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IQBAL ON NEW ULEMA FOR A NEW MUSLIM SOCIETY

Dr. Javid Iqbal

When the European Colonial Powers penetrated the Muslim world, the Ulema in different Muslim countries resisted them. But their resistance could not stop the advance as the Ulema were totally unaware of the advancement made by human knowledge as well as science and technology in Europe. They fought against the long-range of the imperialists with timeworn rifles and swords. Subsequently when the reformers like Syed Jamal-uddin Afghani, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan etc. preached that in order to know the secret of Western power one had to acquire the new knowledge, they opposed them as Westernized Muslims. It was in this background that in the conflict between the "conservatives" and the "liberals", the liberal Muslim reformers regarded the conservative Ulema as a hinderance in the material progress of the Muslim nations.

The problem of "conservatism" was handled in two ways in Turkey and Muslim India. In Turkey Kemal Ataturk eliminated the Ulema completely from the religious life of the Turks. But in Muslim India, Iqbal tried his best during his life time to educate and train the Ulema so as to create among them a group of new Ulema to provide a new motivation for Islam to the new Muslim society which he thought of bringing into being.

Iqbal found the Muslim society suffering from numerous ailments. He has drawn a portrait of it in one of his Urdu articles titled "Qaumi Zindagi" (National Life) which appeared in the journal *Makhzan* in 1904. He observes:

"This unfortunate community has been deprived of political, industrial as well as commercial power. Now unconcerned with the demands of times and smitten by stark poverty, it is trying to survive with the help of the useless staff of contentment. Leaving aside other matters, it has so far not been able to settle its religious disputes. Every other day a new sect is brought into being which considering itself exclusively as the heirs of paradise declares the rest of mankind as fuel for hell. This form of sectarianism has scattered the Muslims in such a manner that there is no hope for unifying them as a single community. The condition of our Maulvis is such that if two of them happen to be present in one city, they send

messages to each other for holding a discussion on some controversial religious issues, and in case the discussion starts, which usually does, then it ends up in a deplorable brawl. The width of knowledge and comprehension which was a characteristic of the early Ulema of Islam does not exist any more. But there exists a list of "Muslim infidels" in which additions are being made daily by their own hand. The social scene of the Muslims is equally distressing. Their girls are illiterate, their boys are ignorant and jobless. They are scared to try their luck by working as industrial labourers, they consider taking up vocational jobs as below their dignity. The number of dissolution of marriage cases in their families is rising. Similarly the crime among them is on the increase. The situation is quite serious, and there is no solution of the problem except that the entire community should direct its mind and soul completely towards reforming itself. God does not change the condition of a community unless it changes itself."

According to Iqbal one of the most important factors for the establishment of a new Muslim society was the reform of Islamic culture, and it was in this connection that he felt the need for educating and training the Ulema. He argues:

"The question of cultural reform among the Muslims is in fact a religious question, because there is no aspect of our cultural life which can be separated from religion. However, because of the occurance of a magnificent revolution in the conditions of modern living, certain new cultural needs have emerged. It has therefore become necessary that the decisions made by the old jurists, the collection of which is generally known as the Islamic *Sharâ'ah*, require a review. The decisions delivered by the former jurists from time to time on the basis of the broad principle of the Quran and the Tradition, were indeed appropriate and practical for those specific times, but these are not completely applicable to the needs and requirements of the present times. If one reflects deeply on the conditions of modern life, one is forced to arrive at the conclusion that just as we need the elaboration of a new *Ilm-i-Kal«m* for providing a fresh religious motivation, we likewise need the services of a jurist who could by the width of his vision stretch the principle so widely as to cover all the possible situations of the present cultural needs. As far as I am aware, the Muslim world has not yet produced any such great Jurist, and if one were to consider the magnitude of this

enterprise, it would appear that perhaps it is a job for more than one mind to accomplish, and it may require at least a century to complete the work."

Iqbal wanted to establish an Islamic university for the education of the new Ulema. This was necessary for the realization of many objectives, and one of them, as explained by Iqbal was:

Who does not know that the moral training of the Muslim masses is in the hands of such Ulema and preachers who are not really competent to perform this duty. Their knowledge of Islamic history and Islamic sciences is extremely limited. In order to persuade the people to adopt in their lives the moral and religious values of Islam, it is necessary for a preacher of today to be not only familiar with subjects like history, economics and sociology, but must also have complete knowledge of the literature and modes of thinking of the community."

The Islamic University was not created. However, in the thirties the Aligarh Muslim University thought of introducing a new faculty of Islamic studies, and accordingly Aftab Ahmed Khan, Chancellor of the university wrote to Iqbal seeking his advice. Iqbal wrote a long letter to him which is a very important document. Some of the extracts of the same are given below:

"Our first and formost object should be to create Ulema of proper qualities who could fulfil the spiritual needs of the community. Please note that alongwith the change in the outlook of the people their spiritual requirements also undergo a change. The change in the status of the individual, his freedom of thought and expression, and the unimaginable advancement made by the physical sciences, have completely revolutionized modern life. As a result, the kind of *Ilm-i-Kal«m* and the theological understanding which was considered sufficient to satisfy the heart of a Muslim of the Middle Ages, does not satisfy him any more. This is not being stated with the intention to injure the spirit of religion. But in order to re-discover the depths of creative and original thinking (Ijtihad), and to emphasize that it is essential to reconstruct our religious thought. Like many other matter, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's far sightedness made him also look into this problem. As you may know he laid the foundations of his rationalism on the philosophical doctrines of an ancient and bygone age for the resolution of this problem. I am afraid, I do not agree with your proposed curriculum of Islamic studies. In my view the revival of the faculty

of Islamic studies on the old lines is totally useless. As far its spiritual significance one can say that it is based on stereotype ideas, and as far its educational significance it is irrelevant in the face of the emerging new problems or the new presentation of the old problems. What is needed today is to apply ones mind in a new direction and to exert for the construction of a new theology and a new *'Ilm-i-Kal«m*. It is evident that this job can be accomplished by those who are competent to do it. But how to create such Ulema? My suggestion so that if you desire to keep the conservative element of our society satisfied, then you may start with the school of Islamic studies on the old lines. But your ultimate objective should be to gradually bring forward a group of such Ulema who are themselves capable of independent and creative thinking (Ijtih«d-i-Fikr) in accordance with my proposed scheme …. In my view the dissemination of modern religious ideas is necessary for the modern Muslim nations. A struggle has already commenced in the Islamic world between the old and new methods of education as well as between the upholders of spiritual freedom and those monopolizing religious power. This movement of independence of human thought is even influencing a conservative country like Afghanistan. You may have read the speech of the Amir of Afghanistan in which he has attempted to control the powers of the Ulema. The emergence of numerous such movements in the other parts of the Muslim world makes one arrive at the same conclusion. Therefore in your capacity as the Head of a Muslim university, it is your duty to step forward in this new field with courage."

These educational reforms proposed by Iqbal were never implemented. Even a couple of months before his death on 21 April, 1938, an attempt was made by one of his devotees to establish a D«r-ul-'Ulëm according to the specifications of Iqbal, and for this purpose a correspondence started between Iqbal and Al-Mar«ghâ, the Rector of Al-Azhar University of Egypt through Maulana Maudoodi, but the Egyptians could not produce an Arabic instructor satisfying Iqbal's requirements.

There are many old and new Islamic educational institutions operating in Pakistan today. But it is difficult to say what kind of impact the duly qualified Ulema of these institutions have on spiritual life of the Muslims of Pakistan. The fact remains that neither Iqbal's new Muslim society could be brought into being in this country nor new Ulema could be trained on the lines

suggested by him for disseminating among the Muslim faith, unity and discipline so that they could collectively face the challenges of the new world.

CAN THE ISLAMIC INTELLECTUAL HERITAGE BE RECOVERED?

William C. Chittick

By "the Islamic intellectual heritage" I mean the ways of thinking about God, the world, and the human being established by the Qur'ān and the Prophet and elaborated upon by generations of practicing Muslims. I use the term "intellectual" to translate the word *'aqlâ*, and by it I want to distinguish this heritage from another, closely related heritage that also has theoretical and intellectual dimensions. This second heritage is the "transmitted" (*naqlâ*) heritage.

Transmitted knowledge is learned by "imitation" (*taqlâd*), that is, by following the authority of those who possess it. This sort of knowledge includes Qur'ān recitation, Hadith, Arabic grammar, and jurisprudence. It is impossible to be a Muslim without *taqlâd*, because one cannot discover the Qur'ān or the practices of the Shariah by oneself. Just as language is learned by imitation, so also the Qur'ān and Islamic practice are learned by imitating those who know them. Those who have assumed the responsibility of preserving this transmitted heritage are known as its "knowers," that is, its *ulama*.

In transmitted knowledge, it is not proper to ask "why." If one does ask why, the answer is that the Qur'ān says what it says, or that grammar determines the rules of proper speech. In contrast, the only way to learn intellectual knowledge is to understand it. One cannot learn it by accepting it on the basis of authority. Intellectual knowledge includes mathematics, logic, philosophy, and much of theology. In learning, "why" is the most basic and important of questions. If one does not understand why, then one will be following someone else's authority. It makes no sense to accept that 2 + 2 = 4 on the basis of a report, no matter how trust worthy the source may be. Either you understand it, or you do not. The goal here is not *taqlâd*, but *taÁqâq*, which can be translated as "verification" or "realization."

In the transmitted sciences, people must follows *mujtahids*, whether the *mujtahids* be alive (as in Shi'ism) or dead (as in Sunnism). In other words, one follows a *mujtahid* because the only way to learn the transmitted sciences is from those who already know them. But one cannot follow a *mujtahid* in matters of faith, because faith pertains to one's own understanding of God,

the prophets, the scriptures, and the Last Day. A Muslim cannot say, "I have faith in God because my *mujtahid* told me to have faith." Someone who said this would be saying that if the *mujtahid* told him not to believe in God, he would not. In other words, he would be saying that his faith is empty words.

Although in theory we can distinguish between the transmitted and intellectual sciences, in practice the two have always been closely interrelated, and the transmitted sciences have been the foundation upon which the intellectual sciences are built. One cannot speak properly without grammar, and one cannot understand things Islamically without the Qur'ān and the Hadith. However, the fact that people may have an excellent knowledge of the transmitted sciences does not mean that they know anything at all about the intellectual sciences. Nor does the ability to recite the opinions of the great Muslims on matters of faith prove that the reciter has any ***understanding*** of what he is saying.

Both the transmitted and the intellectual sciences are essential to the survival of any religion—not only Islam—and both are gradually being lost. By and large, however, the transmitted sciences have been preserved better than the intellectual sciences, and the reason is obvious. Anyone can learn Qur'ān and Hadith, but very few people can truly understand what God and the Prophet are talking about. One can only understand in one's own measure. One cannot understand mathematics (or any of the other intellectual sciences) without both native ability and training. One may have a great aptitude for mathematics, but without long years of study, one will never get very far. And mathematics deals with issues that are relatively near at hand, even in the most sophisticated of its modern forms. What about theology, which deals with the deepest issues of reality, the furthest from our everyday experience?[1]

It is important to stress that no religion can survive, much less flourish, without a living intellectual tradition. In order to verify this—because this

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[1] Throughout this essay, by "theology" I do not mean Kalām, but rather the whole enterprise of thinking about God as it came to be established in diverse modes throughout Islamic history. From this point of view, there are three broad modalities that theology has taken, and these can be called "philosophy" (*falsafah*), "theoretical Sufism" (*'irfan*), and "Kalām." Of these three, Kalām is the least suited for dealing with modern-day intellectual issues. Both philosophy and theoretical Sufism ask more basic questions about the self and reality, and, unlike Kalām, neither finds it necessary to assume a polemical stance.

statement should not be accepted on the basis of *taqlâd* —we can ask the questions, What was the intellectual tradition for? What function did it play in Islamic society? What was its goal? To ask these questions is the same as asking, "Why should Muslims think?" The basic answer is that Muslims should think because they must think, because they are thinking beings. They have no choice but to think, because God gave them minds and intelligence when He created them. Not only that, but God has commanded them to think and to employ their intelligence in numerous Qur,ānic verses.

No doubt, this does not mean that God requires all Muslims to enter into the sophisticated sort of study and reflection that went on in the intellectual tradition, because it is obvious that not everyone has the proper sort of talents, capacities, and circumstances to do so. Nevertheless, all Muslims have the moral and religious obligation to use their minds correctly—if they have minds. As the Qur'ān puts it, *lā yukallifu Allāhu nafsan illā wus'ahā*, "God does not burden any soul save to its capacity." When people's capacity includes thinking, God has given them the burden of thinking correctly. But He does not tell them ***what*** to think, because then He would be making *taqlâd* incumbent in intellectual matters. If many of the Ulama have forbidden *taqlâd* in matters of *uÄël*, it is because God Himself forbids it. He has given people minds, and they cannot use their minds correctly if they simply accept dogma or opinions on the basis of authority. To think properly a person must actually think, which is to say that conclusions must be reached through one's own intellectual struggle, not someone else's. Any teacher of an intellectual science—like mathematics or philosophy—knows this perfectly well.

It is true that many if not most people are unreflective and would never even ask why they should think about things. They simply go about their daily routine and imagine that they understand their own situation. In any case, they suppose, God wants nothing more from them than observing the Shariah. But this is no argument for those who have the ability to stop and think. Anyone who has the capacity and talent to reflect upon God, the universe, and the human soul must do so. Not to do so is to betray one's God-given nature and to disobey God's commandments.

Since some Muslims have no choice but to think, learning how to think correctly must be an important area of Muslim effort. But what defines "correct" thinking? How do we tell the difference between right thinking and wrong thinking? Does the fact that people have no choice but to think

mean that they are free to think anything they want? The Islamic answer to this sort of question has always been that the way people think is far from indifferent. Some modes of thinking are encouraged by the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, some are discouraged. Islamically, it is incumbent upon those who think to employ their minds in ways that coincide with the goals of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. In other words, the goal of the Islamic intellectual tradition must coincide with the goal of Islam, or else it is not ***Islamic*** intellectuality.

So, what is the goal of Islam? In general terms, Islam's goal is to bring people back to God. However, everyone is going back to God in any case, so the issue is not going back, but ***how*** one goes back. Through the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, God guides people back to Him in a manner that will ensure their everlasting happiness. If they want to follow a "straight path" (*Àirāç mustaqâm*), one that will lead to happiness and not to misery, they need to employ their minds, awareness, and thinking in ways that are harmonious with God Himself, who is the only true Reality. If they follow illusion and unreality, they will be following a crooked path and most likely will not end up in a pleasant place when they go back.

The history of Islamic intellectuality is embodied in the various forms that Muslims have adopted over time in attempting to think rightly and correctly. The intellectual tradition was robust and lively, so disagreements were common. Nevertheless, in all the different schools of thought that have appeared over Islamic history, one principle has been agreed upon by everyone. This principle is the fact that God is one and that He is the only source of truth and reality. He is the origin of all things, and all things return to Him. This principle, as everyone knows, is called *tawÁâd*, "asserting the unity of God." To think Islamically is to recognize God's unity and to draw the proper consequences from His unity. Differences of opinion arise concerning the proper consequences, not in the fact that God is one.

The consequences that people draw from *tawÁâd* depend largely on their understanding of "God." Typically, Muslims have sought to understand God by meditating upon the implications of God's names and attributes as expressed in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. The conclusions reached in these meditations have everything to do with how God is understood. If He is understood primarily as a Lawgiver, people will draw conclusions having to do with the proper observance of the *Sharâ'ah*. If He is understood primarily as wrathful, they will conclude that they must avoid His wrath. If He is

understood primarily as merciful, they will think that they must seek out His mercy. If He is understood primarily as beautiful, they will know that they must love Him. God, of course, has "ninety-nine names"—at least—and every name throws different light on what exactly God is, what exactly He is not, and how exactly people should understand Him and relate to Him. Naturally, thoughtful Muslims have always understood God in many ways, and they have drawn diverse conclusions on the basis of ***each*** way of understanding. This diversity of understanding in the midst of *tawÂâd* is prefigured in the Prophet's prayer, "O God, I seek refuge in Your mercy from Your wrath, I seek refuge in Your good pleasure from Your displeasure, I seek refuge in You from You."

Obstacles to Recovery

My title indicates that I think the Islamic intellectual heritage has largely been lost in modern times. This is a vast topic, and I cannot begin to offer proofs for my assertion, but I think it is obvious to most Muslims who have some awareness of their own history. What I can do here is to offer a few suggestions as to the obstacles that stand in the way of recovery. For present purposes, I want to deal with two basic sorts of obstacles, though there are other sorts as well. First are intellectual forces that originally came from outside. They are intimately connected with the types of thinking that grew up in Western Europe and America and have come to dominate in the modern world. However, they have long since become an internal problem, because most Muslims have either actively and eagerly adopted them as their own, or they been molded by them without being aware of the fact. Given that these intellectual forces have now been internalized, they have given rise to a second group of obstacles, which are modern attitudes and social forces within the Islamic community that prevent recovery.

In suggesting the nature of the first category of obstacles, we can begin with a basic question: Is it possible nowadays to think Islamically? Or, Is it possible to be a "Muslim intellectual" in the modern world? By this, I do not mean an intellectual who is by religious affiliation a follower of Islam, but rather an individual who thinks Islamically about the three basic dimensions

of Islam—practice, faith, and sincerity[2]— while living in the midst of modernity.

I have no doubt that there are tens of thousands of Muslim intellectuals in the ordinary sense of the word—that is, Muslim writers, professors, doctors, lawyers, and scientists who are concerned with intellectual issues. But I have serious doubts as to whether any more than a tiny fraction of such people are "Muslim intellectuals" in the sense in which I mean the term. Yes, there are many thoughtful and intellectually sophisticated people who were born as followers of Islam and who may indeed practice it carefully. But do they think Islamically? Is it possible to be both a scientist in the modern sense and a Muslim who understands the universe and the human soul as the Qur'ān and the Sunnah explain them? Is it possible to be a sociologist and at the same time to think in terms of *tawÁâd*?

It appears to me, as an outside observer, that the thinking of most Muslim intellectuals is not determined by Islamic principles and Islamic understanding, but by habits of mind learned unconsciously in grammar school and high school and then confirmed and solidified by university training. Such people may act like Muslims, but they think like doctors, engineers, sociologists, and political scientists.

It is naive to imagine that one can learn how to think Islamically simply by attending lectures once a week or by reading a few books written by contemporary Muslim leaders, or by studying the Qur'ān, or by saying one's prayers and having "firm faith." In the traditional Islamic world, the great thinkers and intellectuals spent their whole lives searching for knowledge and deepening their understanding. The Islamic intellectual heritage is extraordinarily rich. Hundreds of thousands of books were written, and in modern times the majority of even the important books are not available, because they have never been printed. Those that have been printed are rarely read by Muslim intellectuals, and those few that have been translated from Arabic and Persian into English and other modern languages have, by and large, been badly translated, so little guidance will be found in the translations.

