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PHILOSOPHY AND LIFE

(Its contribution to mental health)

DR. NAZIR QAISER

As 'Life' is a very wide term, I have specified it in order to become more precise. I have concentrated in my article on mental life which forms an integral part of human personality. Hence my sub title: *'Philosophy and its contribution to mental health'*.

The word philosophy comes from the Greek words *'philein'* which means love, and *'Sophia'* means wisdom. "Philosophy has been both the seeking of wisdom and the wisdom sought."¹ Philosophy takes view of life and the universe as a whole as compared to other branches of knowledge such as biology, chemistry, physics which are sectional studies of reality from different angles. C.E.M. Joad rightly says that philosophy "takes into account all branches and aspects of human knowledge and experience. The inspiration of the artist, the vision of the mystic, the social urge of the reformer, the emotions of the lover, and the moral intuitions of the plain, man, all are grist to the philosopher's mill. He must also take into consideration the conclusions and discoveries of the scientist."²

It makes reasoned inquiry into and clarifies concepts to solve problems. To Ighal, "The spirit of philosophy is one of free inquiry. It suspects all authority. Its function is to trace the uncritical assumptions of human thought to their hiding places, and in this pursuit it may finally end in denial or a frank admission of the incapacity of pure reason to reach the ultimate reality."³

As such philosophy is very important in all the fields of Art and Science. But, to my mind, it has tremendous importance in building personality. Harold H. Titus pointedly says, "The life of a person who is matured

¹ D.D. Runes, Dictionary of Philosophy.

² C.E.M. Joad, Guide to Modern Thought, p. 16.

³ Iqbal, Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p.1.

mentally is integrated around a philosophy of life"⁴ philosophy sets ends and purposes which, as Iqbal says, "form the warp and woof of conscious experience.... In fact, they constitute the forward push of our life, and thus, in a way anticipate and influence the states that are yet to be. To be determined by an end is to be determined by what ought to be."⁵ Again, philosophy gives us values. Jacques Maritain justly observes that "men do not live only by bread, vitamins, and technological discoveries. They live by values and realities which are above time and are worth knowing for their own sake."⁶ Next, philosophy helps man construct his beliefs with due deliberation and analysis which are the integral part of personality. According to Hugh Stevenson Tigner, "This capacity to believe is the most significant and fundamental human faculty, and the most important thing about a man is what he believes, in the depth of his being. This is the thing that makes him what he is; the thing that organises him and feeds him; the thing that keeps him going in the face of untoward circumstances; the thing that gives him resistance and drive. Let neutrality, confusion, indifference or skepticism enter this inner glance, and the very springs of life will cease to flow. Men will quit, lose heart, yield, give up, become bitter or cynical, become sunk in bleakness or emptiness, commit suicide, turn to criminality or retreat into a realm of phantasy." Further, philosophy constructs normal behavior by creating realistic attitude toward life. Normal life makes man live in the actual world. He does not live in a world of unreality or wishful thinking. He being develops balanced interpersonal relations with other human being. Harold H. Titus⁷ expressly says, "A realistic attitude toward one's personal problems, toward one's relationship with other people and. toward the world is a condition of mental health."⁸

Here it appears necessary to mention that philosophy and religion are not poles asunder. Iqbal clarifies the position thus, "In its deeper movement, however, thought is capable of reaching an immanent Infinite in - whose self-unfolding movement the various finite concepts are merely moments."⁹

⁴ Harold H. Titus, *Ethics For Today*, p. 239.

⁵ Iqbal, *op.*, *cit.*, p. 53.

⁶ Jacques Maritain, *On the Use of Philosophy*, pp. 6-7.

⁷ Hugh Stevenson Tigner, *No Sign Shall Be Given* (New York).

⁸ Harold H. Titus, *Ethics for Today*, p. 239.

⁹ Iqbal, *op.*, *cit.*, p.6.

To Dr. Mohammad Maruf this is the place where thought and intuition become identical.¹⁰ "Iqbal, however, openly believes that philosophy and religion are complementary to each other. He says, "They spring up from the same root and complement each other. Both seek visions of the same Reality which reveals itself to them in accordance with their function in life."¹¹

These features of philosophy have great value in the field of psychotherapy. The need of this science or art of psychotherapy is increasingly felt day by day in the light of deplorable plight of the modern man. Fulton. J. Sheen regrets, "The modern man is no longer a unity, but a confused bundle of complexes and nerves. He is so dissociated, so alienated from himself that he sees himself less as a personality than as a battle field where a civil war rages between a thousand and one conflicting loyalties."¹² "He continues to say that even, the educated man has a smattering of uncorrelated bits of information with no unifying philosophy."¹³ To Will Durant, "Without philosophy, without that total vision which unifies purposes and establishes the hierarchy of desires, we fritter away our social heritage in cynical corruption on the one hand, and in revolutionary madness on the other; we abandon in a moment our pacific idealism and plunge into the cooperative suicide of war; we have a hundred thousand politicians, and not a single statesman. We move about the earth with unprecedented speed, but we do not know, and have not thought, where we are going or whether we shall find any happiness there, for our harassed souls. We are being destroyed by our knowledge, which has made us drunk with our powers. And we shall not be saved without wisdom."¹⁴

Thus, to meet the challenge of present day, modern man should take cognizance of the situation in its wholeness, reset his goals, reconstruct his beliefs and values, and reorientate his attitude toward life and the universe. Without this change his plight is bound to change. A.H. Maslow rightly says, "When the Philosophy of Man (his nature, his goals, his potentialities, his

¹⁰ Or. Muhammad Maruf, Iqbal's Philosophy of Religion, p. 194.

¹¹ Iqbal, op., cit., p. 2-3.

¹² Fulton J. Sheen, Peace of Soul, p. 7.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Will Durant, The Pleasures of Philosophy, p. xii-xiii).

fulfillment) changes, then everything changes. Not only the philosophy of politics, of economics, of ethics and values, of interpersonal relations and of history itself change, but also the philosophy of education, the theory of how to help men becomes what they can and deeply need to become."¹⁵

Philosophy, however, has tremendous power to contribute toward mental health. It not only carries a great curative value but also an immense preventive appraisal, which psychotherapy has so far deplorably ignored. It is why, regretting the little role played by psychotherapy on its preventive side Abraham Maslow pointedly says, "Psychotherapy is too good to be restricted only to the sick."¹⁶

Preventive Value: The irony of the modern society is that first it creates different complexes, mental troubles, and maladjustments because of different conflicts, frustrations, confused thinkings, lack of meaning in life, wrong attitudes and unhealthy ways of life; and then it comes forward with remedies through psychiatry and psychotherapy. But such remedies do not ensure the real well-being of a person. As 'prevention is better than cure' the importance of preventive measures should duly be realized. To my mind, most of the psychological problems of modern age will not arise if we reconstruct our-selves with sound philosophical assumptions. This will help save human personality from disintegration. For instance, many psychological problems can be removed if love to humanity is given due place in our heart and man creates harmonious relationship with his fellow men. A Reza Arasteh says, and rightly so, In the human situation love is a therapeutic means which prevents neurosis, greed, rivalry, and eliminates jealousy. In fact, true love does not stand in opposition to hate, as is generally thought, but absorbs it."¹⁷

Further, if attitude towards life is changed and Faqr is adopted in true sense many psychological problems, which are the result of our 'gold hunger'

¹⁵ A.H. Maslow, Article: "Some basic propositions of a growth and self-actualization psychology", in *Theories of Personality: Primary Sources and Research*, ed. by Gardner Lindzey/Calvin S. Hall, p. 307.

¹⁶ Erving & Miriam Polster, *Gestalt Therapy Integrated*, p.23.

die before they raise their heads. True Faqr is a way of living which is the result of a particular attitude toward economic and social aspects of life, irrespective of poverty or riches. It is neither segregation from community nor a way to passivity. It is full of struggle and action. It is probably in the context of such views that Raza Rasti limelighted Erich Fromm's remarks about Rumi's thought thus: "The principles that Rumi practised, are viewed by Erich Fromm as a necessary requirement for the development of a healthy and mature character."¹⁸

The value of preventive measures is enhanced to a great extent when we understand that even if one is successfully and easily cured one does not attain developed personality or mature character, because the absence of disease does not ensure such results. This is a fact which is acknowledged by prominent psychotherapists themselves. For instance, Erich Fromm 'does not believe that well-being is the absence of illness, nor does he limit the purpose of psychoanalysis to "the liberation of the human being from his neurotic symptoms, inhibitions and abnormalities of character", as did Freud. Rather, Fromm deduces his concept of well-being from the state of a matured and healthy man, that is, in the presence of joy'.¹⁹

Curative Value: In this respect also the importance of philosophy, due to its emphasis on goals, values, clarification of misconcepts and orientation of mental attitudes, is greatly acknowledge by modern psychotherapists.

To Rollo May, "There is growing recognition of the relationship between mental illness and one's philosophy of life."²⁰ Allport believes that no body can be understood in his entirety by separating himself from his philosophy. He said, "The philosophy, of the person is inseparable from the psychology of the person."²¹ Abraham Maslow, who bases his concept of self actualized person on his philosophy of human nature, believes in the curative values of a philosophy of life. He says, "The state of being without a system or a framework of values, a philosophy of life.... The value-illnesses which result from valuelessness are called, variously anhedonia, enomie, apathy,

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 186.

¹⁹ Referred to by Reza Arasti, Op., cit., p. 177-78.

²⁰ Rollo May, Existential Psychology, p. 63.

²¹ Allport, C.W. Pattern and growth in personality, New York.

amorality, hopelessness, cynicism, etc., and can become somatic illness as well."²²

Again, various movements of psychotherapy cannot do without recognizing the importance of philosophy. For instance, Logotherapy is largely based on philosophical assumptions. Frankl, the father of logotherapy, says about his system: In contrast to many other therapies, however, logotherapy is based on an implicit philosophy of life. More specifically, it is based on three fundamental-assumptions which form a chain of interconnected links: (1) Freedom of Will; (2) Will to Meaning; (3) Meaning of Life."²³ Frankl further says that "psychotherapy can only have an unconditional belief in the meaning of life, every life, if it starts with the right kind of philosophy, if it chooses the right philosophy."²⁴

Even Behaviorism, which was strictly based upon scientific method, has changed its position. Arnold A. Lazarus pointedly remarks, "Because of earlier struggle to gain recognition as a science, many psychologists, particularly of behaviourist orientation, are suspicious of recent efforts by personality theorists to defy strict scientific methodology and reassert the philosophical character of psychology."²⁵ Lazarus further says, "The bulk of therapeutic endeavours may be said to centre around the correction of misconceptions. The people who consult us tend to view innocuous events as extremely noxious, and may disregard objectively noxious situations."²⁶

Besides, the over all impact of philosophy on modern psychotherapy may not be lost sight of. Morris I. Stein openly admits that the philosophical orientations of our time have a great impact upon the contemporary development in psychotherapy. "The papers of Rollo May, Carl Rogers, and

²² A.H. Maslow, Article, op., cit., p. 312.

²³ Viktor E. Frankl, Psychotherapy and Existentialism, p. 2

²⁴ Ibid., p. 130.

²⁵ Barbara Engler, Personality Theories, p. 460.

²⁶ Arnold A. Lazarus, Behaviour-Therapy and Beyond, p. 165.

Otto Will hear the witness of having the philosophical influences of the modern movement of Existentialism. The influences of George Herbert Mead on Otto Will's approach and of transactional theory of Dewey and Bentley on Grinker's thinking are quite obvious."²⁷ It may also be noted that even in the field of medicine its curative value is recognized. Professor Fransworth of Harvard University remarks that, "medicine is now confronted with the task of enlarging its function. Physicians must of necessity indulge in philosophy."²⁸

Even the earlier psychotherapists fully recognized the importance of philosophy. About Freud, for example, Barbara Engler remarks, "Freud acknowledged that philosophy was a goal that had beckoned to him all along, for in later years he suggested that his dalliance with science was a detour on the road to a more ultimate quest: a comprehensive philosophy of humanity. In the final analysis, the criteria that compelled Freud and compel many of his followers are largely philosophical."²⁹ About Jung, Barbara says that he "raised philosophical questions and suggested philosophical answers. To suggest that questions about human nature should be answered empirically is in itself a philosophical position.... For Jung, the fundamental power of self-understanding and cure stem from an appropriate.... philosophy of life."³⁰

To conclude, philosophy has rightly been called love of wisdom. It is undoubtedly true that "good life is also the intelligent life."³¹ Thus the importance of philosophy in the field of psychotherapy is acknowledged widely both for its curative and preventive values. But still philosophy

²⁷ Morris I. Stein, ed. *Contemporary Psychotherapies*, P. 4-5.

²⁸ Fransworth, referred to by Victor E. Frankl, op., cit., p-90.

²⁹ Barbara Engler, p. 76.

³⁰ Barbara Engler, op., cit., p. 112.

³¹ Harold Titus, *Ethics For Today*, p. 492.

commands supremacy on psychotherapy because of its preventive value. I believe that philosophy has an inherent potentiality of becoming an independent school of healing. I take the opportunity to point out that it is practiced as such in most of the countries of the world. In the West, many thinkers have since made great strides successfully in this direction. During my stay in Europe and U.S.A., I met the upholders of such schools and discussed elaborately with them the theory and practice of these schools. They call it 'Philosophical Therapy, or 'Metaphysical Healing' or 'Healing by Positive Thinking'. In the East, such thinking is not new. Treatment by sufis, yogis, and other mystics is based on religious philosophy. I visualize that the day is not far off when philosophy will be widely recognized as an independent and one of the most effective schools of healing, besides the various schools of modern psychotherapy.

CONTOURS OF AMBIVALENCE

Iqbal and Ibn 'Arabi:

Historical Perspective

Part II

Muhammad Suheyl Umar

(Continued from the previous issue)

Let us now consider the objections listed earlier. The order of listing has not been observed.

Objection no. 1

This is an oversimplified statement. The sufis do not regard the individual self or the microcosm an illusion in the literal sense. Only God is absolutely real. Everthing else, since it exists, has a reality on its own level. To quote Ibn 'Arabi, “**الرب حقٌ والعبد حقٌ**”³²

Concerning the entities of the cosmos, it is said that they are neither identical with the Real, nor other than the Real. On the contrary wujud is all Real. However, some of what is Real is described as created, and some is described as not created, while all of it is existent.³³ Several other quotations are referred to in the notes.³⁴

³² This statement is found in four of his works; Mawaqi' al-Nujum. Al-Tanazzulat al-Musiliyyah, Kitab al-Masai'l and on the first page of Futuhat, see M.M.al-Ghurab, al-Rad'ala Ibn Taimiyyah, p.10 as well as Sharh Kalimat al-Sufiyah, p.367. Both the works have been published in a single volume from Damascus, Dar-al-fikr, 1981. see also S.H.M. Anwar, "Shaikh-i-Akbar our Iqbal" op.cit.p.153,154;

³³ See Futuhat. (Bulaq) Chap.III,p.419.34.

