherence to outward form and discipline, valid as these are in giving direction to the lives of individuals and communities. Nor is religion validated in ultimate terms by rational arguments and metaphysics, necessary as these are for an intelligent view of the universe with God as its creator. What makes religion possible in the final analysis, he argues, 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 discussions of modern philosophy, but must seek to penetrate through them in the certainty that the essence of all reality is spiritual. Let me repeat: for Iqbal this in no sense meant that religion is a spiritual escape from reality. On the contrary, religion enables us "to appropriate the real with a view eventually to absorb it, to convert it into itself and to illuminate its whole being."

For fear that this may sound too highly theoretical, let us ground Iqbal's view of the necessity of this authentic religious spirit in the two most urgent ethical, or practical, tasks which confronted him in his day, and are of no less relevance in out own.

Religion and Spiritual Value

Firstly, we must recall that Iqbal's struggle to vindicate religion's possibility and necessity was part of India's historic struggle for independence from British imperial rule. Yet Iqbal's participation in this struggle continues to have implications fat us long after the repossession of independence with the establishment of the modern states of India and Pakistan. He saw religion as necessary, and urgently so, as the way of withstanding the pervasive materialism of western culture, exported in the age of European empires and exposed as morally deficient by what he termed "the Great European War" − which, to Europe's shame, we must

now put in the plural. These wars and mud that has happened since serve to underline the rectitude of Iqbal's castigation of "intolerant democracies whose sole function is to exploit the poor in the interest of the rich."

Would that this had remained the sin of European national and international politics alone. That it has not is a fact which again gives universal significance to Iqbal's understanding of the task of true religion in confronting and overcoming materialism's hindrance of human ethical advance. Within the harsh arena of politics, he argued, religion is necessary to restore three essential facilities to humanity: a spiritual interpretation of the universe the spiritual emancipation of the individual; and basic principle of a universal import to direct the evolution of human society on a spiritual basis.

Religion and Change

Secondly, however, we must emphasize that Iqbal saw this necessary and urgent task of religion to be possible only if religions can transform themselves from archaic, tradition-boon and often irrational monuments of the past into dynamic forces, of change. In place of intellectual, social and moral inertia he called for "a principle of movement" as the necessary accompaniment of religion in the spirit of discovery. He found this best set forth in the teaching of the Prophets, in Jaudaism and Christianity, and ultimately in the message of the Prophet Muhammad to whom he gave his most devout personal allegiance as we shall see in a later part of this paper.

Prophetic religion is by nature dynamic in that it partakes of the movement of God who created and sustains the universe not as an inert mass but as an intricate interaction of space, time and motion. Iqbal saw reality as being ever in a state of movement from which religion cannot be exempted. To the reality of change, indeed, religion must relate its own self-understanding, itself engaging in a constant process of inner evolution in order to give spiritual and ethical direction to the movement of change in the rest of human society.

Iqbal expressed this concept in the classical Islamic juristic word ijtihad, which he elaborated in his memorable lecture on "The Principle of Movement in the Structure of Islam". Ijtihad means "to exert oneself with a view to forming an independent judgements", and as a fundamental principle

of Islamic thought Iqbal drew his understanding of it from the Qur'an and the hadith. "To those who exert themselves We show Our Path", God is heard to say in the Qur'an; and on many occasions in his ministry the Prophet .Muhammad encouraged his followers to exercise their own judgment over a wide range of issues after giving careful consideration to the guidance of the Qur'an and his own example (sunnah). Once again the principle of Iqbal's point is of universal significance for all religion, though we must acknowledge that of all religions it was in Islam that he saw this principle of movement most clearly embodied in the structure of its juristic foundations. The more deplorable, therefore, did he find the sloth of inertia within the ranks of the Muslim community which he criticized for having exchanged the emancipation of the Prophet Muhammad's message for the spiritual slavery which had existed in Arabia of the jahiliyyah (so-called pre-Islamic) age. With all urgency, therefore, did he appeal to his Muslim audience in particular: "Let the Muslim of today appreciate his position, reconstruct his social life in the light of ultimate principles, and evolve, out of the hitherto partially revealed purpose of Islam, that spiritual democracy which is the ultimate aim of Islam?"

But we should caution ourselves at this point against misrepresenting Iqbal's concept of movement in religion. Movement implies change, certainly, though Iqbal was never an advocate of change simply for change's sake. This is perhaps a vogue, or is it a heresy, of our own times! In his own day he saw Islam to be irrevocably in a process of reformation − a word which he used with neither qualification nor apology; indeed, he thoroughly approved of it. But he was also concerned that it should "move forward with self-control and a clear insight into the ultimate aims of Islam as a social policy:"

Religion and Reformation

Iqbal partly explains what he meant by contrasting his hopes for the future of the Islamic reformation against the reformation through which western Christianity passed in 16th century Europe. In his judgment the latter lacked the self-discipline of the universal ethics set forth in the New Testament, with the result that the modern states of Europe − and he would no doubt wish us to add North America − have displaced "the universal ethics of Christianity by systems of national ethics."

As a child of this Protestant Reformation which Iqbal criticizes, I wish that he had argued his historical point more precisely so that I should understand it better. But if he is saying that a negative result of Christianity's movement of reformation in Europe has been the tendency of the church to withdraw from the public arena of social policy and political activity, I cannot but agree with his strictures. Indeed, I would confirm his view that such a separation of religion and politics (church and state in Christian terminology) is a betrayal of a permanent and, I believe, revolutionary responsibility of religion. Thank God, therefore, that Christians in other parts of the world, particularly in parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America where the church is active in non-western cultural and social environments, .are intent upon restoring this proper emphasis in Christian theology and life, and are themselves become the tutors of the western church.

I suspect that the logic of Iqbal's argument would lead him to approve of this development were he alive today. In any event, we would be wrong to interpret his criticisms as a blanket condemnation of Christianity; rather, by focusing upon one historical specific he was identifying a problem inherent in all religious reformation, The movement of change is the authentic dynamic of all true religion, but in Iqbalian terms it should be seen as a constant process of inner growth or evolution, in which universal principles and ethical norms find new and varied out-working in different times and places, without the latter diminishing or distorting the former… or the former constraining the latter as stimuli in the process of change itself.

A consequent tension is inevitable between permanence and change. There is a related tension of which Iqbal was ever aware: between the individual believer who is open to change and the community which is socially more resistant. Ijtihad, he emphasized, is the task of the individual, for religion never changes it-self except in response to the dynamic of individuals who are themselves open to and involved in change; and if religion fails to respond, it dies.

Hence, in certain respects Iqbal had a sharply individualistic understanding of reality and religion. This is evident furthermore in his concept of God as "the Perfect Individual" (which we shall try to clarify later in this paper), and the idea which he shared with the Swiss philosopher, Henri Bergson, that "the tendency to individuate is everywhere present in the

organized world." Yet religion, he rightly insisted, is always a polity, involving a community of believers in the totality of their lives. In Islam's case Iqbal identified the community with the polity of tawhid which he saw as providing "the foundation of world unity". This in turn, he stressed, laid upon the Muslim community the task of "making this principle a living factor, in the intellectual and emotional life of mankind."

I do not think I am wrong in suggesting that these tensions are ones which we all feel today in our contemporary struggle to stimulate religion's dynamic power of change in our own lives and that of our communities, thereby undertaking the mission which Iqbal lays upon us, whether we be Muslims or Christians. If Iqbal's challenge comes to us equally, how can we respond adequately but in dialogue?

Prayer

Would that I could see more clearly how these tensions are to be resolved? My difficulty, which in dialogue with you I freely admit, gives me reason to sympathize with Iqbal in his failure, in my judgment at least, to fathom the problem more deeply at the intellectual and ethical levels. Yet I find myself profoundly moved by, and in agreement with the spiritual perspective which he brings to the problem: that the way forward is to be found in prayer.

In his brief but truly eloquent discussion of the psychology of prayer in the third of the lectures to which I have already referred, entitled "The Conception of God and the Meaning of Prayer", Iqbal confirms the view of the American psychologist of religion, William James, that prayer is a universal human impulse. Whether it is recognized or not, it gives reality and validity to our humanity. "I pray, therefore I am," Iqbal might have said, though he actually stated that "prayer is instinctive in its origin." Activated and disciplined under the religious rules about methods of praying, preconditions and inner intentions, authentic prayer surpasses intellect as the means of understanding the dynamic movement of reality. Scientific understanding is excelled, as prayer, to quote Iqbal in one of his most powerful passages, "rises higher than thought to capture Reality itself with a view to becoming a conscious participator in its life." Prayer alone is ultimately able to fulfill our deepest individual yearnings for a response to

"the awful silence of the universe". What wonderful, powerful language to express such profound ideas!

Once again, however, we must take care not to misrepresent the thought of our master. Iqbal is not seeking refuge from intellectual tension in mystical flight. The true spirit of prayer, he continues, is social; its object is achieved "when the act of prayer becomes congregational." This socialization of spiritual illumination is a matter of special importance in Islam, Iqbal reminds us, where the obligation of the five daily prayers trains Muslims to find their unity upon the common axis (qiblah) of the Ka'bah: and where the rites of hajj as it were enable the pilgrims to travel to the qiblah to experience their unity in the Holy Mosque in Makkah.

The Islamic significance of all this is as clear as it is definite. As a Christian, however, I am always impressed, and thankful, that the disciplines of prayer are duties that we share in common, though we may practice them differently. And I am reminded that the great rites of hajj are as importantly a commemoration of the spiritual example of the Prophet Abraham upon whom Christians and Muslims alike, together with Jews, invoke God's blessing as we strive to embody the quality of his sacrificial faith in the continuing pilgrimages of our own lives. Is it surprising, then, that Christians experience the same individual and associative dimensions of prayer as do Muslims, and like Muslims know them to be inseparable from one another? Tensions remain, to be sure, but in the mystery of prayer we find them to be given a new perspective. As Iqbal put it "It is a psychological truth that association multiplies the normal man's power of perception, deepens his emotion, and dynamites his will to a degree unknown to him in the privacy of his individuality." I wonder whether we can realistically hope to grapple with these shared tensions in our religious lives until and unless we learn to pray together?

God, "The Perfect Individual"

To whom, then, do we address ourselves in prayer, in hope of becoming, each of us in relation to the other, "a conscious participator in its (Reality's) life"? In answer of this question we must turn to Iqbal understands of God as we find it in his discussion of the first "word" (kalimah) of the

Islamic testimony of faith (shahadah): "I bear witness that there is no god but God."

I begin with a disclaimer before we try to follow Iqbal's thought at this critical point. It is neither from false modesty nor cautious academic convention that I confess my inability adequately to represent his theology of the first kalimah. The fact is that his thought is expectedly complex but, I find, tantalizingly elusive in its nuanced subtleties. Poetry rather than lectured prose is the characteristic mode of his finest theological expression; prayer his more reliable way to understanding than metaphysics. Neither offers itself easily for systematic treatment and you may therefore think me rash to proceed. My sole though slender confidence in doing so is that, like you − and this much we may all have in common with Iqbal − I have a personal faith in God which is more valuably experienced in feelings than expressed in words. Of one thing I am sure, however. My faith is not in a presumed "Christian" God, distinct from a presumed "Muslim" God. The very thought is as repugnant as it is alien to the theology of Iqbal. His reflections upon God far transcend the doctrinal straight-jackets of any religious system, and though he is ever loyal to the true orthodoxy of Islam, he expresses his thoughts in a manner which invites the harmonious interaction of believers of other religious traditions. I can do no more but share with you those aspects of his perception of God which speak to my faith experience, and if I am able to do so with even a small measure of clarity, it is in tribute to Iqbal's influence upon me.