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[2] For a detailed elaboration of these three dimensions, illustrating their deep rooting in the Qur'ān and the Hadith, see S. Murata and W. Chittick, *The Vision of Islam* (New York: Paragon, 1994).

I do not mean to suggest that it would be necessary to read all the great books of the intellectual tradition in their original languages in order to think Islamically. If modern-day Muslims could read ***one*** of these important books, even in translation, and ***understand*** it, their thinking would be deeply effected. However, the only way to understand such books is to prepare oneself for understanding, and that demands dedication, study, and training. This cannot be done on the basis of a modern university education, unless, perhaps, one has devoted it to the Islamic tradition (I say "perhaps" because many Muslims and non-Muslims with Ph-D in Islamic Studies cannot read and understand the great books of the intellectual heritage).

Given that modern schooling is rooted in topics and modes of thought that are not harmonious with traditional Islamic learning, it is profoundly difficult today for any thinking and practicing Muslim to harmonize the domain of intellectuality with the domain of faith and practice. One cannot study for many years and then be untouched by what one has studied. There is no escape from picking up mental habits from the types of thinking that one devotes one's life to. It is most likely, and almost, but not quite inevitable, for modern intellectuals with religious faith to have compartmentalized minds — I will not go so far as to say "split personalities," but that is common enough. One compartment of the mind will encompass the professional, intellectual domain, and the other the domain of personal piety and practice. Although individuals may ***rationalize*** the relationship between the two domains, they necessarily do so in terms of the world view that is determined by the ***rational*** side of the mind, which is the professional, modern side. The world view established by the Qur'ān and passed down by generations of Muslims will be closed to such people, and hence they will draw their rational categories and their ways of thinking from their professional training and the ever-shifting Zeitgeist that is embodied in contemporary intellectual trends and popularized through television and other forms of mass indoctrination.[3]

Many Muslim scientists tell us that modern science helps them see the wonders of God's creation, and this is certainly an argument for preferring the natural sciences over the social sciences. But is it necessary to study

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[3] For a thought-provoking critique of the insidious ways in which television undermines intelligence and human freedom, see Jerry Mander, *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television* (New York: Quill, 1978).

physics or biochemistry to see the signs of God in all His creatures? The Qur'ān keeps on telling Muslims, "Will you not reflect, will you not ponder, will you not think?" About what? About the "signs" *(āyāt*) of God, which are found, as over two hundred Qur'ānic verses remind us, in everything. In short, one does not need to be a great scientist, or any scientist at all, to understand that the world tells us about the majesty of its Creator. Any fool knows this. This is what the Prophet called the "religion of old women" (*dân al-'ajā'iz*), and no one needs any intellectual training to understand it. It is simply necessary to look at the world, and it becomes obvious to "those with minds" (*ulu 'l-albāb*).

It is true that a basic understanding of the signs of God may provide sufficient knowledge for salvation. After all, the Prophet said, *aktharu ahl al-jannati bulhun*, "Most of the people of paradise are fools." However, the foolishness that leads to paradise demands foolishness concerning the affairs of this world, and that is very difficult to come by nowadays. It is certainly not found among Muslim intellectuals. They are already far too clever, and this explains why they are such good doctors and engineers. In other words, they have already employed and developed their minds, so they have no choice but to be intellectuals. Inescapably, their intelligence has been shaped and formed by their education, their disciplines, and the media.

The Gods of Modernity

The information and habits of mind that are imparted by modernity are not congruent with Islamic learning. Perhaps the best way to demonstrate this concisely is to reflect on the characteristics of modernity—by which I mean the thinking and norms of the "global culture" in which we live today. It should be obvious that whatever characterizes modernity, it is not *tawÁâd*, the first principle of Islamic thinking. Rather, it is fair to say that modernity is characterized by the opposite of *tawÁâd*. One could call this *shirk* or "associating others with God." But for most Muslims, the word *shirk* is too emotionally charged to be of much help in the discussion. Moreover, they have lost touch with what it really means, because they are unacquainted with the Islamic intellectual tradition, where *tawÁâd* and *shirk* are analyzed and explained. So let me call the characteristic trait of modernity "*takthâr*," which is the literal opposite of *tawÁâd*. *TawÁâd* means to make things one, and, in the religious context, it means "asserting that God is one." *Takthâr* mean to

make things many, and in this context I understand it to mean "asserting that the gods are many."

Modern times and modern thought lack a single center, a single orientation, a single goal, any single purpose at all. Modernity has no common principle or guideline. In other words, there is no single "god"—since a god is what gives meaning and orientation to life. A god is what you serve.[4] The modern world serves many, many gods. Through an ever-intensifying process of *takthâr*, the gods have been multiplied beyond count, and people worship whatever god appeals to them, usually several at once.

The truth of my assertion becomes obvious if we compare the intellectual history of the West and Islamic civilization. Up until recent times, Islamic thought was characterized by a tendency toward unity, harmony, integration, and synthesis. The great Muslim thinkers were masters of many disciplines, but they looked upon all of them as branches of a single tree, the tree of *tawÁâd*. There was never any contradiction between studying astronomy and zoology, or physics and ethics, or mathematics and law, or mysticism and logic. Everything was governed by the same principles, because everything fell under God's all-encompassing reality.

The history of Western thought is characterized by the opposite tendency. Although there was a great deal of unitarian thinking in the medieval period, from the Middle Ages onward there has been constantly increasing dispersion and multiplicity. "Renaissance men" could know a great deal about all the sciences and at the same time have a unifying vision. But nowadays, everyone is an expert in some tiny field of specialization, and "information" increases exponentially. The result is mutual incomprehension and universal disharmony. It is impossible to establish any unity of knowledge, and no real communication takes place among the specialists in different disciplines, or even among specialists in different subfields of the same discipline. In short, people in the modern world have no unifying principles, and the result is an ever-increasing multiplicity of goals and desires, an ever-intensifying chaos.

Despite the chaos, everyone has gods that he or she worships. No one can survive in an absolute vacuum, with no goal, no significance, no

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[4] The Qur'ān often uses the word "god" (*ilāh*, plural *ālihа*) in this sense. Take for example the verse, "Have you seen him who takes his own caprice to be his god?" (25:43). See Murata and Chittick, *Vision*, pp. 47ff.

meaning, no orientation. The gods people worship are those points of reference that give meaning and context to their lives. The difference between traditional objects of worship and modern objects of worship is that in modernity, it is almost impossible to subordinate all the minor gods to a supreme god, and when this is done, the supreme god is generally one that has been manufactured by ideologies. It is certainly not the God of *tawÁâd*, who negates the reality of all other gods. However, it may well be a blatant imitation of the God of *tawÁâd*, especially when religion enters into the domain of politics.

The gods in the world of *takthâr* are legion. To mention the more important ones would be to list the defining myths and ideologies of modern times—evolution, progress, science, medicine, nationalism, socialism, democracy, Marxism, freedom, equality. But perhaps the most dangerous of the gods are those that are the most difficult to recognize for what they are, because we in the modern world take them for granted and look upon them much as we look upon the air that we breathe. Let me list the most common of these gods by their seemingly innocuous names: basic need, care, communication, consumption, development, education, energy, exchange, factor, future, growth, identity, information, living standard, management, model, modernization, planning, production, progress, project, raw material, relationship, resource, role, service, sexuality, solution, system, welfare, work. These are some, but not all, of the ninety-nine most beautiful gods of modernity, and reciting their names is the ***dhikr*** of modern man.

Anyone who wants an analysis and explanation of the nature of these gods should refer to the book *Plastic Words*[5] by the German linguist, Uwe Poerksen. The subtitle is more instructive as to what the book is all about: *The Tyranny of a Modular Language*. Poerksen explains how the modern use of language—a use that achieved dominance after the Second World War—has resulted in the production of a group of words that have turned into the most destructive tyrants the world has ever seen. He does not call them "gods," because he is linguist and has no apparent interest in theology. Nevertheless, he does give them the label "tyrant," and this is a good translation for the Qur'ānic divine name, *al-jabbār*. When this name is applied to God, it means that God has absolute controlling power over creation.

[5]Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996

"Tyranny" becomes a bad thing when it is ascribed to creatures, because it indicates that they have usurped God's power and authority. In the case of the plastic words, the usurpation has taken place at the hands of certain words that are used to shape discussion of societal goals.

As Poerksen points out, these tyrannical words have at least thirty common characteristics. The most important of these is that they have no definition, though they do have an aura of goodness and beneficence about them. In linguistic terms, this is to say that such words have no "denotation," but they do have many "connotations." There is no such thing as "care" or "welfare" or "standard of living," but these words suggest many good things to most people. They are abstract terms that seem to be scientific, so they carry an aura of authority in a world in which science is one of the most important of the supreme gods.

Each of these words turns something indefinable into a limitless ideal. By making the ideal limitless, the word awakens unlimited needs in people, and once these needs are awakened, they appear to be self-evident. The Qur'ān says that God is the rich, and that people are the poor toward God. In other words, people have no real need except toward God. But nowadays, people feel need toward meaningless concepts, and they think that they must have them. These empty idols have become the objects of people's devotion and worship.

The plastic words give great power to those who speak on their behalf. Anyone who uses these words—care, communication, consumption, information, development—gains prestige, because he speaks for god and truth, and this forces other people to keep silent. After all, we think, only a complete idiot would object to care and development. Everyone must follow those whose only concern is to care for us and to help us develop.

The *mujtahids* who speak for these mini-gods are, of course, the "experts." Each of the plastic words sets up an ideal and encourages us to think that only the experts can achieve it, so we must entrust our lives to them. We must follow the authority of the scientific *mujtahids*, who lay down shariahs for our health, our welfare, and our education. People treat the pronouncements of the experts as *fatwās*. If the experts reach consensus (*ijmā'*) that we must destroy a village as a sacrificial offering to the god "development," we have no choice but to follow their authority. The *mujtahids* know best.

Each of the plastic words makes other words appear backwards and out-of-date. We can be proud of worshipping these gods, and all of our friends and colleagues will consider us quite enlightened for reciting the proper *dhikrs* and *du'ā's*. Those who still take the old God seriously can cover up this embarrassing fact by worshipping the new gods along with Him. And obviously, many people who continue to claim to worship the old-fashioned God twist His teachings so that He also seems to be telling us to serve "care, communication, consumption, identity, information, living standard, management, resource . . ." — the ***dhikr*** is well enough known.

Because the plastic gods have no denotations, all those who believe in them are able to understand them in terms of the connotations that appeal to then and then convince themselves that they are serving the basic need that is stated in the very name of the god, because, after all, it is a self-evident need. We are poor toward it and we ***must*** serve it. It is obvious to everyone that these gods are worthy of devotion. Religious people will have no trouble giving a religious color to these tyrants. In the name of the plastic gods, people of good will join together to transform the world, with no understanding that they are serving man-made idols, idols that, as the Qur'ān puts it, "your own hands have wrought."

The topic of false gods is vast, especially nowadays, when more false gods exist than were ever found in the past. The Qur'ān tells us that every prophet came with the message of *tawḤâd*, and that God sent a prophet to every community. Every community of the past had its own version of *tawḤâd*, even if people sometimes fell into *shirk* because of ignorance and forgetfulness. But in modern society, there are nothing but the gods of *takthâr*, and these gods, by definition, leave no room for *tawḤâd*.

Understanding the nature of false gods has always been central to the intellectual sciences, but this cannot be the concern of the transmitted sciences. One cannot accept that "There is no god but God" simply on the basis of *taqlâd*. The statement must be understood for people to have true faith in it, even if their understanding is far from perfect. Hence most of the Islamic intellectual tradition has been concerned with clarifying and explaining the objects of faith. What is it that Muslims have faith in? How are they to understand these objects? Why should they have faith in them?

The first of the Islamic objects of faith is God, then angels, prophets, the Last Day, and the "measuring out, the good of it and the evil of it" (*al-qadri khayrihâ wa sharrihâ*). In discussing God and the other objects of faith, it

is important to explain not only they are, but also what they are not. When people do not know what God is and when they do not know that it is easy to fall into the habit of worshipping false gods, then they will have no protection against the *takthâr* of the modern world, the multiplicity of gods that modern ways of thinking demand that they serve.

What is striking about contemporary Islam's encounter with modernity is that Muslims lack the intellectual preparation to deal with the situation. Muslim intellectuals—with a few honorable exceptions—do not question the legitimacy of the modern gods. Rather, they debate about the best way to serve the new tyrants. In other words, they think that Islamic society must be modified and adapted to follow the standards set by modernity, standards that are built on the basis of *takthâr*. This is to say that innumerable modern-day Muslims are forever looking for the best ways to adapt Islam to ***shirk***.

Many Muslims today recognize that the West has paid too high a price for modernization and secularization. They see that various social crises have arisen in all modernized societies, and they understand that these crises are somehow connected with the loss of the religious traditions and the devaluation of ethical and moral guidelines. But many of these same people tell us that Islam is different. Islam can adopt the technology and the know-how—the "progress," the "development," the "expertise"— while preserving Islam's moral and spiritual strength and thereby avoiding the social disintegration of the West.[6] In other words, they think, Muslims can forget *tawÁâd*, embark on a course of *takthâr*, and suffer no negative consequences.

The fact that so many people think this way and do not recognize the absurdity of their position shows that they have lost the vision of *tawÁâd* that used to give life to Islamic thinking. They cannot see that ***everything*** is interrelated, and they fail to understand that the worship of false gods necessarily entails the dissolution of every sort of order—the corruption not only of individuals and society, but also of the natural world. In other words,

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[6] I do not wish to give the impression that I am opposed to technology in principle. Rather, I am opposed to the worship of any god that turns people away from understanding who they are. For profound and wide-ranging critiques of various modes in which modernity's *takthâr*, especially as embodied in technology, gives rise to ignorance of the human situation, see the writings of Ivan Illich and, in a Christian theological perspective, those of Jacques Ellul.

when people refuse to serve God as He has asked them to serve Him, they cannot fulfill the functions for which He has created them. The net result is that our world becomes ever more chaotic. A significant Qur'ānic verse here is this: "Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea because of what the hands of people have earned" (30: 41). When people follow the gods of *takthâr*, corruption can only increase, and it will end up by destroying the natural world just as it is destroying society. "Corruption" (*fasād*), after all, is defined as the lack of "wholesomeness" (*ÄalāÁ*), and wholesomeness is wholeness, health, balance, harmony, coherence, order, integration, and unity, all of which are established through *tawÁâd* or "making things one."

Attitudinal Obstacles

The second sort of obstacle preventing the recovery of the intellectual heritage can be discerned on the societal level in the attitudes and habits of mind that have been adopted by modern-day Muslims. These result from the loss of intellectual independence and have become embodied in the institutions and structures of contemporary society. I will not attempt to go into details. Instead let me suggest that these obstacles become manifest in various currents that are not difficult to see, such as the politicization of the community, monolithic interpretations of Islamic teachings, and blind acceptance of the teachings of contemporary Muslim leaders (in other words *taqlâd* where there should be *taÁqâq*). Perhaps the broadest and most pernicious of these obstacles, however, is the general attitude that one might call "anti-traditionalism."

Although Islam, like other religions, is built on tradition—the sum total of the transmitted and intellectual heritages—many Muslims see no contradiction between believing in the gods of modernity and accepting the authority of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. In order to do this, however, they need to ignore thirteen hundred years of Islamic intellectual history and pretend that no one needs the help of the great thinkers of the past to understand and interpret the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.

We need to keep in mind that if there is any universally accepted dogma in the modern world, it is the rejection of tradition. The great prophets of modernity—Descartes, Rousseau, Marx, Freud—followed a variety of gods, but they all agreed that the old gods were no longer of any use. In the Islamic view, God's prophets share *tawÁâd*. In contrast, the modern

prophets share the rejection of *tawÁâd* and the assertion of *takthâr*. One can only reject God's unity by inventing other gods to replace Him.

In traditional Islamic terms, God is *qadâm*," ancient" or "eternal." God has always been and always will be. In modernity, the gods are new. To stay new, they have to be changed or modified frequently. The new is always to be preferred over the old, which is "outmoded" and "backwards." Science is always making new discoveries, and technology is constantly offering new inventions that all of us quickly think we need. Anything that is not in the process of renewal is thought to be dead.

One name for this god of newness is "originality." He rules by ordaining new styles and models, and his priests are found everywhere, especially in the domains of advertising and mass indoctrination. Thus we have the fashion *mujtahids* who tell women what to wear and who change their *fatwās* every year. Originality's priests also exercise authority in the world of art. Or take the modern university, where many professors adopt the latest intellectual styles as soon as they arrive on the scene. In much of the modern university, as in women's fashion, Paris rules.

The greatest danger of anti-traditionalism for modern Muslims is that they have accepted this god—like so many others—without giving any thought to what they are doing. Hence they think that for thirteen hundred years, Muslims had nothing to say. They want to retain their Muslim identity, but they imagine that in order to do this, it is sufficient to keep their allegiance to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, blithely ignoring the great interpreters of the tradition over the centuries.

If people think they no longer need the grand interpreters, this seems to be because they believe in the gods of progress, science, and development. They tell us that today we know so much more about the world than those people of olden times, because we have science. People who think this way usually know nothing about science except what they are taught by the media, and they certainly know nothing about the Islamic intellectual tradition. They are blind obedientalists on the intellectual level, even though *taqlâd* is absurd in such matters. What is worse, this is a selective *taqlâd*. They will only accept the intellectual authority of the "scientists" and the "experts," not that of the great Muslim thinkers of the past. If Einstein said it, it must be true, but if *Ghazzālâ* or *Mullā Âadrā* said it, it is "unscientific"—which is to say that it is false.

If such people really knew something about the intellectual roots and bases of science and theology, they would know that science has nothing to say to theology, but theology has plenty to say to science. The reason for this is that theology is rooted in *tawÁâd*, and hence it can look down from above and discern the interconnectedness of all things. But science is rooted in *takthâr*, so it is stuck to the level of multiplicity—the lowest domain of reality—and it can only dissect this multiplicity and rearrange it endlessly. Even when it is able to gain a certain overview of interconnections, it does this without being able to explain how it can do so or what the ultimate significance of these interconnections may be. By its own premises, science is banned from the invisible domains—what the Qur'ān calls ***ghayb***. If it has nothing to say about angels and spirits, which are sometimes called the "relative ***ghayb***," it has even less to say about God, the "absolute ***ghayb***." In contrast, the Islamic intellectual tradition is rooted in knowledge of God, and thereby it also acquires various modalities of knowing His creation. These are rooted in absolute truth and in certainty, unlike modern disciplines, which are cut off from the Absolute. Only this sort of traditional knowledge can reestablish human connections with the divine.