³⁴ See Futuhat, II 248.24; II 587.32; II 56.3; II 484.32: See S.H.M. Anwar op.cit.p.153, which runs as follows;"

Ibn 'Arabi's position on the status of created things, and of human individuality among these, has been summarized as follows:

Things, entities, possible things, loci of manifestation, forms, attributes--- these are all names applied to that which is other than Being, to non-existence. But, "non-existence" does not mean absolute nothingness, since the things---whether as objects of Gods knowledge "before" they are found in the cosmos or as existent entities within the cosmos itself--- possess certain modes of relative existence."³⁵

In his earlier exposition *Fusus*, in a more elliptical manner, he had said, "اوجد الاشياء وهو عينها"³⁶. This is usually interpreted by the critics as the acceptance of identity between the Absolute and the relative or the Creator and the creation. 'Ayn has many meanings in Arabic the common being that of identity. But here Ibn 'Arabi has in mind the other meaning i.e. **مابه القوام** that the existents receive their entification from the Absolute and exist not in themselves but through the Real. Apart from the Absolute they cannot exist.

This presence of the Absolute in the relative and the prefiguration of the relative in the Absolute forms the mystery that has given rise to human responses that have a - striking similarity with one another with out there ever being any historical connection between them. Civilizations as far removed from each other, in time and space, as Islam and Taoism or Islam and the plain Indian religions are unanimous, despite apparent differences, about the essential identity and substantial discontinuity between the principle and its manifestations.³⁷

ان العالم ما هو عين الحق تعالي- اذ لو كان عين الحق تعالي ماصح كون تعالي بديعاً-

See the following quotation from *Futuhat*, II 614.4.

تعال الله ان تحله الوداث او يحلها-

³⁵ See Chittick, op.cit, p.79. See also his chapter on "Ontology".

³⁶ See Faiz, *Mehr-i-Munir*", op.cit.,p.468.

When Ibn 'Arabi speaks about the ephemeral nature of the cosmos and the created things it contains, he is pointing, towards their metaphysical reality and it would be useless to search for a categorical denial of the existential status, within their own realm, for the created entities in his works. In his own words:

As for us [creatures], though we exist, our existence is through him. He whose existence is through other than himself is in effect non-existent.³⁸

It is God Himself who has given the name wujud to the cosmos so how can Ibn 'Arabi ascribe to a view that posits an illusory status for the cosmos and the human self.

Just as God gave the cosmos the name wujud, which belongs to him in reality, so also He gave it the Most Beautiful Names through its preparedness and the fact that it is a locus of manifestation for Him."³⁹.

Objection no. 15 & 6

In this perspective, when we consider the objection no.15, which is perhaps the most worthy of attention, it becomes abundantly clear that Iqbal in principle agrees with what we have said, the misunderstanding having arisen by assimilating pantheism with Wahdat al-Wujud. He is right when he says that "pantheism pertains to philosophy" and seems to support the same doctrine that Ibn 'Arabi upholds when he declares that "The multiplicity that we observe in the world all belongs to the created order though in reality and

³⁷ See Izutsu, T. *Sufism and Taoism*, University of California Press, 1983, which is a comparative study of the key concepts of Ibn 'Arabi and Taoism. See also J.C. Cooper, *Taoism, The Way of the Mystic*, Acquarian Press, U.K.,1972. For the religion of the Red Indians see, F. Schuon, *Language of the Self*, Ganesh, Madras, 1959.Chap.II;Esoterism as Principle and as Way. London 1981. p.21; *Logic and Transcendence*, London 1975,p.152; J.E. Brown, *The Sacred Pipe* Penguin, 1971, rep.1984; also, *Black Elk Speaks*, University of Nebraska Press, 1961.

³⁸ See Futuhat op.cit., I 279.5.

³⁹ Ibid. II 167.32

in essence it may be one."⁴⁰ One wonders as to how does it differ from the positions we have described regarding Ibn 'Arabi?

The orthodox sufis, contrary to what Iqbal has attributed to them here, (in objection 15) have always maintained that Wahdat and Tawhid have a relationship of part and the whole or particular and universal. These are not synonymous terms. On the other hand, multiplicity (Kathrah) is an ontological principle where as association (Shirk) is a "prescriptive Command" (amr taklifi or amr hukmi). To posit multiplicity in Necessary Being is Shirk.

As for Ibn 'Arabi he did not employ the term Wahdat al-Wujud though the idea permeates his work.⁴¹ Before him the idea certainly existed with its roots in the Quran and the Prophetic sayings.⁴² He formulated it in a detailed and elaborate form. In fact, when Ibn 'Arabi himself explains this 'concept.' he provides,

one of the most sophisticated and nuanced expressions of the 'profession of Gods Unity' (tawhid) to be found in Islamic thought. His teachings did not dominate the second half of Islamic intellectual history because people were simple-minded and therefore ready to accept 'pantheism,' in place of tawhid-- quite the contrary. What Ibn 'Arabi provides is an inexhaustible ocean of meditations upon' the Unity of God . and its relationship with the manyiness of all things."⁴³

⁴⁰ Italics my own.

⁴¹ See Chittick, "Rumi and Wahdat al-Wujud", The Hesitage of Rumi, (ed.) A. Banani and B. Sabagh. Cambridge University Press.

⁴² See Lings, M. A Sufi Saint of the 20th Century, ch.V, "Oneness of Being," Suhail Academy, LHR, 1981, p.121: also Lings, "Sufism" in Cambridge History of the Middle East, chap.13; Naqd-i-Iqbal, op.cit.; Zakariyyah op.cit; Chittick, op.cit; Anwar, op.cit; several works of A.A Thanvi, and M.M.al- Ghurab. especially, Sharh Kalimat al-Sufiyyah, Damascus, 1981.

It is evident that Iqbal accepts Ibn 'Arabi's views on these points with the difference that he leaves out the highest level that of the transpersonal and absolutely transcendent Self which is even beyond Being, perhaps for practical purposes. Ibn 'Arabi's doctrine is more comprehensive. A reconciliation could be brought about by taking into consideration the universal doctrine of multiple states or levels of Being.⁴⁴

A Sufi Shaikh, while discussing the objection of Iqbal mentioned above, commented that Iqbal, with a pure intention, misunderstood the issue but refuted it rightly. What we have said in the foregoing pages regarding objection no.15 also covers objection no.6 (see also note 61).

Objection No.2

As for objection no.2 regarding Ibn 'Arabi's interpretation of the Quran, it is now quite well known that Ibn 'Arabi's commentary of the Quran has been lost. The work usually attributed to him is most probably written by A. Razzaq Kashani.⁴⁵ We may understand this statement as pointing towards the Quranic hermeneutics of Ibn 'Arabi. In that case it would be dealt under objection no.14. But still the point regarding his affinity with Shankara is not resolved. Iqbal did not know enough Sanskrit to use the original texts directly and Kunhayya Lal's Urdu translation, if he consulted it, was misleading and substandard.⁴⁶ Edgerton⁴⁷, Radha Krishnan⁴⁸ and R.C. Zaehner⁴⁹ had not yet

⁴³ For details, see Chittick, op.cit., especially his chapter on "ontology".

⁴⁴ See Guenon, R. The Multiple States of Being, Larson, N.York,1984, rep. Suhail Academy, LHR, 1989.

⁴⁵ Abd ar-Razzaq al-Kashani, Tafsir ash-Shaikh al-Akbar, 1867; (Bulaq, Cawnpore, 1883). See also, M.M.al-Ghurab, Sharh Fusus al-Hikam, Damascus, 1985. p.417: and Rahmatu min-al Rahman fi Tafsir wa Isharat al-Qur'an.

⁴⁶ I have myself compared it with Zaehner's translation and transliterated text at various places and found it often wide the mark. An other example of his using erroneous English translations instead of original sanskrit could be seen in the case of Bhartiri Hari's verses for which he followed Prohat Gopi Nath's English rendering. See S.S.M. Rizvi, "Iqbal and Bhartiri Hari", in Iqbal Centenary Papers Lahore,1977,Vol.II,p.19.

⁴⁷ F. Edgerton, Gita, Harward, 1944.

published their English translations. Hill's translation had twelve more years to appear.⁵⁰ Faizi's Persian translation was not reliable in Iqbal's view:⁵¹ he himself wanted to translate Gita; but how, this is still to be resolved. As for Shankara's point of view the readers may consult the masterly exposition of E. Schuon.⁵² The similarity is without historical influences as we have pointed out in the case of Taoism and the Red Indians.

Objection No. 14 & 11

This objection brings us into the arena of a difficult and problematic issue. Hermeneutics or gnostic interpretation of the Quran is a vast subject. Iqbal's objection, on the other hand is not clear enough. If some thing is "logical and sound according to the transmitted knowledge", as he himself gives the margin, what could possibly be the basis of criticism? Perhaps Iqbal is showing a distaste for the use of the symbolic language which included symbols ranging from poetical to the geometrical and mathematical. Ibn 'Arabi uses it to penetrate to the innermost meaning of the sings (ayat) of the Quran as well as of the macrocosm.

Ibn 'Arabi, for the most part, considers ta'wil as interpretation of the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet in a way that will not compromise the principles of rational thought. This, according to him, tantamounts to accepting the supremacy of reason, making it the scale in which every thing else may be weighed. Generally Ibn 'Arabi is critical of ta'wil.⁵³ It weakens

⁴⁸ Radhakrishnan's Gita, Unwin, 1948.

⁴⁹ R.C. Zaehner, The Bhagvad Gita, Oxford, 1969.

⁵⁰ W.D.P. Hill, Gita, Oxford, 1928.

⁵¹ See Iqbal's Letter to K.P. Shad, 11th Oct. 1921, in Iqbal Banam Shad, ed.' Abd Allah Qureshi, Lahore, 1986, p. 257.

⁵² F. Schuon, Esoterism As Principle and as Way. Perennial Books, England, 1981, p.21. Also see, Rene Guenon,; Man and his Becoming According to Vedanta, Luzac,1945; An Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines, Luzac,1944; A.J.Alston(ed.) Samkara on the Absolute; Samkara on the Soul: Samkara on the Creation, Shanti Sadan, London, 1981.

faith,⁵⁴ imprisons one within one's limitations,⁵⁵ misleads in ego's caprice,⁵⁶ offers partial view of reality⁵⁷ etc. According to him, to suggest that God's "real meaning" lies below the surface or has to be found through interpretation is to cast aspersions upon God and amounts to balatant ill manners and discourtesy (Su'al-adab). The literal sense of the text must always be honored. If, after that. God opens up one's understanding to perceive other meanings which preserve the literal sense while adding new knowledge. one accepts the new understanding and thanks God. The requirements of the Law are to be fulfilled before any interpretation is searched and that only through faith, practice and God fearing (taqwa).

His fundamental verdict can be summarized as follows:

"Any knowledge, tasting, insight, witnessing, self disclosure: or what ever that contradicts the literal sense of the Quran and the Hadith must be abandoned. Unveiling (Kashf), like reason must submit itself to the scale of Law".⁵⁸

These observations also cover objection eleven. For details the readers are referred to William Chittick's remarkable work.⁵⁹

Objection No. 12

This objection, though connected with the former, draws our attention towards an other aspect of the issue. There is no question of a separate, secret knowledge transmitted to some of the companions by the Prophet

⁵³ For his definition of ta'wil see Futuhat, II 594.28.

⁵⁴ Ibid. II 660.7.

⁵⁵ Ibid., I 218.21.

⁵⁶ Ibid., III 69.30.

⁵⁷ Ibid., II 523.2.; III 46.27,47.25.

⁵⁸ See next note.

⁵⁹ The Sufi Path of Knowledge, op.cit. chapters.9-15.

which they divulged to their close followers only. Ibn 'Arabi like other Sufi's does not accept such an idea. In fact the basic data of a religion are the same for every one. The difference arises in levels of comprehension and depth of understanding to which the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet often testify.⁶⁰

Objection No. 13

This objection declares followers of wahdat al-wujud to be spiritually affiliated with the batinis or the Qaramitah. This is a criticism that goes completely wide the mark. At present, however, we are concerned with Ibn 'Arabi himself and his followers. How can some body be affiliated to a sect which he disapproves and mentions it always with a certain amount of hostility?⁶¹

Objection No. 17

Here we are presented with an interesting issue that should be taken into consideration by research scholars of Iqbal's original texts. The objection gives us to understand that Iqbal regarded Sufism as an accretion and a foreign importation in Islam. This is a blatant contradiction of what he has said about Sufism at numerous other places and of which we have quoted copiously. The letter published in Iqbal Namah⁶² reads as follows:

"The very phenomenon of Sufism " تصوف کا وجودی

which is given in translation (objection 17). The original letter, preserved in manuscript in Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad (Department of Iqbal Studies), gives the following reading:

⁶⁰ See M. Zakariyya, Shari 'at ur Tariqat ka Talazum, Karachi, 1399 H. Also see F. Schuon who has clarified this point in his numerous works.

⁶¹ Futuhat, I 282.4 [Y 4,280.8]; II 8.19; III 36.15, 138.9. For a discussion of Ibn 'Arabi's kinship with Shi'ism see M. Chodkiewicz, Le Sceau des saints, prophetic et saintete dans la doctrine Ibn'Arabi, Paris, Gallimard, 1986. pp.15,134, 67-68,174.

⁶² See note 42.

The pantheistic Sufism " تصوف وجودی "

The readers can decide for themselves what difference occurs with the slight change of a phrase!

There is an underlying idea in Iqbal's statements and writings which is reflected here as well. He had misgivings about the origins of Sufism in that period though he appreciated its positive contribution. Later, perhaps under Massignon's influence,⁶³ he changed his views. We cannot enter here into a discussion concerning the origins of Sufism. The readers may consult the works given in the notes.⁶⁴

Objection No. 16

This objection is simply inexplicable. It is the only example in all his writings where he has descended very harshly on Ibn 'Arabi and the general tone and content of his statement goes against all his other statements. Moreover it is quite unbecoming of such a civilized man of letters as Iqbal to comment like this, in clear contradiction to his other statements of the same period, and even that in extremely disparaging terms. My leaning is towards giving more weight and importance to the whole body of praise and appreciation statements and to offer a probable explanation for this pejorative and dismissive comment to the research scholars.

Iqbal had quoted and used D.B. Macdonald's works. In his works Macdonald has extensively quoted from Ibn Khaldun, especially his views on sufism (e.g. *The Religious Attitude and life in Islam*, Khayats, Beyrouth, 1965; originally given as Haskell lectures, Chicago, in 1906). Iqbal may have been informed that Ibn Khaldun, in one of his unpublished works, had denounced Ibn 'Arabi and declared his books as 'full

⁶³ See Massignon, *La Passion d 'Al Hallaj*, p.480.

⁶⁴ See M. Lings, "The Origins of Sufism," *A Sufi Saint of the 20th Century*, op.cit. p.34; "Abu Bakr Siraj ad-Din The Origins of Sufism," *Islamic Quarterly*, Vol.III, No.1, p.53; also see by the same author, *What is Sufism*, LHR. 1983, chaps. 1&2; -V. Danner, *Islamic Tradition*, I.I.C, LHR, 1991, chap.IV.; G. Maqdisi, "Ibn Taimiyah: A Sufi of the Qadiriya Order," in *The American Journal of Arabic Studies*, Leiden, 1-1973, p.118.

of heresy and deviation'. The same reprot was reflected in Iqbal's letter though the manuscript appeared in print in 1957 under the title, *Shifa'al-Sa'il li Tahdhib al-Masa'il* (Istanbul, Osman Yalcin Matbasi. p. 110-11). It may also be noted that Ibn Khaldun denounced these works in 'public interest' (*Al-Maslahah al-'ammah*).