God as Personal

What strikes me first and foremost is Iqbal's vital sense of the personal nature of God. To speak of God being personal is, I re-cognize, to court controversy, the more so when we recall Iqbal's repeated use of the terms "the Perfect Individual" and "the Supreme Ego"[1]. Hard is it, it may seem, to reconcile such language with the careful creedal formulations of orthodox Sunni theology, faithful follower of Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari as Iqbal claimed to be. It is precisely here that we find the clue to understanding his role as a metaphysical philosopher and theologian: he tried to take traditional dogmatic formulations and re-express them in the language of the contemporary philosophy of his day. Our understanding of theology cannot be insulated from the process of change in which Iqbal saw the whole of the

universe and human Endeavour to be involved. Reformation of religion requires the reformation of theology as a sine qua non, though as we have seen Iqbal understood the most creative process of reformation to be that which treated seriously with the tradition within which it evolved.

As a devout reader of the Qur'an Iqbal believed intensely in a personal God, holding fast in his devotions and intellectual life to the reality of the Beautiful Names (al-asma al-husna) which, in the Qur'an, God discloses to be His, so that we might call upon Him in prayer and grow in understanding, The Names became for both Islamic theologians and philosophers the "attributes" (sifat) of God which, as it were, named the qualities of His being and action. But against many a philosopher, al-Ash'ari and count-less orthodox theologians insisted that the Names or attributes have an eternal reality; and though they must not be regarded as identical with God in any human understanding of their meaning, they are not other than He in the mystery of their Quranic meaning which is known to none other than God Himself.

This is a difficult distinction − the difficulty of which is as evident in Christian theology as well as in Islam. It is the distinction which Iqbal, I think, seeks to preserve in his concept of God as "the Perfect Individual" and "the Supreme Ego". Borrowing these terms from Henri Bergson and others, Iqbal insists that the qualities of God manifested in His Names are eternally real, so that God is in truth a personal God with whom we can relate in intimately personal terms. Yet as a theologian he also insists that the eternal Names neither introduce plurality into the being of God, nor impose any limitation upon Him. Iqbal may have felt certain sensitivity against Christian theology at this point, and he rejected Christian notions of Incarnation and Trinity. Without seeking to elucidate the Christian doctrine of God let me simply say from within the Christian tradition that I have no difficulty in accepting Iqbal's formulations. Indeed, I warmly confirm his notion of God as "the Perfect Individual" in the four main senses in which I understand him to use the term as I shall now attempt to summarize.

God in Personal Relationship with Us

Firstly, there is Iqbal's sense that God is the Perfect Individual in His having a real personality which humans can recognize and which we can

address in prayer and worship. Because His personality is real, we may have a truly personal relationship with Him, though without His being limited thereby. God's personality remains qualitatively other than ours, for it is perfect and our personalities are subject to all kinds of imperfection. So the relationship we have with God, "the Perfect Individual", provides the ground of hope that, through prayerful participation in the life of Reality (to recall Iqbal's phrasing of the purpose of prayer), we can learn to reflect more clearly the perfection of God's personality in, the individuality of our own persons. Jesus Christ, I believe, taught us the same hope when, in his Sermon on the Mount, he bade us: "Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect."

The Unicity of God

Although human "beings may potentially be perfectible by the grace of God's perfection, we are actually far from being perfect in our actual individuality, and this brings us to the second point which I hear Iqbal to be making. We recognize and invoke God's perfect personal qualities, His Names, in terms of our imperfect human experience. This is marked by our multiplicity in which we cling to that which differentiates us one from another, inevitably we tend to think of God in these terms, and Iqbal reminds us that to do so is itself an expression of our imperfection. God indeed relates Himself to our differentiated world of human experience, as He does to the differentiated universe of nature in its infinite complexities. This Iqbal fully accepts. Multiplicity is part of the universal process of change which he likens to "an infinite series". God is involved in that series, "but (He) is not that series." The reality of God's being is beyond the imperfection of multiplicity, and as the Perfect Individual His Names, which we construe as many, exist.in eternal Unicity. "Say, God is One (ahad); all things depend on Him (al-samad)", to quote the opening verses of Surat al-Ikhlas, "The Chapter of Unity" from which Iqbal derived his decisive direction at this point.

The Uniqueness of God

Iqbal's third point follows from the continuation of this Quranic chapter: "He begetteth not, and He is not begotten, and there is none like unto Him." Neither a self-serving apologist nor a demeaning polemicist, Iqbal consciously turns aside from those who would misuse the verse to

attack Christian theology. This is not the Qur'an's point, he rightly maintains; the real issue, he says, is "the characteristic of the Perfect Ego (which) is one of the most essential elements in the Quranic conception of God."

His argument is actually against pantheism which he sees as a tendency in all religions to escape from "an individualistic conception of the Ultimate Reality" and to conceive of God rather as "a vague, vast and pervasive cosmic element." In contrast, Iqbal interprets the Qur'an as protecting the definite otherness of God from imperfect creation, while yet affirming the immediacy of His relationship to it. Again he makes his point by differentiating the Perfect Individuality of God from the imperfect individuality of created beings. Quoting Bergson, he argues that "while the tendency to individuate is everywhere present in the organized world, it is always opposed by the tendency toward reproduction." Hence, we human beings like all other animals harbour an enemy within ourselves which, as the instinct for reproduction, places us in a state of dependency upon others, and militates against the perfectibility of our individuality. God alone is beyond this animal force of reproduction and this is what Iqbal understands the Qur'an to be affirming in surat al-Ikhlas and consistently throughout all its other chapters. In contrast to our imperfect individuality, God is "the Perfect Individual closed off as an Ego, peerless and unique", begetting nothing whether it is physically or pantheistically understood.

The Infinity of God

The fourth and last point I want to make about Iqbal's meaning in the term "the Perfect Individual" concerns the issue of infinity. To put it another way: Is there not a danger that any notion of the Individuality of God, although intended to affirm His specific relationship to the "infinite series" of the created universe, actually ends up by imposing upon Him the limitation of finitude in our mathematical sense of space and time?

This is a monumentally difficult question, but one which none of us may ignore whether we are Christians who perceive the divine relationship with creation in the person of Jesus Christ, or Muslims who perceive it in the book of the Holy Qur'an. Does a belief in an individualizing self-disclosure of God impose the imperfection of finitude upon Him?

No, says Iqbal! And his answer evidences his knowledge of contemporary physics, as well as his understanding of modern • philosophy and psychology. The problem lies not with God, but with the partial nature of human conceptions of space and time, indeed of the essence of nature itself. "Modern science", he stated in his lecture dealing with "The Conception of God", "regards, nature not, as something static, situate in an infinite void, but a structure of inter-related events out of whose mutual relations arise the concepts of space and time." Hence they are relative concepts, or as he says, "interpretations which thought puts upon the creative activity of the Ultimate Ego." Far from interpreting space and time as limitations upon the Perfect Individual, Iqbal teaches us to see them as belonging to "the infinite inner possibilities of His creative activity of which the universe, as known to us, is only a partial expression." Now I acknowledge that to repeat Iqbal's theories does not necessarily help to elucidate them for those of us who are less familiar than he with the theories of modern physics, so I shall not attempt to follow him any further. But let us enjoy, and hopefully remember, the pithiness of his own conclusion: "God's infinity is intensive, not extensive."

God as Light

I hope these paragraphs have not disheartened those of you −and I expect we may be many who find metaphysics difficult, or even to distaste. However it is part of Iqbal's thought about religion in general and Islam in particular, and to ignore it would be seriously to misconstrue his message to us as a theologian.

But in the sum of his writing we can see that Iqbal depended as much upon the power of metaphor, particularly when speaking about God, as upon intellectual discussion of theories. The best of his metaphors are those which he draws directly from the Qur'an, and nowhere more poignantly than from the "Light Verse" in surat al-nur, "The Chapter of Light". I rehearse the well-known verse in English rendering of Yusuf Ali:

"God is the Light of the heavens and the earth.

The parable of His Light is as if there were a Niche and with it a Lamp:

the Lamp enclosed in Glass:

the Glass as it were a brilliant Star:

Lit from a blessed Tree,

an Olive neither of the East nor the West,

whose Oil is well nigh luminous

though fire scarce touched it:

Light upon Light!"

Light gives life, Iqbal reminds us, recalling other Beautiful Name's of God in the Qur'an: al-hayyu'l-qayyum. But it is again in physics that he finds his key to interpreting the Quranic metaphor of God as Light. The velocity of light cannot be exceeded, and so light is the nearest approach to an absolute that is known to us in nature. Iqbal's sense of the Quranic metaphor, therefore, is that God discloses Himself as Light. His Light is everywhere present as that which illuminates all that is in the heavens and earth. But this is not pantheism, Iqbal warns, for the Quranic metaphor continues to individuate the Light by focusing it specifically in a Niche, a Lamp, a Glass, which is then likened to the pin-prick exactness of the Star, brilliantly lit by the blessed Olive Tree, though not a terrestrial tree of earth with its eastern and western divisions.

The point Iqbal is making is that the absolute universality of God, the Perfect Individual and Supreme Ego, is disclosed not in formless cosmic platitudes, but in particular individual realities while God remains unlimited in His perfection. It is by these particular disclosures, Iqbal argues, that we know the truth of tawhid to be that "the world in all its details is the self-revelation of the great I AM", a spiritual reality which therefore calls for human understanding and participation through the refinement of intellectual sciences into ultimate spiritual perception.

Iqbal's Love of the Prophet

Iqbal's careful exposition of the relationship between the universal and the particular in his doctrine of God brings us, in the logic of Islamic faith, to the second kalimah of the shahadah, where we must enquire into how he understood his confession: "And I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God."

Without a doubt, his love of and for the Prophet ran deeply through the piety of his own life, throughout which he meditated upon the beauty (jamal) and majesty (jalal) of what he held to be the perfection of Muhammad's humanity as the Chosen One (al-mustafa), the Seal of the Prophets (khatim al-nabiyyin). In this he identified himself intimately with the living tradition of na't poetry, so strong within the mystically-inclined Sufi devotional piety of traditional Islam. Not surprisingly, therefore, it is in his poetic stanzas that he expressed most sonification of fulfilled human potentiality. Nor does Iqbal recall the Prophet merely as a hero of the past, but relates to him as a living inspiration in the lives of devout Muslims through all ages.

In the great Javidnama, for example, he captures the Quranic mystery of spiritual intimacy between the believers and the Prophet who is nearer to them than their own souls (33, 6): "A beloved is hidden in your heart; in the Muslim's heart there is Muhammad's home; all our glory is from his name." His use of pronouns in this stanza skillfully underscores the inseparability of individual and community which, as we have seen, inheres his understanding of the polity of Islam, and which now we see to be animated by the spiritual reality of the Prophet. Hidden in the heart of the believer, the glory of the entire community derives from his name; or as Iqbal expressed it on another occasion: "love for the Prophet runs like blood in the veins of his community."

A Christian's Reflection

You may wonder how a Christian can relate to these verses and the many others of similar kind to be found throughout Iqbal's poetry, treating as they do with that which is evidently most particularly "Muhammadan" of Islamic faith and piety. The second kalimah, we are often told, excludes by its particularity the non-Muhammadan believer whose monotheism and at least partial credentials as a Muslim are acknowledged in the first word of the Shahadah. Are we not at this point confronted by an inevitable and necessary

parting of the ways, honestly to be recognized if painfully to be endured? There are, I respectfully recognize, many in our two religious traditions who would say so, without their wishing to impair our dialogue as Christians and Muslims who continue to share much else in common. Others, I know, argue that there is here a parting of the ways of such magnitude that all else is invalidated, Muslims and Christians necessarily alienated from on another by a great historical divide between right guidance and error, though with such a view I have no personal agreement. Nor, I feel, would Iqbal, even if certain of his more stunning hyperboles were to be marshaled into the argument: for example, his statement that: "You can deny God, but you cannot deny Muhammad." Taken literally, this would exclude Muslims in their totality before ever it addresses Christians, and this, I think, Iqbal clearly did not intend.