Finally, let me suggest that the most basic problem of modern Islam is that Muslims suffer from what has traditionally been called "compound ignorance," ***jahl murakkab***. "Ignorance" is not to know. "Compound ignorance" is not to know that you do not know. Too many Muslims do not know what the Islamic tradition is, they do not know how to think Islamically, and they do not know that they do not know. The first step in curing ignorance is to recognize that one does not know. Once people recognize their own ignorance, they can go off in "search of knowledge" (*Çalab al-'ilm*)— which, as everyone knows, "is incumbent on every Muslim," and indeed, one would think, on every human being. No recovery of the intellectual tradition is possible until individuals take this step for themselves. The tradition will never be recovered through *taqlâd* or by community action, only by the dedication of individuals, through their own, personal *taÁqâq*. Governments and committees cannot begin to solve the problem, because they start from the wrong end. Understanding cannot be imposed or legislated, it can only grow up from the heart.

The Prophet said, "Wisdom is the believer's lost camel. Wherever he finds it, he recognizes it." People today do not know what wisdom is, and still less do they know that it belongs to them by right. Until they recognize

this, they will never know that their camel has been lost. They will think that in any case, camels are no longer of any use, since cars, airplanes, and computers will take them wherever they want to go. It is a tragedy when people have no idea that the only way to cross the desert of modernity without danger is by the camel of wisdom.

THE SUFI TROBAR CLUS AND SPANISH MYSTICISM: A SHARED SYMBOLISM

(Part III)

Luce López-Baralt
Translated by Andrew Hurley

First and second parts of this study appeared in *Iqbal Review*, Oct. 1997 and April 1998. Dr Baralt argued that the degree to which the mystical literature of Spain came under the influence of Islam is much greater than had been studied. Focusing on such great figures of Christian mysticism as St John of the Cross and St Teresa of Avila she presented her thesis with reference to the key concepts, symbols and recurrent motifs that are found in these works. Part I was devoted to preliminary observations and studied the imagery of "*Wine and Mystical Drunkenness*" and "Dark Night of the Soul" in the Works of St John of the Cross. Part II continued to trace the symbols in the same vein. In part III she continues to investigate further and draws our attention toward the close parallels between the two traditions.

> The process of assimilating the aesthetics, the mysticism, and the narrative and metaphoric symbolic devices that were present in the literature of their Moorish neighbors went on among the Christians of Castille for hundreds of years; some day [the co-presence of that literature in Spanish letters] will be talked about with the same naturalness as we say today that Virgil and Ovid were present in the literature of the sixteenth century.
>
> *Américo Castro*

St Teresa de Jesús

The spiritual symbolism of St Teresa de Jesús in many ways parallels the Symbolism of St John of the Cross, who worked closely with St Teresa, as we all know, in the reformation of the Carmelite order. The two poets share

several important symbols that would appear to have Islamic antecedents and both also employ a great deal of the same technical language. Let us look quickly at those images and phrases that we have explored in St John of the Cross:

a) "Contraction" and "expansion"; wine; the interior fount or spring; the soul as a garden

Over and over, St Teresa insists on the Qur'ānic technical vocabulary of "Contraction or straitness" (*qabî*) and "expansion or breadth"(*basÇ*). The torments of straitness are unmistakable: "because there are many things that embattle [the soul] with an inward straitness that is so sensible and unbearable, that I do not know what it may be compared with save those who suffer in hell"; "it is unspeakable because they are spiritual straitnesses and pains, to which one knows not how to put a name."[7] But curiously, St Teresa *does* know how to "put a name" to this intense spiritual suffering: she calls it "straitness"— *qabî* ?—throughout the *Interior Castle.* The parallel with the *qabî* and *basè* of the Sufis is quite precise: for St Teresa the state that is the alternative to this straitness is, quite explicitly, "expansion." She would appear to interpret Psalm 118: 32 from the perspective of Muslim mysticism:

> . . . "Dilataste cor meum," speaks of the heart's being enlarged. . . [and as] this heavenly water begins to flow from this source of which I am speaking—that is, from our very depths—it proceeds to spread within us and cause an interior dilation and produce ineffable blessings, so that the soul itself cannot understand all that it receives there (*Moradas* IV:2 [*Castle* p. 82]; *OC* 386).

In addition, the works of St Teresa are filled with passages celebrating the wine of ecstasy and the spiritual intoxication that washes over the soul. The verse "thy breasts more precious than wine" is "deciphered" according to this occult meaning that the Muslims established over the centuries:

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[7]*Moradas del castillo interior,* Madrid: BAC, 1976, pp. 406-407. Hereafter, pages in the Spanish edition of the text will be given as *OC* "page"; when quoting from the Standard English edition, the citation will also include the indication *Castle* "page."

> [When] one is in this delight, so drunken and absorbed that one appears not to be within oneself, but rather in some way in a divine drunkenness, that one knows not what one wants, nor what to say, nor what to ask for. . . .When one awakes from that dream and that celestial drunkenness, one is as though shaken and groggy, and feels a holy confusion (*Meditación sobre los Cantares* IV; *OC* 349).

One of the symbols in which St Teresa most closely parallels the Islamic tradition is that of water or the inward spring or fountain. Asín Palacios began to sketch out this parallel in *ŠaÉilâes y alumbrados*: for St Teresa, prayer and meditation are performed in two ways—one, laborious and difficult; the other, spontaneous and autonomous. She compares the two ways of praying with two basins that fill up with water in different ways. The first one is filled by means of "numerous conduits and through human skill; but the other has been constructed at the very source of the water and fills without making any noise. If the flow of water is abundant, as in the case we are speaking of, a great stream still runs from it after it has been filled; no skill is necessary here, and no conduits have to be made, for the water is flowing all the time" (*Moradas* IV: 3 [*Castle* 81]; *OC* 386). For St Teresa, the "conduits and human skill" are the arduous duties which we are bound to (the mortification and guided meditation) and by which we achieve nearness to God, while the free-flowing spring is God Himself, the knowledge of Whom "rushes forth" into our souls with no special effort on our part. This is exactly the same comparison that occurs over and over among the Muslim mystics and that we have also seen in St John of the Cross. Let us look at how closely St Teresa's image resembles the Shādhilite metaphor:

> Just as the mystics of this school compare the soul with a mirror, they also compare it with a spring of water, and link the knowledge and intuitions that exist within the soul with the water that flows from the spring, and say that sometimes the spring is hidden in the earth, and only by digging can one extract water from it. And this simile which they employ, comparing the soul with the spring, is exact, for when the soul is lighted with the mystical truths that make it forget its cares and the things of the world, from it there rushes forth the divine knowledge, just as the water rushes forth from the spring; on the other hand, sometimes one must dig down into the

> water with the hoe of ascetic combat and the shovel of mortification, until those waters gush forth again, as previously they gushed forth spontaneously, or better yet. (Asín Palacios, *ŠāÉilâes* 272)

This soul swollen by spiritual waters is for St Teresa, as for St John of the Cross and so many followers of the Prophet, also a garden cooled by divine breezes, refreshed by the rain of God's mercy, and adorned with the flowers of the virtues. But one must tend it diligently, be a good gardener:

> [With] the help of god we must attempt, like good gardeners, to make these plants grow [in the soul] and take care to water them so that they are not lost, but rather put forth flowers that give forth great fragrance, to give pleasure to our Lord, so that He will come many times to take delight in this garden and pass His time among these virtues (*Vida* 11; *OC* 59).

We have already seen that the Sufis were good "gardeners" of their souls throughout the Middle Ages. It is interesting to note that despite her bad memory, St Teresa recognizes that the image of the garden is not her own: "It now appears to me that I have read or heard this comparison, though as I have such a bad memory I do not know where, nor to what purpose, but it does now content me."

But there are yet more parallels between St Teresa, St John of the Cross, and the mystics of Islam: for St Teresa, as for those others, the soul is a *mirror* that one must polish (*Castle* VII: 2: 8, p. 217) and whose center or deepest depth receives the sudden illumination of a *lightning-bolt* of mystical enlightenment (*Castle* VI:9: 3, p. 185). We might go on piling up examples: the comparative study of the mystical symbolism of St Teresa, St John of the Cross, and the Muslims has yet to be done.

There are other symbols that St Teresa shares with the Muslims but that we have not seen in St John of the Cross. Let us turn now to these.

b) The mystical tree.

One of the most curious of the symbols shared by St Teresa and Muslim mysticism is the tree that grows in the "living" waters of the soul, which is the soul itself:

> I want you to consider what will be this tree of life, planted in the living waters of life—namely, in God—. . . this spring of life in which the soul is as a tree planted [there]. . . . [For] the spring sustains it and prevents it from drying up and causes it to produce good fruit (*Castle,* I:2: 1, pp. 33-4).

The symbol of the cosmic tree is shared by the most diverse cultures. The *Bhagavad-Gitā* and the Upanishads, for example, give us the image of the universe in the form of a tree whose branches extend throughout the world. Scandinavian and German mythology repeat the idea, although Mircea Eliade believes that the image has an Eastern origin: the cosmic tree "has a special significance in the beliefs of the Nordic and central Asiatic and, more particularly, the Altai and Germanic peoples, but its origin is probably eastern (Mesopotamian)" (Eliade, *Patterns* 299 [*Traité* 255]). Some of these traditions link the tree with water, as St Teresa does. Revelations 22: 2 speaks of the tree of life that is planted in the river that flows from the throne of God in the Heavenly Jerusalem and gives all manner of fruit,[8] and the idea is not very distant from numerous Indian, Persian, and Arab traditions.[9]

The alchemists, however, interpret the cosmic tree in terms of their own spiritual experiences, and it becomes "the outward and visible sign of the realization of the self," according to Carl Jung (196). The Arab alchemist Abë 'l-Qāsim al-'Iraqâ (thirteenth century) speaks of the symbolic tree of his soul which rises out of a spring in precisely that way. And with this we come nearer to St Teresa, who notes that the tree (which represents her soul and not the universe) will grow well or ill depending on the kind of spiritual

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[8]Ezekiel 47:7 also, though in a very vague way, links the tree with an allegorical river or "waters."

[9]In chapter 48 of Muhammad's *Mi'rāj,* Gabriel and Ridwān take Muhammad to a spacious place called *Sidra al-muntahā.* There they find a huge tree, made of pearl, at whose feet "there arose a spring of clear water beyond all praising," which was perfect grace (in Munoz Sedino 220).

waters that nourish it: the clean waters of grace or the filthy waters of sin. The parallels multiply when we look at the mystical literature of the Sufis, who over and over again repeat the image of the tree of the soul that rises out of a spiritual spring, and do so in the same terms St Teresa employs. In other words, the mystics and alchemists of Islam give the tree—the symbol of the universe for so many cultures—a new and inward, mystical dimension. Let us look a little closer at these Islamic theories.

The ancient *Book of Certainty* sees the tree and the spring or river of the Garden of Eden as having their counterpart in the soul:

> In the centre of the Garden of Eden there is said to be not only a fountain but also a tree, at whose foot the fountain flows. This is the Tree of Immortality, and it is an outward image of the inward Tree of Immortality, which grows in the Garden of the Heart (40).

The Persian Shabastarâ also praises this tree which, like St Teresa's, grows in the depth of his spirit and indeed is the spirit itself: "From water and earth springs up 'the soul's kernel' into a tree, Whose high branches are lifted up to heaven" (Lederer 32). Nërâ of Baghdad speaks to us repeatedly of the same tree, an image he explores in several chapters of his *Maqāmāt al-qulëb.* Here is a brief excerpt from Chapter I:

> God planted [in the soul of the believer] a tree of mystical knowledge. . . [whose] roots penetrate the heart, while its branches rise up to heaven, reaching even to the Throne of God. . . . Then [God] has made a water [spring, etc.] that flows from the sea of right conduct flow from the river of His grace, and with it He waters [this tree] (*op.cit.,* 131-2).

In close parallel to St Teresa, Nërâ notes that the soul's tree of spiritual knowledge grows in step with our positive or negative spiritual growth (*cf.* his chapters XVII, "A Portrait of the tree of knowledge in the mystic's heart," and XIV, "A Portrait of the tree of desire"). The Islamic tradition of the tree of the soul is very strong: Ibn 'Arabâ, among so many others, considers the cosmic tree in its double dimension: macrocosmic and microcosmic. Laleh Bakhtiar notes the following:

> The Cosmic Tree, Tuba, in its macrocosmic form grows at the uppermost limits of the universe. In its microcosmic form, its cultivation depends on the mystic. In its macrocosmic aspect, it is associated with the Cosmic Mountain on Top of which the Cosmic Tree grows. . . . [In] the microcosmic form. . . it is the symbol of wisdom which, through roots in meditation, bears fruit of the Spirit (57).

The symbol was so common among the Muslims that it found expression in the plastic arts of Persia, as in a piece of embroidery with flannel appliqué (Fig. 6). Somehow, the ancient Muslim image seems to have found its way to St Teresa in the Spanish sixteenth century.

c) The silkworm.

Another symbol that is immediately associated with St Teresa is the silkworm. The soul is like a silkworm that weaves its own dwelling-place for union with God, and in doing so withdraws from all things created:

> . . . The silkworms[, when] . . . they are full-grown[, . . .] start spinning silk, making themselves very tight little cocoons, in which they bury themselves. Then, finally, the worm, which was large and ugly, comes right out of the cocoon a beautiful white butterfly. . . .
>
> Here, then, daughters, you see what we can do, with God's favour. May His Majesty Himself be our mansion as He is in this Prayer of Union which, as it were, we ourselves spin. . . .
>
> On, then, my daughters! Let us hasten to perform this task and spin this cocoon. Let us renounce our self-love and self-will, and our attachment to earthly things. (*Castle,* 5: 2, pp. 104, 105, 106).

Once again, this figure would appear to have Eastern origins. Several critics—Gaston Etchegoyen, González Palencia, etc.—concede that it was the Arabs who introduced the literary silkworm into Andalucia and adapted it to the Peninsular climate. And yet the silkworm was employed as a mystical symbol in Islam in exactly the same sense as St Teresa's. Could St Teresa have had indirect access to these literary sources in which the symbol is such a clear trope, since she confesses to never having been an eyewitness to the

lifecycle of the silkworm?[10] Be that as it may, in the thirteenth century the Persian poet and religious thinker Rëmâ was one of the most famous users of the trope. We might cite, from among the multitude of examples that the poet left us, these lines in which he celebrates the way the leaves that the silkworm eats are transformed into silk, and in comparing us with those silkworms situates us, exactly as St Teresa was to do so many centuries later, outside all things created:

"When the worm eats leaves the leaf becomes silk

we are the worms of love, for we are without the

leaves (provision of sorrows, *barg*) of this world"

(*Divān-e-kabâr* 1484/15652, in Schimmel, *Triumphal Sun* 111).

It is not just the silkworm but also silk itself that obsesses Rëmâ, who explores it at great length as a mystical symbol. Perhaps, then, it is in the East that are to be found the germs of this spiritual image that St Teresa, in Europe, made so much her own.

d) The seven concentric castles of the soul.

We will end our study with one of the most famous symbols of Peninsular mysticism: St Teresa's seven concentric castle of the soul, an image celebrated for its beauty and immediacy, and above all for its startling "originality."

St Teresa, whose memory for sources so often failed her, declared at the beginning of her treatise, in all innocence, that the delicate mystical schema

[10]"You will have heard of the wonderful way in which silk is made—a way which no one could invent but God—and how it comes from a kind of seed which looks like tiny peppercorns (I have never seen this, but only heard of it, so if it is incorrect in any way, the fault is not mine) (*Castle,* V:2, p. 104).

she had formulated was the product of her own imagination, divinely inspired:[11]

> While I was beseeching Our Lord to-day that he would speak through me, since I could find nothing to say and had no idea how to begin to carry out the obligation laid upon me by obedience, a thought occurred to me which I will now set down, in order to have some foundation on which to build. I began to think of the soul as it if were a castle made of a single diamond or of very clear crystal,

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[11]Fr Diego de Yepes insists that the symbol is the product of a direct inspiration from God, and cites the personal testimony of St Teresa with respect to the genesis of her famous treatise. Although Robert Ricart ("Le symbolisme du 'Château intérieur'") and Víctor G. De la Concha (*El arte literario de Santa Teresa*) question whether this statement is to be taken absolutely at face value, as absolutely "true," I think it useful to record it here because it would seem to confirm that full credence was given to the idea that the trope was original with St Teresa. Here are Fr Diego's words:

> This holy Mother had been desirous of obtaining some insight into the beauty of a soul in grace. . . . Just at that time she was commanded to write a treatise on prayer, about which she knew a great deal from experience. On the eve of the festival of the Most Holy Trinity she was thinking what subject she should choose for this treatise, when God, Who disposes all things in due form and order, granted this desire of hers, and gave her a subject. He showed her a most beautiful crystal globe, made in the shape of a castle, and containing seven mansions [Trans: *moradas,* see note below], in the seventh and innermost of which was the King of Glory, in the greatest splendour, illumining and beautifying them all. The nearer one got to the centre, the stronger was the light; outside the palace limits everything was foul, dark and infested with toads, vipers and other venomous creatures. . . . It was about this vision that she told me on that day. . . [To this point, the Peers translation, p. 8 in *Castle*]. She took from those seven dwellings of the castle seven degrees of prayer, through which we enter into ourselves and grow nearer and nearer God, so that when at last we come to the depths of our soul and perfect knowledge of ourselves, we have then arrived at the center of the castle and the Seventh Dwelling, where God is, and we are joined to Him in perfect union (qtd. in Asín Palacios, *"El símil"* 266-67; this study of the castles served as a basis for our paper "De Nërâ de Bagdad a Santa Teresa de Jesus, el símbolo de los siete castillos concéntricos del alma," read at the Seventh International Congress of Hispanicists, Venice, August 1980).

> in which there are many rooms, just as in Heaven there are many mansions.[12]

It does not strain credulity overmuch to believe St Teresa's protestations of originality and divine inspiration, for the image has a strange loveliness and an undeniable imaginative complexity about it: the soul is conceived as a castle made of fine crystal or diamond and constituted by seven dwellings or apartments which seem themselves to be seven concentric palaces or castles (*cf. Interior Castle,* I: 2, 207; VII: 2, 9 and 10, 337-38, and *passim.*). In the last palace or dwelling resides God, Whom the soul joins and with Whom it dwells; the soul thus escapes the ravages of the devil who, in the form of various horrible and venomous animals, is constantly attempting to penetrate the castles that demarcate the progressive resting-houses or dwellings arrived at on the mystical path. When we consider one further important detail, the symbolic schema would indeed appear to be original: it has been found terribly difficult to document, in all its particulars and constitutive elements, anywhere in the European mystical literature that antedates St Teresa.