Objection Nos. 4 & 15

The objections concerning (Sukr) 'intoxication', that appear in nos.4 and 15 are important since these pertain to the 'method' or the practice of the Sufis. Sukr, in the sense in which Iqbal has used it in these writings, could only mean a self induced in-rush of states; mental, psychic or even physical, that would disturb or stop the normal working of the rational and sense faculties, in order to grasp the pantheistic idea that God is one with the universe and the multiplicity observed in the world is an illusion.

Before turning to Ibn 'Arabi to find his views on the he subject let us consider what do the sufis themself teach about it? After all, they should have the final say on something which is attributed to them as a part of their method. Sufis have never regarded intoxication (Sukr) as an integral or even provisional part of their method. It may occur, as a result of the divine attraction or divine self-disclosures, to the traveller on the Path' but it is never self induced and never used as a means of reaching a spiritual station; Even when one is seized by a state of sukr the ideal is to observe outward sobriety (*sahw*).⁶⁵

As for the wakefulness of the 'heart', an elementary reading of the sufi literature would reveal that the sufis are the foremost to emphasize the requirement to 'polish' the 'heart' and to aspire for a constant wakefulness of the 'heart' through invocation of the divine name and observance of the Law.

The case of the Persian poets regarding intoxication (sukr) is an other issue which may send us at a tangent from our subject. Some aspects of this

⁶⁵ See Lings, *A Sufi Saint of the 20th Century*, op.cit. Moreover we can testify to the fact by our personal experience. Having 'lived' the inner life of four Sufi orders we can say with confidence that it is no where regarded a part of the Sufi practices.

issue would be dealt when we discuss Hafiz and the problem of his influence on the masses.

Ibn 'Arabi has described three types of intoxication, (sukr) namely, natural⁶⁶ (tabi'i), rational ('agli) and the divine (Ilahi)⁶⁷. The latter, which he mentions approvingly, is equated by him to bewilderment (hayrah) which we find in the saying, "O' Lord increase my bewilderment in thee".⁶⁸ More over, on an other place, he mentions that the gnostics are sober either through God or through themselves;⁶⁹ the sobriety (sahw) of the gnostic through God being superior to the other. This statement, apart from establishing the internal hierarchy, also elucidates the point that Ibn 'Arabi regarded sobriety as the ideal state of the soul.

Objection No. 19

This objection, concerning the piety and salvation of Pharoah, refers to the statements that we find in the Fusu-al-Hikam⁷⁰ to this effect. Ibn 'Arabi has advanced several arguments that try to prove the issue. His position on this question, as it appears from the Fusus, is in clear contradiction with the consensus of the Muslim authorities. Leaving aside its metaphysical interpretation, which explains the point in terms of an interplay of polar

⁶⁶ Nature, in the sense Ibn 'Arabi uses the term, includes the corporeal as well as the imaginal worlds since both these world take bodily forms in their own ways; the first is elemental ('unsuri) also apart from being natural. See Chittick, 'The Sufi Path of Knowledge, "Cosmology"; "Death and the world of Imagination", The Muslim World,78,(1988):p.51-82.

⁶⁷ See. Futuhat, 11 544.16.

⁶⁸ رَّبِّ زِدْنِي تَحِيْرًا فَيْدُ. Usually regarded as a prophet saying, it is not found in the standard sources. Ghazali regards it a hadith, see Stead al-Hakim, Al-Mu'jam al-Sufi, Beirut 1981. Also see M.M.al Ghurab, Sharh Kilimat as-Sufiyah, Dar al-Fikr, Damascus, 1981,pp.48, where he has discussed the point with reference to Ibn Taimiyah's criticism.

⁶⁹ See Futuhat,II 547.24.

⁷⁰ See Fusus al-Hikam, Arabic text with Urdu translation with notes and explanations by Zahin Shah Taji, Karachi, 1976, p.66; M.M. al-Ghurab, Sharh Fusus al-Hikam, Damascus, 1985,p.380-419; also see R.W.J. Austin, (Tr.) Ibn al-'Arabi: The Bezels of Wisdom, rep. Lahore, 1988,p.249.

principles of the creative Will and the spiritual Wish of God,⁷¹ we find that even on the plane of textual criticism, the statement in question has given rise to a difference of opinion among the scholars. Sha'rani claimed that he did not find the statement in the manuscript copy he read.⁷² This is the point of view that M.M. Ghurab has also adopted in his studies, especially in his sharh *Fusus al-Hikam* where he has discussed the problem of the authenticity of the text.⁷³ More over, even if we accept the authenticity of the passages in question, Ibn 'Arabi is not unique in his views. Before him Abu Bakr Baqillani, the famous theologian, and a number of other scholars had maintained a similar position.⁷⁴ Lastly, Ibn 'Arabi, in his *Futuhāt*, has enumerated four different abodes of hell. One of these contains the damned who would never escape it. Pharaoh is among the eternally tormented souls.⁷⁵ This is Ibn 'Arabi's final position. Scholars have suggested that either the passages in the *Fusus* were interpolated or, else, he earlier followed Baqillani and then changed his views.

Objection No. 20

"Saints are higher in rank than the prophets", which forms Iqbal's objection no. 20, is perhaps the most often repeated objection against Ibn 'Arabi. Nevertheless, the passage in chapter XIV of the *Fusus* (The Wisdom of Destiny in the Word of Ezra) which contains this statement, is so abundantly clear that anybody reading the Arabic text or a good translation

⁷¹ See Austin, *op.cit* p.250.

⁷² 'Abd al-Wahhab Sha'rani, *Kitab al-Yawaqit wa al-Jawahir*, Cairo, 1305, opening, also, part 51, Vol.II, p.112; c.f. Ashraf 'Ali Thanvi, *Al-Tanbih al-Tarbi fi Tanzih Ibn 'Arabi*, Thana Bahawan, India, 1346h, p.128; Al-Hall al-Aqwam li 'Uqdi *Fusus al-Hikam*, Thana Bahawan, India, 1338h, p.92. Also see Taji, *Fusus al-Hikam*, *op.cit.* p.685.

⁷³ See M.M. al-Ghurab *Sharh Fusus al-Hikam*, *op.cit.*, Introduction and postscript where he has provided useful information regarding the textual criticism of the *Fusus*. In his explanatory notes as well, he has indicated the passages that contradict the doctrines and ideas of the Shaikh al-Akbar.

⁷⁴ See Sha'rani, *op.cit.*

⁷⁵ *Futuhāt*, Chap.62.

cannot miss the real intent of Ibn 'Arabi's words. The passage runs as follows: " if he says that the saint is superior to the prophet and the apostle, he means only that this is so with in one person".⁷⁶ The context leaves no doubt as to what the Shaikh had in mind. Moreover, authorities like 'Izz ud-Din 'Abd as-Salam also uphold his views.⁷⁷ Futuhat also clearly indicates what Ibn Arabi intended to say.⁷⁸ Iqbal seems to have registered the popular view which could not be attributed to the Shaikh al-Akbar.

Objection No. 8

This objection also falls into that category of statements which can not be traced back to Ibn 'Arabi's works. Eternity of the souls of the perfect is a concept that gives rise to many questions. Metaphysically it is a contradiction in terms. When we speak of 'the souls' of the perfect we imply that we are talking of the manifest order and about the principle of individuality. Whereas the realm of eternity transcends the individual order. The unmanifest spirit, which has an 'uncreated' aspect to it, cannot belong to the order of subtle manifestation which is the realm of the individual souls. A gnostic of Ibn 'Arabi's stature and a metaphysician par excellence can not maintain such an idea. It seems that this statement also belongs to those popular views that have been attributed to Ibn 'Arabi. A reference to it is nevertheless, found in Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's letters where he has refused to accept it as authentic and has advised to interpret it in a way as it may not clash with the accepted opinion. "Our Shaikh (Muhammad Baqi billah) used to say that Shaikh Ibn 'Arabi accepted the notion of the oternity of the souls of the perfect".⁷⁹ No further reference is made to any of Ibn 'Arabi's works. We can safely conclude that the Shaikh al-Akbar did not support this idea.

⁷⁶ See Austin, op.cit., p.168-69; also see Taji, op.cit.,pp.407 and 417; M.M. al-Ghurab, Sharh Fuses pp.218-224 where he has gathered other references as well from different works of the Shaikh, especially from Futuhat.

⁷⁷ Thanvi, Al-Tanbih..... op.cit,p.92; Al-Hall,..... op.cit.,p.85

⁷⁸ Futuhat, Chap.14; II 229;II 246; II 256; II 24,26; also see Kitab al-Qurbah c.f. Ghurab, op.cit. p.219.

Objection No. 5

Iqbal regarded doctrine of the Five Divine Presences as un-Islamic.⁸⁰ We have translated his statement in the standard contemporary terminology. However it would provide us with a better insight into the matter if we take into consideration his own words.- "This doctrine which teaches that 'Allah from His spirit of Absoluteness, descends (tanazzul) in the valley of delimitation (ta'ayyun) and from a undeferentiated (mujmal) mode becomes deferentiated (mufassal) through- traversing the levels and states of multiplicity, reaching in the end at the delimitation of the corporeal state', in our view, is pure heresy and deviation."⁸¹ At an other place he terms it as the "doctrine of the six alightments".⁸²

Iqbal's objection is two fold. One the one hand the terminology is neoplatonic and, on the other, its content and meaning is heretical.

As is obvious, the statement is couched in anthropomorphic symbolism, which, as we would see presently, is not the way Ibn 'Arabi would have described it. Secondly, the terms employed (i.e. Tanazzul, Ta'ayyun) are surely of a later origin since Ibn 'Arabi never employed them in the context with which we are concerned at the moment.

The discussion regarding the possible origin and sources of the doctrine in question could be postponed till we come to objection no.7 which deals with the philosophic concerns of the Sufis. A definition of the doctrine is, nevertheless, required to examine the objection.

The world ('alam) is defined as "that which is other than God" (ma .siwa Allah). With in the world we observe different things, entities, realities that could be devided into various categories. The doctrine of the five divine

⁷⁹ Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi, . Maktubat-i-Imam Rabbani, Ist Vol (Durr-i-Ma'rifat), letter No.266, Lahore, N.D., p.135; see also Thanvi, Al-Tanbih op.cit.p.56.

⁸⁰ See note 29.

⁸¹ See Kalurvi, ed., Tarikh-i-Tasawwuf, op.cit..

⁸² Mu'ini, Maqalat-i-Iqbal, op.cit.,p.161-2.

presences is one of the major methods of explaining and referring to the different kinds of entities and things. The doctrine. Therefore, originates from a genuine human need for causality. In a more philosophic manner, these existents are some times referred to as levels (maratib) by the school of Ibn 'Arabi. The "levels of existence" may be infinite in number but their general categories (kulliyat) may be reduced to five or six, i.e.. the Divine Presences⁸³ (al-Hadarat al-Ilahiyyah). A general category of existence, encompassing innumerable specific things, is precisely a hadrah, presence. i.e.. the mode and the 'location' in which one of the Divine Names exercises its influence. Ibn 'Arabi employs this term in the aforementioned context; the "Presence of the Merciful" (hadrat al-Rahman), the "Presence of the self subsistent" (hadrat al-qayyum). But he refers to the presences individually and does not seem to discuss the "Five Divine Presences" as a separate doctrine. Nor does he state clearly and explicitly how they are related to a single whole.⁸⁴

There is another aspect to the problem. God is al-Wasi' (He who contains) and al-Muhit, (He who encompasses). So, in the last analysis, there is but a single presence known as the Divine presence (al-hadrat al-Ilahiyyah) which comprehends every thing. Ibn 'Arabi defines it as the Essence, Attributes, and the Acts of Allah,⁸⁵ thus embracing all that is. The Essence is God in Himself without reference to the relationship that can be envisaged between him and the existent or nonexistent things. The acts are the created things. The attributes or names are the barzakh or isthmus between the Essence and the cosmos. The Essence (dhat) is the transcendent Self which is beyond Being and beyond manifestation; the attributes (sifat) of Allah are the relationships that can be discerned between the Essence and everything

⁸³ For a detailed discussion of the doctrine see W.C. Chittick, "The Five Divine Presences: From al Qunawi to al-Qaysiri". *The Muslim World*, 72(1982):107-128. Also see his *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, op.cit., "The Divine Presence".

⁸⁴ This is being said on the testimony of W.C. Chittick, one of the finest and most erudite scholars in this field; "I have not been able to discover any reference to the Five Presences as such in the works I have read", see his "The Five Divine Presences", op.cit., p.125(n.7).

⁸⁵ *Futuhat*, II 114.14;IV 196.11;c.f.II 579.14.

other than he; and the acts (af' al) which are all the creatures in the cosmos along with everything that appears from them. Hence the term 'Divine Presence' designates God on the one hand and the cosmos, inasmuch as it can be said to be the locus of His activity, on the other.

This, then, is a brief sketch of the doctrine that we find in Ibn 'Arabi. It was systematized and elaborated by his followers over the centuries. Neither is the doctrine devoid of its Quranic 'premisses'.⁸⁶ We can neither undertake a description of details of the different schemes as expounded by the followers of Ibn 'Arabi nor can we, possibly, elaborate upon its Quranic premisses as well as its parallels in other traditions. Suffice to say that neither Ibn 'Arabi, nor his authentic commentators seem to present the doctrine in the fashion in which we encountered it in Iqbal's statement. Iqbal must have come across the definition in some works far removed from the original sources and was rightly put off by the anthropomorphic air of its diction which made 'Allah' 'descend' in the 'valley where as, in Ibn 'Arabi. We have observed that the manifestation is always of the Divine Acts and the Essence remains absolutely transcendent with regard to its manifestations. The word *nuzul*⁸⁷ (descent, alightment) is used by Ibn 'Arabi, but in an other context and in the sense we find it used in the prophetic saying.⁸⁸ No wonder if Iqbal hesitated to accept the doctrine as Islamic in the form in which he came across it. He suspected that the doctrine advocated the idea of a 'substantial' continuity (*saryan*) between the Principle and its manifestations, where as, in its original form the doctrine was, perhaps, the most sophisticated analysis of the ontological levels of the whole spectrum of manifestation.

⁸⁶ See F.Schuon, "Five Divine Presences" in *Dimensions of Islam*, reprint, Lahore, 1985,p.142, where he has discussed the Quranic premisses of this doctrine and has provided an overview of the different schemes in which the Sufis have envisaged it. Extremely important are the comparisons that he has made with different expositions of the doctrine in other traditions.

⁸⁷ *Futuhat*, II 578-1;III 408-11,28,32.

⁸⁸ See, Muslim, *Musafirin* 172.cf. Ahmad II 433, III 34 for other versions see A.J. Wensick, and others, *Concordance* Leiden, Brill, 1936-1969, II 152.

It remains to be seen as to what did Iqbal propose by way of his own exposition/solution of the problem? I would like to put my readers to a test in this regard. Following are the two statements that expound the views of Ibn 'Arabi and Iqbal on the issue of the Divine Presences. The readers may try to differentiate between the two.

1) The "Presence of Power" is everything in existence that comes under the sway of His Power, including the whole of creation.⁸⁹

2) Different ontological levels, which include the whole of creation, are a manifestation of the "Presence of Power".⁹⁰

The readers may refer to the notes to identify the exact reference. It would, nevertheless, be clear that very little difference exists between the two ideas. Hence we may draw the conclusion that, like so many other cases, Iqbal is in agreement with Ibn 'Arabi on the question though he could not ascertain the exact position of al-shaykh al-Akbar.