Speaking for myself as a Christian who seeks to confess God in Christian faithfulness without denying the faithfulness of Muhammad and the Muslims' faith in God which he inspires, I would like at this point to enter two personal concerns, without in either of them attempting so suggest a particular Christian appreciation of the Prophethood of Muhammad. The first is, I think, relatively straight-forward. Without requiring Christian acceptance of the Prophethood of Muhammad in Muslim testimony, or Muslim acceptance of Christian belief in Jesus Christ, cannot a deep spiritual sympathy exist between Christians and Muslims deriving from the rich spiritual psychology which binds them to Jesus Christ and the Prophet Muhammad respectively? In other words, we are indeed marked and distinguished by the particularities of our faith traditions, the one Christian and the other Muslim. But the way 'we each relate psychologically to our distinctive historical particularities Jesus Christ and the Prophet Muhammad in particular − are so strikingly common in spiritual terms as to give each of us a real potential for the appreciation of the other.

My second point is, I recognize, more difficult. As a Christian I happily acknowledge that Muslims have a deep appreciation of the Prophet Jesus, different from my own in some respects, but legitimately theirs by a double right as I see it. First is the fact of Quranic hospitality for Jesus as the Prophet of the Injil to the Children of Israel, a mercy from God, a word and a spirit from Him: Secondly, if my Christian resurrection faith is sure, then

surely the Resurrected Christ is free to visit Muslims in the intimacy of their own faith in whatsoever manner he chooses, the mystery of which I am content to uphold in prayer. Is it, then, possible to say something comparable about how I as a Christian may appreciate the Prophet Muhammad, without yet being able to define his Prophethood? I like to think so. If the Bible as I interpret it − and I know that many Muslims would interpret it otherwise − makes no specific mention of Muhammad or his ministry, the message he preached inheres much of the spirit and word of the Hebrew and Greek Testaments alike. The spirit of Muhammad's teaching is written clear on many a Biblical page. If this falls short of Muslim understanding of Muhammad's Prophethood, as I fear it must, let me honestly assure my Muslim friends that I am making not the least allusion to the knit-picking theories of many non-Muslim scholars about the historical origins of scripture. I speak only of an important way in which, through my own scripture, I find myself in Christian possession, as it were, of much that Muhammad preached, for which I hold him in deep spiritual esteem. But is there not still another dimension of such esteem? If Iqbal and millions of like-minded Muslims throughout the ages are right in sensing that the spirit of Muhammad, his Light if you will, remains spiritually active, though his body lies in the grave awaiting the Day of Resurrection, why should this spirit of Muhammadan Light not visit others besides Muslims, in whatsoever manner it chooses?

I raise these questions, without disguising the implicit answers I intend, in prelude of my attempt to interpret something of Iqbal's thought about the spiritual perfection of the Prophet Muhammad. If you cannot agree with me, I trust you can accept that it is not my intention to trespass as a Christian into the deep emotional intimacy of Iqbal's faith, or that of any other Muslim. But at the same time these questions are not irrelevant to our concern for the nature of Iqbal's religious thought itself, for they return us to the issue of how we are rightly to understand the relationship between the particular and the universal, the historical and the eternal, the spiritual and the material − and how we are to discern this relationship within the experience and perspective of true religion as "discovery".

The Book and the Person

Let us, then, examine Iqbal's appreciation of the Prophet Muhammad under the conceptual principles of his particularity and his universality, "You are the Well-Preserved Tablet, you are the Pen", he wrote, and again: "He is the meaning of Gabriel and the Qur'an; he is the watchman of the wisdom of God; his wisdom is higher than reason." Here we have but two short examples of the many Iqbalian stanzas in which the author interprets the chosenness of Muhammad by identifying him with divine revelation itself. It is critical, therefore, that we under-stand how Iqbal intends this identification to be understood, though his lack of systematic clarification renders our task difficult. He is not, of course, substituting the Prophet in place of the Qur'an as the locus of revelation. But he is implicitly rising again, though now in a different way, the issue of relationship: this time the relationship between the Book and the Person.

Comparative religious study of Christianity and Islam has only partially been facilitated by the observation that the focus of divine revelation in Christianity is a Person, while in Islam it is a Book. It is in a sense true that Christ is for the Christian what the Qur'an is for the Muslim: the Word of God. But it is also true to the historic traditions of the two religions that Christians find the Word of God in Biblical scripture as well, and that Muslims find it also in the person of the Prophet. Christians and Muslims may argue within their respective traditions as to the correct way of understanding the relationship between the Person and the Book in the one case, and the Book and the Person in the other. A relationship there most certainly is in both cases, however. Within his Islamic piety it is the Prophet as the living embodiment of the divine revelation vouchsafed in the Qur'an that fascinates Iqbal. This at once elevates Muhammad above the finite limitation of mortality, at least in spiritual terms, and ex-tends the perfection of the Qur'an's literary quality into the personal attributes of a human life lived in fullest potential.

Let us examine more closely what this means. Within Islamic piety each Prophet of God is seen to have embodied in a particular way certain of the qualities of human perfection by spiritually manifesting the attributes of the Word of God revealed to him. The one chosen to be the Seal of the Prophets, however, is the living repository of all these attributes, with a perfection of nature exceeding the sum of the individual qualities themselves.

I he measure of Muhammad's perfection is the Qur'an, held by Iqbal as by all orthodox Muslims, to be the perfect revelation of God's Word. Its perfection is inclusive of all that was revealed to the former prophets, confirming the truth recorded in the previous scriptures (musaddiq); it is the decisive "canon" or measure of God's Will as the criterion (furqan) of prophetic revelation; it provides the guidance (huda) of the Straight Path to the Last Day, but is neither historically contingent nor bound by the duration of the historical order; it pertains to the mystery-of eternity as the uncreated (ghayr makhluq) Word of God (kalam allah). These are in turn the qualities which the Qur'an "seals" upon the personality of its human transmitter, the Prophet Muhammad. His humanity is perfected by the transcendent perfection of God's Word, which lifts him spiritually beyond the natural and moral limitations of "sub-prophetic" human existence, including our particular comprehension of space and time. Chosen as the human vehicle of the Qur'an, as the "watchman" of its eternal wisdom and meaning, the Prophet Muhammad was, for Iqbal, the human being who, beyond all others, surpassed the stage of intellectual knowledge of God to become the "conscious participator" in the spiritual reality of the universe. This reality cannot, you will remember, be separated in Iqbal's thought from "the self-revelation of the great I AM", though neither are they identical. Similarly, without identifying the Prophet with God, Iqbal esteemed the Prophet Muhammad to be "The Perfect Man as he worshipped God as "the Perfect Individual".

The Prophet's Night Journey and Heavenly Ascent

This concept of "the Perfect Man" has a long history in the spiritual psychology of the Sufi tradition of Islamic mysticism, where it is rooted in Sufi meditation upon that most mysterious moment in the Prophet's life known as the isra or mi'raj, the "Night Journey" or the "Heavenly Ascent". You are all familiar, I am sure, with the supreme Quranic allusion to this moment in the opening verse of surah bani isra'il, "The Chapter of the Children of Israel (17, 1), but let us be reminded of the words in English rendering, so important were they for Iqbal:

"Glory to (God)

Who did take His Servant

For a Journey by night

From the Sacred Mosque

To the Farthest Mosque,

Whose precincts We did

Bless, in order that We

Might show him some

Of Our Signs: for He

Is the One Who heareth"

And seeth (all things)."

This passage held deep spiritual fascination for Iqbal who returned to it repeatedly in his poetry, finding it to express the mystery of the Prophet's personality more evocatively than is possible in rational intellectual terms. The hadith tells us that the Prophet was in the state of sleep when this mysterious event occurred − the state which we may think of as being "sub-conscious". The Sufi masters, however, have always considered it to be a state of "supra-consciousness" in which the dream takes on significance far greater than the disclosure of our sub-conscious thoughts, and is valued rather- as a means of objective experience of Reality. It is not my intention here to enter into the historic debate as to be nature of the Prophet's mi'raj: was it a physical journey to heaven, or a spiritual experience? This was not, so far as I am aware, a choice which Iqbal saw necessary to make. He accepted the certainty of the event on the basis of the Quranic witness, and within the broad interpretation of the sufi tradition he held it to be the moment of the Prophet's mushahidah or "Beatific Vision". His interest was less in knowing the precise circumstances of the event itself, and more in perceiving its significance for a right spiritual understanding of the Prophet's ministry. Let me emphasize just two points which he made.

Firstly, there is Iqbal's perception of the Mi 'raj experience representing, as it were, the conjunction of the first and second "words" (kalimatay) of the

shahadah. It was conjunctive not merely in the extensive sense of bringing together the two testimonies of faith. For Iqbal it was "intensive", to use again one of his most favored theological terms. As he taught us to understand God's infinity as intensive more truly than extensive, so he saw the second kalimah to be intensive of the first, providing the key to its secret in the pattern of a single human life which, by its God-given perfection, exceeded the limitations of material mortality and matured to fulfillment in spiritual reality. This, at least, is what I understand Iqbal to have meant in a thought-provoking line which serves as an elliptic commentary upon the Quranic verse I have quoted (17, 1): "His Servant is nothing but the secret of God."

Iqbal and the Sufi Tradition

This brings us, secondly, to the critical issue of where Iqbal stood within the Sufi tradition from which he drew much intellectual and spiritual nurture, yet which drew from him some of his most strident criticism. Sufism, as you know, presents itself as the spiritual path (tariqah) of Islam, and we may imagine Iqbal standing at a fork in the road: In one direction lay the way of spiritual absorption into a sense of Reality as being nothing but God. Metaphysical language expresses this as "undifferentiated monism", and it has a long history in the development of Sufism from the early centuries through Abu Yazid al-Bistami who revelled in spiritual "drunkenness" (sukr) to Muhyiddin ibn 'Arabi who conceived Reality as the divine "Unity of Being" (wahdah al-wujud). This school of mystical thought has been widely influential in South Asia and had a marked impact on the early life of Iqbal himself.

Leading in another direction from our imaginary fork, however, lay the path trodden by another group of Sufis, also from the earliest centuries of Islam: Abu Qasim al-Junayd emphasized spiritual "sobriety" (sahw) over against al-Bistami's drunkenness; the great Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali taught the ethical discipline of Sufi spirituality, notably in his major work entitled

The Revivication of Religious Sciences (ihya'ulum al-din) which set the model for Iqbal's lectures on The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam; and in India Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi and Shah Wall Ullah opposed ibn

'Arabi's concept of wahdah al-wujud with that of wahdah al-shuhud, "the Unity of Witness", which affirmed the validity of the highest mystical experience as a subjective sense of the spiritual reality of all being, but nonetheless insisted that there remains an actual distinction between God and creation.

In his mature thought Iqbal emphatically chose this second path in his affirmation of the insights of the Sufi tradition. From this position he could be stridently critical of ibn 'Arabi and the so called "wujudis" whom he accused of propounding a world-denying spirituality' which undermined human energy, responsibility and activity. There are moments, indeed, when Iqbal seems to reject the entire mystical tradition for this reason, opposing it with the alternative of what he termed "prophetic religion" which gives full and firm place to ethical dynamism. But we must recognize here an element of hyperbole, characteristic of the way Iqbal frequently expressed himself. He certainly subjected aspects of Sufism to searching criticism, but he never renounced the validity of the spiritual, psychological and ethical concerns which inhere much of Sufi thought and practice. Indeed, that which he valued in Sufism he saw to be personified in the life of the Prophet which itself contradicts what he judged to be the aberrations of some Sufi thought. Nowhere in his writing does he make the point more forcefully than in the opening paragraph of his lecture on "The Spirit of Muslim Culture":

> "Muhammad of Arabia ascended the highest heaven and re-turned. I swear by God that if I had reached that point, I should never have returned.' These are the words of the great Muslim saint, 'Abdul Quddus of Gangoh. In the whole range of Sufi literature it will probably be difficult to find words which, in a single sentence, disclose such an acute perception of the psychological difference between the prophetic and mystic types of consciousness. The mystic does not wish to return from the repose of 'unitary experience'; and even when he does return, as he must, his return does not mean much for mankind at large. The Prophet's return is creative. He returns to insert himself into the sweep of time with a view to control the forces of history, and thereby to create a fresh world of ideals. For the mystic the repose of 'unitary experience' is something final; for the prophet it is the awakening, within him, of world-shaking

psychological forces, calculated completely to transform the human world."