This symbol has, in fact, led to one of the most intriguing problems of filiation in all of Spanish literature. Many more than one scholar, respectfully ignoring St Teresa's protestations of originality, has joined the search for the literary source or sources of the seven concentric castles of the soul. And the findings of critics such as Morel Fatio, Gaston Etchegoyen, Menéndez Pidal, and R. Hoornaert do mitigate our wonder at the trope to a degree, for they have documented the equation of the soul with a castle in spiritual writers before St Teresa. (It seems only fair, too, to note that C. G. Jung[13] and

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[12]*Interior Castle,* I:1 (*OC* 365).This last word in the Peers translation, *mansions,* is translated from the Spanish *moradas,* which means most generally *dwellings*. Peers chooses "mansions" to echo with the Biblical phrase "In my father's house there are many mansions" (John 14:2). St Teresa, however, does not seem specifically to be echoing that verse here.

[13]In his *Alchemical Studies,* Jung reproduces a drawing of a castle fortified with sixteen towers and with an interior moat. This schema perfectly coincides with the Eastern *mandalas* described in the *Tao* and with the quest for deep consciousness, although it was drawn by one of Jung's patients (60).

Mircea Eliade[14] have written at some length on the universality of the image.) And yet the antecedents seem rather distant and disappointing: in none of them do we find the mystical way or path structured as seven dwellings or castles, each clearly *inside* the other, their progressive interiority marking the stages or steps of the soul's ascension. Gaston Etchegoyen, the commentator who has probably most deeply delved into the phylogenetic aspect of the problem of the castles, has proposed that Bernardino de Laredo and Francisco de Osuna were Teresa's principal sources. These writers, the works of both of whom were well-known by St Teresa, do indeed conceive the inner soul as a castle, but their sketchy figures hardly explain the fullness of detail achieved by St Teresa. In his *Tercer abecedario espiritual* ("Third Spiritual Primer"), Osuna keeps to a schema which owes much to medieval allegories; in this conception, the traditional enemies (the world, the flesh, and the devil) try to breach the castle of the soul.[15] The figure that Bernardino de Laredo

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[14]St Teresa's basic intuition is quite profound in the sense that it appears to correspond with a universal conception of the "sacred space" that we find present, spiritually, in the construction of temples and palaces throughout the world. Eliade describes the architectural configuration of these *mandalas*: "The same sense of a cosmogony is also apparent in the construction of the *mandala* as practised in the Tantric schools. The word means 'circle'; the Tibetan renderings of it are either 'centre' or 'what surrounds'. The thing itself is a series of circles which may or may not be concentric, inscribed in a square. . . . The initiation consists in the neophyte's penetration into the various zones or stages of the *mandala.* The rite may be looked on with equal justice as the equivalent of the *pradaksina,* the well-known ceremonial of going round a temple or sacred monument (*stëpa*), or as an initiation by way of ritual entry into a labyrinth. The assimilation of the temple with the *mandala* is obvious in the case of Borobudur" (Patterns 372-73 and *passim.* in Chap X, "Sacred Places: Temple, Palace, 'Centre of the World'"). It would appear that we are even closer to St Teresa with the Babylonian ziggurats which manifested or embodied a mystical meaning: "Les celebres *ziqqûrâts* de Babyloine typificent la montagne cosmique aux sept étages, aux couleurs respectives des sept Cieux; par elles était possible, rituellement, l'ascension jusqu'a sommet, c'est-à-dire jusqu'au point culminant qui est le nord cosmique" (Henri Corbin, *L'homme* 66). But in this case, Corbin notes that the subdivisions of the mystical path into seven degrees, corresponding to the seven heavens constitutes a typically Eastern symbol which was to find later elaboration in the spiritual literature of Islam. It will be interesting to recall this when we look at the mystical schemata of the seven concentric castles of the soul that we will see later in Nërâ of Baghdad (9th century) and the anonymous author of the *Nawâdir* (11th century).

[15]Osuna says: "The heart [must be guarded] with all vigilance, as the castle which is beset is guarded, setting against the three harassers three lamps: against the flesh, . . . set chastity; against the world, . . . set liberality and alms-giving; against the devil, . . . set *caritas*." There

sketches in his *Subida del Monte Sión* ("Ascent of Mount Zion") is more complex and intriguing, but finally even further from St Teresa's: the understanding is a sort of "civitas sancta" built in a square field. Its foundations are of crystal and its walls of precious stones, with a Paschal candle inside symbolising Christ.[16]

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are three portals or gates of the castle through which the devil may enter, according to Osuna: through one enters deceit, through another fear, and through the third enters hunger. "And it is to be noted," Osuna continues, "that if the devil finds only one part or path of these three ill-guarded, by that way he enters into the castle of the heart" (IV, III, pp. 198 and 202).

[16]This is Laredo's enigmatic text, in which the image differs considerably from St Teresa's: "[The understanding is a field] perfectly foursquare; seek that it be fenced about with a fine crystal, which is a bright and precious stone. And on each one of the panels or sides of that square thou wilt erect three towers hewn in precious stonework, that is precious gems; thus of that towered wall make a walled city, and let it be *civitas sancta*, that heavenly Jerusalem of whose walls it is written that they are of precious stones (Revelation 21:18). . . . From the top of these towers must thou hang four shields of fine gold. . . . In the centre of this now-walled field. . . let there be lighted a rich Paschal candle, of cleanest wax and of purest wick, . . . crafted in such perfection. . ., that once the candle is lighted no space nor time will ever see it spent, or diminished, or its light fail. . . . And when this candle is lighted, the wax is the most sacred body of Christ; the wick, His most happy spirit; and from its perfectly illuminated splendour thou mayest. . . elevate thy understanding of the Holy Trinity in one most pure substance. . . . And in this holy city neither sun nor moon is ever needed. . . for the brightness of God illuminates it. . . . The crystalline wall is the bright virginity which illumines the city; the divers gems. . . are the great nations of the fortunate; twelve towers, twelve Apostles, the four shields are the four Evangelists. . . . Look again at the shimmering brightness and splendour of the gems. . . and the other materials, for it is thus that the blessings of our God are communicated to the fortunate. . . . And still we have another tower which is castle, is fortress, strong house, royal house, it is the apartment of the King, citadel of the city, it is nearer than the candle's, it is homage to God and it exceeds the other towers in such perfected eminence, that this meagre understanding can in no way reach it. . . . [Its] foundations rest on fine crystal as strong as diamond, which cannot be broken or breached, and of a thousand precious stones is its wall fortified, and of sapphire and emerald are its doors hewed. (Tobit [Apocrypha] 33:16). . . [This] our royal citadel is sanctified in the Church, . . . it is a temple of God, Jerusalem. . . City of God. . . [Our] splendor is God, is blessed Jesus Christ, is that Paschal candle. . . splendor and brightness from its glory, the immense Divine Being" (*Subida del Monte Sinaí* in *Místicos franciscanos españoles* II, pp. 270-274).

These are, then, the symbolic outlines which criticism has generally taken to be the best explanation for St Teresa's figure, but it is obvious that this simple scheme has really very little to do with the imaginative richness of her seven concentric castles.

Furthermore, we should note that conceptions of the spiritual castle, such as those found, as we have noted, in Osuna, Laredo, Denis the Carthusian (and even Ramon Lull), are yet more abundant in medieval and Renaissance literature than scholars have so far documented. St Bernard of Clairvaux [1090-1153] in the twelfth century, for example, over and over again compares the soul to a fortress besieged by spiritual enemies.[17] Jean

[17]In his sermon *De la guarda constante del corazón* ("On the Constant Guard of the Heart"), we are told that we must defend this fortress against attacks "from above and from below, from before and from behind, from the right and from the left,"[7] while in his sermon *En la dedicación de la Iglesia* ("Upon the Dedication of the Church"), after describing such military defenses of his castle as continence and penitence, he identifies this castle, anticlimactically, with the castle of the Order of Clairvaux: "A most beautiful castle wilt thou have taken from Christ shouldst thou deliver to its enemies the castle of Clairvaux." Following is the text of Bernard's sermon "On the Constant Guard of the Heart" (*Sermones varios*, #82, *Obras Completas*, p. 1107):

> We should cultivate and keep custody over the castle of the soul above all things, for from it comes eternal life. But this castle, located in the land of our enemies, is attacked from every side; from above and from below, from before and from behind, from the right and from the left. From below it is assailed by the concupiscence of the flesh, which struggles with the soul. . . From above there is God's imminent judgment. . . . From behind is the morbose delectation which is born from the memory of past sins; from before, the insistence of temptations; from the left, the perturbation of arrogant, murmuring brothers; from the right, the devotion of obedient brothers.

In his *Sermones de santos* ("Sermons on the Saints"), Sermon 2: "On the Ascension of the Virgin Mary, titled On the Manner of Cleaning, Adorning, and Furnishing the House," St Bernard expands the Biblical verse: "Now it came to pass, as they went, that [Jesus] entered into a certain village [in Spanish: *castillo*]: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house" (Luke 10:38). Bernard continually shifts the meaning of the Spanish word *"castillo"* [lit. "castle" but in the King James version

Gerson likewise speaks of assaults on the soul by the world, the flesh, and the devil.[18] Other theorists such as Hugh of St-Victor (*De arca Noe morali*) and the anonymous author of the thirteenth-century *Ancren Riwle* ("The Nun's Rule") make more or less the same symbolic arguments. In a curious variant, Robert Grosseteste, in his thirteenth-century Anglo-French *Château d'amour*, equates the allegorical castle to the Virgin Mary's womb which receives Christ.[19] He, like many other spiritual writers, avails himself of a Biblical passage which did not occur to St Teresa (or at least which she did not use):

"village" (and therefore, "walled city")]: it is the world, the incarnation of Christ, Mary's bosom, the house or castle of our soul. For purposes of his allegory he also quotes Proverbs 4:23: "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." The enemy [read: *the devil*] can conquer the "wall of continence. . . [and] the forebattlement of patience" of the allegorical castle of the soul (707). But Jesus "entered into the [castle] and attacked the fort and sacked its spoils, . . . he broke open the brass doors and rendered the iron bolts into pieces, taking out the prisoner from the prison and from the shadow of death. He went out through the door which is confession. . ." (708).

[18] *". . . l'ostel de mon âme est durement assegié: . . . par le monde, par la chair, par l'ennemie. . ."* (*Sermon pour la Pentecôte: Mansionem (De la première chamberière, Oraison)*, from *Six sermons français inédits de Jean Gerson*, Paris, 1946, p. 74. ["The dwelling of my soul is hard besieged: by the world, by the flesh, by the enemy. . ."]

[19] Here is an extract from that poem:

En beau lu fut il veraiment, / La ou Deu de le ciel descent. / En un Chastel bel et grant, / Bien fermé e anenant, / Kar c'est le chastel de ammur / De tuz solaz, de tuz sucur. / . . . . / Ou habiter ne poet nul mal. / Environ ad quatre tureles / En tut le mund ni ad si beles. / . . . . / Le castel est bel e bon, / Dehors depeint environ / De treis colurs diversement. / E si est vert le fundement, / Ki a la roche se joint. / . . . . / La colur ki est en mi liu / Si est inde e si est bliu, / la tierce colur par en som / Plus est vermeille ke n'est rose / . . . . / En mi la tur plus hautaine / Est surdant une fontaine / Dont issent quatre ruissel / Santé porreit recoverer / K'a cel ewe peüst puiser. / . . . . / En cele bele tur el bone / I ad de invoire une trone, / Ce est le chastel de delit / Cum la duce Virgine Marie / La roche k'est si bien polie, / C'est le cuer la duce Marie, / Ki onkes en mal ne mollist / . . . . / Et de si tres bele verdur / Ce est la fei de la virgine / . . . . / C'est cele ki tant est vermeille / . . . . / E c'est la seinte charité / . . . . / Les quatre tureles en haut / . . . . / Sunt quatre vertuz kardinals. / . . . . / La baille k'est en mi formé / Signifie sa chasteté. (*Le Château d'amour*, Paris, 1918, pp. 105-6, 111.)

"Intravit Jesus in quodam castellum. . . " (Luke 10:38). The German mystic Meister Eckhart, who produces some of the most delicate and beautiful spiritual literature in medieval Europe, buttresses his own metaphorical castle—which in this case is also a metaphor for the Virginal womb which received Christ—with the same passage from Luke, and translates the Biblical "castellum" by "*bürgelin*"—"little burg" or "village," rather than strictly "castle," as the King James Bible in fact also does (*cf. Selected Treatises and Sermons Translated from Latin and German*).

The Portuguese, for their part—St Anthony of Lisbon (or Padua), Frei Paio da Coimbra, the author of the *Boosco deleitoso*—would seem virtually obsessed with the symbol of the castle of the soul, though they develop it with the same limitations as do their European contemporaries. The most interesting treatise-writer of all the Portuguese may be Dom Duarte, who in his *Leal conselheiro* ("Faithful Councillor") speaks of the "five houses of our heart," one inside another. The last chamber or house is the "oratorio," or "room of prayer,"[20] and there is some justification for Mario Martins' belief that he sees some family resemblance between the Portuguese Dom and the Spanish St Teresa.[21] In Spain, we should add the names of Juan de los

[20]These are the details of Dom Duarte's image: "In the center of the heart of every person there are five houses, disposed as the nobles are wont. In the first, all those who reside in the realm may enter, as may those foreigners who desire to come there. In the second chamber or antechamber, they are wont to have their dwellings, and some notable [persons] of the kingdom. In the third, which is the bedroom, the eldest and those most closely related to the house. The fourth, which is the inner room, where they are wont to dress, is for special persons. The fifth, which is the room of prayer [*oratorio*], is the place into which the nobles retire each day in order to pray, read holy books, and think upon virtuous occupations. In each of these houses, we have those twelve passions of which I have written before: to wit, Love, Desire, Delectation, Hatred, Loathing, Sadness, Meekness, Hope and Boldness, Rage, Desperation, and Fear. . . . And it is at the end of these [passions] that we must have our beginning [that is, of a virtuous and holy life]: first we must order our heart, setting in the [first] room all things that [the other room] does not have. In the antechamber, improvement. And bodily health in the bedroom. In the inner room, deeds of honor. The study shall be especially kept for the service of our lord and the following of virtue" (Chapter LXXXI, "*Das casas de nosso coraçom, e como lhe devem ser apropiadas certas fiis*" ("On the Houses of Our Heart"), *Leal conselheiro* 303-4).

[21]"[He] belongs to the same tribe, though of a more humble family" (233). Martins' scholarly and erudite study a bounds in examples of Portuguese treatise-writers whose allegories employed the castle in similar terms: St Anthony of Lisbon (*Sermones et Evangelia Dominicarum*,

Angeles and Diego de Estella. In Italy, Dante would appear to be close to St Teresa when he speaks of his *"nobile castello / sette volte cerchiato d'altre mura"* [literally, of course, "noble castle"; the John Ciardi translation is "great Citadel / circled by seven towering battlements"] (*Inferno*, IV, ll. 106-7), but Dante's castle symbolises not the soul but rather the entrance to the Garden of Limbo.

Thus, castle-allegories among European spiritual writers are, as we see, quite widespread, but in fullness of imagistic detail they compare very unfavourably with the highly articulated Teresian schema.[22] Other sources sometimes mentioned in relation to St Teresa's famous symbol are even more remote and disappointing in this regard, such as the castles in chivalric books, the allegorical castles of courtly love of the *cancioneril* poetry of the fifteenth century, St Augustine's "mansions," and even some biblical passages only vaguely related to the trope.[23] Finally, it seems an act of critical near-desperation when some scholars opt for an extra-literary solution to explain St Teresa's sudden inspiration. In 1919 Miguel de Unamuno put

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of the thirteenth century); Frei Roberto (whose *Château Perilleux* circulated widely in Portuguese in the fifteenth century); and Frei Diego Rosario (in the sixteenth century), among others.

[22]We should mention, however, the case of the *Remedio de cuerpos humanos y silva de experiencias* ["Cure of Human Bodies and Miscellany of Experiences"], written by the physician Luis de Lobera de Avila and published in 1542, which is a compendium of human anatomy under the allegory of a fortified tower, and which does have certain general parallels with the symbol as used in St Teresa. We are grateful to our colleague Francisco Marquez Villanueva who lent us a copy of his study on this subject, "El simbolismo del castillo interior: sentido y génesis," which he read at the MLA meeting in Chicago in 1967 when it was still unpublished. Since then it has been expanded for the 1982 publication in the *Actas del Congreso Internacional Teresiano,* Salamanca, pp. 495-522.

[23]St Teresa herself paraphrases the much-quoted passage John 14:2, "In my father's house are many mansions [or, in her case, 'dwellings']," but critics also sometimes refer to the text from I Peter (5:8), which speaks of the protection of the flock (as though a fortress) from the devil, but in a most superficial way: "*quia adversus vester diabolus, tamquam leo rugens, circuit quorens quem devoret; cui resistite fortes in fide"* ["Be sober, be watchful! For your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goes about seeking someone to devour"; or, in the King James Version, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"].

forth the hypothesis that the walled city of Avila had served as a model for the Seven Castles, and Robert Ricart in 1965, at the end of an article whose initial incisive rigor promised better, chose to accept Unamuno's conclusion (*cf.* above, note ?). More recently, in 1970, Trueman Dicken also decided to adopt a similar phylogenetic solution, except that now it is not Avila which is St Teresa's supposed source of inspiration, but rather the Mota Castle at Medina del Campo. Dicken strengthens his argument by minutely (and not, in our opinion, at all successfully) comparing this real castle with the seven imaginary castles of St Teresa's mysterious trope.