The quotation that we mentioned in the foregoing paragraph is taken from the period of the polemical writings of Iqbal to which we have referred earlier during the course of our study.⁹¹ In one of his later writings, separated from the already quoted statement by a further period of 10 years, we find the following views regarding the question of the Divine Presence in the cosmos.

"To the Absolute self... the universe is not a reality confronting Him as His 'other'; it is only a passing phase of His consciousness, a fleeting moment of His infinite life."⁹²

⁸⁹ This is Ibn 'Arabi. c.f. Chittick, *The Sufi Path* op.cit.,p.5.

⁹⁰ This is Iqbals statement, see Kalurvi, *Tarikh* op.cit.,p.57.

⁹¹ See notes 22 and 23.

⁹² See M. Iqbal, "Self in the light of Relativity." *The Crescent*, Lahore, Dec.1925, VoI.XX,No.79; rept. Lahore, 1988,p.3.

"... the Amr is not related to God in the same way as the Khalq is. The amr is distinct but not isolated from God. But I confess, I can not intellectually apprehend this relationship any more than Rumi, who says:⁹³

اتصال بے تکلیف بے قیاس ہست رب الناس راباجان ناس

"... Reality lives in its own appearances, and that the surest way to reach the core of it lies through its appearances"⁹⁴

There is no essential difference between Iqbal and Ibn 'Arabi' with reference to the first quotation given above. Rephrased, it could be read as follows: "The cosmos is encompassed by the Divine Presence. It is a locus of manifestation of the divine attributes of consciousness and life". For Iqbal, as for Ibn 'Arabi' then, the cosmos is not 'other' than God. It is a presence, though not of the Acts (hadrat al-af al), as Ibn 'Arabi maintains, rather of the attributes (hadrat al-Sifat); but we can, for the moment, afford to ignore this distinction between the two ontological levels. This enables us to see that, despite differences of terminology, Iqbal is essentially in agreement with Ibn 'Arabi.

The second quotation, perhaps as a complement to the first, focuses its attention on the microcosm, that is, the human individuality. Iqbal describes the presence of God in the macrocosm as well as in the microcosm with the help of two Quranic terms.⁹⁵ The macrocosm is a presence of the divine creative act (khalq) where as the microcosm, the human substance, is the

⁹³ Ibid.,p.3-4. For the verse quoted from Rumi see, Mathnawi ed. Nicholson (Pourjawady edition) Amir Kabir, Tehran, 1363, Vol.1, p. 130, verse 2128.

It may be noted that Iqbal, though himself a philosopher, often prefers to follow Rumi in his expositions who, unlike Ibn 'Arabi and his school, tried to avoid philosophic terminology to expound his mystical experience. Rumi, instead of employing a philosophic jargon, appeals primarily to mans religious instinct and employs images and symbols as the primary means of exposition.

⁹⁴ Ibid. p.5. (Italics mine)

⁹⁵ Quran, 17:85:7:54

locus of manifestation of the presence of the divine command (amr), which is 'distinct' yet not 'isolated'. Here we enter the realm of perhaps the most universal and oldest of mysteries, namely, the 'presence' of the Principle in the manifestation or the Absolute in the relative. God is not in the cosmos but the universe is some how mysteriously plunged in the divine presence. Discursive thought cannot comprehend the complex problem and Iqbal, at this point, while announcing its inability, draws upon Rumi to elucidate this point.

"Reality lives in its own appearances." Third quotation brings us almost in the same anthropomorphic ambiance which permeated the objectionable statement quoted by Iqbal. If Allah (Reality) lives in His own appearances (i.e. in the corporeal state) and if such a metaphorical form of expression is admissible to describe the divine presence in the cosmos what, then, would possibly be the error in saying that He (Allah) "... in the end reaches the ... delimitation of the corporeal state"? The fact that we intend to emphasize here is precisely that if Iqbal, with all his philosophic training, could not escape the inevitable mode of anthropomorphic expression, allowance should also be made for the expressions of some anonymous sufi author, separated from the times of Ibn 'Arabi by several centuries, for employing a less sophisticated method in comparison to Ibn 'Arabi who would not have expressed himself in this kind of loose terminology.

Objection No. 7

The question of terminology that Ibn 'Arabi employed in his works is intimately bound up with the question of his sources. The latter has been debated right from his own times and of his immediate followers. Even in his day he was given the surname "Son of Plato" (Ibn Aflatun), apart from his title "Supreme master" (as-shaikh al Akbar),⁹⁶ indicating the fundamentally

⁹⁶ Cf. R.W.J. Austin, (tr.) *Bezels of Wisdom*. Preface by Titus Burckhardt, Lahore, 1988, p.viii. Ibn 'Arabi himself makes an exception of Plato from the usual run of the philosophers who rely on reflection pure and simple. See *Futuhat*, II 523.2. Also see Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, op.cit.p.84. and F. Schuon, "Tracing the Notion of Philosophy", *Sufism: Veil and Quintessence*, Lahore, 1985,p.115 where the writer has clarified certain problems pertaining to the notion of philosophy with remarkable clarity and acumen.

platonian bent of his thinking. This, by no means, is the only or the primary source of Ibn 'Arabi. His two main sources were the Qur'an and the Traditions of the Prophet. In this regard he placed himself squarely in the mainstream of Islam by basing all his teachings upon the Qur'an and the Hadith and parted company with the philosophers and the proponents of Kalam (rational theology). He confirmed his logocentrism by claiming repeatedly that the knowledge gained through opening pertains to the meaning of the Qur'an. The Futuhat, like his other works is nothing if not a commentary upon the Holy Book.⁹⁷ On the other hand, to borrow the words of Dr. Austin,

"It requires only a general survey of his works to realize that he managed to combine in himself the genius and resources of the philosopher, the poet, the traumatizer, the occultist, the theologian and the practical ascetic. He combines the scholastic expertise of Ghazali with the poetic imagery of Ibn al-Farid, the metaphysical daring of al-Hallaj with the stringent orthodoxy of Muhasibi, abstract categories of the Neoplatonists with the dramatic imagination of Rumi, and the abstruse science of the Kabbalist with the practical wisdom of the spiritual guide".⁹⁸

This should, however, never be confused with an attempt at syncretism or a tendency towards apologetics striving to bring the Islamic perspective in 'conformity' with some foreign frame of thought. To grasp the full significance of this very important phenomenon of Islamic intellectual life the following remarks by S.H. Nasr are extremely illuminating:

"One cannot speak in an ordinary historical sense about the origins and sources of the works of any Sufi writer because the Sufi who has realized the goal of the Path receives inspiration directly and vertically and is not dependent upon "horizontal" influences. He receives his knowledge through

⁹⁷ Cf. Chittick, *The Sufi Path* op. cit., p.XV, 80-81.

⁹⁸ See R.W.J. Austin, *Bezels of Wisdom*, op.cit., p.24.

the illumination of his heart by Divine theophanies and only in the expression and formulation of his inner experiences may he depend upon the writings of others. In the case of Ibn 'Arabi, also, his primary source is his gnostic knowledge received in states of contemplation and made possible through the grace (barakah) of the Prophet which he received through his initiation into the Sufi Path.

But on the level of interpretation of ideas and formulations we may speak of the "historical sources" of Ibn 'Arabi in the sense that the doctrines of many schools found their profoundest interpretation in the writings of the Shaikh. Within the tradition of Islam, Ibn 'Arabi followed, most of all, the earlier Sufis, especially Hallaj, many of whose utterances he discussed in his works; Hakim al-Tirmidhi, whose *Khatam al-wilayah* (The Seal of Sanctity) became the subject of the Shaikh's special study; Bayazid al-Bastami, whose gnostic utterances he often quoted; and Al-Ghazzali whose later works he followed and whose theses he expanded in many ways. He also adopted certain cosmological ideas found among the philosophers, especially Avicenna - - not to speak of the "Neo-Empedoclean" schemes of Ibn Masarrah - - and made frequent use of the dialectic of the theologians. In addition, the influence of earlier Islamic Hermetic writings, such as those of the Jabirian corpus, as well as the Epistles of the Brethren of Purity with their Neopythagorean tendencies, and other writings associated with Isma'ilism, are to be discovered in Ibn 'Arabi's works.

As for doctrines of pre-Islamic origin, we find in Muhyi al-Din the interpretation of Alexandrian Hermeticism at its most elevated level of meaning, where the concept of Nature itself takes on a significance transcending the order of formal cosmic manifestation. We also find doctrines belonging to the Stoics, Philo, the Neoplatonists, and other schools of antiquity which are interpreted metaphysically and integrated into the vast panorama of Ibn 'Arabi's theosophy. It is

through the prism of his mind that not only gnostic doctrines but also cosmological, psychological, physical, and logical ideas gain a metaphysical dimension and a transparency which reveal the nexus that all forms of knowledge have with the sapientia possessed by the saints and sages, just as the root of all things, of all orders of reality, is plunged in the Divine."⁹⁹

Thus we can say that "for Ibn 'Arabi, the Universe is a Muslim one on whose horizons certain pre-Islamic symbols are contemplated."¹⁰⁰ More over these pre- Islamic "Candles of light" were dissolved and integrated into the dazzling light of the 'Sun'¹⁰¹ of Islamic intellectual and spiritual life.

One may like to question the legitimacy and opportuneness of the aforementioned approach which found its culmination in Ibn 'Arabi though it is also discernable among the theologians, theosophers and philosophers of Islam that went before him. From our point of view, it derives its legitimacy from the inherent principles and practice of the Islamic Tradition itself. Islamic Tradition, from its vantage point of being the summer-up, incorporated ---- obviously with alterations, amendments, abrogations and adaptations ---- the "Judeo-Christian" elements; especially the legal (or Shari'ite, in the technical sense of the word) aspects of the Mosaic code and the esoteric elements of the Christian message. These elements were brought to perfection in addition to the specifically Islamic aspects of the new faith in the Islamic revelation. This process, as it was accomplished on a purely vertical plane, had the stamp of divine sanction on it which distinguished it from any subsequent attempts that the Islamic community may had envisaged in the same direction. Nevertheless it had the significant role of setting the example for integrating ideas and symbols of pre-Islamic origin into the unitary perspective of Islam and its general framework.

⁹⁹ S.H. Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages*, op.cit., p.100-102.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.59.

¹⁰¹ See S.H. Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, Harvard University Press, 1964, p.191.

As for the opportuneness of such an approach we can do no better than to quote S.H. Nasr again. "The importance of Ibn 'Arabi consists, therefore, in his formulation of the doctrines of Sufism and in his making them explicit. His advent marks neither a "progress" in Sufism by its becoming more articulated and theoretical, nor a deterioration from a love of God to a form of pantheism, as has been so often asserted against Ibn 'Arabi. Actually, the explicit formulation of Sufi doctrines by Muhyi al-Din signifies a need on the part of the milieu to which they were addressed for further explanation and greater clarification. Now, the need for explanation does not increase with one's knowledge; rather, it becomes necessary to the extent that one is ignorant and has lost the immediate grasp of things through a dimming of the faculty of intuition and insight. As Islamic civilization drew away gradually from its source of revelation, the need for explanation increased to the degree that the spiritual insight and the perspicacity of men diminished. The early generations needed only a hint or directive (isharah) to understand the inner meaning of things; men of later centuries needed a full-fledged explanation. Through Ibn 'Arabi Islamic esotericism provided the doctrines which alone could guarantee the preservation of the Tradition among men who were always in danger of being led astray by incorrect reasoning and in most of whom the power of intellectual intuition was not strong enough to reign supreme over other human tendencies and to prevent the mind from falling into error. Through Ibn 'Arabi, what had always been the inner truth of Sufism was formulated in such a manner that it has dominated the spiritual and intellectual life of Islam ever since."¹⁰²

This formulation was responsible, apart from other things, for "placing in the ascendancy the trend to expound the mystical experience in philosophic terminology."¹⁰³ As such it was one of the various possible

¹⁰² S.H. Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages*, op.cit.,p.91.

means to justify and, prove the religious teachings concerning God's unity that unfolded themselves gradually during the whole of Islamic intellectual history.¹⁰⁴ Use of philosophic terminology or discussion of philosophic positions shall never be equated, however, with the unbridled activity of the unaided reason which would imply that the norm for the mind is reasoning pure and simple, in the absence, not only of intellection, but also of indispensable objective data. It is an expression in a philosophic style and terminology of specifically Islamic positions and data obtained from mystical experience as well as from unveiling finding as a result of reading and meditating upon the Qur'an and fearing God; it can not be legitimately termed as bringing philosophic issues within the pale of Sufism, as Iqbal seems inclined to have it

(Objection no.7).

To quote Schuon,

"In a certain respect, the difference between philosophy, theology and gnosis is total; in an other respect, it is relative. It is total. when one understands, by 'philosophy', only rationalism; by 'theology' only the explanation of religious teachings; and by 'gnosis' only intuitive and intellective, and thus suprarational, knowledge; but the difference is only relative when one understands by 'philosophy' the fact of thinking, by 'theology' the fact of speaking dogmatically of God and religious things and by 'gnosis' the fact of presenting pure metaphysics, for then the genres interpenetrate. It is impossible to deny that the most illustrious Sufis, while being 'gnostics' by definition, were at the same time to some extent theologians and to some extent philosophers, or that the great theologians were both to some extent philosophers, and to some extent gnostics...."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Cf. Chittick, "Sadr al-Din Qunawi on the Oneness of Being" in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 21 (1981): 171-184.

¹⁰⁴ For a profound discussion of the causes that emphasized this need, see S.H. Nasr. *Three Muslim Sages*, op.cit.,p.1-7.

It is against this backdrop that we claim that Ibn 'Arabi and his followers donot import the issues of philosophy¹⁰⁶ (understood in the sense of rationalism) into the fold of Sufism. They were, to quote Chittick, only helpful,

"to bring the teachings of sufism into the mainstream of Islamic intellectuality, which in any case was moving more towards philosophy than Kalam. In addition, from the 7th / 13th century onward Islamic intellectuality tends towards synthesis. Many authors contributed to the harmonization of divergent intellectual perspectives It was only logical that sufism should play a major role in this harmonization of different intellectual streams. Al-Ghazali (d. 505/1111) had begun this task long before Ibn 'Arabi and Ibn 'Arabi himself contributed to it by employing the terminology of all the intellectual perspectives".¹⁰⁷

It is true that, after Ibn 'Arabi, there have been sufis who did not use philosophic terminology. Rumi is its foremost example. Yet it is the dominant trend of the Muslim intellectuality; to the extent that commentators of Rumi's Mathnawi also used the ideas and terms of Ibn 'Arabi's school down to the present times.

Objection No. 3 & 10

The question of the Persian poets and their detrimental influence on the masses is a complex and detailed problem. A few general observations would only be possible with in the confines of this article. First of all we have to consider that the process of decadence, to which they are seen as the chief contributors, had equally overwhelmed the non-Persian peoples who could

¹⁰⁵ See F.Schuon, 'Tracing the Notion of Philosophy', Sufism: Veil and Quintessence, op.cit.p.125.

¹⁰⁶ It may be noted that philosophy had a very different role in the West as compared to the Islamic world where it was an incidental development and left the heart of the tradition intact.