The Universal Ethic of the Prophet's Teaching

I have quoted Iqbal at length because what he has to say brings us to the core of his appreciation of the Prophet Muhammad and the nature of true religion. Recall what we said earlier: for Iqbal the three-fold purpose of religion is to disclose the spiritual reality of the universe, so as to emancipate human beings from the shackles of materialism, and advance human society upon universal principles of spiritual and ethical truth. This was the achievement of the ministry of the Prophet Muhammad as Iqbal commends it, and he urges the Muslim community to continue in the Prophet's path in its mission in the world.

In the Javidnama Iqbal more than once draws attention to what, in light of the socio-political challenges of his own life in India, he saw as the greatest ethical transformation of human values affected by the Prophet. With a high sense of the dramatic, he recalls the complaint against Muhammad by Abu Jahl, the clear-minded leader of the Prophet's opponents in Makkah who better than most understood the revolutionary character of the Quranic message . . . . but rejected it from self-interest in the pagan status quo:

"We are utterly sick because of Muhammad!

His teaching has put out the lights of the Ka'bah!

His religion abolishes the distinctions of race and blood –

Though himself of Quraysh, he disowns the superiority of the Arabs.

In his religion the high and low are one;

He ate from the same dish as the slave!"

There is no need to enlarge upon Iqbal's thought in these lines, so clearly do they present his vision of a human society where spiritual kinship between all participants excludes the false superiorities of race, ethnicity, class and economic status, as well as what Iqbal condemned as improper

expressions of religious particularity which lead to ritual exclusivism. I, for one, do not feel that his moral challenge has lost anything of its relevance from India of his day to ours in Britain or Pakistan.

So far we have noted three emphasis in Iqbal's estimation of the Prophet Muhammad: the inseparability of his Person from the Book of revelation; his spiritually-transforming experience of the mi'raj or heavenly Ascent; and the radical universalism of his preaching. From these we can see a clear pattern emerge. Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah ibn 'Abd al-Mutallib, an Arabian of particular time and place, was ordained by God, "the Perfect Individual", to become the human bearer of His perfect revelation. The human individual was thus conjoined with eternal Word, and losing nothing of his personal particularity he became the conscious participator in the spiritual dynamism of Reality itself; as "the Perfect Man" his humanity was fulfilled in the in-expressible mystery of mushahidah, or Beatific Vision. Manifesting himself more truly as Prophet than mystic, however, his consciousness of the universal impelled him back to the particular situation of his historic ministry where he created "a fresh world of ideals" which transformed the tribal fiefdom of the Quraysh into the Abode of Islam friar al-islam).

This pattern of thought moves along the axis of the particular and the universal, the former leading to the latter to become transformed by it. This, surely, is the key to Iqbal's understanding of the true spiritual direction and religious value in life. It is the essence of his conception of the nature of prayer in the life of the individual believer and of the faithful community. In the ministry of the Prophet Muhammad he shows us one who responded to this movement within his own person in a life of prayer which, effective in action, radically challenged and reshaped the social environment of his day and of all days thereafter.

The Prophet and the Hijrah

Let us move now to the fourth moment in the Prophet's ministry which Iqbal draws forward for our reflection: the hijrah, when Muhammad migrated with his Makkan followers, the muhajirun, to Madinah and brought the new Muslim community into being, founded and fashioned upon the

universal values which he had taught in the particularities of the Makkan situation.

At the historical level Iqbal interpreted the hijrah as the Prophet's rejection of parochial or provincial nationalism. It demonstrates that God's purpose always calls us to move toward wider horizons as we strive "in the Way of God" (fi sabil allah as the Qur'an puts it in Arabic) for the universal: "To leave one's native country is the sunnah of the beloved of God," wrote Iqbal, with the exemplary precedent of the Prophet in mind, and the re-iterated assurance of the Qur'an that God's reward awaits the emigre in this world and beyond.

While recognizing the importance of this concept in Iqbal's thought, we should not of course belittle his role as a "nationalist", one-time leader of the Muslim League and conceptual Father of Pakistan. As he was never prepared to separate the individual from the community, equally his conception of the Muslim community combined ideology with geography. The Arabic-Urdu word watan appears frequently in his writing, but it is a word that is notoriously difficult to translate into English: 'native country'? 'nation state'? 'love of one's homeland'? Iqbal was aware of the problem of meaning, however, and interestingly gives us some assistance in a line from the Javidnama: "Watan is something different in the right teaching of the Prophet than in the words of politicians"; idolatry (shirk) so often inheres the rhetoric of the latter, whereas "the greatest miracle the Prophet performed was the formation of a spiritually-united nation." This was the Prophet's goal in the hijrah; to go forth "in the Way of God", breaking links with the racially-defined society of the pagan Quraysh in order to create in Madinah a new community based on the social kinship of faith in God − a society which, in the Prophet's day, you will recall, included both Muslims and Jews, and maintained cordial relations with Christians. Iqbal measured the quality of the Muslim community of later history against this high-calling, and held up the same vision in his commitment to Pakistan.

Iqbal Understands of Culture

Neither history nor politics can be separated from the spiritual in Iqbal's thought. This brings us to a second aspect in his understanding of the significance of the hijrah: the cultural. In the heroic event of migration Iqbal

saw the Prophet immersing himself in "the sweep of time… the tide of history", not as the instrument of some predetermining fate (for Iqbal firmly rejected any notion of predestination), but as the active progenitor of "a fresh world of ideals." He thought of history in Quranic terms as "the days of God", an infinite series of events inter-related with one another by two universal principles disclosed in the Qur'an: the unity of the entire human family, and the reality of time. History therefore becomes "a continuous collective movement" which Iqbal contrasted against pre-Islamic classical concepts of history as cyclic or recurrent. In this he identified the difference between the cultures of the classical world and what he saw to be the new culture of Islam, a culture based on the principle of "forward movement" in which, through the processes of change, the purposes of God can be discovered anew within history, within the affairs of human societies and within the lives of individual human beings.

Let us not suffer any ambiguity at this point. Iqbal saw history as "a continuous collective movement" of societies, nations and peoples. Culture, in his sense, is the continuous discovery of the knowledge of God within the historical process, and he there-fore had no hesitation in including history within the Quranic concept of wahy or "inspiration". Hence, when Iqbal defines Islamic culture as "historical", he means that the Muslim community is one that will evolve through change as it struggles to treat history with all seriousness not merely as a sequence of events, but as a way of attaining such knowledge of God as will bring it to "a wider experience, a greater maturity of practical reason, and finally a fuller realization of certain basic ideas regarding the nature of life and time." The historical process is, for Iqbal, the complement of supernatural revelation, and he judged it "a gross error to think that the Qur'an has no germs of an historical doctrine."

Iqbal draws out this relationship yet more clearly in one of his most striking assessments of the Prophet's achievement which I quote in conclusion, of our discussion of his sense of the spiritual, historical and cultural significance of the hijrah:

> "Looking at the matter from this point of view, then, the Prophet of Islam seems to stand between the ancient and the modern world. Insofar as the source of his revelation is concerned he belongs to the ancient world; insofar as the spirit of his revelation is concerned he

> belongs to the modern world. In him life discovers other sources of knowledge suitable to its new direction. The birth of Islam… is the birth of inductive intellect."

The Finality of Prophethood with Muhammad

The distinction Iqbal here draws between the "source" and the "spirit" of revelation is, I think, a helpful one. The "source" to which the Qur'an refers in the word tanzil with the sense of "descending revelation", is transcendent; the "spirit", which the Qur'an refers to as wahy, is immanent within history, society and indeed the whole of nature, for Iqbal believed it to be nothing less that "a universal property of life". The former is vouchsafed through prophecy (nubuwwah) and registered in scripture (kitab); the latter is accessible to the exercise of intellectual and scientific reason. Each was fully present in the Iqbal emphasized, by the ministry of the Prophet Muhammad, finalization of the former (tanzil) the Prophet liberated his followers to pursue the path of reason in search of the continuing wahy of God. This is what he meant in closing the passage which I have just quoted with the unforgettable statement: "In Islam prophecy reaches its perfection in discovering the need of its own abolition."

It is in these terms, then, that Iqbal adheres as an orthodox Muslim to belief in the finality of Muhammad as "the Seal of the Prophets" (khatim al-nabiyyin), to use the most decisive of his Quranic appellations. The seal which he sets upon tanzil brings humanity to age in rational adherence to true religion, and frees us to search positively for the wahy of God's continuing guidance within the forces of history, scientifically discerned. The scientist, therefore, is the true and only successor of the Prophet, a conviction which Iqbal frequently aired in interpretation of the Prophet's own statement that "the heirs of the prophets are those of under-standing." But if science is the true complement of prophecy, we must remember that Iqbal saw prayer as the true complement of science. It is in the interrelationship of these three that Iqbal esteemed the Prophet Muhammad as "the Perfect Man", and held his sunnah before the Muslim community of his own day as both the challenge and the inspiration for a new ijtihad.

Conclusion

There are just three things which remain for me to say by way of conclusion, two of them reflecting points which Iqbal explicitly made in his writing, while the third is something which I, a Christian, draw from his thought as a Muslim.

Iqbal's Warning to Muslims

Firstly, Iqbal presents the Prophethood of Muhammad, personifying the nature of true religion, as both a challenge and an inspiration to the Muslim community. The positive emphasis in his thought at this point is not infrequently accompanied by negative and sometimes harsh criticism of Muslims for failing to rise to the challenge and inspiration which the Prophet presents. He was particularly critical of the mindless adulation of the Prophet which is perpetuated in certain strains of Islamic piety by almost-exclusive attention to what are held to be his super-natural miraculous capabilities. "That 'kind of prophethood is hashish for the Muslim, in which there is not a shred of the message of power and energy," he stormed in terms reminiscent of Marx's condemnation of the slavery of religion to superstition:

Iqbal's Challenge to Christians

Secondly, and with equal emotion, Iqbal condemned the defamatory characterization of Muhammad in the western polemical tradition and, under the skilful disguise of historical criticism, the Orientalist tradition of modern western scholarship. Nowhere does he disqualify non-Muslim scholars of Islam on the a priori grounds of their non-acceptance of the Prophethood of Muhammad. With his acute sense of history, however, he affirms the validity of "another way of judging the value of a prophet's religious experience (as being) to examine the type of manhood that he has created and the cultural world that has sprung out of the spirit of his message." As seriously as I take this opportunity to confess my personal sense of shame at the polemical disfiguring of Muhammad and .much else of Islam in the west, I hope that my Muslim audience will judge me to have taken this piece of Iqbalian advice seriously to heart in this lecture.

Iqbal's Inspiration for Muslim-Christian Dialogue

Thirdly and finally: if I have interpreted Iqbal's thoughts on religion in very positive terms as a Christian, it is because I find himself in profound agreement with much of what he has to say. My agreement is based on my study of Christian theology in which a similar understanding of the nature of true religion is given by, for example, Thomas Aquinas in medieval times, or by Dietrich Bonhoeffer in our own troubled century. From within our different traditions of faith, therefore, I find that we are talking a common theological language, and I believe this is something we should gratefully affirm by listening to one another and working together in dialogue. Iqbal addressed himself to Muslims within the intellectual context of his deep personal dialogue with western thought. In the Iqbal Academy I hope we can continue to honour his memory by addressing ourselves to the contemporary world of East and West alike within our collective experience of Muslim-Christian dialogue for which we have here in the West Midlands a God-given opportunity, challenge and inspiration.

IQBAL AND SUFISM

Dr. KHALID ALAVI

Every spiritual community has somehow faced the challenge of the existing world and worldly desires and worked out reconciliation on practical and intellectual levels. Among the spiritual communities of the world, perhaps, the Hindu masters and thinkers were the most perceptive and practical people. They divided religion into two categories and introduced practices on two levels:

i Religion of the common folk,
ii Higher religion of the intellectuals.