Given these critical attempts, so generally unsuccessful, any attempt to impugn the supposed literary originality of St Teresa would appear distinctly ill favoured, if not misguided. And yet that supposed originality *was* challenged, many years ago now, by the great Spanish Arabist Miguel Asín Palacios, in an essay which, surprisingly, few recent critics have taken into account. Originally published in 1946 in *Al-Andalus* (2, pp. 263-274), the essay's title was "El símil de los castillos y moradas del alma en la mística islámica y en Santa Teresa"; it has now been reprinted in my 1990 edition of Asin's work (179-216). In this essay, Asin documented the basic Teresian schema among the mystics, specifically in a little work titled *Kitāb al Tajrâd* ("The Book of Spiritual Nakedness") by AÁmad Al-Ghazzālâ, the brother of the famed philosopher, wherein the soul is portrayed in terms of concentric circles. Here, Asín contended, the trope "acquires completeness and offers itself to us as a true precedent to the Teresian [figure] in a single passage, unfortunately anonymous, in the *Nawādir*, a curious compilation of stories and religious thoughts attributed to AÁmad al-Qalyëbâ and written down towards the end of the sixteenth century" (266). The passage, which Asin himself translates from the Arabic into Spanish, is as follows:

> God set for every son of Adam seven castles, within which is He and without which is Satan barking like a dog. When man lets a breach be opened in one of them, Satan enters by it. Man must, therefore, keep most careful vigil and guard over them, but particularly the first castle of them, for so long as that one remains sound and whole and its foundations firm, there is no evil to be feared. The first of the castles, which is of whitest pearl, is the mortification of the sensitive soul. Inside it there is a castle of

> emerald, which is purity and sincerity of intention. Inside this there is a castle of brilliant, shining porcelain, which is obedience to God's commandments, both the positive and the negative. Within this castle there is a castle of rock, which is gratitude for Divine gifts and surrender to the Divine will. Within this castle there is a further one, of iron, which is leaving all in the hands of God. Within this, there is a castle of silver, which is mystical faith. Within this there is a castle of gold, which is the contemplation of God–-glory and honor to Him! For God–praised be He!–hath said (*Koran*, XVI, 191), "Satan has no power over those who believe and place their trust in God" (267-8).

Indeed Asín had come upon a somewhat schematic but nevertheless precisely rendered precedent for St Teresa's image. Although we do not find in the *Nawādir* the exhaustive mystical elaboration that St Teresa gives the trope, nonetheless all the principal elements of an image that St Teresa believed to be the offspring of her own inspired imagination are there present. Yet the specific problem of the origin or origins of the castle-symbol was never totally solved by Asín Palacios, because the documentary evidence in his possession was a manuscript dating from the end of the sixteenth century (and therefore contemporary with or even following St Teresa), and Asín believed that the symbol had been perfected in Islam at about that date. It has been my good fortune, though, to be able to resolve some of the doubts about the origin of the symbol in St Teresa that were left by Asín, for I have come upon documentary evidence which was not available to him in his 1946 essay. This document is the ninth-century *Maqāmāt al-qulëb* ("Stations of the Hearts") by Abë 'l-Àasan al-Nërâ of Baghdad. (Indeed, the document may be even earlier.) It does not seem incautious, then, given this document, to suspect that we are in the presence of a metaphoric motif recurrent in Islamic thought and writing. The two examples which Asin and later I have been able to document—with so many centuries' difference between the manuscripts (between, that is, the ninth and sixteenth centuries)—argues, we can fairly assume, for a long literary tradition for this figure, replaying itself across the centuries.

Abë 'l-Àasan al-Nërâ's mystical tract is of particular interest because until now no other author among those documented to have used the castle-

symbol (with the exception of the anonymous writer of the *Nawādir*) organised the symbol's elements so similarly to the way they are structured by St Teresa. Let us examine how precisely the Sufi master Nërâ foreshadows the *Nawādir* and draws—a full eight centuries before the mystical saint from Avila—the image that St Teresa considered personal and inspired. We have translated from the Arabic the chapter dealing with the symbol of the seven interior castles; its title is or "The Castles of the Believer's Heart":

> Know thee that God—praised be He!—created in the heart of believers seven castles surrounded by walls. He commanded that believers dwell within these castles and He placed Satan without, barking at them as the dog barks. The first enclosed castle is of corundum [*yāqët*, a crystalline stone which may have several colours; here, probably "ruby" or "sapphire," perhaps "emerald," or perhaps even a clear crystalline stone that resembled a diamond], and [this castle] is mystical acquaintance with God—praised be He! —; and about this castle there lies a castle of gold, which is faith in God—praised be He! —; and about this castle there lies a castle of silver, which is faithfulness in word and deed; and about this castle there lies a castle of iron, which is surrender to the Divine will—blessed be the Divinity! —; and about this castle there lies a castle of brass, which is carrying out the commandments of God—praised be He!—; and about this castle there lies a castle of alum, which is keeping the commandments of God, both the positive and the negative; and about this castle there lies a castle of baked clay which is the mortification of the sensitive soul in every action. . . .
>
> As the word of God—praised be He!—states, "Against my servants thou shalt have no power" (Qur'ān XII, 40). The faithful man is thus within these castles; and him who is within the castle of corundum Satan has no manner of reaching, so long as the faithful man observe the rules of the mortification of the sensitive soul. But if he once fail to observe them and say "it is not necessary," then Satan wins the castle from him which is of baked clay; and covets the next. When the faithful man grows negligent in keeping the commandments of God both positive and negative, Satan wins from him the castle that is of alum; and covets the third. When the

> faithful man abandons surrender to the Divine will—praised be God!—then Satan takes from him the castle of brass; and covets the fourth, and so on until the last castle.[24]

It is obvious that this symbolic schema is of the same family as the sixteenth-century *Nawādir* and that it also contains (though perhaps embryonically) all the principal elements of St Teresa's figure: the soul—or, better said, the soul's mystical path—is conceived of as seven successive dwellings or rooms represented by concentric castles. Satan lurks about the first castles, especially, awaiting his chance to seize them, while the faithful man who manages to penetrate to the most inward castle achieves union with God. There are specific parallels of great interest: St Teresa speaks of the "dwellings" or "mansions" (*moradas*) of the soul, no doubt remembering the verse from John 14:2, "In my father's house there are many mansions." However, as Miguel Asín Palacios has shown in his *Šādilâes y alumbrados,* the concept of the dwelling as the *permanent* state of the soul (as opposed to a state more ephemeral or transitory) seems to derive from the Islamic concept of the stage on the path of perfection as *maqām*, or "station/dwelling," which the Arabic word exactly signifies. This technical usage is uncommon in medieval Christian spirituality, but Sufis such as Nërâ and Al-Hujwârâ freely and frequently employed it hundreds of years before it acquired currency in the Carmelite school.

Nërâ compares the devil, the enemy of the soul, to a dog; St Teresa, to filthy beasts or vermin. The Saint would appear to be closer to the Shādhilite brotherhood of the thirteenth century, which concretised the enemies of the soul as a mob of beasts and vermin which assault the interior castle. But it may be that the Baghdadian mystic Nërâ is not so distant from St Teresa after all, if we should recall the impact which any image of threatening impurity would have on a Muslim, accustomed to purifying rituals such as

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[24]The original Arabic text is printed in Paul Nwyia: *Textes inédits d'Abë-l-Àasan al-Nûri*, Vol. XLIV, F.9, pp. 135-6. The text quoted here is on p. 135. Nwyia also discusses the *Maqāmāt* in his *Exégèse coranique et langage mystique: Nouvel essai sur le lexique technique des mystiques musulmans,* and it is curious that in that study he does not take into account the essay written by Asín Palacios (against whom Nwyia published such polemics) on the symbol of St Teresa's castles and their relation to Islam.

ablutions. In Islam the dog is the impure animal *par excellence*: a member of the faithful is not allowed to pray where a dog has passed. Thus Nërâ's "dog" translates, emotionally, into the "filthy beasts" or "vermin" with which St Teresa metaphorizes our impurities, or into the devil himself.

One obvious difference between St Teresa's castles and those of the Arabs is the precious materials with which they are constructed. Interestingly, St Teresa seems to have changed the polychrome castles of the Islamic symbol into diamantine, transparent palaces. The two authors do doubtless diverge here, but we should note that in constructing his castles Nërâ of Baghdad availed himself of building materials that would symbolically indicate the spiritual progress of the soul within itself, and so in that sense does not greatly differ from the mystical itinerary of St Teresa. Taken from outside to inside, the constitutive materials of the Arabic castles ascend in quality as does the sublime path they represent: the castle of clay (a fragile, friable substance) symbolises the mortification of the sensitive soul (that is, the principles of the spiritual life). And from there we continually rise—through alum, brass, iron, silver, and gold—until we come to the most inward castle, union with God, which is of corundum (*yāqët*) and which would appear to be, in a lovely artistic and symbolic culmination, the precious gem for which the precious metals serve as a mounting.

Although the schematic spiritual levels or stages of the *Maqāmāt al-qulëb* do not correspond perfectly to the extremely complex stages enunciated by St Teresa in her much longer treatise, it is noteworthy that in both cases there is a very clear ascending scale of spiritual perfection. And we must note that the first and seventh of both Teresa's and the Muslim's castles do coincide exactly: in the first the sensitive soul is mortified and in the seventh God is at last possessed.[25]

[25]The idea of the concentricity of these seven successive castles is more than clear in St Teresa. In the following passage from her *Interior Castle* she describes the dwellings from the inside outward, exactly as Nërâ does: "You must not imagine these mansions as arranged in a row, one behind another, but fix your attention on the centre, the room or palace occupied by the King. Think of a palmito [Peers footnote: 'The palmito is a shrub, common in the south and east of Spain, with thick layers of leaves enclosing a succulent edible kernel.'], which has many outer rinds surrounding the savoury part within, all of which must be taken

But we do not in any way wish to imply by all this that the immediate source for St Teresa was Abë-l-Àasan al-Nërâ. What we do propose is that the raw materials for the symbol of an interior castle, subdivided into seven concentric dwellings or apartments or castles, are imported from Islam. Muslims continued to elaborate on this motif throughout the Middle Ages; Nërâ and the author of the *Nawādir* are but two isolated (though very significant) examples of the Islamic use of the symbol of the mystical castles. What the matter comes down to, indeed, is a true commonplace of Sufi literature: In his *IÁyā' 'ulëm al-dân* ("Revivification of the Religious Sciences"), Al-Ghazzālâ repeatedly alludes to the spiritual castle whose gates must be defended against the attacks of the devil, and the celebrated thirteenth-century Murcian poet and mystic Ibn 'Arabâ portrays his own esoteric illuminations as a citadel composed of a multitude of chambers and doors successively passed through as mystical knowledge grows (*Futëëāt* [II, p. 768-774]). The Persian author Niïāmâ in his *Haft Paykar* ("Seven Princesses") illustrates the mystical progress of the soul as seven castles (or of one castle with seven towers or cupolas which are in turn themselves castles), corresponding to the colours and characteristics of the seven planets. In these seven castles reside seven princesses dressed in the seven colours associated with those planets. In the seventh castle, which is white or transparent, the mystical union with God metaphorically occurs. The metaphorical transfiguration of the soul into a castle is so dear to Islam that it has passed into the vernacular: in Arabic one often hears "*muéaÅÅana*," which means something like "may the castle of God around you protect you."

St Teresa, then, did not introduce the figure of the concentric castles into the history of mystical literature. So great is the weight of documentary evidence linking St Teresa's seven concentric castles to that same figure in Islamic mystical literature, that we are obliged to ask ourselves whether this is not in fact a question of Islamic cultural filiation. This would be the most dramatic case of such a thing, perhaps, but as we have seen, it is far from being the only such instance in Western mystical literature.

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away before the centre can be eaten. Just so around this central room are many more" (*Castle,* I:2, ¶8, p. 37).

Summary

We will not linger on the doctrinal motifs that St John of the Cross and St Teresa (among other spiritual writers of the Siglo de Oro, including the *Illuminati*) share with the Sufis, because these motifs have already been outlined by Asín Palacios or his disciples, and especially because many of them would require a doctrinal analysis that falls outside the scope of this study, which is intended to deal with a shared *literary* Symbolism or terminology. But we might recall in passing some very eloquent cases, simply to dramatise the fact that Muslim and Christian mysticism have more points in common than we have touched upon here. The pure love which neither fears hell nor yearns for heaven and which St John of the Cross and numerous other spiritual writers of the Siglo de Oro share with the anonymous author of the sonnet "No me mueve, mi Dios, para quererte," would appear to have some connection with the spiritual literature of Islam, as I have noted in another essay.[26] Likewise, as Asín noted, other spiritual postures—the rejection of charisma and miracles; the emphasis on the appreciation of the divine favours (the school of the Divine Benefices that Bataillon discusses at length in his *Erasmo y España* was foreshadowed by Al-Ghazzālâ); the virtue of the *murāqabah* (*cf.* Pareja 313; Nicholson, *Poetas místicos* 76; Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions* 29), which is to act as though God, omnipresent, were watching the devout man's every action; the use of meditation without images hundreds of years before Erasmus; the prayer of quietude that leaves the soul *muèma'innah* or "pacified / at peace" (*cf.* Nwyia, *Ibn 'Ata'* 255; Corbin, *L'homme* 104; Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages* 35); impeccability or *shath* (exchange, trade) by means of which so many Illuminati believed themselves to be sinless because God possessed them and acted through them (Nasr 115)—all these attitudes and postures seem to resemble Islamic attitudes that are prior to them chronologically.

Even the famous little saying attributed to St Teresa, "Nada te turbe. . . ", would appear to have been antedated by the Shādhilites: "He who hath God, lacks nothing," says Ibn 'Abbād, in a formulation not at all unlike St Teresa's. And contrariwise, lacking God, nothing avails one: "Once a

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[26]"Anonimia y posible filiacion espiritual islamica del soneto. . .," *NRFH* 2 (1975), pp. 243-268.

dwelling has been reached, or a favour granted thee, neither desire nor ask to keep it, nor suffer in losing it, because only God suffices" (Ibn al-'Arâf, in Asin, *Obras escogidas,* Vol. I, 269). And finally, although Asin has noted (*Islam* 158) that St Nilus and St John Climacus had already outlined the figure, there is the tremendous insistence by the Muslims on a motif that St Ignatius made famous, the *perinde ac cadaver* ["like unto a cadaver"], which was employed by Tustarâ (*cf.* Massignon, *Essai sur le lexique* 42), Al-Naqshabandâ (*cf.* Arberry, *Sufism* 131), Ibn 'Arabâ and Al-Ghazzālâ. For Al-Ghazzālâ this trope figured in the conception of the highest degree of trust or *tawakkul* (*cf. LÁyā'* 385), which Pareja describes in the following terms:

> The third degree [of *tawakkul*] consists in the soul's trusting in Allah in its acts of movement or repose, like the cadaver in the hands of him who washes it in order to wrap it in the shroud, with the sole difference that the living person sees himself as though dead, and moved by the omnipotence of Allah (308).[27]

Let us recapitulate, then, the conclusions of this study. St John of the Cross and St Teresa did not introduce into European literature such mystical symbols as the *dark night,* the *lamps of fire,* and the *castles of the soul,* although their Christian elaboration of those symbols is touched with genius and has made those tropes famous in the spiritual literature of the West. St John of

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[27]Did St John of the Cross somehow have indirect access to a poetic image so often used in secular Arabic poetry? This would be the flowering garden as a starry sky, which critics consider to be a motif characteristic of Arabic poetry and which has produced an entire genre called *nauriyya* (*cf.* Pérez, *La poésie andalouse* and Bargebuhr, *The Alhambra*). Among many examples that we might cite, there is Abë Firās, prince of the Hamdanid dynasty (d. 968): "The sky wept upon the drizzling of its tears / whereupon she [the meadow] began to smile showing stars of the sky [i.e., flowers, like a mouth showing teeth]" (Bargebuhr, 336). The image is so widespread that it is inherited by such Hispano-Jewish poets as Moshe ibn Ezra: "the trees with the stars of their / flowers to the sun serve as firmament" (Díez Macho 45). And there is also St John, who gives a somewhat unexpected twist to his gloss on the ver "¡oh prado de verduras!" when he understands it from the point of view of the *nauriyya*: "This is the consideration of the sky, called "meadow of green" because the things that are in it are always of unwithering green, and neither perish nor wither with time, and in them as though [in] fresh green things do the just take pleasure and delight. In which consideration is also comprehended the entire difference of the lovely stars and other celestial planets" (*CB,* 4:4; *VO,* p. 642).

the Cross and St Teresa de Jesús carried these figures to such heights of literary and spiritual beauty that the distant Eastern origins of the metaphors indeed pale. On other occasions, however, it is the mystical Symbolism of the two Carmelite reformers that appears sketchy in comparison with the exquisite (and extraordinarily complex) literary elaboration of their Islamic counterparts. In any case, St John of the Cross and St Teresa are never passively derivative, but rather constantly creative with these possible Muslim sources, adapting, transforming, and melding them into their own Western Christian heritage, which is immeasurably enriched by them.[28]

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[28]We wish once more to note that in other essays (our book *San Juan y el Islam* and the essay in collaboration with María Teresa Narváez cited in Note 1) we have concerned ourselves with the thorny problem of how the Carmelite mystics could have echoed these Islamic figures in the sixteenth century. But they were not the only ones to use these figures: the works of many medieval European spiritual writers appear to have been influenced by Islamic motifs; we have not gone into these for reasons of space.

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But the Sufi influences present in the work of St John and St Teresa are so abundant and so significant (as we have tried to indicate in this study) that they irrevocably mark their work. If we are unfamiliar with these Islamic tropes, the work of the two writers (and many more) becomes unnecessarily mysterious and often falsely original. We cannot, in intellectual honesty, not take into account the fact that St John of the Cross and St Teresa employ a technical language and a Symbolism that the Muslims had moulded into a complex spiritual literature hundreds of years before the Carmelite reformers were born. St John and St Teresa are no less Christian for that; they can be seen as more fertile and imaginative. In the face of certain features of their work, we should begin to speak not of a "Christianised Islam" as Asín once proposed, but rather of an "Islamicized Christianity." Thanks to the Islamic influences on Christianity, the religious literature of these writers of the Spanish Siglo de Oro, shot through with Muslim motifs, is one of the most mysterious, complex, and brilliant in all of Europe, and one of the most fertilely hybrid.

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IQBAL'S CONCEPT OF LOVE

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

Muhammad Suheyl Umar

Tracing the notion of *Ka's al-Kirām*[29] in one of our earlier papers we had remarked: "The question remains to be asked as to why did Iqbal designate love (*'Ishq*) as *Ka's al-Kirām* (cup of the generous). This is a complex issue and does not lend itself to a simple or neat solution. We are required to form a fairly accurate idea of Iqbal's concept of love with reference to the entire corpus of his prose and poetry before we attempt a response to the question posed in the foregoing lines. Moreover, it would be indispensable to look at this concept of love with reference to the general background of Arabic poetry and, more specifically, in the perspective of mystical/wisdom tradition of Persian poetry that started with AÁmad Ghazālâ.[30] Any formulation about Iqbal's concept of love that fails to take these aspects into consideration would remain inadequate and lacking in essentials."[31]

Later on, having taken up the study, we realised that it was an understatement. The quest did not end there. It had to continue; and as it happened, it crossed the frontiers of Persian poetry and led us into the terrain of Islamic philosophy and pointed towards a "beyond" that is still to be explored.[32]

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[29]See Iqbal's famous poem "Masjid-i-QurÇubah", *Kulliyāt-i-Iqbāl*, Iqbāl Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 421.