¹⁰⁷ See W.C. Chittick, The Sufi Path of Knowledge, op.cit.p.xvii-xix.

not have, possibly, received the negative influence of the "pantheistic" ideas borne by the wings of their poetry. Therefore we can surmise that the Muslim community was, as a whole, subject to more universal and profound causes of decline and decadence in which the Persian mystic poets had no special contribution.

(To be continued)

REASON AND FAITH IN THE NATURAL THEOLOGY OF IQBAL

Part III

AZIZAN BAHARUDDIN

The kind of ideal that a person will choose at any moment will be dependent upon his state of knowledge and experience at that particular time. This will mean therefore that as his knowledge and experience increases, he should come closer and closer to the criteria of true Beauty.¹⁰⁸

But true to the spirit of evolution, as Iqbal understood it, this process is a very long one, involving innumerable combinations of possible right or wrong, perfection as well as imperfection. As has been explained, it is also not an easy process as each choice carries with it inherent mistakes and new adjustments. According to Iqbal, therefore, the urge for Beauty in man takes the form of the urge for the ideals and is capable of being fully satisfied by an ideal of the highest beauty and perfection and that is the Divine Beauty itself. The question of where this ideal of Divine Beauty is to be found we shall look at in the next section. Iqbal's idea can therefore be seen as pertaining to stages in the development of the self. We are never absolutely wrong; we advance from the lower to the higher, from less perfect to more perfect ideals.¹⁰⁹

Iqbal even connected his ideas with the central Islamic doctrine or profession of faith *la illa ha ilia Allah* which means "there is no god(s) but

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. A question can be raised at this point; i.e. would religion still be necessary if man is going to evolve towards the Right Ideal anyway? We can see Iqbal addressing this question in the last lecture of *The Reconstruction* where he asks the question "Is religion possible?" himself. We will see this later in the chapter.

God."La" stands for the self's stages of wrong ideals, and "illa" stands for the only Right Ideal.¹¹⁰

The urge for Beauty and the urge for ideals" rules man's instinctual urges. Instincts are those psycho-physical dispositions or compelling tendencies of action. Man preserves his life for the sake of the urge of his self for Beauty. The instincts in him do not obstruct the urge of the self, which is free to have its way, but only helps it to satisfy itself, if called upon to do so. This is proven by the fact that man can oppose any of his instincts, even the most compelling of them, whenever he thinks his ideal needs this sacrifice. Animals do not possess this urge for ideals. In man it is the ideal for Beauty and not any one of his instincts that dominates his life.¹¹¹ Only his devotion and service to the Right Ideal will enable man to unfold the deepest possibilities of his nature and enable him to reach the zenith, the height of his perfection.

Is Religion Possible?

If evolution is teleological and if the Right Ideals would eventually be realised, would not the question arise as to whether religion is still necessary? Iqbal also asserted that the finality of prophethood was supposed to mean the increased use of reason. Would not this also imply that religion would be a redundant affair? It is arguable that Iqbal was well aware of these questions and that is why he devoted the last chapter of the Reconstruction exclusively to a defence of religion.

Religious life is divided by Iqbal into three phases which he calls the periods of Faith, Thought and Discovery respectively.¹¹² In the first period there is an unconditional acceptance of the religious commands; without any rational understanding of those commands. Secondly there is perfect submission to discipline but it is accompanied by a rational understanding of the discipline. In this period religious life seeks its foundation in' a kind of

¹¹⁰ M. Rafiuddin, op. cit. 1971, pp.80-90.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² See chapter 7. The Reconstruction, 1968 edition.

metaphysics - a logically consistent view of the world with God as a part of that view.¹¹³

In the third period, metaphysics is displaced by what Iqbal termed as psychology, where religious life develops a desire or ambition to come into direct contact with God. Here the individual achieves a free personality, not by releasing himself from the fetters of the law or the dogma, but by "discovering the ultimate source of the law within the depths of his own consciousness".¹¹⁴

It is clear that it is in the sense of this last phase in the development of religious life that Iqbal used the word religion in asking and attempting to answer the question "Is religion possible?"¹¹⁵ Does this mean that ordinary dogmatic religion is no longer important to Iqbal? In the first place I do not think the question should be phrased this way, because, Iqbal wanted to reach a certain level of universality and objectivity in his discussion of religion; and it is in the third phase that this can be achieved as it operates at the basic bio-psychological (and therefore universal) level. Secondly, Iqbal believed that it is only after the third phase has been achieved that the dogmatic can become a norm or accepted naturally without being questioned. So the third phase, although the last, is in actual fact the most important. It is what makes the dogmatic part understandable and practicable. It is arguable that it is in the context of the third phase also that Iqbal would answer the question of the possibility of religion in the affirmative.

The third phase he identified not unexpectedly with mysticism. This he said was an unfortunate term because it has always been supposed to be a "life-denying, fact-avoiding attitude of mind directly opposed to the radically empirical outlook of our time".¹¹⁶ Iqbal was well aware of the difficulties

¹¹³ The Reconstruction, 1968. p. 141

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. p. 184.

involved when talking about mysticism or religious experience - it is an experience difficult to describe. But this could not be the end of the matter. In fact the mystical experience can give a clue to the nature of the ego which to Iqbal is the heart of the religious experience. Here Iqbal harks back to his idea that our consciousness can be divided into the superficial and profound self [or what to William James was the transitive and substantive state of the mind]. In the Sufistic literature, Sufis describe experiencing different 'level's or the 'worlds'.

Iqbal wanted to emphasise that it is precisely the discovery of the consciousness as an individual, at a deeper level than his conceptually describable habitual selfhood that constitutes the very climax of religious life. It is through this way that possible 'contact' with the most Real can be achieved, and the effect is that the ego realises in its uniqueness its metaphysical status, and the possibility of improving this status.

The proof that this contact has been made can be seen in the acts that emerge out of the individual after the encounter, because, to Iqbal, religion is essentially a mode of actual living.¹¹⁷ What faith does is to change his actions. The content of this timeless experience can diffuse itself in the time-movement and make itself visible to the eye of history. Strictly speaking, however, the experience which leads to this discovery is not a conceptually manageable intellectual fact; it is a vital fact, "an attitude consequent on an inner bilogical transformation which cannot be captured in the net of logical categories."¹¹⁸

Iqbal also referred to the evidence provided by religious people in all ages and countries to show that "there are potential types of consciousness lying close to our normal consciousness." If these types of consciousness open up possibilities of life-giving and knowledge-yielding experience, the question of the possibility of religion as a form of higher experience is a perfectly legitimate one.¹¹⁹ To him higher religion is really only an attempt to

¹¹⁷ Ibid. p. 184.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. Emphasis is mine.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. p. 185.

understand life or what he calls 'larger 'life' and is essentially, still only a type of experience which religion recognises as necessary for its foundation, long before science learnt to do so.¹²⁰ But Iqbal insisted that higher religion is no less than a genuine effort to classify human consciousness and is as critical of its level of experience as Naturalism is of its own.¹²¹

Iqbal's categorisation of the different stages of higher religion seems comparable with Bergson's idea of the dynamic religion of the open society as opposed to the static religion of the closed society.¹²² In his *Two Sources of Morality and Religion* Bergson contrasted the "purely social and socially explicable forms of both religious and moral life (closed society, static religion) and the higher, qualitatively different manifestations (open society, dynamic religion) in which we perceive the collaboration of the human mind and imagination with the creative source of being."¹²³ Bergson had also been interested in mystical phenomena; in 1909 for example he reviewed a book by Henri Delacroix on the history of the psychology of mysticism.¹²⁴

Even more interesting is that by dynamic religion Bergson also meant mysticism which to him is the "main organ through which life assures progress for individuals and for the human race as a whole."¹²⁵ This is what Iqbal also wanted to say.

Iqbal's next argument was to show that science could only tell us about a part of the Reality. He referred for example to the idea of the plurality of

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid. p. 182.

¹²² H. Bergson, *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*. (1932) in L. Kolakowski. op. cit. pp. 72-87.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid. p. 81

space - orders which make the idea of Divine Time and Divine Space more rationally imaginable.

Therefore it may be that what we call the external world, is only an intellectual construction, and that there are other levels of human experience capable of being systematised by other orders of space and time - levels in which content and analysis do not play the same role as they do in the case of normal experience.¹²⁶ He quoted Eddington who seemed to support his view and said:-

We acknowledge that the entities of physics can from their very nature form only a partial aspect of reality. How are we to deal with the other part? It cannot be said that the other concerns us less than the physical entities. Feelings, purposes, values, make up our consciousness as much as sense-impression. We follow up the sense-impressions do and find that they lead to an external world discussed by science; we follow up other elements of our being and find that they lead not to a world of space and time, but surely somewhere.¹²⁷

From this, Iqbal asserted that religion is necessary because it is essentially a mode of actual living, the only serious way of handling Reality. Science which is the method of dealing with this Reality by means of concepts is not a serious enough way of dealing with it. Science is not too much concerned for example whether the electron is a real entity or not. He felt that "nothing is at stake in the ventures of science". In the religious venture however, "the whole career of the ego or individual's personal centre of life' is at stake."¹²⁸ This is because the individual cannot base his conduct just on mere illusions, a wrong concept may mislead the understanding, but a wrong deed not only degrades the man, and may eventually demolish the ego, but because it is also a sociable deed, can affect others.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ The Reconstruction. 1968, p 183.

¹²⁷ Ibid. p. 186.

¹²⁸ Ibid. p. 185.

On the practical level. Iqbal felt that higher religion was especially necessary for modern man, who because he has been "wholly overshadowed by the result of his intellectual activity, has ceased to live soulfully i.e. from within."¹³⁰ Iqbal thought that in the domain of thought the modern man lives in conflict with himself, whereas in the domain of economic and political life he is living in open conflict with others.¹³¹ His suggestion for a remedy was religion which "in its higher manifestation is neither dogma nor priesthood, no ritual". Only religion can "ethically prepare the modern man for the burden of the great responsibility that the advancement of modern science necessarily involves". And in what sounds characteristically Iqbalian, religion can also restore to man "that attitude of faith "which will enable him to win a personality here and retain it "in the hereafter ".¹³²

When talking about the plight of modern man, Iqbal was not only referring to the west, He saw the situation as being no better in the East. Far from reintegrating the forces of the normal man's inner life, and thus preparing him for participation in the "march of history" he saw the techniques of¹³³ medieval mysticism as only teaching the Muslim "a false renunciation: and making him perfectly contented with his ignorance and spiritual thralldom."¹³⁴ Politically, he saw the Muslims trying to find answers through 'rationalism' and 'atheistic socialism'. But these he said must draw

¹²⁹ Ibid. p. 185.

¹³⁰ Ibid. p. 188.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid. p. 189. Emphases is mine. In using the term 'biological' it shows how much Iqbal wanted religion to be treated in as natural a . way as possible. It is also in line with what he was saying about religion actually having concrete effects on man's behavior.

¹³³ By this I think he meant the 'interpretation' and use made of the mystical knowledge and experience of Sufism.

¹³⁴ Reconstruction, p. 189.

upon the psychological forces of hatred, suspicion and resentment which in the long run would close down his hidden sources of spiritual energy.¹³⁵

HOW CAN MYSTICAL EXPERIENCES BE

EXPLICATED?

This question was his fundamental preoccupation. He stressed that “we have to find out an effective method of inquiry into the nature and significance of this extraordinary experience.”¹³⁶ He turned to the field of psychology but found its present state unsatisfactory. This was because it did not give a real insight into the essential nature of religion and its meaning to human personality. It only held a plethora of new theories which proceed on a complete misunderstanding of the nature of religion as revealed in its higher manifestation and therefore was quite hopeless.¹³⁷

Refusing to be discouraged by the difficulty of the task he had set up for himself (i.e. no less than to 'empiricise' mysticism) Iqbal doggedly carried on drawing parallels between the scientific and religious enterprises. He believed, for example, that "the truth is that the religious and scientific processes, though invoking different methods are identical in their final aim. Both aim at reaching the most real". In fact, he felt that religion (for reasons which have been mentioned before) is far more anxious to reach the ultimately real than science is. And to both, the way to pure objectivity lies in what may be called the "purification of experience."¹³⁸

For him the scientific and the religious processes are in a sense parallel to each other. In science we try to understand the external behaviour of reality, while in religion we try to understand the inner nature of that reality. Both are really descriptions of the same world with the difference that in the

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid. p. 190.

¹³⁷ Ibid. p. 191.

¹³⁸ Ibid. pp. 198-196.

scientific, the ego is excluded, whereas in the religious the ego is integrated in the process.¹³⁹

He saw that just as Hume and Einstein,¹⁴⁰ for example, had helped to objectify science, so too the student of mystical or religious experience must try to rule out as many subjective elements as possible in religion until what is reached is absolutely objective.¹⁴¹

Like Bergson, Iqbal was certain that man's final religious experience "is the revelation of a new life process - original, spontaneous, and the moment he reaches this revelation he recognises it as the ultimate root of his being without hesitation."¹⁴² He is at pains to convince his audience that there is nothing mysterious about such an experience; it is a perfectly natural phenomenon; possesses cognitive value for the recipient as well as a biological significance for the ego.

As Bergson said, "even though the certitude of mystical experience cannot be simply converted into philosophical wisdom, the mystics have changed the philosophical perspective; that is, we cannot philosophise about God, love and creation without reference to their experience. And the most reliable method of philosophy is to look first at experience instead of concocting concepts by which reality is to be measured."¹⁴³

In view of what has been said about the role of mysticism in the thought of Iqbal, it is interesting to note that Bergson also thought that mysticism can form the basis for a 'universal religion'.¹⁴⁴ "Genuine mysticism" said Bergson,

¹³⁹ Hume showed that there is no foundation for causality through sense experience. Einstein. Says Iqbal, dispenses with the concept altogether. See the Reconstruction.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² L. Kolakowski, Bergson, Oxford, 1985, p. 83.

¹⁴³ Ibid. pp. 87-85 (for a fuller discussion of this contention.)

is "the guiding force of dynamic religion appears very infrequently in the history of religion but is able to move a real, if hidden, layer in our minds and gradually transform or ennoble conservative religion."¹⁴⁵

He believed that "there is progress in religious life; the transition from worshipping spirits to worshipping personal Gods is already an important step forward. The power of mystical experience gives new color to the established mythologies."¹⁴⁶ He believed also that "mysticism culminates in a 'contact' and therefore partial coincidence with the creative effort that life reveals. This effort is of God, if not God Himself."¹⁴⁷ Bergson tried "to assimilate into his spiritualist outlook those tenets of modern science which had seemingly established the materialistic doctrine and had done away with the religious legacy of mankind". The same may be said of Iqbal.

Finally, Iqbal's thinking on religion and science can perhaps be summed up via an extract from a poem by the Turkish poet Zia whom he quoted in the Reconstruction.

Both religion and philosophy claim the soul of
man and draw it on either side.

When this struggle is going on, pregnant
experience delivers up positive science.

And this young leader of thought says,
tradition is history and Reason is the method
of history!

Both interpret and desire to reach the same

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. pp. 87-83.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Reconstruction. 1968, p. 160. Emphasis is mine.

indefinable something!

But what is this something? Is it a spiritualized heart? If so, take my last word.