Common man kept himself busy worshipping idols, celebrating events, performing rituals and offering sacrifices, building temples, believing in myths and practicing magic. But the intellectuals always developed thinking on higher subjects such as; human soul, the Supreme Being, God's will etc. Various areas of pantheistic thought have been a great heritage of Indian philosophy. Individual piety, personal communication with God, spiritual purification and devotional life have' been very important aspects of religious life throughout human history. Every great thinker or religious scholar has, in some way, expressed his opinion on this subject. I will be sharing with you this afternoon one or two points of Iqbal's view on sufism in the light of his book the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam.

Iqbal, being one of the great modern minds, has tried to work out a solution for the problems faced by modern Islam, and has given an outline for further thinking. He says:

"…I propose to undertake a philosophical discussion on some of the basic ideas of Islam, in the hope that this may, at least, be helpful towards a proper understanding of Islam as a message to humanity; also with a view to give a kind of ground outline for further discussion."[44]

Being a philosopher and poet, he has the capacity to under-stand and explains the nature of intellectual and poetic experience. Equipped with

[44] Sir Mohammad Iqbal, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p. 8.

philosophical insight and poetic vision, he tried to provide a framework for the reconstruction of religious thought in Islam. He says:

"…God, human beings and the universe are common issues of religion, philosophy and higher poetry…[45]" Religion, in its more advanced forms, rises higher than poetry. It moves from the individual to the society. In its attitude towards the ultimate reality it is opposed to the limitations of man. It enlarges his claims and holds out the prospect of nothing less than a direct vision of reality.[46]

History of religious thought has presented two methods of explaining religious ideas, viz, scholastic and mystic. Iqbal, to my knowledge has not dealt with both approaches separately. However, he has generally reviewed the development of Muslim thought, and a student of Iqbal would find frequent references to mysticism in his works.

Mysticism, or the Muslim term Tasawwuf, according to Shaykh Junayd, is "that your devotion to God is not for any purpose."[47] To some, it is the code of the heart (Fiqh-al-batin) or the purification of the soul (Tazkiyah-al-Nafs) or the feelings of God's presence (al-lhsan).[48] A definition adopted by Shaykh Sirhindi is that "Walayah means the effacement (Jana) of man in God and his survival (baqa) in Him."[49] Qushayri has reported a statement of Shaykh Junayd which could be the basis of this definition. He said, "Tasawwuf is that God make you die to yourself and live by Him."[50] Is Tasawwuf an experience, or piety and devotion? Is it an ascetic practice, or knowledge? Opinions vary on this issue. As for Iqbal, we find references to both experience and knowledge. In his Sixth Lecture he says, "The rise and growth of ascetic sufism which gradually developed under influences of a non-Islamic character, a purely speculative side, is to a large extent responsible for this attitude."[51] Elaborating it furthermore he asserts, "On its speculative side, which developed later, sufism is a form of free thought and

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[45] Ibid, p. 1.
[46] Al-Risalah, p. 552.
[47] Tasawwuf Kiya Hay, (Lucknow 1978), pp. 24, 33, 65.
[48] Nafahat al-Uns, 4 (Maktubat, v. 1:35 308 1097) p. 241.
[49] Risalah, p. 551.
[50] The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p. 210.
[51] Ibid., p. 211.

in alliance with rationalism. The spirit of total other-worldliness in later sufism obscured men's vision of a very important aspect of Islam as a social polity, and offering the prospect of unrestrained thought on its speculative side it attracted and finally absorbed the best minds in Islam."[52]

Looking at the Reconstruction, it appears that Iqbal is inclined to accept mysticism as an experience. Discussing the nature of religious experience and its being a source of knowledge, he re-marks, "The revealed and mystic literature of mankind bears ample testimony to the fact that religious experience has been too enduring and dominant in the history of mankind to be rejected as mere illusion[53] "and cannot be ignored merely be-cause it cannot be traced back to sense perception."[54] Iqbal's view of mystic experience becomes clear when, comparing Kant and Ghazali, he says, "Ghazali, finding no hope in analytic thought, moved to mystic experience and there found an independent content for religion. In this way he succeeded in securing for religion the right to exist independently of science and metaphysics. But the revelation of the total infinite in mystic experience convinced him of the finitude and inclusiveness of thought and drove him to draw a line of cleavage between thought and intuition."[55] He gives a new name to mysticism when he says, "In religious psychology, by which I mean higher sufism, the ideal revealed is the possession and enjoyment of the infinite."[56]

It is the nature of mystic experience which has always been a point of discussion among the scholars and sufis. Pantheistic sufis have talked of unity and complete fana. Iqbal has taken notice of pantheistic doctrine and gave a new meaning to 'Hallaj's utterance.' Explaining the cultural background of Islamic thought he says, "This culture, on the whole Magian in its origin and development, has a structurally dualistic soul picture which we find more or less reflected in the theological thought of Islam. Devotional sufism alone tried to understand the meaning of the unity of inner experience which the Quran declares to be one of three sources of knowledge, the other

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[52] Ibid., p. 21.
[53] Ibid., p. 29.
[54] Ibid., p. 7.
[55] Ibid., p. 184.
[56] Ibid., p. 174.

two being history and nature. The development of this experience in the religious life of Islam reached its culmination in the well known words of Hallaj -- "I am the creative truth." The contemporaries of Hallaj, as well as his successors, interpreted these words pantheistically …The true interpretation of his experience, therefore, is not the drop slipping into the sea, but the realization and bold affirmation in an undying phase of the reality and permanence of the human ego in a profounder personality."[57]

Iqbal is aware of the danger of an independent mystic experience because our Sufi literature is full of Shatahat of the Sufis. According to him prophetic experience is complete and a safe one. It is constructive and useful. Giving a definition of a Prophet, Iqbal says, "A prophet may be defined as a type of mystic consciousness in which 'unitary experience' tends to overflow its boundaries, and seeks opportunities of redirecting or refashioning the forces of collective life."[58] At the start of his fifth lecture he elaborates the difference between a mystic and a Prophet by quoting a saint of the sub-continent:

"Muhammad of Arabia ascended to Heaven and returned. I swear by God that if I had reached that point I should never have returned." Iqbal says, "In the whole range of sufi literature it will be probably difficult to find words which, in a single sentence, disclose such an acute perception of the psychological difference between the prophetic and mystic types of consciousness. The mystic does not wish to return from the repose of "unitary experience"; and even when he does return, as he must, his return does not mean much for mankind at large. The Prophet's return is creative. He turns to insert himself into the sweep of time with a view to control the forces of history, and thereby to create a fresh world of ideals. For the mystic the repose of "unitary experience" is something final; for the Prophet it is the awakening, within him, of world-shaking psychological forces, calculated to completely overhaul the world of concrete fact. The desire to see his religious experience transformed into a living world force is supreme in the Prophet."[59]

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[57] Ibid., p. 96.
[58] Ibid., p. 174.
[59] Ibid., p. 178. See for further comments, pp. 22-29.

Iqbal's treatment of mysticism is two fold. He accepts mystic experience as a source of knowledge and a useful way of approaching reality. Since his concept of Islam is not of a monastic order, and he perceives Islam as a unifying force between the spiritual and temporal world, so he does not accept a passive attitude. To him "the function of sufism in Islam has been to systematize mystic experience; though it must be admitted, that Ibn-i-Khaldun was the only Muslim who approached it in a thoroughly scientific spirit."[60] He believes in action because his concept of personality is different from common concept. He says, "Thus my real personality is not a thing, it is an act. My experience is only a series of acts mutually referring to one another, and held together by the unity of purpose."[61] We, therefore, find him criticising certain attitude and activities of the mystics. But we also find a sense of appreciation and gratitude even in his criticism. He remarks, "Mysticism has, no doubt, revealed fresh regions of the self by making a special study of this experience. Its literature is illuminating, yet its set phraseology shaped by the thought form of a worn-out metaphysics has rather a deadening effect on the modern mind."[62]

Iqbal has a critical view of myticism. His criticism is on two different bases. He believes that life is activity, and a person having communication with God cannot be a passive individual. A human being coming in touch with the Supreme Being is illuminated. He becomes a moving spirit in the society. It seems that such an individual is having a burning fire within him and he is part of God's activity in this world. To him a sufi is a creative and active agent of Divine will. He criticises those who cause passivity and create inactiveness among the Muslims. He says:

خود گیری و خودداری و گلبانگ اناالحق
آزاد ہو سالک تو ہیں یہ اس کے مقامات
محکوم ہو سالک تو یہی اس کا ہمہ اوست
خود مردہ و خود مرقد و خود مرگ مفاجات

[60] Ibid., p. 144.
[61] Ibid. p. 125.
[62] Kulliat-e-Iqbal, (Urdu) p. 680.

([63])

"If a devotee is free, his spiritual stations are self-restraint, self-respect and a shout of joy that "I am the creative truth". But if he is subjugated and enslaved, his pantheism shows that he is dead, he himself is a grave, and also a sudden death."

Iqbal differentiates between Faqr and Rahibi and condemns monasticism (Rahbaniyya). He says:

کچھ اور چیز ہے شاید تیری مسلمانی
تیری نگاہ میں ہے ایک فقر و رہبانی
سکوں پرستی راہب سے فقر ہے بیزار
فقیر کا ہے سفینہ ہمیشہ طوفانی
([64])

"Your Islam is something else, because in your view Faqr and monasticism are the same things. (The fact is) that Faqr is disgusted with monasticism's love for peace and tranquility. Faqir's ship is always in the storms and commotion."

His message to the sufis is very clear:

نکل کر خانقاہوں سے ادا کر رسم شبیری
کہ فقر خانقاہی ہے، فقط اندوہ و دلگیری
ترے دین و ادب سے آرہی ہے بوئے رہبانی
یہی ہے مرنے والی امتوں کا عالم پیری
([65])

"Come out of the monasteries and follow the example of Shabbir (Martyrdom); for the monastic life is just grief and affliction. Your

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[63] Ibid., p. 152.
[64] Kulliat-e-Iqbal, (Urdu) p. 680.
[65] Ibid., p. 453.

religion and morality show signs of monasticism. This is the state of decay which is the symptom of every dying nation"

The other basis of criticism is the establishment. Sufi orders and religious institutions were the sources of inspiration for the masses. These orders provided refuge to socially dislocated and mentally disturbed people. As place for spiritual training and purification, Khanqah has lost its role. Sufi orders collaborated with the political establishment and became the source of exploitation and caused disintegration of the social cohesiveness of the Muslim community. It is this aspect of the mysticism which has been rightly criticised by Iqbal. He says:

رمز و ایما اس زمانے کے لیے موزوں نہیں
اور آتا بھی نہیں مجھ کو سخن سازی کا فن
'قم باذن اللہ' کہہ سکتے تھے جو رخصت ہوئے
خانقاہوں میں مجاور رہ گئے یا گورگن
([66])

"Allusive and suggestive expression is not suitable for this age, and I do not know the art of eloquence. Those who could say, "Stand up with God's permission" have gone. Living in the monasteries now are only the attendants or the grave-' diggers."

On religious leadership his views are also very clear. He says:

فتنہ ملت بیضا ہے امامت اس کی
جو مسلماں کو سلاطیں کا پرستار کرے

"The leadership which persuades Muslims to obey the (sultan) is a mischief and sedition in the Muslim community."

For Iqbal sufism is an activity and a "source of inspiration; but the unworthy occupants of spiritual seats have destroyed its image and spoiled its usefulness.

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[66] Ibid., p. 512.

ISAAC OF NINEVEH: THE PERSIAN MYSTIC

DR. ERICA HUNTER

As long as a man is negligent, he fears

The hour of death… [b] ut when he reaches true knowledge by… the apperception of God's mysteries and becomes confirmed in future hope, he is consumed by love… He that has reached the love of God, does not desire to stay here any more.

(A. J. Wensinck, *The Mystic Treatises by Isaac of Nineveh*, Amsterdam, 1923, p. 288.)