[30] More specifically his *SawāniÁ*. It was first brought to light by H. Ritter, Istanbul, 1942 and decades later re-edited and published by N. Pourjawādâ. See AÁmad Ghazzālâ, *SawāniÁ*, (ed.) Nasrollah Pourjawādâ, Tehran, 1359 A.H.S. Also see, *SawāniÁ, Inspirations from the World of Pure Spirits,* (tr.) Nasrollah Pourjawādâ, KPI, 1986.

[31]See *Iqbāliyāt*, Vol. 36, No. 2, January 1995, pp 81-97.

[32]What we have in mind here is, at least, an adequately extensive survey of Arabic love/wine/mystical poetry, Arabic love theory, medieval love theory and poetry, classical literature and, above all, the development of the theme through the medium of Arabic-Persian-Urdu mystical poetry as embodied in the poetic/mystic/intellectual tradition of Islam.

Moreover, the sources that had to be tapped for the purpose of our inquiry and the survey of the existing literature on the subject[33] awakened us to another rude fact. Barring some brilliant exceptions, that are few and far between, scholarship on Iqbal, in most of the cases, offers us paraphrases and pious platitudes. The reader gains little insight into the real issue, that is, Iqbal's concept of love.

The reason for this seems to be twofold. Most of the writers blind themselves and, consequently, the readership to the fact that Iqbal's concept of love, like so many other concepts, is subject to the principle of the multiple states or gradations which is, in the first place, metaphysical, existential and psychological but it *grosso modo* applies to the domain of art and literature. They work on cross sections of Iqbal's works and, as a result, views that emanate from these works suffer from the shortcomings that we termed as paraphrasing and pious platitudes.

The other shortcoming that has become a besetting error to the Iqbal Studies is that, in most of the cases, Iqbal is seen in isolation and no effort is made to search for the worldview, the vision that informs his works and which Iqbal shared with the highpoints of the Islamic intellectual tradition. What is more important and which has a direct bearing on our subject is the fact that within the over all worldview of Islam there have always existed different perspectives. Qur'ān is the basic source of Islam. In a very deep sense Islam is the Qur'ān and Qur'ān is Islam. The basic interpretation of the Qur'ān has been provided by the Prophet himself. Following in his wake, numerous great figures — sages, saints, theologians, philosophers, jurists— have elucidated and interpreted the nature of the original vision in keeping with the needs of the times. Iqbal Studies stops short at isolated studies or at best, comparative studies that scratch the surface only. Seldom does it try to pry open the doors of the Iqbalian universe and to look for the affinity, similarity or difference of Iqbal's perspective with the major perspectives in the intellectual history of Islam.

An other misfortune that often occurs is that Iqbal is evaluated from within those dominant perspectives of modern scholarship that make various

[33]Even the initial version of the bibliography consisted of a baffling variety of works the number of which runs into hundreds.

contemporary modes of self-understanding the basis for judging Iqbal's ideas. In some cases Iqbal's concepts are approached with mental reservations or preconceived ideas.

Let us illustrate these points through a few representative samples. The question of "paraphrasing and pious platitudes" first.

Commenting on the key paragraphs of "The Mosque of Cordoba" (*Masjid-i-QurÇubah*)[34] an outstanding authority on Islam and Iqbal Studies has remarked:

> *"Love is the essence of life. It is deathless. The march of time is irresistible. It rolls on like a torrent, carrying violently away everything that impedes its onward movement. But love stands up to it; it stems all opposing waves for it, too, is not different from a flood tide, a deluge.*
>
> *Love transcends time and space and its wondrous possibilities are beyond human comprehension. There are states and stages of love that are not known to anyone. The effulgence of love is common to all Divine Apostleships and sacred teachings.*
>
> *Colour and radiance, joy and fragrance of all the universe is from love. It is the purifying draught (from the Fountain of Paradise) that sends saints and poets into ecstasy. It reveals itself sometimes, in the form of a preacher from the pulpit, and, sometimes, as a philosopher and conqueror. Love has a thousand facets. It is a many-splendoured thing. It is an eternal wayfarer, a perpetual traveller. It is always on the move, restless, mercurial.*
>
> *Love is the flute of life from which melodies pour forth and enrapture the world. Light and heat, activity and movement, ardour and enthusiasm are all from it."*[35]

According to the 'wont' of Iqbal Studies these remarks are followed by a long quotation of 16 verses from the poem.[36] Is this treatment any more than

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[34]'Masjid-i-QurÇubah', in *Bāl-i-Jibrâl*, *Kulliyyāt i Iqbāl*, Urdu, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1994, p. 422.

[35]A. A. Nadawâ, *Glory of Iqbal*, (Translated from Urdu by ÿÄif Kidwā'I) Progressive Books, Lahore, 1977, pp. 139. For the Urdu original, which is no better in this respect, see A. A. Nadawâ, *Nuqësh-i-Iqbāl*, op. cit., pp. 171.

[36] For the sake of reference we add the translation of the verses in question. (By Victor Kiernan, *Poems from Iqbal*, J. Murray, London, 1955, pp. 37).

"Day succeeding to night-moulder of all time's works!

Day succeeding to night-fountain of life and of death!

Chain of the days and nights-two-coloured thread of silk

Woven by Him that is, into His being's robe!

Chain of the days and nights-sigh of eternity's harp,

Height and depth of all things possible, God-revealed.

You are brought to their test; I am brought to their test-

Day revolving with night, touchstone of all this world;

Weighed in their scales you and I, weighed and found wanting, shall both

Find in death our reward, find in extinction our wage;

What other sense have your nights, what have your days, but one

Long blank current of time empty of sunset or dawn?

All Art's wonders arise only to vanish once more;

All things built on this earth sink as if built on sand!

Inward and outward things, first things and last, must die;

Things from of old or new-born find their last goal in death.

Yet, in this frame of things, gleams of immortal life

Show where some servant of God wrought into some high shape

Work whose perfection is still bright with the splendour of Love

Love the wellspring of life; Love, on which death has no claim.

Swiftly its tyrannous flood time's long current may roll:

Love itself is a tide, stemming all opposite waves.

Other ages in Love's calendar are set down,

a neat paraphrase! Does it leave us any wiser than what we would have been in case of having only read the verses in translation?

Writing in a similar vein the same authority remarked, " In Iqbal's view, love (*'ishq*) is completely elevated from matter and does not have the slightest traces of passional desire. It is all faith (*âmān*) longing (*shawq*) and pious sentiments."[37]

Keeping in view the whole sweep of Iqbal's poetic works, its multi-layered richness and variety of meaning, its multiple levels of symbolism and last but not least, its evolution through the years can we safely make such a statement? To our mind it is a representative sample of turning a blind eye to the principle of "the multiple states or gradations" mentioned earlier.

To elucidate our point of view further we have no one better than 'Abd al- RaÁmān Jāmâ. In many of his works Jāmâ has discussed the theory of

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Ages as yet unnamed, far from this now-flowing hour;

Love is Gabriel's breath, Love is Muhammad's strong heart,

Love is the envoy of God, Love the utterance of God.

Even our mortal clay, touched by Love's ecstasy, glows;

Love is a new pressed wine, Love is the goblet of kings,

Love the priest of the shrine, Love the commander of hosts,

Love the son of the road, counting a thousand homes.

Love's is the plectrum that draws music from life's taut strings—

Love's is the warmth of life; Love's is the radiance of life.

Shrine of Cordoba! From Love all your existence is sprung,

Love that can know no end, stranger to Then-and-Now."

[37]A. A. Nadawâ, *Nuqësh-i-Iqbāl*, (Urdu), Karachi, 1993, pp. 171. Examples could be multiplied almost endlessly.

love but in his *Lawāmi'* he offers a long discussion[38] of the different kinds of love and lovers.[39] In considerable detail Jāmâ divides love into love of the Divine Essence (*maÁabbat-i-dhātâ*), love of the Divine Names (*maÁabbat-i-asmā'â*), love of the Divine Attributes (*maÁabbat-i-Äifātâ*) and love of the Divine Traces (*maÁabbat-i-āthārâ*) or love of the Divine Acts (*maÁabbat-i-af'ālâ).* "The last is impassioned attachment to the beauty of God's "traces" (*Vestigio Dei*) in the world, and stems from the manifestation of the Mystery of Unity in the form and shape of the multiplicity of the universe. Lovers of God's traces are then in turn divided into four classes, ranging from those who contemplate only the Face of God in the things of the world, to those who are still in the clutches of their lower soul (*nafs-i-ammārah*) and

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[38] "The reality of love which Jāmâ is discussing is the absolute and unconditioned reality of the Divine Essence Itself. As Jāmâ points out, Love is God's very nature, for, according to the Hadâth, "God is beautiful and He loves beauty." If Love appears in many different forms, it is precisely because, not being conditioned by any form in particular, It can assume all forms. If Love – the Divine Essence – were delimited by any attribute whatsoever to the exclusion of others, It could never appear in another form. If God were transcendent only, and not immanent, He would not be the "coincidence of opposites" (*jāmi'-i- aîdād*). Thus Love appears in numerous forms because in Itself, it is formless. Sometimes It appears in the form of love for the Essence or for the Attributes, and at other times It displays Itself as love for women or for wealth. The reality is one reality, for there is no other reality. To posit two loves different in essence would amount to introducing a duality into the very nature of existence. But the One Reality assumes all forms and shapes. These in turn follow the receptivities (*qābiliyyāt*) and preparednesses (*isti'dādāt*) of the lovers. Certain lovers have the capacity to love God in His Essence, others only to love the Paradise of His Proximity, others only to love the dark-eyed beauties of the Garden, and still others only to love dark-eyed beauties here below. As the Sufi saying goes, "The colour of the water depends on the colour of its container."

It will be noticed that this discussion of Love corresponds closely to the more philosophical and metaphysical discussions of how the Absolute Being of God (*wujëd-i Áaqq-i muÇlaq*), undetermined by any delimitation whatsoever, manifests Itself in the levels of existence or the "Five Divine Presence" (*Áaîarāt-i-khams*). At each level of manifestation and theophany the One Reality assumes attributes and characteristics determined by the ability of that level to receive and display the infinite possibilities of Sheer Being. The further we descend in the Great Chain of Being, the less the attributes of God can be manifested in their purity." W. C. Chittick, "Jāmâ on Divine Love and the Image of Wine", *Studies in Mystical Literature*, Vol. 1, No.3, Spring, 1981, pp. 193-209.

[39] It is based, at least partly, on Farghānâ's introduction to his own commentary on the *Poem of the Way* of Ibn al-Fāriî.

dominated by bodily passions. These last have completely forgotten the true Beloved and "have taken into their arms false beloveds (or "metaphorical beloved", *maÁbëbān-i-majāzî*). They are at ease with the passions of their natural constitution and call the capricious desires of their lower soul 'love'. How far from the mark!"[40]

While studying Iqbal's concept of love or for that matter any of his key concepts we should never lose sight of this principle.

Let us now turn to the questions of Iqbal's perspective *vis á vis* the major perspectives in our intellectual history and an uninhibited approach towards Iqbal's view even if it led in a direction that runs contrary to one's cherished contemporary modes of self-understanding.

A couple of years ago a series of translations appeared in English by the pen of a very learned and seasoned scholar who was an expert in a multitude of disciplines. While acknowledging all the merits[41] of these undertakings we, nevertheless, see both the trends at work here. On the one hand he glides silently over the question of the worldview, the vision that informs the works of Iqbal and, on the other, perhaps due to his aversion to philosophy and intellectual Sufism, side steps the issue by situating the interpretation in one of the alien but contemporary modes of self-understanding instead of situating it in the universe of discourse that informed Iqbal's thinking.[42]

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[40] This is a résumé of his elaborate discussion for which we are indebted to Dr William Chittick. See his "Jāmâ on Divine Love and the Image of Wine", *Studies in Mystical Literature*, Vol. 1, No.3, Spring, 1981, pp. 193-209. For the Persian original see Jāmâ, *Lawāmi'*, in *Seh Risālah dar TaÄawwuf*, Tehran, 1360, pp. 110-118.

[41]Appreciating his efforts we had commented, "He has undertaken a series of remarkable English translations of selection from Iqbal's Urdu and Persian poetical works. He is an expert in several oriental and occidental languages and their literatures as well as an outstanding scholar of Islamic Studies. With this series of translations his study of Iqbal, spanning more than two decades, is brought to fruition. His consummate skill, based on his long years of training and research, has produced for us here translations of extraordinary literary excellence."

[42] We are reminded here of Dr Chittick who remarked about the interpretations of many contemporary Muslims "who would like to discard their intellectual heritage and replace it with truly "scientific" endeavours, such as sociology…. Those who ignore the interpretations of the past are forced to interpret their text in light of the prevailing world view of the

Among other poems his translations included "Solitude".[43] Introducing the poem the translator remarked:

> *"Possession of a feeling heart distinguishes man from and sets him above the rest of creation. This secret was, however, hidden from man not with a view to keeping him ignorant of his distinction but in order to motivate him to discover it through his own effort. Discovery of the secret earns man praise from God: he has risen to his Creator's expectations, and the Creator smiles in appreciation."*

The translation of a few verses of the poem is given in the following lines:

"…….

Leaving the moon and the sun behind,

I reached the presence of God, and said,

"Not a single atom in Your world

Is an intimate of mine

The world has no heart, but I,

A handful of dust, am all heart.

It's a nice garden, but not worthy of my song!"***

A smile appeared on His lips—

He said not a word."

[*The world or universe.

** "Not worthy of my song," because Iqbal's song

arises from his heart and a heart is needed to appreciate it, whereas the universe has no heart. Translators notes]

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present." See S. Murata & W. C. Chittick, *The Vision of Islam*, Suhail Academy, Lahore, 1998, pp. XI.

[43] *Payām-i-Mashriq*, in *Kulliyyāt i Iqbāl*, Persian, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1990, p. 272-273.

The variety and richness of Iqbal's overall intellectual perspective allows us to add a few comments here by way of further elucidating the multifaceted and many tiered concept of heart in Iqbal's poetical works. The word heart is a highly nuanced term used in different interconnected shades and meanings during the various phases of Iqbal's poetic career, ranging from 'heart' as a seat of emotions and feelings to the Sufi idea of 'heart' as the centre of human interiority and the deepest seat of consciousness. In his mature works, to which category this poem belongs, he mostly employs the term 'heart' in its mystico-philosophic meaning and, for an adequate explanation, one inevitably has to turn towards the perspective of intellectual Sufism which provided the underpinning to Iqbal's verses and which, consequently, is the only legitimate paradigm that may reveal the beauty and intellectual profundity of his thought in its full splendour.

One is also reminded of the fact that in Islamic texts in general and Sufi works in particular; the heart is a locus of knowledge and intelligence rather than sentiments or feelings. Equating the heart to 'emotions' and 'feelings' is a typically modern phenomenon. The Qur'ān employs the term about 130 times and often attributes understanding and intelligence to the healthy heart. Hadâth literature also carries abundant references to it. Based on these primary sources a vast body of literature came into existence in various schools of Islamic thought which worked out its implications according to their respective points of view. Iqbal places himself squarely in the perspective of intellectual Sufism when he, for example, says: "No less than the Exalted Throne is the breast of Adam".[44] In short, it may be concluded that the term 'heart', at least in the majority of Iqbal's mature works, represent, before every thing else, the following ideas:

- The deepest seat of consciousness;
- Locus of intelligence;
- Centre of interiority or inwardness;
- Secret of God;

[44]"Masjid-i-QurÇubah', in *Bāl-i-Jibrâl*, *Kulliyyāt i Iqbāl*, Urdu, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1994, p. 422. This is an explicit reference to the Hadith Qudsâ that is frequently cited in the Sufi texts, as well as by al-Ghazālâ in his *IÁyā' 'Ulëm al-Dân*.

- The point where the Divine intersects the human realm thus projecting itself onto the mental plane in a rational mode and into the intermediate domain of human psyche as will, sentiments and emotions.

Thus, in our view, to gain a comprehensive view of Iqbal's key concepts, it is hardly possible to glide silently over the question of their proper perspective and intellectual background. No interpretation would yield results to the required degree of satisfaction unless an unrestricted approach is adopted to read his works; an approach which is unhampered by mental reservations and preconceived notions.

Another poem, translated in the same series is "The Houri and the Poet".[45] Introducing the poem the translator remarked:

> *"In the poem "The Houri and the Poet", the houri asks the poet why he is uninterested in the pleasures of paradise. The poet replies that paradise, which represents perfection, cannot satisfy him because he is always in search of something more perfect, and* ***this possibility is excluded in paradise****. Paradise is all happiness and joy, and there is no room in it for sorrow and pain. Iqbal is not advocating masochism. It is the pain and sorrow of love— that is the pain and sorrow due to the realisation that one's lofty ideals will be forever unattainable. (One is reminded of John Keats' poem "*On Grecian Urn*" which speaks of both the excitement and the pain of an unfulfilled wish.)"*[46]

Translation of the poem is given in the following lines:

THE HOURI AND THE POET

THE HOURI

You are not drawn to wine,

And you do not cast your eyes on me:

It is surprising that you are so unsociable!

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[45] *Payām-i-Mashriq*, in *Kulliyyāt i Iqbāl*, Persian, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1990, p. 279-280.

[46] *IRK&HS Research and Information Bulletin*, International Islamic University, KL, Malaysia, Vol. 2, No. 2, September, 1994, pp. 7-8.

It is but a tune of quest, a flame of desire—

*The breath you draw, the song you sing.**

With your song you have created

Such a lovely world

That paradise itself, it seems to me,

*Is but a work of magic.***

THE POET

You steal the traveller's hearts

*With pointed talk,****

Except that in the pleasure it gives

It does not compare with the pointed thorn.

What can I do, for by nature I feel

Ill at ease at a stopping-place!

I have an impatient heart,

Like the zephyr in a garden of tulips.

As soon as my eyes are set on a pretty face,

My heart begins to yearn for one prettier still.

From the spark I seek a star, from the star a sun:

I do not long for a destination,

For if I stop I die.

When I arise, having quaffed

A cup of wine brewed by one spring breeze,

I begin to sing another song,

To the breeze of another spring.

I seek the end of that which has no end—

With a restless eye, but with a hopeful heart.