Religion is positive science, the purpose of which is to spiritualize the heart of man.¹⁴⁸

LESSON FOR THE PRESENT

(i) What I find most encouraging is the fact that there were similarities or positive harmonies at least between Islam and rationalistic - humanistic perceptives of religion. Both Iqbal and Bergson talked of higher religion i.e. mysticism which is an element present in all religions. It can therefore be the basis of a unity between many diverse world communities. Perhaps it is about time also that religion in its 'higher' meaning combines efforts with philosophy and science. Philosophy and science could provide the language or form of expression for the meaning of that higher religion.

(ii) Iqbal's philosophy about the nature of reality also has relevance to the conflict generated by the mind-body problem that has been reflected in many schools of psychology, most notably in the conflict between the psychologies of Freud and Jung.¹⁴⁹ As he noted in his Reconstruction during his time, (and perhaps the situation is not very much different today) the prevailing psychology, because of its mechanistic bend was not able to contain the subject of the meaning of the self or the consciousness. Perhaps it is now time to have a fresh look at the basic tenets of psychology. In this context also the new holistic approach that is being argued for by F. Capra

¹⁴⁸ F. Capra. The Turning Point London, 1985, p. 169.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

against the duality of Cartesianism and mechanistic Newtonism seem to be echoing the thoughts of Iqbal.¹⁵⁰

(iii) Another inspiring feature of his theology is his idea of evolution -- man's development as an ego can be explained via the concept of beauty and man's quest for it. Translated into the realm of real actual life, this idea can provide the basis for the incentives that are badly needed in facing the present challenges and creating alternatives for the future. In explaining the idea of takdir or destiny Iqbal convinces us that we are actually involved in the process of creation, in real history. This surely is a momentous fact and if true means that there is no room for 'any feelings of despair in action and life for man.

(iv) Iqbal's natural theology is a reconciliation between religion and science. Many people are still under the impression that the conflict thesis between religion and science is a proven fact. Research in the history of science has however shown for several decades, now however, that this is but one interpretation. Serious scholars have found that what may look like conflicts are in actual "fact conflicts of interests (in power and politics for example) between various groups.¹⁵¹ Many Christian scientists have shown, for example, how a more integrated view of nature and reality - can be obtained through a wedding of understanding of the two spheres.

In this context, Iqbal was one of the earliest Asian Muslim contributors to the field and that his works should therefore

¹⁵⁰ See Martin J.S Rudwick, "The Shape and Meaning of Earth History" in D.C. Lindberg & R.L. Numbers, *God and Nature*, Berkeley 1986, p. 296-321.

¹⁵¹ Huston Smith, "Crisis in Philosophy", Paper Presented at the International Seminar on Islamic Philosophy and Science - Penang, 30 May - 2 June 1989.

be critically studied and expanded upon by present scholars and thinkers.

(v) Finally it can be argued that the natural theology of Iqbal can have an important place in the prevailing debates on the current 'crisis in philosophy'.¹⁵² As Prof. Huston Smith has pointed out recently, reason is not itself light. "It is more like a transformer that does useful things but on condition that it is (attached or) to a generator."¹⁵³ He explained that after revolting against a narrowly empiricist positivism, philosophy is now looking for a new generator. What strikes me as being very interesting is his argument that the much sought after new alternative could very well be found in our understanding of human nature itself. Perhaps this is why Iqbal stressed the importance of psychology. I believe that in his ideas regarding the consciousness and the nature of the self. Iqbal's theology may prove more than a useful source of inspiration, regarding our perceptions about human nature. In this regard I hope that the very lengthy explication of this theology has proven to be worthwhile.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

IQBAL AND DEMOCRACY

(pt. 1)

Dr. WAHEED ISHRAT

TRANSLATION

Dr. M.A.K. KHALIL

The operation of democracy in the West has not been an unmixed blessing, and history is replete with oppression of the religious and ethnic minorities. The shortcomings of democracy have been disturbing Western intellectuals over the past two centuries. They have expressed fears and disappointments in their works, several of which have been reviewed.

The alternative Western political systems of monarchy and dictatorship have also been reviewed. Their performance has been found to be even more disappointing than that of democracy. As these are the only alternatives to democracy in the experience of the West this has added to the frustration of Western intellectuals.

These events in human history highlight the Qur'anic message that man-made systems are defective and that the human race is standing at the edge of an abyss, falling into which can be avoided only by Divine guidance. The Judeo-Christian ecclesiastical literature was, at best, vague and incomplete in providing any guidance, and the operation of theocracy in Europe during the middle ages had been a nightmare to the people.

Allamah Iqbal's service to humanity at this critical juncture was a very timely beacon of light. He declared to the world not to despair because there was hope of redemption in the "Islamic spiritual democracy."

In addition to the above objections to Western democracy Iqbal objected to its unaltered application to the undivided Indian sub-continent, on account of the country's special conditions in which Hindus formed a large privileged majority and Muslims a small and handicapped minority. In these

circumstances obviously the Muslims would have been losers and subservient to the Hindus. All efforts of the Muslim League, over a period of two decades in which Iqbal had played a prominent role, to come to workable understanding with the Hindus, had failed. In these circumstances it would have been impossible for the Muslims to lead their lives according to the dictates of Islam in the Western democratic system had been adopted. Political partition of the subcontinent was, therefore, unavoidable for the Muslims if they wanted to fulfil their Divine Commission of establishing the sovereignty of God first in their majority regions in the sub-continent, and then to extend it to the rest of the world in cooperation with their brethren in other Islamic countries.

The paper cites extensively from Allamah Iqbal's works, especially from his opus magnum *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, and concludes that Allamah Iqbal was convinced of the indispensability of the establishment of "Islamic spiritual democracy" for Muslim and that Islamic society could not be established without an Islamic State, which he considered as "the sixth pillar of Islam".

As Pakistan was the first country established in the name of Islam, after the Divinely guided Khilafah, it was obviously Iqbal's Prime Choice for being the bulwark of such a State. The paper considers the following objectives essential for the Islamic State:

1. The Objectives Resolution passed by the Pakistan Constituent Assembly in 1950 should form the basic guideline for all legislating and executive decisions.

2. We should realize that all Muslims are jointly responsible for establishing the Islamic State, and not any individual or group. The Consultative Assembly should be established by adult franchise and should, in turn, appoint the Executive. The Executive should enact and enforce, through the Executive, legislation in conformity with God's will and Commandments and should have the power of *ijtihad*. The Executive should be accountable to the Consultative Assembly and the latter should be responsible to the people. Important matters, including controversial *ijtihads*, should be referred to the people's referendum. Political parties should be permitted to formulate and enact their programmes for establishment and operation of

the Islamic_ State on the basis of which they should obtain people's mandate periodically through elections.

3. The State should provide the four basic needs of free education, free justice, equitable distribution of country's resources and economic freedom to all citizens,

4. Privileged classes on religious, social and political bases should be gradually, but surely, eliminated.

5. The State should guard the interests of Muslims all over the world and should struggle for freeing them from oppression of all kind and degrees.

6 Having established an ideal society, the State should invite all mankind to follow their example by adopting it and benefitting from Islamic ideals and their blessings.

7. The State should fight for the emancipation of un-privileged and under-privileged people all over the world, and should cooperate in all efforts for establishing a world society based on peace and freedom from want, which is the ultimate objective of Islam.

INTRODUCTION

Even apart from Allamah Iqbal's concepts democracy is a controversial subject which needs viewing with deep insight. Evidence exists in Allamah Iqbal's verse as well as prose which gives the impression of his strong opposition to the concept of democracy. The Allamah was particularly a strong critic of the present day commonly held concepts of Western democracy. As the Allamah has pointed out several basic defects of the Western concept in democracy it would be appropriate to clarify that he was against the well known and widely understood western concept of democracy only. This also was with special reference to the conditions prevailing in the Indian subcontinent, where the Muslims were a minority and the Hindus a majority. In opposing the Western concept of democracy the Allamah also had the fact in view that the promulgation of the Western democratic system in undivided India, with Muslim minority and Hindu majority, would result in perpetual political power for the Hindu majority and slavery for the

Muslim minority. This fact should not be ignored in connection with Allamah Iqbal's opposition to democracy. Still, the question arises whether the unaltered Western democratic system was acceptable in a new Islamic society outside the mixed society of Muslims and non-Muslims . The Allamah's reply to this also is almost in the negative. However, the system of government which Allamah Iqbal considers indispensable for the spiritual freedom of Muslims, according to the concept of ijihad and "spiritual democracy" has the Islamic democratic consultation as its foundation and spirit. Sovereignty belongs to the people in Western democracy and they are answerable to none except themselves. As opposed to this, sovereignty in Allamah Iqbal's "spiritual democracy" befits God alone. The Muslims are its guardians by virtue of being God's Vicegerents. They are empowered to establish an institution, by mutual consultation, some form of election, or by vote, in the present day parlance, for the administration of their affairs in conformity with the dictates of God and His Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H). In this way. based on the Islamic concept of consultation, Iqbal strongly supports the establishment of a parliament or consultation, Iqbal strongly supports the establishment of a parliament or consultative assembly for the Muslim society, elected by the majority of Muslims. This assembly would produce new interpretations of ijihad in conformity with the demands of the present age, so as to bring justice and prosperity to the Muslim society and harmonise them with the demands of the present age. This is the basic point of the "spiritual democracy" of Allamah Iqbal. We explain below the basic concepts with reference to Allamah Muhammad Iqbal.

WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

In the commonly known Western sense democracy is a system of government in which sovereignty belongs to the people and the legislature is created by their majority opinion, which is obtained through votes. This legislature is the highest legislative organisation of the country. Maulana Muhammad Haneef Nadvi explains democracy thus:

“Democracy is composed of two Greek components; one means the people and the other means government and law.

Technically, it is applied to a system of government in which the greatest number of people participate.¹⁵⁴

The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy explains the concept of democracy thus:

"The correct meaning of democracy is that this is a form of government in which citizens have the direct collective right of political decisions, and the principle of the rule of the majority is accepted as the law. This is called direct democracy. Secondly, it is the system of government in which people do not exercise political rights individually but do so through elected representatives and the latter are responsible to them. This is called representative democracy. Thirdly, this is a form of government which is generally representative democracy but the powers and activities of the majority operate within a special institutional framework, which is constitutionally so framed as to allow people to enjoy their collective and individual rights. These rights relate to freedom of expression and religion. This is called balanced or constitutional democracy. Fourthly, the word democracy is also used for the political and social characteristics of a system which is not covered by the above mentioned three definitions of democracy, but which does aim eliminating economic and social distinctions, especially the distinctions resulting from the right of individual ownership and distribution of wealth. This is called social and economic democracy".¹⁵⁵

Dr. Khaleefah Abdul Hakeem in his book titled, *Fikr-i-Iqbal* (The Thoughts of Iqbal) considers democracy to be an ambiguous concept like many other social concepts. He says:

¹⁵⁴ Nadvi, Muhammad Haneef; *Asasiyat-i-Islam. Idara-i-Saqafat-i-Islamia*, Lahore: p. 205, 1973.

¹⁵⁵ The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, Vol.2: pp. 77-78

"Democracy is also like those ambiguous concepts which have no meaning. In the present day world every nation desires for and strives to establish democracy, or claims to be the custodian of the correct democracy, and considers the claims to other forms of democracy baseless and imposterous¹⁵⁶".

However, notwithstanding the various ambiguities about democracy, it has the basic attribute that "The most common meaning of democracy, which appears to be acceptable to all, is that no individual or class rules over the people against their will¹⁵⁷". Further explaining this Hakeem says:

"Democracy is a system in which sovereignty should not belong to the king or the rich, the reins of the government should be controlled neither by the feudal lords nor the capitalists and industrialists. The people's representatives in the legislature should be persons of sound judgement freely elected by the people¹⁵⁸".

A brief definition of democracy would be, in Abraham Lincoln's words, "The government of the people, for the people, by the people". In other words democracy is a form of government in which people participate by expressing their opinion through votes. They have the feeling of participation in their affairs in a government established only for the common weal by the common consent of the people. This feeling of people's participation promoted Abraham Lincoln to call it "the last best hope of this world", and Jefferson, had called it "a respect for the people's opinion¹⁵⁹".

¹⁵⁶ Hakeem, Dr. Khaleefah Abdul Fikr-i-Iqbal. Bazm-i-Iqbal, Lahore, Fourth Edition p. 281, 1968

¹⁵⁷ Hakeem, Dr. Khaleefah Abdul Fikr-i-Iqbal. Bazm-i-Iqbal, Lahore, Fourth Edition p. 281, 1968

¹⁵⁸ Hakeem, Dr. Khaleefah Abdul Fikr-i-Iqbal. Bazm-i-Iqbal, Lahore, Fourth Edition p. 281, 1968

In short democracy is a system of government in which:

1. Sovereignty belongs to the people
2. The people establish the parliament or the country's highest legislature by their common votes, and the legislature is answerable to them.
3. The government is established for the common weal and prosperity.
4. It is also elected by the common vote.

In other words democracy per se is not the purpose or goal but is only an instrument of government of a country in which the country's people participate directly.

THE COMMON ARGUMENTS AGAINST DEMOCRACY-

As stated earlier, the concept of democracy is of Greek origin. Consequently, the first proceedings against democracy were also initiated in Greece by Socrates. who was regarded as one of the seven wisest persons of his time. The criticism levelled by Socrates against democracy at that. time has always been repeated by its critics. In fact democracy's critics neither have any stronger argument than those of Socrates sub-consciously taking shelter behind fascism or dictatorship under some excuse. Socrates had said that:

"What would be more ridiculous than democracy which had been hamstrung by the mob, where emotions ran supreme, government was merely a debating society, and where the military commanders were selected, dismissed and killed without rhyme or reason when the simple minded farmers and merchants were selected in alphabetical order to work as members of the supreme court.¹⁶⁰

Later, criticizing the system again he says:

"Is it not naively superstitious to imagine that wisdom would be attained by mere majority? On the contrary, is it not universally experienced that the people participating in gatherings are very much more foolish, violent and cruel than those who prefer seclusion? How shameful is it that those orators should rule humanity who indulge in high sounding rhetoric which can be likened to empty brass vessels which keep sounding on being hit till somebody stops them by putting his hand over them."¹⁶¹

Socrates suggests the solution of this problem to be to "entrust government's leadership to the wisest person".¹⁶²

After condemning democracy up to the hilt the solution presented by Socrates in the form of "the wisest person" will be examined at the proper place. We should first identify Socrates' criticism, which is:-

1. This system of government is hamstrung by the mob, i.e. decisions are made by majority opinion, which means that the decision made by the majority opinion is considered sound.
2. This system of government is dominated by emotions.
3. Such a government is a debating society, i.e. every matter is decided after a debate in the parliament.

¹⁶⁰ Durant, Will (1885); History of Philosophy. Urdu Translation (Dastan-i-Falsafah) by Syed Abid Mi. Maktaba-i-Franklin, Lahore: p.44.

¹⁶¹ Durant, Will (1885); History of Philosophy. Urdu Translation (Dastan-i-Falsafah) by Syed Abid Mi. Maktaba-i-Franklin, Lahore: p.44.

¹⁶² Durant, Will (1885); History of Philosophy. Urdu Translation (Dastan-i-Falsafah) by Syed Abid Mi. Maktaba-i-Franklin, Lahore: p.44.