When Isaac of Nineveh, the author of this quotation, sought to explain the means by which to attain God's love in A.D. 7C, Islam was in its nascence. But, Isaac of Nineveh was not a Muslim; rather he was a Christian and, indeed, had once been a bishop of the Nestorian Church. Nor was Isaac of Nineveh a lone voice, for Persia in A.D. 7C -- 8C saw a flowering of Nestorian mysticism, whose influences were still being felt in A.D. 13 C. However, Isaac of Nineveh was the outstanding representative of this movement which gains sway amongst the solitaries and ascetics.

Isaac of Nineveh may, indeed, be termed the Persian Mystic. Whilst he was born in Qatar, his life appears to have been spent in the realms of Persia. Yet the only, definite chronological fact about Isaac of Nineveh is his consecration as the Bishop of Nineveh (modern Mosul) by Catholicus George I between A.D. 660-680. After only five month's incumbency, Isaac of Nineveh relinquished his seat to retire to the Mountains of Khuzistan in 'S.W. Iran in order to lead an anchoritic life. For forty years he devoted himself to writing at the monastery of Rabban Shabbour, where he was buried.

The Mystic Treatises, or De Perfectione Religiosa, was the most important work of Isaac of Nineveh.[67] It transcended the ecclesiastical barriers which separated the Nestorians from the Monophysites.[68] Furthermore, the Mystic Treatises found its way into the Orthodox Church when, in A.D. 9C, monks of the monastery of St. Saba in Palestine translated it into Greek.[69] Nor was its influence contained only within Christianity, for the writings of al-Ghazali show concordance with the Mystic Treatises.[70] Its widespread circulation was a testimony to the universality of its mystical message.

It is the intention of this paper to provide a brief introduction to the teachings of Isaac of Nineveh's Mystic Treatises. By this expose, it is hoped to cast another perspective on the milieu in which the Sufic traditions arose. A linear connection is not necessarily advocated, for the two traditions may have developed pari passu.[71] But, as Wensinck commented, "[a]s long as the sources of Christian mysticism are as little accessible as they are at present, even the study of Sufism must necessarily remain defective… for the latter cannot be considered… without… knowledge of the former".[72]

The overriding theme of the Mystic Treatises was the attainment of God's love, the consummate union between man and God. To achieve this

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[67] The Syriac texts of Isaac of Nineveh bore no distinct title, but were edited as De Perfectione Religiosa, by P. Bedjan in 1909. This edition was translated by A. J. Wensinck, Mystic Treatises of Isaac of Nineveh, (Verhandelingen der Kon. Akademie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam, Afd. Letter-kunde Nieuwe Greeks, XXIII 1, Amsterdam, 1929).

[68] Khalife-Hachem, E. Isaac de Nineve', Dictionnaire de Spiritualite, v. 7:II, col. 2052, summarises the efforts of the Monophysites to expurgate references to Nestorian theologians from the writings of Isaac of Nineveh. Similarly, a false biography was fabricated, whereby Isaac of Nineveh bore the appellation of Isaac of Syria and also became a recluse in the Egyptian desert.

[69] Brock, S. 'St. Isaac of Nineveh and Syriac Spirituality' Sobornost, 7:2 (Winter, 1975), p. 81 discusses the irony of this development since the translation of Isaac of Nineveh's works unwittingly re-introduced the Origenist tradition that had been condemned by the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 553. Khalife-Hachem, loc. cit., notes the influence of Isaac of Nineveh in the Slavonic Church.

[70] Wensinck, op. cit., p. LIV.

[71] Colless, B. 'The Place of Syrian Christian Mysticism in Religious History', Journal of Religious History, 5 (1968), p. 10.

[72] A. J. Wensinck, New Data Concerning Syriac Mystic Literature, Amsterdam, 1923, p. 1.

ecstasy, an aspirant had to acquire a spiritual, rather than an intellectual, knowledge since he should "in his mind be a void as regards the world".[73] The Mystic Treatises described the way via the three stages of repentance, purification and illumination which have also been designated the corporeal, psychic and spiritual levels of man.[74] Not that Isaac of Nineveh organised his thoughts systematically, for they were like the three stages; intertwined.[75]

Repentance was to be attained through ascetic practices and solitude. Vigils, mortification and fasting were advocated since only the anchoritic life could combat the distractions which were produced by man's affections. Indeed, the "love for riches; gathering of possessions; fatness of the body…; love of honour… pride and haughtiness…; folly; glory among men ...; bodily fear", allowed Satan to enter the soul.[76] In this capacity, solitude became the prime means of overcoming the distractions of these affections, for it fostered concentration on God − through prayer.

Indeed, prayer provided the vehicle for the soul to progress from the corporeal to the spiritual states. Tears during prayer signalled repentance and that man was worthy of entering the second stage; purification.[77] Not that this transition was achieved without difficulty as this sensitive analogy reminds us: "A young bird without wings in the mind that has lately left the bonds of affections, by the means of the work of repentance. At the time of prayer, it strives to exalt itself above earthly things, but is cannot. For it creeps still on the surface of the earth…"[78]

By his purification, the original, divine nature of man was revealed and culminated in his illumination. This attainment of spirituality was indicated

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[73] Wensinck, (1929), op. cit., p. 515.
[74] Khalife-Hachem, op. cit., col. 2043.
[75] Wensinck, (1929), op. cit., p. XV−XVI, discusses the relative sequences of the Greek and Syriac texts and notes that the latter "taken as a whole" has nothing to do with the real composition. Here Isaac of Nineveh contrasts with both Gregory Bar Hebraeus and al-Ghazali who were very systematic in their writings.
[76] Ibid.. p. XXIX.
[77] See, Khalife-Hachem, E. 'La priere pure et la priere spirituelle selon Isaac de Nineve', Memorial Mgr. G. Khouri-Sarkis, (Louvain, 1969), pp. 157−173 for further elaboration on this point.
[78] Wensinck, (1929), op. cit., p. XXXVI.

by various signs of 'grace' during prayer.[79] In such a state of ecstasy, "a fervent heat burns in the heart and unspeakable joy arises in the soul. Further sweet tears moisten the cheeks; spiritual exaltation makes the mind drunk; inexplainable consolations are received by the soul; hope supports the heart and strengthens it. Then it is to him as if he dwelled in heaven"[80] At this stage, paradoxically, man passed beyond prayer.

With illumination, "there arises in him that sweetness of God and the flame of His love which burns in they heart".[81] Whilst F.C. Burkitt disparagingly described this acme as a "perpetual crescendo of self-induced emotion", man returned to the original Paradise of God's love, garbed in humility.[82] There he ate the heavenly bread for the vision of God's love was seen as the continual Eucharist. But, participation in this union was a rare achievement, with only one man in, 10,000 being deemed worthy of receiving spiritual prayer and hence, of realising God's love.

Whilst the Mystic Treatises incorporated the theologies of both the Mesallian and Origenist traditions, its widespread distribution was undoubtedly engendered by its non-sectarianism.[83] Rather than being a theological synthesis, the Mystic Treatises was essentially a practical guide to attain God's love. And whilst it was a product of the ascetic-mystic stream of the Nestorian Church, the Mystic Treatises was stamped by the personal experience of Isaac of Nineveh. Each of these three factors contributed to the influence of the Mystic Treatises on Sufic writings.

No more is the legacy of Isaac of Nineveh recognised, than in the writings of Gregory Bar Hebraeus, otherwise known as Gregory Abu'l Faraj. This outstanding Monophysite literary figure of A.D. 13C, combined the mysticism of Isaac of Nineveh and the philosophy of al-Ghazali in The Book

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[79] Brock, op. cit., p. 83, quotes several passages illustrating the signs of 'grace' that occur during prayer.
[80] Wensinck, (1929), op. cit., p. 372.
[81] Ibid., p. 226.
[82] F. C. Burkitt, 'Isaac of Nineveh', Journal of Theological Studies, 26 (1925), p. 82.
[83] Brock, op. cit., pp. 80-81 briefly discusses the two traditions and mentions the writers who were subsequently influenced. For a more detailed study of the influence of Origenism on Syriac mysticism see G. Widengren, 'Researches in Syrian Mysticism: Mystical Experiences and Spiritual Exercises, Numen, VIII (1961), pp. 161−198.

of the Dove and The Ethikon.[84] In these two works, Bar Hebraeus acknowledged the mutuality of the Nestorian mystics of Persia and the Sufis. And also, the dominance of Isaac of Nineveh whose influence, spanning half a millennium, linked Muslim mysticism with the Christian expression.

[84] A. J. Wensinck, The Book of the Dove, Leydon, 1919. The Ethikon was edited by P. Bedjan, Leipzig, 1898.

CHRISTIAN MYSTICAL TRADITION

REVD. PETER BERRY

Dear Mr. President and Your Excellency!

With all the cognoscenti present here, I am very conscious today of being surrounded by great learned people. And after the magisterial address by Dr. Mohammed Ajmal − really, in one sense, silence is in order and not a lot of talk. And I think it would be a great Sufi insight to say now that we should have silence for an hour or two − or three - or four (laughter).

I wish, if I may, as Provost of the Cathedral, and now that I work in Birmingham, to pay tribute to Iqbal Academy and to wish it well and all its tremendously important work in Birmingham. I have been associated with it in Coventry for some years, and have been delighted always that the Cathedral at Coventry should be the centre and office and library of the Iqbal Academy. And I am delighted to see it on the notepaper which you have all received.

I wish to add just one or two points, if I may. I am pleased that the choice of the subject is about mysticism, but I wonder if you do share this − we have not had speakers yet who would say that both in orthodox Islam and within the Christian tradition, mysticism has always been unorthodox and difficult, and unacceptable to many people, because it has been misunderstood. And I think that it is very important that we understand it, particularly in our Islamic traditions and in our Christian, Western Christian, traditions.

I would want to move into a situation where we regard all theology as mystical theology and all life as mystical; and that we ought not to allow the words mystical and mysticism to be separated and put to one side as though it was something different and special in every human person's experience. We are all on that via mystica, if you like; we are all caught up in whatever mysticism is − it is, if you like, a pilgrimage to God.

Last year I spent a month in Abu-Dhabi, and Dubai and Sharja, and at the oasis, the Burami oasis, in the Sultanate of Oman. And for the first time

in my life I experienced something of the desert, something of the mystical life that I read about and share with Muslim friends. It does seem to me, as an earlier speaker from Cambridge has indicated, that there is a very close interlocking of the Christian and Muslim experience. And it does seem to me also that it is centered in the desert as a very special way in which the 7th and 8th centuries AD, or 1st and 2nd centuries of the Hegira, are closely intertwined. And there-fore we must look for the mystery, the experience of mysticism, which, I think, Iqbal of Lahore was experimenting within his own enormously pantechnicon mind.

He was looking also for the sutures that bind the experiences of different religions and communities together. The suture − I just thought of that word − comes from the medical world. The sutures are those special things that bind us together. It seems to me that the work of Iqbal Academy, and all that we are doing today, is to bind us together and not to separate us. It is the work of the devil, the diabolos, to divide. Satan divides the world; it is God who unites it. And it seems to me that one of the marks of our work in the Iqbal Academy is to look for sutures and things that hold us together.

I would like to suggest that through our work today, it has already come through the experiences of the sermons and addresses given to us, that we explore more deeply the spiritual, the life of the spirit: the life that, in Islamic theology, is روح and Nafs two levels of the spirit in Islamic theology; the life of the spirit in the great tradition of Ruach of the Hebrew tradition; the life of the Sanctus Spiritus in the Christian theology. It seems to be a very important part of exploration, and we should share it.

But if I may just say one last word, about the abiding influence of the Islamic mystical tradition on the Christian tradition,

I think I would use perhaps that marvellous word − Tauhid (توحيد i.e. Unity) − and say that one of the extraordinary developments within Islamic mysticism is the wrestling with the question of God, Allah, who is truly within himself and yet Creator, and yet relating to His world; and the constant awareness of the difficulty of talking about a relationship − what is the relationship between Allah and us? − And search that relation-ship. It seems to be a pilgrimage, or Hajj, or an exploration of all relationships. It is at the heart of all mysticism. And there are two words which mean a great

deal to me in my own search, in my own Hajj for truth. And those two words are kabd قبض and bast بسط. It seems to me they are the essence of spirituality, because they are related to universals. Kabd means contracting of our life and soul and spirit; and bast, an expansion. And because they are related to deep human experiences of fear, kabd; and love, bast.