An eternal paradise is death to the lover's heart---

In it no cry of a soul in affliction,

*No sorrow, and no friend to share the sorrow!*****

> [*It is….. you sing: The houri notes that the poet, although he had reached paradise, supposedly the highest goal of a mortal, is still in search of something else.
>
> **That paradise…..magic: That is, even paradise appears to lack reality and substance in comparison with the beautiful world created by the poet's imagination.
>
> ***You steal….pointed talk: A possible allusion to the sirens of Greek mythology.
>
> ****In it… sorrow: The pangs of love a lover feels give him joy. Paradise, while a perfect place in every other way, does not afford this special type of pleasure. In an eternal paradise, therefore, the lover's heart will wither and die. *Translators Notes*]

Here, as in the earlier example that we cited in connection with the poem 'Solitude', it is possible to situate Iqbal's ideas in a different perspective which, in our view, yields a more satisfactory interpretation. The primary sources of Islam contain seminal references to the state that Iqbal has portrayed in these poems. When the Qur'ān speaks of the hereafter as 'greater in levels and greater in hierarchical excellences"[47] or of the "two paradises"[48] and when the Qur'ān and the traditions inform us about

[47] See Qur'ān, XVII: 21.

[48] See Qur'ān, LV: 62.

beatitude (*riîwān*) being above the pleasures[49] of paradise (Hadâth of 'dunes' is also relevant here[50]) they imply that, for certain souls at least, the possibility of "pain and sorrows of love" due to the "unattainable lofty ideals" would exist. These 'ideals' in our view, are not 'created by the poet's imagination' (see note ** to "The Houri and the Poet") but reflect an objective possibility to be actualised for some of the blessed souls. This predilection, evident from the poet's attitude, is the same which is expressed in the earlier poetic expressions of his predecessors in preferring the 'Gardener over the garden' or, in theological terms, by the distinction between the 'seekers of salvation (*najāt*)' and the 'seekers of the Self or sanctification (*taqarruh*)'. Therefore, this 'special type of pleasure' is neither peculiar to the poet's soul or absent from paradise. Iqbal has in fact placed himself squarely in the tradition which admits of a hierarchical arrangement of human souls corresponding to the degrees of achievements in paradise and which, as a consequence, speaks of the aspiration which Iqbal has translated into his own idiom and manner of expression.[51]

Reference, in parenthesis, to John Keats to our mind is an 'insult' to Iqbal. We sincerely believe that Iqbal needs, and even compels us that his verses, and his ideas, should be interpreted against the stable backdrop of Islamic poetic-Intellectual tradition. The few comments that we have offered may help to catch a glimpse of the difference, almost unbridgeable, that separates Iqbal's intellectual/gnostic perspective and the extremely limited

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[49] See Qur'ān, IX: 72. There are many references to the same Qur'ānic theme in the Hadith literature as well. For an elucidation of the sense in which the idea permeates Iqbal's thinking see Martin Lings, *What is Sufism*, Suhail Academy, Lahore, 1985, pp.40-44.

[50]This particular Hadâth, quoting Abë Hurayrah's account of his conversation with the Prophet, is recorded in essentially the same version by *al-Tirmidhâ* (*Äïfāt al-jannah*, 15, 25; *birr*, 54) and Ibn Mājah (*zuhd*, 39) from which the quotations are taken here, as well as by al-Dārimâ (*riqāq*, 116) and in a number of places by AÁmad ibn Àanbal; see the full references in Wenisinck, *Concordance*, V, 542-3). This Hadâth comes at the very end of Ibn Mājah's entire Hadâth collection, and is therefore clearly understood there to concern the ultimate ends and finality of human actions.

[51] Jāmâ is talking about the same hierarchical excellences, in his own terminology and poetic prose of course, when he establishes a distinction between "*wuqëf ma'a 'l-Àaq*", "*wuqëf ma'a 'l-Áaï minhë"* and "*wuqëf ma'a 'l-Áaï min ālā'ihâ wa na'mā'ihâ* ". See his *Lawāmi'*, in *Seh Risālah dar TaÄawwuf*, Tehran, 1360, pp. 113-114.

mental horizon of Keats, ridden by individualism and permeated by the ethos of romanticism as it was!

These considerations lead us to certain conclusions that are not only pertinent to the question of Iqbal's concept of love but, I believe, could be applied as a methodological apparatus for a systematic study of all the key concepts, symbols and motifs that we find in Iqbal's works. This method of investigation could be summarised in the form of a syllogism:

- **Identify the key concept/theme/subject from Iqbal's works.**
- **Apply the twin principles of gradation and historical development. The former works vertically and the latter proceeds horizontally in chronological succession.**
- **Go to the intellectual tradition of Islam in general and the Sufi tradition in particular as it is found embodied in Persian wisdom poetry.**
- **Look for antecedents and parallels.**
- **Mark and work out variations/nuances that are specifically Iqbalian.**
- **Determine the perspective that proves to be the closest to that of Iqbal; Islamic Philosophy-Theology (*Kalām* authorities)-Jurisprudence- Sufism- Persian Wisdom Poetry.**
- **Try to reach for an interpretation that squares best with the givens of our methodology.**

In the following section Iqbal's concept of love shall be analysed with the help of the method that we have chalked out.

IQBAL—THE CONNOISSEUR OF CALLIGRAPHY

Muhammad Iqbal Bhutta

Very few people know that Allama Iqbal, apart from being a great poet, was also a great connoisseur of the art of calligraphy and himself a competent calligrapher of *shikasta* script. His talent as a calligrapher has so far remained hidden because of his pre-eminence as a poet not only of national level but also truly of an international repute. It was a normal practice in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the Punjab, and particularly in Sialkot and Gujranwala districts, to emphasize exercise or learning of calligraphy by young children during the early days of their education.

Shikasta Script

During the later Mughal period, about 30 Muslim calligraphers have been reported as well-versed in *Shikasta* script. The long list shows that the art of calligraphy continued to be practiced enthusiastically both by Hindus and Muslims till 1857, when the Mughal rule in India came to an end. But the public and social upheavals of the Mughal period were reflected in this art. The turbulent period was responsible for the decline and degeneration of all artistic activities. In the 20th century most of the scholars, writers, poets, etc., were good calligraphers. Their experience in either one of the styles: *nasta'lâq* or *Shikasta,* is confirmed.

Allama Iqbal appears to have acquired the expertise in calligraphy as a result of this process. He certainly had a good sense of calligraphy. The best examples are his three letters[52] (figs. 1-3) written to Abdul Majeed Perveen Raqam giving him instructions with regard to the calligraphy of his book *Bāl i Jibrâl* [53] and the first edition of *Payām i Mashriq*, printed in 1924. Allama Iqbal revised the same for the second edition. At page 29 of the same book, the quatrain No. 52 he himself corrected in his own handwriting as a calligrapher. The angles of the words (☝🕐✵) and (♦☞●🡐) (fig. 4) were

[52] See letter No. 1977-416/1-3 in Letters Section of the Allama Iqbal Museum, Lahore.

[53] Allama Iqbal, *Bāl i Jibrâl*, first edition, Taj Co, Lahore, 1935, pp. 18, 20, 22.

got corrected and the size of letter (✪) was reduced to the scale of five dots (*qaÇ*) according to the standard calligraphic rules.[54]

Iqbal was very serious about the selection of calligraphers for his works. It speaks for his taste of calligraphy. All of the calligraphers selected by him were highly experienced persons and held positions of excellence among other calligraphers.

Iqbal is a prominent figure in *Shikasta* style of calligraphy. The manuscripts of his books were written in his own handwriting in *Shikasta* script. Those exhibited in Allama Iqbal Museum require serious study. Even a cursory glance at these manuscripts enlightens us about the personality of Allama Iqbal as calligrapher. Since Allama Iqbal was not satisfied with the work of Abdul Majeed Perveen Raqam, mainly due to his slow calligraphy of *Bāl i Jibrâl*,[55] he tried to find another calligrapher of a high caliber.

The letter (fig. 1) shows that Allama Iqbal was not satisfied with the speed of calligraphic work by Abdul Majeed Perveen Raqam. Somewhere he had instructed him about the size of letter according to the basic rules of calligraphy which were never accepted by Perveen Raqam because he was enjoying the leading position among the top-most calligraphers due to his innovation in *nast'alāq* style of calligraphy. One of his disciples told another story about the conflict between Allama Iqbal and Parveen Raqam. According to this version, Allama Iqbal calculated the payment of calligraphy according to the page and half page at the time of payment; this was not acceptable to Parveen Raqam. These are the three main reasons due to which Iqbal-Parveen Raqam conflict occurred. On the contrary he has been reparted to have said: "If Parveen Raqam refuses to write my works I will abandon poetry".

He had also collected the specimens of top-most calligraphers for the calligraphy of his poetic work. Among them were Muhammad Abdullah Warsi of Kot Waris, Muhammad Sadiq Almas Raqam and several others. After a minute study of various specimens of calligraphy Iqbal selected the

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[54] Allama Iqbal, *Payāmi i Mashriq,* Ist Edition, p. 29.

[55] See letter No. 1977-416/1-3, Letter Section, Allama Iqbal Museum, Lahore.

work of Muhammad Sadiq Almas Raqam, who originally belonged to Sialkot District, for the calligraphy of his book: *Zabër i 'Ajam*.

Maulvi Ghulam Rasool, owner of the magazine entitled *Bahāristān*, compiled all the volumes of Allama Iqbal's works in one issue of his magazine for presentation to dignitaries of the city of Lahore. One copy of it was presented to Allama Iqbal through Mr. Nazish Rizvi, the Editor of *Bahāristān*. Allama Iqbal was so happy that he inquired the name and address of the calligrapher.[56] Allama Sahib was told that calligraphy for *Bahāristān* had been done by Muhammad Siddique Almas Raqam, who belonged to Mauza Goriala, Distt: Sialkot. Allama Iqbal engaged him for his forthcoming book: *Zabër i 'Ajam*, published in 1934.[57]

Allama Iqbal was not only a great poet but he was also a very gifted calligrapher of *Shikasta* script. Here we examine his script according to the basic rules of this script. We have a few examples of his *Shikasta* style in the collection of Allama Iqbal Museum.

The letter dated 12th March 1822 by Allama Iqbal addressed to Ghulam Ahmad Mahjur regarding compilation of biographical work on the poets of Kashmir[58] (fig. 5). In this letter, although the *qalam* is very sharp, it is also perfect according to the basic joining and strokes of calligraphy. The *Shikasta* script itself underwent some changes as later calligraphers simplified it. The new simpler version was called *dast-e-tehrir* .[59]

Amir Nizam Garrusi of Iran is famous as master of *tehrâr* with his own special style[60] (fig. 6). Here we compare the script of Iranian calligrapher Amir Nizam Garrusi with the handwriting of Allama Iqbal (fig. 5).

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[56] S. Feroz, "*Fan-i-Khāttatâ aur Allāmā Iqbal*," Monthly *Khush Navâs*, Vol. I, No. 3, May, 1995, pp. 15.

[57] Allama Iqbal, *Zabër i 'Ajam,* Maqbool Alam Press, 1st Edition, Lahore, 1934.

[58] Letter No. AIM.1977-401.

[59] Dr. Salim Neysari, "The Development of Persian letter shapes with special reference to the teaching of hand-writing to Beginners", *Journal of the Regional Cultural Institute*, Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, Vol. IV, No. 1 to 4, Tehran, 1971, p. 145.

[60] Ibid. p. 145.

a) Compare the word '♦⮙' in the first line of Allama Iqbal's letter (fig. 3) with the eighth line of Garrusi's script (fig. 2).

b) The word ' ❶◆■ ' in the eleventh line of Garrusi's script be compared with ' ❶◆■ ' in the first line of Iqbal's letter.

c) The word ' ' written as ' ' is similar in each place which shows that Iqbal was competent to write *Shikasta tehrâr*. This word is used in line number 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 12 where the word ' ' is written as ' ' in a similar manner which is used only in the *Shikasta* script.

d) The world ' ➲ ' written in the third and seventh line of the Amir Nizam's script can be compared with the first line of Iqbal's letter which are similar to each other.

e) In the word ' ✍◆ ' the letter ' ' is similar in the line number two and four in Iqbal's script, the same letter may be compared with seventh line of Amir Nizam's script.

f) The word ' ' in the seventh line of Iqbal's letter may be compared with the word ' ' in the seventh line of Amir Nizam's script. It is pertinent to mention here that each calligraphic stroke, line, length and fluency is similar to Amir Nizam's script (figs. 5 & 6).

This shows that Iqbal was not only the poet of international repute, but he was also an excellent calligrapher of *Shikasta tehrâr*.

H. A. WOLFSON & A. H. KAMALI ON THE ORIGIN OF THE PROBLEM OF DIVINE ATTRIBUTES IN MUSLIM KALAM

Abdul Hafeez

The problems dealt with by the Muslim Kalam are at least of three types. Some of them are purely religious; some are purely philosophical; some are problems of religion treated in terms of philosophy[61]*. It is my humble contention that not only the problems of purely philosophical nature, but also at least some of the problems of purely religious nature, along with almost all of the problems of religion treated in terms of philosophy, have their origin either in Plato or Aristotle. It is my contention that many of these problems even could not have arisen, had the Muslims not accepted Greek Philosophers' views passed to them through Christianity or through Judaism. Since it is not possible to analyze all the problems in such a brief article, I have selected the problem of the nature of Divine Attributes, a problem apparently of essentially religious nature, to prove my contention. I intend to show in what follows, that the problem of Divine Attributes in Muslim Kalam, ultimately has its origin in one of the different interpretations of Plato's theory of Ideas as a further development mainly of the problem of "the relation of God, the world of Ideas, and the* Logos*" dealt with by Philo, and the reconstruction of Philo's ideas by the Church Fathers into Trinity. And as far as the semantic aspect of the same problem in Muslim Kalam is concerned, it is based on discussions on the "Unknowability of God and Divine Predicates" both in Philo and the Church Fathers.*

Before we embark upon this discussion let us make a very important point clear. It is usually thought among our scholars that the thought of the orientalists is mostly infected with general Western malady —— of their

1. Problem of the createdness/uncreatedness of the Qur'ān, Beautific Vision, problem of the creation of the world as *ex-nihilo* or 'out of something', Atomism, Causality, Predestination and Free Will, Problem of the relation of Faith and Action, are some of the different problems dealt with by Muslim *mutakallimoon*. Mir Valliuddin, 'Mu'tazilism' and M. Abdul Hye, 'Ash'arism' in *History of Muslim Philosophy* Vol. 1, by M.M. Sharif (ed.), Royal Book Company, Karachi--3, 1983, pp. 202-214 and pp. 224-243. Also please see H. A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Kalam* Harvard University Press,1976, Contents, pp.xi-xxvi.

views being far-fetched to the extent of absurdity. I agree with this view, but it cannot be made a rule. As for Wolfson's views concerning the different interpretations of Platonic Ideas is concerned, it is a fact of history that philosophers have disagreed as to the real nature of their relationship with God.[62] According to my understanding Wolfson has traced the development of Intradeical interpretation of Platonic Ideas with full logical consistency. Wolfson's views on this specific problem of Divine Essence and Attributes, as I understand it, are far-fetched to the least. To my mind, there is a similar malady found in the views of Muslim philosophers in general —— to try to prove by far-fetched explanations that the views of the Muslim theologians and for that matter, the Muslim philosophers, were somehow or the other originated from the spirit of Islamic teachings; and that if they were influenced by Greek or other alien thought, only to the extent of their being consistent with the spirit of Qur'ānic teachings; hence it was a creative assimilation and not a blind acceptance of alien thought.[63] A. H. Kamali in a series of his three articles (refered to at end note no. 26), has presented the views similar to Wolfson on the origin of the problem of Divine Atributes in Muslim Kalam. Kamali's articles are rather more comprehensive and enlightening than Wolfson as he not only traces the origin and development of this problem in Muslim theology and Philosophy but also he traces the development of this problem in *Tasawwuf*. Abdul Hameed Kamali also makes a more significant and positive contribution by presenting a quite new and genuine attempt in the right direction as I see it, i.e., at the development of a Logic of Divine Names. In this article, I have tried to make a critique of the

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2. "A part of that [Platonic] teaching is the much-disputed theory of Ideas. The theory is doubtless basic to all Plato's thought, but is presented in so many ways and attended by so many difficulties that scholar's have been for from certain about its meaning." Irene Samuel, *Plato And Milton*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1965, p. 131.

3. Reference here is to *Studies in Muslim Philosophy*, by M. Saeed Sheikh, and *'Ibn e Taimiyya ka TaÂawwur e Âifāt'* article by Moulana M. Hanif Nadvi in *Pakistan Philosophical Journal*, V, January 1962, Pakistan Philosophical Congress Lahore. Professor M. Saeed Shaikh in his book *Studies in Muslim Philosophy* tries to prove that the views of the Muslim philosophers such as al-Fārābâ and Ibn-e Sânā were a creative assimilation and not a blind following of the Greeks on the face of the fact that he himself analyses Ibn Sânā's theory of Emanation and Theory of God' Knowledge of Particulars to be quite contrary to be the spirit of Islamic teachings.

Muslim Kalam on the problem of divine attributes by presenting with approval the views of Wolfson on the origin of this problem; and have presented the views of A. H. Kamali to make a comparison and to show similarity and continuity in their thought. With this explanation, let us now specify the different aspects of this problem in Muslim Kalam to trace its origin.[64]

In the Qur'ān, Allah is described by what the Qur'ān refers to as "the Most Beautiful Names of Allah" such for instance, "as the Living", "the Powerful", "the Beneficient", "the Wise" and so forth up to ninety-nine. In the early centuries of Islam i.e., as early as the first part of the eighth century, there arose in Islam a view, first with regard to only two of these Names and then with regard to all other Names by which Allah is designated, that each Name reflects some real being existing in Allah as something superadded and distinct from His Essence, but inseparable from It and coeternal with It.[65] In the history of Muslim Kalam, the belief that certain terms attributed to Allah in the Qur'ān stand for real incorporeal beings which exist in Allah from eternity, is known as Attributism. This belief soon became the orthodox belief in Islam.[66] However, as soon as the belief in real attributes had been

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4. "Philo Judaeus is one of the writers who first attempted to reconcile Plato with Holy Writ. Philo Judaeus initiated the system of Biblical exegesis which made of the text a peg from which to suspend Plato's doctrines." Irene Samuel, *Plato And Milton*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1965, p. 37-8

5. Wolfson, Extradeical and Intradeical Interpretation of Platonic Ideas in *Religious Philosophy* (*A Group of Essays*) by H. A. Wolfson (ed.), Harvard University Press, 1961, p.49.