4. Simple minded farmers and businessmen are elected, or otherwise, power is captured by feudal lords and capitalists.
5. Rhetoricians gain power.
- 6 Those living in public are more violent and cruel than the ones who prefer seclusion.

These are the basic objections raised more or less by all. It would be better to point out the criticism of other critics of democracy before analysing Socrates' criticism, so that the objections against this system and the analysis of other systems in comparison may be explained in detail. Will Durant writes in his book. *The Story of Philosophy*, on the tragedy of Western democracy:¹⁶³

Will Durant has the same objections as Socrates. that the power of decision rests with the majority. Even Rousseau, who was among the founders of the new democratic system, also objected to the decision making by the majority. Consequently, he says:

"If we take the term in its strictest sense there never has existed, nor will ever exist. a true democracy. It is contrary to the nature of things that the many govern and the few he governed."¹⁶⁴

Professor Tahseen Firaqui in his book, *Maghribi Jamhooriyat Ahl-i-Maghrib Kee, Nazar Men*, (Western Democracy in the View of the Westerners) has assiduously assimilated the objections of very important Western thinkers and writers against democracy. They include Rousseau, Nietzsche, Carlyle, Belak, Donnelly, Agneish, Bernard Shaw, Laiky, Spengler, Mawrence, Eric Frum, Harold Laski, Rene Guenon, Joseph Schimpter, and

¹⁶³ Durant, Will (1885) *The Pleasures of Philosophy*. Urdu Translation (Nishat-i-Falsafah) by Dr. Muhammad Ajmal. Maktaba-i-Khawar, Lahore: p. 101, 1966

¹⁶⁴ Rousseau, Jean Jaques - *Le Contract Sociale*. Vol.III, Chapter IV; p. 762

Bertrand Russell. In addition, there must be many more who have raised objections against democracy. However, it must be admitted that of all their objections against democracy none are more worth mentioning than those of the first critic, i.e. Socrates. For example Carlyle also considers a wise man more important than many idiots. He is also in search of a wise man, and considers democracy to be the rule of the idiots. Belak, Donnelly and Bernard Shaw prefer a wise man over majority and consider democracy to be synonymous with the appointment of some unscrupulous people through elections organized by several incompetent persons. When Laski says that the creation of a conflict between the majority and the minority is the work of the election agent, he also supports the stand of Socrates. He has another objection, that is, voters do not have mature judgement needed for voting. That only a rich person can contest a democratic election, is an important objection against democracy which has been levelled by Laiky, Spengler, Russell, Eric Frum and Schimpter. They have said that poverty and democracy do not go together. As it were, election is an arena in which only the rich can enter, The American intellectual, Joseph A. Schimpter calls democracy ' a government stabled with the people's approval, and says that we cannot call it the people's government but the one established by their approval. In the same way the famous French intellectual, Rene Guenon, who later accepted Islam with the name of Abdul Wahid Yahya, raised the objection against democracy in his book, Crisis of the Modern World that the lower and backward classes of the populace form the majority and they are devoid of judgment and ability, while the classes with ability constitute a minority. Hence, the superior cannot emanate from the inferior, which is approximately what Socrates had said, namely that thick-headed farmers and businessmen acquire power in democracy and the dream of the government of the people becomes ridiculous¹⁶⁵. Professor Tahseen Firaqui has cited the whole of this objection of Rene Guenon in his above mentioned book. Consequently, this discussion of the critics of democracy is largely based on this book, where it has been put together to some extent. Guy Eaton (Islamic

¹⁶⁵ Guenon Rene; The Crisis of the Modern World, Urdu Translation (Nai Dunia Ka Bohran). Suhail Academy, Lahore: pp. 69-78 (cited in Professor Tahseen Firaqui by Maghribi Jamhooriyat Ahl-i-Maghrib Kee Nazar Men; p. 45.

name Hasan Abdul Hakeem), who was a native of Switzerland, criticising the materialism of democracy and the misleading concept of majority, says:

As for the problem of the common people, the poor simpletons mark the ballot papers as voters in favour of the person who has promised them better houses and cheaper food.¹⁶⁶

Professor Muhammad Munawwar has also levelled some important and basic objections in one of his papers titled, Iqbal's Idea of Democracy on the complete absence of ethical values and destruction of the higher ethical principles in democracy. These objections point out misdemeanors of the candidates in obtaining votes and, of the voters in giving them, which influence the entire ethical structure of the society. The objections of the professor are obviously very important and correct. The Western democracy has bequeathed all these evils of the countries of its origin in their colonies, and has destroyed the ethical, social and political structures of the latter. However, the countries gaining independence from this colonial system did not organize this Western concept of democracy under their own cultural and social principles, for accepting the experiences of the West in a constructive spirit have blindly followed them. Consequently, the virtues of the West could not be established in our countries but we did adopt their vices. Perhaps virtue, its durability is slow, and vice, being apparently bright, is fast in its influence. Consequently, the scarceness of morality in democracy exposed by Professor Muhammad Munawwar cannot be denied, because ethical values are really alien to Western democracy. The professor writes.

"But the glaring drawback that transpires is the non-visibility of any moral fibre in the system. Rights are mentioned whereas the question of the right and wrong is ignored. what sort of people as human beings are to be elected? Certainly they must be, suitable individuals. But are they suitable morally as well? What sort of people as human beings are those who elect their representatives? Are they upholders of human values and hence they can elect those who have respect for what is good for humanity? Are they elected because they can spend lavishly on election campaigns can brow-beat

others into voting for them on account of their muscles or just due to their positive capabilities? Does, in the Western democracy, even legal equality prevail? Are there no racial or territorial prejudices at work? Does Western democracy stand for teaching man's respect for man and for trying to make human beings genuinely human? Does it create feelings of sympathy and sacrifice for others? It is quite obvious that Western democracy is not essentially for forming a government of good people, elected by good people and making people good."¹⁶⁷

In fact these objections can be raised against any system devoid of prophetic consciousness. However, in contrast with democracy-fascism imperialism and dictatorship are completely devoid of the very concept of ethics. People are at least counted in democracy, while they are driven like despicable wild beasts in systems other than democracy. Scrutiny of the methods of formation of the governmental structure of the systems other than democracy would show them to be much more cruel, vindictive, narrow minded and destructive to ethical values than democracy. The crimes committed by all the democrats of the world are for less than the cruelties and crimes of one dictator. Examples are available even in Islamic history of the way in which the neglect of the mechanism for the transfer of political power created moral evils. The non-observance of this mechanism for the transfer of political power created the dispute between Hadhrat Ali (R.A.) and Hadhrat Ameer Muawiya (R.A.) and brought Yazeed, Hadhrat Ameer Muawiya's (R.A.) son to political power after his death. During his reign several prominent companions of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H), and his grandson with his whole family was sacrificed at the altar of dictatorship by substitution of the voluntary ba'at (ba'at bil raza) with the ba'at by force (ba'at bil Jabr). If the system of the Ba'at of Hadhrat Abu Bakr and Faruque (R.A.) had been continued as an effective system for the transfer of political power, the pathetic tragedy of the martyrdom of the oppressed Imam would have been avoided and the would not have been changed to monarchy. The fundamental essence of democracy is the transfer of political power and establishment of the governmental structure by majority opinion. It is unrealistic to expect anything more than this from democracy. It can resist

the devastation of ethical values only with the help of other ethical ideals and cultural limitations. We will have to seek guidance from our deen for it and will have to fix the objectives and the modus operandi of democracy in the light of prophetic consciousness. After achieving it, this democracy will be a means of accomplishing ethical values instead of breaking them down, as in the present conditions when all systems are devoid of ethical values, work on the principle of 'might is right'. These are not even remotely concerned with the eminent status of humanity and dignity of man. In fact the very object of Islam is the reorganization of democracy in the light of Islamic principles and its application to Islamic society, through which alone it can gradually evolve into a government elected by pious people, for pious people, which would be instrumental in promoting virtue and endeavours in the pursuit of the common weal. Expecting this from any other system is self deception. If a good king or dictator in power per chance takes interest in the common weal it would be considered only fortuitous. The dictatorial, fascist and monarchical systems cannot be expected to do that.

In the same way the gist of the objections of Laski, Repairedfi, Eric Frum and Russell on democracy is also that it is a trick of the capitalist class, which brings incompetent people to political power through press, specious language and wealth. Lord Russell says the same things in various ways. So, an analysis of all the objections against democracy compels us to admit that the critics of democracy have not gone beyond its first critic, Socrates, while this democratic system has laboured its way to a mighty system in spite of all these criticisms. Democracy's being a controversial system is a criticism levelled by various classes. Directly or indirectly it has been entangled in various h' confusing concepts such as social democracy, economic democracy, constitutional democracy, noble democracy and people's democracy. It has no clear and identifiable form. The different forms of democracy, appearing in different circumstances prevailing in different societies and resulting from centuries of experimenting are in themselves in need of definition, so that a society may be able to adopt any of the forms it prefers to suite its own circumstances. It would be better to review Allamah Iqbal's criticism also before discussing these criticisms.

ALLAMAH IQBAL'S CRITICISM OF DEMOCRACY-

The basic objections raised by Allama Iqbal against democracy in his works are not different from those raised by Socrates. Allama Iqbal expressed the following thoughts about democracy:

جس کے پردوں میں نہیں غیر	ہے وہی سازِ کہن مغرب کا جمہوری نظام از نوائے قیصری
تو سمجھتا ہے یہ آزادی	دیو استبداد جمہوری قبا لیں پائے کوب کی ہے نیلام پری
طب مغرب میں مزے	مجلس آئین و اصلاح و رعایات و حقوق میٹھے اثر خواب آوری
یہ بھی اک سرمایہ	گرمی گفتار اعضائے مجالس الاماں! داروں کی ہے جنگ زرگری

The Western democratic system is the same old orchestra

Its notes have nothing but the melodies of Caesar

The demon of despotism is treading the path of democracy

Thou considereth it to be the fairy of freedom

The constituent assembly reforms grant concessions and rights

In the Western medical system tastes are

sweet but the effects are sporadic

The heat of the debates of assemblies! May God protect us!

This too is a sham quarrel to deceive others

Thou considereth this mirage of attractions to be a garden

O simpleton! thou considereth the cage to be the nest"¹⁶⁸

متاع معنی بیگانہ ازدوں فطرتاں جوئی
ز موران شوخی طبع سلمانی نمی آید
گریز از طرز جمہوری، غلام پختہ کارے شو
کہ از معز دو صد خر فکر انسا نی نمی آید

Thou seekest the treasures of unfathomed wisdom from people of mean nature

Surely, ants cannot attain the wisdom of a Sulaiman

Flee from the Mechanisations of democracy, follow an experienced sage

For the brains of two hundred donkeys cannot produce the wisdom of one man.¹⁶⁹

فرنگ آئین جمہوری نہادست
رسن از گردن دیوی کشادست
گروپی را گر وہی در کمین است
خدا یش یار اگر کاوش چنین است
زمن و ہ اہل مغرب راہ پیامی
کہ جمہور است تیغ بی نیامی

The West has founded the democratic system

It has loosened the rope from the demon's neck

A host of people are running like robbers

While many hungry mouths are running for a loaf of bread

¹⁶⁹

Iqbal. Dr. Sir Muhammad Payam-i-Mashriq Javid Iqbal, Shaikh Ghulam Ali & Sons, Lahore, Pakistan, Thirteenth Edition 1971, p. 158.

One group lies in ambush for another one May God help it if these are
its ways Convey the message from me to the West

That the populace is an unsheathed sword.¹⁷⁰

اس راز کو اک مردِ فرنگی نے کیا فاش
بر چند کہ دانا اسے کھولا نہیں
کرتے

جمہوریت اک طرزِ حکومت ہے کہ جس میں
بندوں کو گنا کرتے ہیں تو لا نہیں
کرتے

Some European sage has unveiled this secret

Though wise men keep these secrets concealed

Democracy is a form of government in which

People are counted but their worth is not assessed.¹⁷¹

تو نے کیا دیکھا نہیں مغرب کا جمہوری نظام
چہرہ روشن اندروں چنگیز سے
تاریک تر

Hast thou not seen the Western democratic system

Whose face is bright but the inside is dark; darker than Changiz?"¹⁷²

ہم نے خود شاہی کو پہنایا ہے جمہوری لباس
جب ذرا آدم ہوا ہے خود شناس و
خود نگر

We have ourselves bestowed democratic role on monarchy

Then has man become somewhat self conscious and self cognizant¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Iqbal, Dr. Sir Muhammad; Zaboar-i Ajam (Gulshan-i-Raz Jadeed. Ninth Edition, 1970, p. 233.

¹⁷¹ Iqbal. Dr. Sir Muhammad; Zarb-i-Kaleem. Maktaba-G Jamia, Delhi, India. First Edition., 1941, p. 150

¹⁷² Iqbal, Dr. Sir Muhammad; Armaghan-i-Hijaz, Published by Kapoor Arts Printing Works, Lahore, Pakistan, First Edition, p. 218, 1938.

نئی تہذیب کے انڈے ہیں گندے
بنائے خوب آزادی نے پھندے
نہایت تیز ہیں یورپ کے رندے

اٹھا کے پھینک دو باہر گلی میں
الکشن، ممبری، کونسل، صدارت
میاں نجار بھی چھیلے گئے ساتھ

Cast them away into the street

The eggs of the new civilization are rotten

Elections, membership, council, presidency

Sham freedom has invented strange noozes

The carpenter has also been scraped

Very sharp are the Europe's planes.¹⁷⁴

یہاں مرض کا سبب ہے غلامی و تقلید

وہاں مرض کا سبب جمہوری نظام

In the East bondage and mimicry has caused the malady

In the West the democratic rule causes the disease¹⁷⁵

We have assembled some verses from Iqbal's Persian and Urdu works containing some criticism of democracy so that a consolidated comprehension may be acquired of the Allamah's' criticism of democracy, free from emotional and humorous diction. Consequently, the following objections arise from the background of the verses.

173 Reference 19: p. 217

174. Reference 15: p. 335

175 Reference 18:p. 164

1. The Western democratic system is the same old European Caesarism or imperialism, and the old capitalistic despotism of Europe is operative behind the smoke screen of democracy. Hence, the system bears only a deceptive resemblance to freedom.

2. Parliament or legislative assembly is only a debating society and an institution established by capitalists for the protection of their own interests.

3. Just as the assembling of two hundred donkey's brains cannot produce a human brain the majority of the common people cannot produce a wise man, or in the Allamah's words "a man of attested intelligence" We should avoid a democratic system which makes decisions by simple majority and does not seek the guidance of a wise man or a man of Faith. Democracy is a system in which the simple majority of persons makes decisions without considering the ability of these persons, whereas one wise man is better and more effective than thousands of simpletons.

4. Though the Western democracy has a bright face. its interior is darker than that of Changiz. Due to the general awakening of the common people (brought about by the influence of the awakening created by the Muslims in Spain and Baghdad) Europe has presented imperialism in the wrappers of democracy. The democratic institutions such as election, membership, council and presidentship etc. are the rotten eggs of the new civilization. Europe has invented these in the name of democracy.

5. The Allama says that the bane of the Eastern people is their, enchantment with blind following of the ways of their ancestors and the root of all ills of the West is this democracy in which the numbers of persons are considered instead of their intellectual worth.