And it does seem to me that if we are to explore together, as Christians and as Muslims, together as creatures of Allah or God, then we have to explore how to move from the kabd, fear, of each other or a hostile world, towards that wide expansion of life that is, I think, the theme of our conference and of the other papers that we shall have this afternoon. But I wish to thank you for asking me to just say a word. And also to say how deeply important it is that the Iqbal Academy, perhaps more than any other institution, enables, in this special way, this creation of a garden out of the desert of our relationships: to create a garden of relationship and love and fellowship and friendship between the Muslims and Christians − as a special flower for today (applause).

HENRI BERGSON AND MUHAMMAD IQBAL

A. B. A. BAWHAB

You must pardon my audacity in presuming to say anything of substance about the philosophies of Bergson and Iqbal or their mysticisms or indeed anything conclusive about even the bare essentials of their respective systems in such a brief space and time.

It is, however, a particularly opportune time in which to speak about "irrationalism", "intuitionism" and "emotionalism", when the normative issues of the ordinary man have become so polarized that the language of stark "positivism" and "rational factualism" alone hardly make sense in any dialogue, and when the exigencies of moral situations are forcing re-integration of "facts" and "values", and one hears more and more about such topics as: "The Enforcement of Morals", "Law, Morality and Religion in a Secular Society" and "Freedom and Reason".[85]

The apparent signs of re-orientation of philosophical outlook generally along with the quest of:

"An intelligible rationale for a transcendent alternative to the secular reduction of reality",[86]

Is one such manifestation of the concerns now engaging the philosophers and theologians alike? It is here argued that a philosophy concerned with the treatment of man's complex-being cannot disregard successive dimensions of human adjustment: biological, psychological and ideal or transcendent. It is this comprehensive way of developing philosophy which aims at resolving

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[85] i. Patrick (Lord) Devlin: The Enforcement of Morals, Oxford University Press, 1965.

ii. Basil Mitchell: Law, Morality and Religion, Oxford University Press, 1970.

iii. R. M. Hare. Freedom and Reason. Oxford University Press, 1978.

[86] Carl F. H. Henry: The New Consciousness, Christianity Today, October 8, 1971.

man's discord within himself and the polarity of his principles, laws and imperatives on the one hand and − to use Hegelian language:

"Reaches out for divinity to see God, to enter God's being and to link the objective and subjective experiences of God in the consummate experience of high philosophy",[87]

− On the other, that makes Bergson and Iqbal supremely relevant to the present. It is a remarkable coincidence that the two highly individual thinkers, separated by nationality, cultural back-ground, religious commitment and temperaments, evolved parallel systems which bear so many analogies that despite the divides of place and socio-political milieu their thoughts seem to lead into each other and create a sense of inter-relatedness. They reflect each other's thoughts, and have all the affinities of a family − they are a family of a very long tradition. We recognise the similarities of their thoughts through the content of common themes and their common concerns, yet cannot fail to recognise their individualities.

The present study seeks to identify be comparative exposition of only such common themes as are central to their respective systems. What is and is not central in their philosophies may well be a matter of opinion, but there can be no disagreement about one thing: that their message was a call to mobilise man-kind − to use Bishop Cragg's expression − towards "Godward-liness". It is new and relevant because it is expressed in the modern idiom, it is daring too in a sense, because it was expressed at a time which can rightly be regarded as "the high noon" of materialism, when the mere mention of God was no less than a "Polynesian taboo."

What is intended here is fairly simple and moderately ambitious, in that it is neither evaluative, nor contrastive, nor yet an advocacy of one against the other − but rather an attempt to juxtapose the two equally influential metaphysicians of this century, who attempted to see the reality from two different angles and claimed to have reached the same conclusion. Of course they have different ways of expressing the nature of their respective experiences, but the idiom they use is free from linguistic limitations. They

[87] Frederick G. Weiss: Hegel: The Essential Writings, Harper & Row, 1974.

transcended the barriers of linguistic formalities, which do no more than impose limitations on human thought.

By subjugating intellect to intuition, they inform us of the possibilities of human reach. It is only by complete abandonment of logico-lingual framework, that we begin to appreciate the validity of their otherwise irrational, irreconcilable and non-experiential formulations, and only then every thing they say makes sense.

Their talk of "evolution", ascent of man Me'raaj, freedom and will, compatibility of human Ego with the Divine Will − all fall into a pattern. Their's is the philosophy of "intuition" and "instinct", of "vital-impetus" and "gnostic impulse". A chapter in the large book of mysticism, Al-Kitab-al-Hikma-al Khalida − the philosophae perennis. In fact, without being offensive to partisan feelings, we can say santa-Dharma − a term used by Syyed Hossain Nasr to express the universality of all such traditions.

In his introduction to the "Essential Writings of Hegel", Professor Frederick G. Weiss wrote:

> "His philosophy itself is a spiritual bath, a baptism which ravishes everything in its path, and leaves nothing on earth or in heavens untouched."[88]

I think we can very well say the same about the philosophies of Bergson and Iqbal. For, after all, in some qualified sense at least, these men were no less "God intoxicated" than Hegel himself, who said:

> "Philosophy has the last word on what is; and though it speaks a different language than art and religion, it relates the same message and describes the same content. That content is Truth, in that supreme sense in which God and God only is the Truth."[89]

Without classifying as such, we name them "irrationalists", which is not, however, an imputation of stigma in general terms. For such ascriptions need be applied with more caution and reservations in case of Iqbal and Bergson:

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[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.

It is perhaps due to the lack of any appropriate alternative that they are so labelled; but the fact is that their commitment to "irrationalism" is neither full-blooded "anti-rationalism" nor is it "anti-Scientism", although critical of "intellectualism", they never lost sympathy for intellect as such, and fervently leaning towards" "pure-mysticism", or more precisely, expounding their own brand of mysticism, and occasionally flirting in the twilight zones of "esotericism" and "romanticism", they claimed superiority of intuition over the intellect. It is the variety of their antagonisms that betrays their multifaceted propensities; but their positive doctrines remained essentially "evaluative'. Iqbal's main work The Secrets of the Self and the Mysteries of the Un-self, undeniably a master-piece in its class and the quintessence of his philosophical thought, is built up around the Quranic normative framework, in which Iqbal provides hermeneutical framework by allusion to various key concepts as well as an exegesis of such Quranic themes as are foundational to the training of khalifat-ullah − divinely created agency in the universe.

The prophet's person is a paradigm of the best make of em-bodied manhood Ahsana Taqweem and exemplar par excellence − swatal Hasana. Hence he seeks the closest proximity to the - person of the prophet by imitative adherence to the prophet's way and discovers the possibilities of emulation. It is the unfolding of this secret, discovered by him, that makes up his "philosophy of the self".

Likewise, Bergson's The two Sources of Morality and Religion, a classic work on most delicate yet most neglected concerns of human life, is an exposition, in a most lucid style, of his socio-philosophical thought, in which he provides an account of his deep concern for humanity, and unlike Albert Schweitzer's "Reverence for Life", breaks the confines of sectarian framework.

For Iqbal "freedom of Ego" is imperfect in proportion to its proximity to the most free, i.e. God. "He who comes nearest to God" says Iqbal, "is the completest person." By mastering the world of matter, the Ego absorbs God, not the other way round. "All life is individual; God himself is an individual "It is at this juncture that Iqbal parts company with Ibn 'Arabi, as with Berg-son.

For Bergson communion with Reality is impossibility, for the "vital impetus" is free from anticipations, predictions and destiny.

Iqbal equates his experiences with the higher form of consciousness, which in the case of prophets is Wahy; but he uses the word free from theological connotations. This experience is avail-able to every being, but its best expression is found only in the human being. An innate potential, with an urge to express itself, is always in the state of tension to prevail over the forces of obstruction − in Bergsonian framework this would be termed as the upsurge of the free will of the soul, faced with the downward pull by the matter. A similar dichotomous theme runs through Iqbal's dialectical formulations: Khair virtue opposed by Sharr vice.

Iqbal admits of the potential of human intellect but would not rely on its unguided explorations, which led many a seeker astray.

Although Iqbal disagreed with Bradley in many ways, Bradley's trained instinct is no different than Iqbal's disciplined Ego.

"Metaphysics" said Bradley" is simply a matter of finding bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct; but finding those reasons is no less an instinct."

Iqbal would say:

"Approach the chosen one; for he is the Way, Should you fail in this, you will only be groping in dark! (Translation)

به مصطفے برساں خویش را کہ دیں ہمہ اوست
اگر بہ اونر سیدی، تمام بو لہبی است

'For Bergson, the "vital impetus" does not require training or guidance. It is purely instinctive and expresses itself when faced by the urges.

For example, as Bertrand Russel understood it:

> "a vague desire in sightless animals to be able to be aware of objects before they came in contact with them, led to efforts which finally created eyes."[90]

So, once the desire grows and intensifies, it finds ways of satisfying itself. But, how a particular desire emanates and in what direction it is to be guided is no concern of Bergson. Iqbal found this answer in the "Endowed-guidance". Seen in this way, guidance (Hidayah) is not "'restraining-normative", but rather a means of actualising the possibilities −not a burden of obligations rather the means of survival.

To exploit these means is no credit to man, because they are there; to ignore them is a misfortune, a discredit and Jahl (ignorance). It is this awareness that humbles man, even at the highest level of his career - a theme not so unfamiliar in other traditions. In Job: (40:2), for instance we read:

"Is it for a man, who disputes with the Almighty to be stub-born? Should he that argues with God answers back?"

So, when Kierkegaard came to expound a believer's existentialism, he exploited this theme to the fullest: and repeatedly re-minded himself of:

"Edification implied in the thought that as against God we are always in the wrong."[91]

For Iqbal "Evolution" is a far more structured activity than a mere notion of haphazard growth, as it seemed to the "Darwinian-evolutionists", the evolutionists' account, he felt, may well have adequately captured the way in which the origin of species is traced, but surely it had missed the teleological point of explaining this activity.

He would affirm the Spencerian account insofar as it bears out the historicity of "Social − Darwinism", but found no account more appealing or satisfactory than Rumi's; as he put it:

"Rumi's tremendous enthusiasm for the biological future of man."

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[90] Kulliyat-e-Iqbal (Urdu), p. 421.
[91] Bertrand Russell: "History of Western Philosophy", Unwin University Books, 1975.

For Bergson, living is a primordial function, and life as such a process, an undivided cosmic movement of which we are "expressions" rather than "parts". The elan vital or the vital impetus is the prime mover and has ascendancy over mind and matter. Bergson's philosophy has too many novel doctrines to be characterized by any one in particular; it has been described by some as the "poetry of time". Iqbal's is unmistakably the ex-position of Self/Ego.

Their respective systems afford alternatives to Newtonian mechanical world view: in the case of Bergson elan vital, and anti-Hegelian Wiltanschauung in the case of Iqbal.

They both seek to explain "evolution", and "creation". For Bergson creative impulse is free from foresight and unpredictable. In Bergsonian system there is no room for teleological explication of "universe". Iqbal would not go so far as to refute every argument for purposefulness. He would divide the perspective into long-term and short-term objects.

Creation, for Iqbal, is a mere expression of Divine scheme, which is in the process of perpetual un-folding. Universe is not therefore a completed product. It is growing. It is purposive only insofar as it is selective in character. Man is not helpless in this scheme. He plays a role in moulding the course of creative energy to his own benefit. Fate and destiny are the knowledge of possibilities preserved in the Divine Memory. The following passage from "Revelation of Religious Experience" sums up Iqbal's teleology:

"…To endow the world process with purpose …is to rob it of its originality and its creative character. Its ends are terminations of a career; they are ends to come and not necessarily predetermined. A time process cannot be conceived as a line already drawn. It is a line in the drawing, an actualisation of open possibilities… nothing is more alien to the Quranic outlook than the idea that the universe is the temporal working-out of a preconceived plan."[92]

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[92] Soren Kierkegaard (Translated: Walter Lowrie) "Either/Or 11", Princeton University Press, 1974.

Of course in this, as in all other cases, having preferred his conceptualized formulations, Iqbal presents the authority of Qur'an. If this be Qur'anic, one might be tempted to ask, what then is original in Iqbal? To this it must be replied, that the intuitive apprehension of the revealed truths is itself revelatory, and revelation is the only thing original there is. Bergson and Iqbal were contemporaries, although Bergson was born before and died after Iqbal. Bergson lived long enough to see the rise and fall of his irrationalism as tried by Sorel and Mussolini.

Iqbal on the other hand died too soon to see his dream come true. They both came from migrant families: Bergson from Polish and Iqbal from Kashmiri. Bergson, though French by birth, was of Anglo-Polish descent; his mother was an English lady. Iqbal descended from a Kashmiri Brahmin stock. Bergson started his career as a diplomat, but later became an academic and remained so till the end. Iqbal started as an academic but later took to the legal profession and spent most of his life in retirement, writing poetry and campaigning against colonialism.

Bergson was a winner of Nobel Prize. Bergson wrote in French and occasionally lectured in English. Iqbal wrote and lectured both in English and in Urdu and was equally at ease with the Arabic, Persian, Sanskirt and German. Punjabi came as an unwanted legacy and Hindi as an extra bonus. They both came from orthodox religious families, Jewish and Muslim. Bergson preached morality without naming religion, and Iqbal preached religious morality. They are both equally widely translated writers of this century; although Bergson's works in Oriental languages are a rarity, yet thanks to the universality of English language, Bergson is accessible throughout the world. Some of Bergson's translations, particularly the "Two Sources of Morality", were approved by Bergson himself.

The only work of Iqbal translated into English during his life-time: "The Secrets of the Self," which was published with Iqbal's own interpretation of the philosophy of the "Self", came out rather in haste, and reflects all that goes with haste in matters of delicate exactitude:

Although they were both averse to the appellation Platonist, the perennial pietism disclosed by their systems has much in common with the

philosophy of forms and ideas, rather than with Aristotelian "Tabula Rasa" or in plain English empty-headedness.

Besides, we cannot deny the profundity of Professor J. A. Notopoulos's statement:

"It is perfectly possible to be a Platonist without knowing it, just as it is possible to think oneself a Platonist without actually being one. "[93]

Of course one does not immediately associate these men with Platonism, but their epistemological quest to extend the range of human knowledge beyond reasoning and phenomena is essentially opposed to empiricism and sensationalism, and aligns them with Plato. Their conviction that reality lay beneath the surface and that the eternal mysteries were to be grasped by intuition only, undeniably bear the Platonic stamp, however faint it may be. But they reduced these notions to an existential level by turning them into practical reason or regulative truths. Iqbal learned this technique from Rumi, who taught him:

علم را برتن زنی مار سے بود
علم را بر دل زنی یار ے بود

Knowledge in pursuit of lower desires is (destructive) like a snake

Knowledge in pursuit of higher desires is a worthy gain. (My translation)

اگر یک سر موئے برتر پرم
فروغ تجلی بسوز د پرم

As the brief time graciously allocated to me comes to an end, I am constrained to exclaim, with the 'Sheikh', in ecstasy:

Should I transgress by a hair's breadth,

I will have my wings burnt to ashes! (my translation)[94]

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[93] Muhammad Iqbal: "The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam", Sh. M. Ashraf, Lahore, 1975.

IQBAL AND INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

CHRISTOPHER LAMB

I want to speak this afternoon about what we might call the Sunna of Iqbal, for I believe we need at this stage of our consideration of Iqbal to return from mysticism to a prophetic faith which can guide us in our daily problems and situations. My own work faces me continually with the practical issues of community relations, and I need to be fed by a vision of society. Can the Sunna of Iqbal provide us with just such a vision? There is much that might be said about the relevance of Iqbal to contemporary interfaith relations, almost fifty years after his death. We cannot pretend that he foresaw the present pluralist societies of Western Europe, or would even necessarily have approved of them. But we can draw from his own vision of the nature of Islam to help us construct a vision of a society which enables people to put God first, and for that to be recognised as the proper aim of human living.

There is a passage in Iqbal's Reconstruction of,Religious Thought in Islam, which although it speaks to the situation of his own Islamic times, carries a message for all of us, not only Muslims, today.

"For the present every Muslim nation must sink into her own deeper self, temporarily focus her vision on herself, until all are strong and powerful to form a living family of republics. A true and living unity … is truly manifested in a multiplicity of free independent units whose racial rivalries are adjusted and harmonised by the unifying bond of a common spiritual aspiration. It seems to me that God is slowly bringing home to us that the truth is neither Nationalism nor Imperialism but a League of Nations which recognises artificial boundaries and racial distinctions for facility of reference only, and not for restricting the social horizon of its members."[95]

Iqbal saw Islam as a faith which did not recognise national and racial distinctions except as convenient markers to refer to people and for them to

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[94] Quoted by David Newsome: "Two Classes of Men: Patonisin and English Romantic Thought", John Murray, 1974.

[95] Iqbal, Sir Mohammad, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p. 159.

identify themselves by; but for him the real distinctions were quite other. He made the same point more poetically in verse:

"Our Essence is not bound to any Place;

The vigour of our wine is not contained

In any bowl; Chinese and Indian

Alike the sherd that constitutes our jar, Turkish and Syrian alike the clay

Forming our body; neither is our heart Of India, or Syria, or Rum,

Nor any fatherland do we profess.

Except Islam."[96]

I find in this thought of Iqbal a vital release from the restrictions of majority and minority consciousness. Iqbal is not concerned with majorities and minorities, and I believe he would not have approved of the term that we so often use, 'ethnic minorities' We are in fact all minorities of one sort and another, and the point is rather 'to leap from shallowness', and the kind of thinking which finds all-important distinctions in culture and race. Things which really matter are rather faith and a vision for society. As Christians and as Muslims we will differ as to how we envisage that society, but for both of us ther is a 'leap from shallowness' to be made, which Iqbal identifies with the Hijra, or Prophetic migration from Mecca to Medina. We cannot remain content with the situation which we inherit or the customs which we found our forefathers observing, as the Qur'an again and again insists.

In constructing a society in which different communities live harmoniously and creatively with one another, we have enormous problems, unique perhaps to our times. We can only solve them by seeking refuge in God and by looking for what Iqbal called 'the kingdom of the poor'. The poor in his eyes were not those, necessarily, who were literally impecunious, but rather those who knew their only help to be in God, and we in the same way look for a society which can put God first. As Iqbal said 'the whole world is a

[96] Iqbal, Sir Mohammad, Rumuz-i-Bekhudi, Trans. Arberry, p. 29

mosque, a place of prostration and submission to the Lord'. That is the profoundest sense in which we are 'world citizens'.

CLOSING ADDRESS

H. E. MR. SHAHARYAR M. KHAN

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Mr. Chairman, distinguished guests

I am greatly honoured to be present here with you tonight, partly because of the reasons that my dear friend, Saeed Durrani, has just mentioned, but also because I feel that the Iqbal Academy (UK) has really produced a wonderful seminar today.

I must tell you of my association with the Iqbal Academy. It was, in its early years when I was here last, that I became associated with it. And I recall, very clearly, the day I drove up with Iqbal's son, Javid. I drove him from North London to Coventry Cathedral, where the function took place, and where Javid made a beautiful address, recalling his father's poetry, his philosophy, his thoughts.

I am very grateful, Mr. Chairman, that you have recalled this association which Allamah Iqbal had with my family; and I can assure you that my own association with his family continues, and my own association with Iqbal and all that he stood for stands as deeply committed as that of my forebears. But I want, first of all, to thank all the very distinguished office-bearers of the Iqbal Academy for having organised this wonderful seminar today.

I want to thank particularly my dear friend, Saeed Durrani, whom I have known for nearly 40 years, since we were both students at Cambridge. And he was as mad and dedicated about Iqbal then as he is today [Clapping].

I want also to tell you that he has recently written a book on Iqbal. He's too modest to mention it, but I can tell you that (although I haven't as yet read it, but have only glimpsed it) that he has produced a great deal of research. He has shown Iqbal's life and thoughts and ideas in a European light, and I am sure that those of you who have the time will gain a great deal by reading Saeed's book.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am not a scholar of Iqbal; and I will not even attempt to make a speech which in any way would denegrate from the exalted standards that we have seen from the speakers earlier today. I don't say this merely out of form, but I am sure that I echo and reflect the sentiments of all of you here when I tell you that the speeches by the very distinguished speakers today have really been outstanding. And I request Saeed Durrani if he could, please, let me have a compendium of these speeches, which I will have the honour to send back to Pakistan, to let readers in Pakistan know how much and how deep, how erudite and sophisticated research on Iqbal is in this country. I am quite sure that our people will greatly benefit by the thoughts and by the ideas that have been stated today in these speeches.

My own brief statement, ladies and gentlemen, will reflect one theme that has been, if I may call it, the basic undercurrent of today's ideas and thoughts. It really concerns Iqbal's message and Iqbal's attitudes. As I said, I am not a scholar of Iqbal or his work − greater men have been able to put these ideas and thoughts before you. But what I am aware of is that Iqbal has conceptualised the very entity of Pakistan, and Iqbal has conceptualised the ethos of what we understand to be Pakistan today.

Now' these are the vital roots for Pakistan and the Pakistani people, and rightly Iqbal has been elevated to a status far beyond anyone else's, perhaps with the exception of Quaid-e-Azam, Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Now here is his rightful place in our society. But this is where I think we must tread carefully, be-cause we in Pakistan − when we elevate people to a status like that − tend to allow reverence and that state of virtuous saint-hood, to prevent us from actually understanding and rationalizing what the man said. We make him into a demigod, a saint, and we say it and we take his word as the final authority and we turn it into a certainty. I was extremely moved by the speakers who earlier today said that the need for us in Pakistan is the need to understand what Iqbal said. And the way to understand, the way to knowledge, is to question; and as the speaker − the main speaker [Dr. Muhammad Ajmal] − said, seek knowledge through doubt, not through faith, because faith is blind.

Doubt creates that questioning that leads you to rationalisation; and in a 'very crude way I am trying to say, in a few words, what Dr. David Kerr has

brilliantly articulated in his speech. I was deeply moved by what he said, because if you or I had arrived at belief through rationalisation, it is far deeper, far profounder, than it you arrived there through blind faith.

And this is what Iqbal is asking you to do.

Credit, the Prophet, with the idea that we can rationalise Islam, and that we can arrive there and project Islam in a totally rational manner. But if we do it simply through blind belief, we are doing a dis-service to Islam and a dis-service to Him We must try and understand; we must try and open up our minds: we must ask questions; we must raise that issue of doubt to be able to understand.

I think today's message is a very profound one and a very deep one, because Iqbal has asked us to search for God's message. He has asked us to rationalise what one means by one, what is religion, what is statehood, what is the meaning of life? All these searchings are something that Iqbal's message carries forth. Dr. David Kerr just mentioned an example of what Abu Jahl felt about Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him). He raised certain questions and doubts and criticisms; would this not be true of apartheid today? Would this not be true of racism today? Would this not be true of the great spiritual movements that take place in the world today against oppression, against colonialism, against racism?

This is the message of Islam. It has been badly misunderstood; it has been wrongly projected. It is for us, and I come to my concluding point that I want to make: we, and when I say we I mean we in Pakistan and those of us who understand Islam and its relevance, it is incumbent on us to project Islam in its true face; it is incumbent on us to lead the way, to show the path. And in order to do so, I come back to my original thought; we have to understand what we are; and I think the role the Iqbal Academy is playing today, and has played, is vital; and I for one am deeply impressed, deeply honoured to be here. And I say in conclusion: Let this be the message to the youth, and the young because they are the new generation, growing up by the help of Pakistani parents, who want to know, who want to understand. And let Iqbal's message be the pathfinder: let it be the beacon in the darkness so that they can search for themselves, and then throw light for the rest of the world.

I thank you very much.