Reflection on the Allamah's criticism of democracy would give the feeling that his criticism of democracy is the same as that levelled by Socrates or other critics of democracy. We want to present a fundamental matter about Allamah Iqbal's criticism of democracy before analysing it. This fundamental matter is the Allamah's foresight which discerned the psychological problem constituting the background of his criticism of democracy and this was interconnected with the special political atmosphere of that time.

THE BACKGROUND OF ALLAMAH IQBAL'S

CRITICISM OF DEMOCRACY

During Allamah Iqbal's time the concepts of democracy and democratic thinking, like one person one vote, right of representation, joint and separate electorates were moving fast from the West to the East and were increasingly becoming popular. Under the conditions prevailing in the Indian sub-continent, resulting from the British terminology, all big and small nations there, had been designated Hindus. Thus the Hindus were elevated, to the status of majority by herding together all the different nations of the sub-continent, although the real Hindus were a minority. This catapulted the Hindus into a majority and relegated all other nations to the status of a minority. The latter included the nation which had formerly ruled the sub-continent. i.e. the Muslims. The relegation of Muslims to minority status meant that in the event of the subcontinent gaining independence under the concept of one person one vote, the political power in India would have been transferred to the Hindu majority, and the Muslims being a minority would have become subservient. Consequently, Allamah Iqbal supported the right of ijthihad for the consultative assembly or parliament of an Islamic State, but did not support this right for the parliament composed of the non-Muslim majority which would have been established in united India. He plainly said:

“In my opinion this (ijthihad by parliament) is the only way by which we can stir into activity the spirit of life in our legal system, and give it an evolutionary outlook. In India, however, (with Hindu majority and Muslim minority) difficulties are likely to arise, for, it is doubtful whether a non-Muslim legislative assembly can exercise the power of ijthihad”¹⁷⁶.

This extract reflects Allamah Iqbal's thinking that he did not like any system or state of affairs in united India . which would enable the Hindu

¹⁷⁶ Iqbal. Dr Sir Muhammad (1930); *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, Pakistan, p. 174, 1982

majority to influence the interests of the Muslim minority. This is the reason for which democracy was not acceptable to Allamah Iqbal in any form in the united India. Not only to Allamah Iqbal, this state of affairs could not be acceptable to any Muslim. This was so because the Hindus dream of their renaissance included the annihilation of Muslims from the sub-continent on the pattern of Spain. In these circumstances Allamah Iqbal's support of democracy in united India would have amounted to his recommendation of slavery for Muslims. This is the social psyche which made the Allamah a critic of democracy in united India. But was the Allamah an opponent of democracy even in an Islamic State and was he not prepared to accept any form of democracy? Judgement. should be passed on this, only with much caution. To prove the Allamah to be an all out rejector of democracy. on the basis of a few of his verses, would be against the truth, because the Allamah was a supporter and friend of democracy in an Islamic State where political power would be in the hands of the Muslims.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CRITICISM OF DEMOCRACY

The objections resulting from the above mentioned verses of Allamah Iqbal have been levelled even by democracy's supporters. These are the defects of democracy and it is desirable to remove them, but- the outright rejection of the system is not at all right. This is so because comparison of these defects with other non-democratic systems leaves no choice but to adopt democracy. The systems presented in contrast with democracy are the worst examples of despotic dictatorship in which the individual is not even counted, leave alone assessing his worth. The individuals in the democratic society are at least consulted, whereas in other systems every dictator, acquiring power by force, considers himself to be the Angel Gabril, the man of Faith and the perfect Man. Consequently, the gleaners of power convince such a dictator that the world has never produced a wiser and more intelligent person than him. Searching for a wiser person is even more difficult than obtaining the moon. Nobody has an instrument which can search for such a person. Moreover, having found such a person it is neither always possible to obtain people's consensus in his support, nor is it necessary that he would be able to comprehend the affairs of the State. In these circumstances the power for enforcing his decisions would not be the common consent but the power of the bullet, and he would appear in the

form of an absolute dictator on the strength of this power. The question is as to who beside his own claim, would decide that he is a man of Faith and proven truthfulness. In social environment finding such a person in every election may be possible for a village council, but is impossible in the present day State comprising millions of people. Insistence on or support of such concepts is equivalent to establishing and maintaining a State on perpetually shaky foundations. This is an abstraction with which the present day State cannot be bracketed. How many such wise men has any State been lucky enough to acquire since the time of Socrates? Surely, those acquiring political power by force have compelled people to call them wise men and men of steel. In the present day world, talking of such concepts cannot be considered short of knowingly or unknowingly gaining favours from dictators. Lastly, it cannot be ensured that such a wise and righteous man also has the ability of operating the political system of a country.

The second objection levelled against democracy is even more meaningless than this, i.e. only capitalists and - rich people can acquire political power through democracy. The question is whether the poor people and labourers acquire political power in monarchy and dictatorship? Such a thought is no less than folly, Surely some slaves became kings and some poor and middle class people became dictators. But poverty was not instrumental in their becoming kings and dictators, in that somebody conferred political power on them on the basis of their poverty and excellent ability. In actual fact the internal wire pulling and intrigue provided such military power to these kings and dictators which enabled them, not only to ascend the pedestal of political power but also to join the ranks of capitalists. Also, a labourer does not remain a labourer after ascending the pedestal of political power. His mental and political approach acquire the character of those of the capitalists. Hence, it is a pure fallacy that only capitalists acquire political power in democracy. On the contrary these people acquire political power under every system. The people of the _labouring and poor classes who acquired political power through democracy outnumber those who did so by force. Hence this objection is a mere jugglery of words.

The third objection also deserves little attention, because the opinion of two hundred persons should be considered more reliable than that of one, as one person is more liable to err than two hundred persons. A solitary person

dispensing political power, surrounded by flatterers and over loaded with problems cannot make a better decision than two hundred people elected by a social unit. These people have the common will as well as the power of validation, whereas the dictator has no power of decision except that of his own egotism. The people of Pakistan, who have a twenty to twenty five years experience of dictators climbing the pedestal of political power through the bullet instead of the ballot, know well the game played by these "men of Faith", "men of God", and "men of iron will". They know that these men have used every cunningness to frustrate the democratic ambitions of the people. Certainly, one human brain cannot evolve out of the brains of two hundred donkeys. However, are the two hundred persons always idiots? Besides, how can it be ensured that the one individual preferred over two hundred persons would measure up to the desired standards required by these critics of democracy? In fact every dictator regards himself as the Universal Spirit and others as donkeys. This is the psyche which also exists in the subconscious of the opponents of democracy. Considering the common people to be donkeys and the dictator as the Universal Spirit is nothing short of insulting the populace and flattery of the dictators. These attitudes result only in strengthening the hands of the dictators. The establishment of Pakistan, which has resulted from the common vote, testifies to the appropriateness of the collective decision of the Muslim Ummah. They are worthy of trust, whereas the decisions of the Jamiat-i-Ulama-i-Hind, Jama'at-i-Islami, Majlis-i-Ahrari-Islam, Khaksar Organization and many others righteous people were in conflict with Muslim interests, indifferent to the future of Islam in the sub-continent, fostered by false personal egotism and completely against the interests of Islam. If the right of final vote had been in the hands of these righteous people Pakistan would not have come into existence. The establishment of Pakistan is a masterpiece of the sound judgement of the common people of Pakistan.

The majority of democracy's opponents in Pakistan, by depriving the people of Pakistan of their voting rights, wants to chastise them for their decision in favour of the establishment of Pakistan theocracy in the name of religion wants to thrust on them their own self made theocracy of the righteous. This will be an oligarchy in which the power of decision would be in the hands of these righteous persons. Consequently, it is only proper for

Muslims to beware of the advocates of dictatorship in preference to democracy. Dr. Khaleefa Abdul Hakeem writes:

There appears to be no course open to Muslims except to abstain from looking up to dictatorship in opposition to democracy, and to use their intelligence and practical sagacity combined with sacrifice, for slowly reforming the democratic system so as to make its virtues more prominent than its defects.¹⁷⁷

The correct approach is that in the matters of decision making on concepts and articles of faith nobody except God, His ordained Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) or His Book has the right to make even the most infinitesimal alteration. In these matters it is more useful and effective to assess the worth of people than merely counting them, so much so that even in the interpretation of the deen people would be assessed. At the time of ijthad in deen both the opinion and the worth of the mujtahid would be kept in view. Still the worth of the mujtahid would be assessed more rigorously than his opinion. In other words the worth of people would have to be assessed in matters pertaining to deen and doctrine, but in matters of State administration participation of the greatest number of people in this decision making is more appropriate than their personality precedents. For this is available in the immaculate life of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) Himself. He was bound by God and the Holy Book in matters of deen and at the time of the Battle of the Trench and on several other occasions concerning State administration, He asked for and accepted counsel in spite of having full authority. We cannot adjudge the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) to be bound by consultations but other sovereigns certainly do not enjoy the same status. A Prophet P.B.U.H is appointed by God whereas other sovereigns do not have the same status. Hence, it is only proper to compel them to consultation and to abide by it, so, that they do not become autocratic. Maulana Muhammad Haneef Nadvi has explained this matter to some extent in his book, "Asasiyat-i-Islam (The Basics of Islam):

The distinction between right and wrong in matters of deen and doctrine is doubtlessly not bound by majority opinion. The Truth is the Truth even if it may be accepted only by one person and opposed by the whole society. However, when considering matters of State administration the criterion for making a decision would be the suitability of the course of action instead of arguments.¹⁷⁸

This is so because application and not experience is important in democracy¹⁷⁹. Here, considering the majority opinion alone as decisive is proper. Maximum participation of the people makes it more acceptable to the people, and if some decision enjoys common acceptance it is conducive to the increased stability of society.

The fourth objection to democracy becomes meaningless when we compare democracy with other systems and see that the heart of dictators is much darker than that of Changiz, compared with that of democratic rulers. Every ruler from Oliver Cromwell to those of the present day are the worst examples of oppression and fascism. They do not want to hear anybody's opinion, leave alone accept it. All their powers are wasted in suppressing their opponents, and psychologically they suffer from the complex of non-acceptance of the views of the people. They are permanently paranoid, which makes them psychologically suffocated, leading them to hardheartedness and cruelty. They become bent on suppressing every opposing thought and its expression. If the silence of the graveyard can be called peace it abounds in dictatorship. If the expression of the differences of opinion and views, listening to others and the acceptance or rejection of each other's views after their consideration is regarded instability then it certainly exists in democracies. A little reflection would show that this right of decision making is also a product of democratic disposition. Dictatorship forces decisions by power, force and fear. There cannot be two opinions about considering dictators darker than Changiz.

178 Reference 1:p. 212.

179 Reference 1:p. 212.

In, the fifth objection the Allamah says that the charm of ritualism is the bane of the Easterners, and being ensnared by democracy, that of the Westerners. The Allamah has very rightly diagnosed the malady of the East. He wants the East to abandon blind ritualism and to be the architect of its own destiny, making use of the experience of the West but with due regard to the environments and the problems of the East when applying those experiences. He goes to the extent of advising them against blindly following the west even in the matter of democracy. On the contrary, the East should reorganize democracy according to its own conditions and goals. When the Allamah adjudges democracy to be the bane of the West he has in view the unbridled democracy adopted by the West, which is harmful even to its own civilisation. By adjudging the Western civilization as being devoid of prophetic consciousness and being enamoured by the visible, i.e. materialism, the Allamah means that if it were to reorganize itself in the light of prophetic consciousness it can avoid the problems which are leading to its decline. The absence of prophetic consciousness alone has brought about the decline of ethical values in the Western-style democracy. If we organize democracy in the light of our concept of sovereignty and Islamic ethical values democracy can help in the enlightenment and glory of ethical values also. It has the potential of being cast into a system in which good people may be elected for parliament in order to enlighten and glorify the higher ethical values, and participate in the progress of virtue. This also can be expected only from democracy because in other systems even a good hearted person cannot protect himself, on account of being caught in the web of the struggle for political power.

TWO BASIC ATTRIBUTES OF DEMOCRACY-

All definitions of democracy have two basic points. One is making some arrangements for participation of public opinion in the framing of a country's or nation's councils of executive and legal administrations. At the time of shaping the country's administration, conducting political affairs and enforcing administrative decisions it is necessary to keep in view the opinions of the people on whom these decisions would be enforced, so that their acceptance of these decisions may be obtained through their own free will rather than under any force of authority. Now, compare this attribute of democracy with other systems. In theocracy decision making on country's

affairs and administrative matters is the prerogative of the select ecclesiastical group. They play with the people's destinies as they please, and claim this right under religion, i.e. the power of the Church. Following in their footsteps the kings started designating themselves as the "Shadow of God", implying that their power was bestowed upon them by God. Consequently, they presented themselves as protectors of God's people and co-sharers in the will and intentions of God. The clergy derived their power and authority from the institution of the Church, but the powers of kings resided in their inheritance, their own military strength and the divine right to rule. The same applies to the dictators of the old as well as the present age, who acquire their right to rule over their people by the sword or the bullet. Decide for yourself whether these dictatorships and monarchies are not the products of the law of the jungle in which "might is right"? What can be a bigger insult to human conscience and dignity than these monarchies and dictatorships which are born of the power of the sword or the gun. Supporting them is tantamount to crime against human dignity, and all those who support these dictatorships and monarchies are criminals against humanity, because support to them resembles the support of the law of the jungle. When offered the choice between the ballot and the bullet the present day conscientious man would select the ballot in preference to the bullet. The ballot is the expression of respect for man's rights and opinion in the affairs of the State and the bullet is the emblem of the use of ruthless power and force for subduing him.

Peaceful transfer of political power is the other attribute of democracy. It is a means of transfer of political power from one hand to the other, a better formula than that which has not been established by the human race. There are only three ways for the transfer of political power. One is the method of inheritance by the son on the death of the ruler. The second method is the snatching of political power by force. The third one is this democratic way in which those to be ruled elect their own rulers by their own votes. The first or the second method is current in monarchies. After the death of a king either his son ascends to the throne or some other person usurps political power by his military might. In dictatorships military power is the only way for transfer of political authority. Now consider both these methods of transfer of political power and also view the method of the transfer by common vote and decide which one is safer, easier and more peaceful and has human dignity, honour and magnificence, It is a fact that

there is less than one percent possibility of a man of Faith acquiring political power by the first method of inheritance. In the Muslim history of the Indian subcontinent a good ruler has seldom acquired political power in this way except Aurangzeb. Tipu Sultan and a few others. Among these also, the former had to use the sword to ascend to political power and even a pious person like Aurangzeb could not escape the ignominy of shedding the blood of his brothers and his father. If such a pious ruler could not avoid being implicated in this wrong way to political power the less said the better about other rulers. The whole human history is a tale of woe resulting from the atrocities of kings and dictators. In these circumstances change in government or transfer of political power by common vote alone is proper for human dignity and humane perceptions. In human history the number of people killed in connection with transfer of power in the democratic way bears no comparison to those killed at the time of such a transfer in monarchies and dictatorships. Hence, there is no alternative to adopting the method designed by democracy for transfer of political power. All monarches and dictatorships fail in comparison to it.

Democracy comprises of only these two basic concepts, i.e. participation of the people in the affairs of the State and transfer of political power through the ballot. All other aspects and definitions of democracy are only explanations and clarifications of these two basic concepts, and these explanation and clarifications can be modified by every country and nation according to its own ideologies and conceptions.

(To be continued)