6. *Ibid.,* and *The Philosophy of Kalam* Harvard University Press,1976, chapter 2, Wolfson seems to have successfully shown that this view "could not have originated in Islam spontaneously but it could have originated under Christian influence in the course of debates between Muslims and Christians shortly after the conquest of Syria in the VII century. Majid Fakhry in his book *A History of Islamic Philosophy* also seems to endorse the same point of view when he says "Scholastic theology ... gave the Muslims, as it had given the Christians of Egypt and Syria centuries earlier, the incentive to pursue the study of Greek Philosophy.", or when he says, "The beginning of the Islamic Philosophical school coincides with the first translations of the works of the Greek masters into Arabic from Syriac or Greek." (Introduction, p.xviii, xix)

introduced, there arose opposition to it. This opposition declared the terms predicated of Allah in the Qur'ān, to be only Names of Allah, designating His actions, and hence the so-called attributes were not real beings and other than the essence of Allah: they were identical with His essence. In the history of Muslim Kalam this view is known by Anti-attributism or by the Denial of the Reality of Attributes. This view arose during the first half of the eighth century and is generally ascribed to WāÄil b. Atā of Basra, the founder of Mu'tazilism[67]. And with the gradual introduction of Greek Philosophy into Islam, the problem of attributes became identified with the problem of Platonic Ideas, or rather with the problem of 'universals', as the problem of Platonic Ideas was called by that time, and with that the controversy between Attributists and the Anti-attributists in Islam became a controversy over 'universals' as to whether they were *extradeical* or *intradeical* [68] (as will be discussed later). It is during this new phase of the problem that the theory of Modes(*aÁwāl*) as a new conception of the relation of attributes to Allah, makes its appearance. Dissatisfied, as they were, with both the Attributism (that attributes were really "existent"), and the Anti-attributism (that they were mere Names, hence "non-existent"), the exponents of this new theory declared that attributes, now surnamed as modes, were "neither existent nor non-existent." Abë Hāshim is the main exponent of this theory.[69] Some others among the Anti-attributists made an exception of certain terms predicated of Allah and treated them as things which were real and created. This is known as the Theory of Exceptional Nature of Terms. The terms treated by them in such manner were: (1) Knowledge (2) Will (3)

7. *The Philosophy of The Kalam*, *Ibid.*, p.132.

8. *Ibid.*, Extradeical and Intradeical Interpretation of Platonic Ideas (article) p.52.

9. This theory introduced two innovations to the discussion of attributes. They replaced the old formula "neither God nor other than God" by "neither existent nor non-existent" as a description of modes in their contrast to attributes as conceived by the Orthodox and the Mu'tazilites. Second, they introduced the view that modes are related to Allah as effects to their cause. The Orthodox had spoken regarding the attributes as being co-eternal with Allah, or subsisting in His Essence, or being superadded to His Essence, without any suggestion that they were proceeding from Him as from a cause.

Word(*Kalām*).[70] The theory of modes which arose among the Mu'tazilites as a moderate form of their denial of real attributes was, according to the testimony of Ibn-Àazm, adopted by some Asha'rites as a moderate form of their affirmation of attributes. Two of such Asha'rites, Bākillānâ and Juwainâ, are mentioned by Shahrastānâ in his *Nihayat*.[71]

As far as the semantic aspect of the problem is concerned, it appears in the Kalam in two forms. The first form of the problem is how one is to take the Qur'ānic terms which describe Allah in the likeness of created beings. The basis of this problem is the Qur'ānic teaching that there is no likeness between Allah and other beings, expressed in such verses as *"Not is there like Him"*(42:9), *and"There is none equal with Him"* (112:4). Among the Attributists there were different opinions on this form of the problem. There were Likeners(*al-mushabbihah*), who disregarding the above-mentioned verses, took the terms predicated of Allah in their extreme literalness. Then there were some who claimed that all terms predicated of Allah, while not establishing a likeness between Allah and other beings, should be taken literally to mean exactly what they say, however without asking "how"(*bila kayfa wa la tashbih*). Another group claimed that any term predicated of Allah was unlike the same term predicated of any other being, without however giving it a new unlike meaning. The Anti-attributists, however, all agreed that common terms predicated of Allah were, not only to be taken literally, but were also to be given new non-literal meanings. The second form of the semantic aspect, for both the Attributists and the Anti-atributists, was the

10. Jahm and Abu'l Hudhail are the proponents of this view. Jahm though agrees with the Mu'tazilites in denial of attributes he is reported to have said that "God's knowledge is originated(*muÁdath*) or created(*makÁlëk*).. Abu'l Hudhail is reported to have said that the "Will" of Allah is not mere a word nor an eternal attribute with Allah, it rather exists as an incorporeal real being created of Allah outside himself. He is also reported to have regarded the attribute "Word"(*Kalām*) as of exceptional nature. He divided this term as attributed in the Qur'ān in two kinds: one kind is the term "Be"(*Kun*) and the other is "Command"(*Amr*). While both these kinds of the attribute "Word" are created, according to him, the creative Word or Command is created but incorporeal whereas the obligative Word or Command is created in an *abode* where by abode is meant the Preserved Tablet in the Heaven. Cf. *The Philosophy of The Kalam*, *Ibid*., p.140-41.

11. *The Philosophy of The Kalam*, *Ibid*., p.175.

search for the formula which would express their respective conceptions of attributes.

The formula that "attributes are neither Allah nor other than Allah" was first presented by Suleman b. Jarâr al-Zaidâ flourished at about 785 A.D. The same formula is used by Hishām bin al-Àakam(d.814 A.D.). The next to use the same formula is Ibn Kullāb (d. 854), a Sunnite. Wolfson gives the name of Kullābite Formula to it after him. About a century latter, the Kullābite Formula was adopted by Abë Hāshim, however, replacing the term "attribute" to "mode".[72] At about the same time Asha'râ adopted the Kullābite Formula and another formula to construct a new formula. Hence he is reported to have said: Coexistent with Allah are things (*ashyā* = attributes) other than Himself (*siwahë*).[73]

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According to Wolfson, among the things which Plato somehow left un-explained about his Theory of Ideas is the question: How are these ideas related to God? Sometimes he uses language from which we get that the Ideas have an existence external to God, either ungenerated and coϾeternal with God or produced or made by God: they are thus *extradeical*. Sometimes, however, he (i.e., Plato) uses language from which we get that the Ideas are the thoughts of God. They are *intradeical*. This second interpretation identifies Plato's God with mind. According to Wolfson, more than two methods have been applied by the students of Platonic Philosophy to solve these real or seeming contradictions in his thought:

Modern students of Plato try to solve the problem by assuming that these different views about ideas were held by Plato at different periods of his life, and so try to classify his dialogues according to certain chronological schemes and speak of early dialogues, middle dialogues, and later dialogues.

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12. Abu Hāshâm says of modes that they are "neither Allah nor other than Allah". Hence it no longer is meant to describe a belief in the reality of attributes.

13. *The Philosophy of The Kalam*, *Ibid*., p.212.

The second method which is applied by the students of Platonic Philosophy is what Wolfson calls the Method of Selection and Rejection. The followers of this method simply select one set of statements in Plato and accept them as representative of his true philosophy and reject all the other statements as of no account. This method is applied by the early students of Plato's Philosophy in antiquity.[74]

While these two contrasting methods of interpreting Plato's Ideas were followed by pagan philosophers, the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria introduced a new method which though less convenient was more subtle. Wolfson describes this method, in its general form, as Method of Harmonization. According to this method, all the statements in Plato, however contradictory they may appear to be, are assumed to be true, and out of all of them a harmonious composite view is formed, in which all the apparently contradictory statements are made to cohere with each other.[75] Wolfson calls the method of Harmonization, in its specific form as introduced by Philo as Harmonization by Succession. Christian Fathers followed him in this method of integrating *Extradeical* and *Intradeical* interpretations of Platonic Ideas but with some difference. Wolfson calls this harmonization as Harmonization by Unification.

According to Philo's interpretation of Platonic Ideas, "when God by His own goodwill decided to create this world of ours, He first, out of the Ideas which had been in His Thought from eternity, constructed an '*intelligible world*', and this *intelligible world* He placed in the *Logos*, which had likewise existed previously from eternity in His Thought. Then in the likeness of this *intelligible world* of ideas, He created this "*visible world*" of ours."[76] Philo, thus integrated Platonic Ideas into an *intelligible world of Ideas* contained in a *Nous* called *Logos* [77] so that the original problem of the relation of Platonic Ideas to

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14. Wolfson, *Ibid*., article pp.28-29.

15. *Ibid*., pp.30-31. Such a method of interpretation was used by Jewish rabbis in their effort to harmonise contradictory statements in Hebrew Scripture.

16. *Ibid*., p.31.

17. Wolfson tries to prove that Philo had identified *Logos* with *Nous*, however Dr. C.A.Qadir mentions the word 'Sophia' as used by Philo, instead of

God becomes with him a problem of the relation of the *Logos* to God, and the problem is solved by him on the assumption of two successive stages of existence in the *Logos*, an *intradeical* one followed by an *extradeical* one. When we compare this account of creation with the story of creation as told by Plato in his *Timaeus*, we see that in Plato, there is a God who is called the Demiurge, the Creator. Besides the Demiurge, there is a model which is coeternal with the Demiurge. Plato calles this model as 'the intelligible animal'. According to Plato this model contains in itself 'intelligible animals'. The Demiurge looked at the intelligible animal and he created this world of ours in its likeness, which Plato calls 'the visible animal'.[78]

We can readily see that what Philo was trying to do was to interpret the story of creation of the Book of Genesis in terms of the story of creation in the *Timaeus*.[79] In fact, this was his purpose.

'Nouse'.('Alexandrio-Syriac Thought', in *A History of Muslim Philosophy* vol.1,1983, ed. M.M.Sharif, p.117.)

18. Wolfson, *Ibid*., article.

19. However there are some differences too. The first difference is that Philo describes the contrast between the *pre-existent ideas* and the *created world* as a contrast between *the intelligible animal* and *the visible animal*. As for the significance of this difference is concerned, it involves two problems: i) the problem of the existence of a world soul. To Plato their is a World-Soul, a Soul, which exists in the body of the world, just as their is a soul which exists in the body of any living being. To Philo, however, their is no World-Soul. The function of the Platonic as well as the Stoic, *World Soul* which is a soul immanent in the world, is performed in Philo's philosophy partly by *Logos*, which with the creation of the world becomes immanent in it, and partly by what he calls the *Divine Spirit*, which is incorporeal being not immanent in the world. Without a soul, the world to Philo is not an animal being. ii) then it involves the problem of the existence of ideas as segregate beings. To Plato, all the ideas, with the exception of those of living creatures exist in segregation from each other. Whereas to Philo all the ideas are integrated into a whole, namely, the *intelligible world*; and their relation to the *intelligible world* is conceived by him as that of parts of indivisible whole, which as such has no real existence of their own apart from that of the whole. The second difference between them is that in the *Timaeus* there is no mention of a place where the ideas exist, whereas in Philo the ideas are said to have their place in the *Logos*. Now, while the term *Logos* occurs in Greek Philosophy, having been used ever since Heraclitus in various senses, it was never used as the place of the Platonic ideas. (See *Ibid*, article, p. 32)

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Philo and Jesus Christ were contemporaries. By the time Philo preached his philosophical sermons in the houses of worship of Alexandria, Jesus preached his sermons in the synagogues of Galilee. About half a century later there appeared one of the four standard biographies of Christ, the Fourth Gospel, the Gospel according to St. John. This biography of Christ is based upon the theory, introduced by Paul, that before Christ was born there was a pre-existent Christ, an idea of Christ. This pre-existent idea of Christ, which in the letters of Paul is called *Wisdom* or perhaps also *Spirit* is described in this biography of Jesus by the term *Logos*, which is conventionally rendered into English by the term *Word*. "The Gospel according to St. John" opens with the verse:

"*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*".

Then like the *Logos* of Philo, which became immanent in the created world, the *Logos* of John, which is the pre-existent Christ, became immanent, or as it is commonly said, incarnate in the born Christ. Wolfson gives reference from the same Gospal narrating a verse which reads:

"*And the Word was made flesh"*(1:14)[80]

Inspite of some differences the similarities between the *Logos* of Philo and the *Logos* of John are quite striking. The two elements which were missing or at least which were not clearly stated regarding the *Logos* of John were supplied, however, in the second century by Church Fathers known as Apologists, who, having been born pagans, were before their conversion to Christianity students of philosophy. They identified the *Logos* of John with

20. Wolfson finds justification for such type of controversy in religions in the fact that in the history of religions, many a hotly debated problem was not so much over actual beliefs as over the manner in which to formulate actual beliefs. And behind it there was always the fear that a wrong formulation might lead the unwary astray. But I think that Wolfson has not given proper recognition to political interests of the ruling elite. According to my view mostly it is due to the political interests of the ruling class that one way or the other stirs controvercies in religious factions and it is after this that it becomes a problem of the sanctitiy of the real beliefs to some.

the Philonic *Logos* and thus, without the Johannine *Logos* ceasing to mean the pre-existent Christ, it acquired the two main characteristics of the Philonic *Logos* so that it was no longer a single Idea, the idea of Christ, but it became the place of *intelligible world* consisting of all ideas; then again like the Philonic *Logos*, it was made to have two stages of existence prior to its incarnation: first from eternity it was within God and identical with Him; second, from about the time of the creation of the world it was a generated real being distinct from God.

Following Philo, too, these early Fathers of the Church added to the *Logos* another pre-existent incorporeal being, the Holy Spirit. Thus, together with God and the *Logos* making three pre-existent real beings, subsequently to become known as Hypostasis or persons. Now the Holy Spirit is mentioned in the New Testament but it is not clear whether it is meant to be the same as the pre-existent Christ, or whether it is meant to be a pre-existent being different from the pre-existent Christ. The Apologists, under the influence of Philo, definitely declared the Holy Spirit to be distinct from the *Logos*.[81] Like the *Logos*, the Holy Spirit was held by them to have been at first *intradeical* which then became *extradeical*. These three persons of the Trinity, however, though each of them a real being and each of them God and each of them really distinct from the others, constituted one God, who was most simple and indivisible. Since they all constitute one God, whatever is said of any of the persons of the Trinity, with the exception of the terms which describe the one single distinction between them, applies to the one indivisible God which they all constitute. Wolfson calls this type of harmonization as harmonization by unification which was added by the Apologists to the Philonic harmonization by succession.

Various attempts at explaining the unity of a triune God in the third century by Origen and others ultimately meant the reduction of the unity to a relative kind of unity. But this was not acceptable by many. There were two choices before them: either to deny that *Logos* was God, or to deny the reality of its existence. Those who followed the first alternative are Arians. Wolfson calls those who followed the second alternative, after one of its exponents, as Sabelians.

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21. *Ibid*., p.41.

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How the Doctrine of Attributes was introduced in Islam, Wolfson claims that it is traceable to the Christian doctrine of Trinity. He not only provides external evidence in the form of tracing the origin of basic terms used in these discussions to show how such transformation was effected, but also offers logical reasons and psychological motives in favor of his claim about this transition from Trinity to Attributism.

From the very beginning of the history of the problem of divine attributes in Islam two Arabic terms are used for what we call attribute, namely, (i) *ma'nā* and (ii) *Äifah*.[82] Now if there is any truth in what Wolfson has claimed above, these two fundamental terms used in the doctrine of attributes should reflect similar fundamental terms in the doctrine of the Trinity. The Arabic term *ma'nā,* among its various meanings, also has the general meaning of "thing" and it is used as the equivalent of the term *shay*. Now it happens that in Christianity, the term "things" is used, in addition to the terms "hypostasis" and "persons" as a description of the three persons of the Trinity in order to emphasize their reality.[83] Similarly regarding the term *Äifah* it can be shown that it also goes back to the Christian terminology of the Trinity. The term *Äifah* comes from the verb *waÄafa*, (to describe) which as a verb occurs in the Qur'ān thirteen times and of which the substantive form *waÄf*, "description" only once; the term *Äifah* never occurs in the Qur'ān. While in most cases in the Qur'ān, the verb *waÄafa* is used with reference to what people say about God (Allah), in all these cases its usage is always with reference to something unlaudable which impious people say about God(Allah).[84] The laudable terms by which God(Allah) is described in the Qur'ān are never referred to in the Qur'ān by any form of the verb

22. *The Philosophy of the Kalam, Ibid*., p.114, It is said that WāÄil maintained, in opposition to those who believed in the reality of attributes, that "he who posits a *ma'nā* and *Äifah* as eternal, posits two gods."

23. *Ibid.,* p.115.

24. *Al-Qur'ān*, 2:18,112; 6:100,140; 21:22; 23:93; 37:159,180; 43:82. The instances where the term is used with reference to evil things; 12:18,77; 16:64,117; 23:98.

waÄafa; they are referred to as the Most Beautiful Names(*al-Asmā' al-Àusnā*).[85] When this term was coined and by whom, is not known but finally it put on the highly technical sense of the term "attribute", and took the place of the Qur'ānic term *Ism* (Name). What has been said uptil now is enough to make it clear that the use of term *Äifah* in the sense of *attribute*, whatever be its origin, at least is not Qur'ānic, rather is contrary to the Qur'ānic concept. Wolfson, in his book *The Philosophy of the Kalam* (p.119-120) and in his article *Extradeical and Intradeical Interpretation of Platonic Ideas* has attempted to show that the term *Âifah*, like the term *ma'na*, is also derived from the vocabulary of the Christian Trinity. There is essential difference in the logic of the Qur'ānic term *Ism* (Name) and in the logic of the un-Qur'ānic term *Äifah* (as used equivalent to the Greek term *attribute*) which the Muslims failed to comprehend.[86] I will discuss it later.

As far as the Orthodox Muslim concept of Attributes is concerned, it can be shown that their position is like, though not exactly the same, as orthodox Christian position. If one is to put the Muslim Attributes in place of the second and third persons of the Trinity, the doctrine of the Trinity is transformed into Muslim Attributism. However, unlike the second and third persons of the Trinity, which are *intradeical* and *extradeical* by unification, that is, they were at once the same as God and other than He, these orthodox Muslim attributes were *intradeical* and *extradeical* by location, that is, they were in God but other than He. Whereas the unorthodox position of the Anti-attributists in Islam corresponds to Sabellianism in Christianity.

Against the Christian concept of Trinity Qur'ān says: .... *say not "Three" — Cease! (it is) better for you.... Allah is only One God"* (4:171) *They surely disbelive who say: Lo! Allah is the third of three; when there is no God save the One God"*

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25. *Al-Qur'ān*, 7:179; 17:110; 20:7; also *The Philosophy of the Kalam, Ibid.,* pp.117-8 and the footnote no.30 at p.118.

26. Professor Abdul Hameed Kamali's article Maqëla i Sifāt aur Àaqâqat e Asmā" (Urdu) in *Iqbal Review*, 1986, pp. 1-32, presents a very ingenious attempt to develop this 'Logic of Good Names'. This article is the last of a series of three articles. The first two articles, 'Māhiyyat e Khëdâ aur Khud ÿgāhâ kâ Tashkâl' and 'Martba e Zāt e Àaq'(Urdu) were published in the issues of the same *Iqbal Review* in July 1963, and January 1964 respectively.

(5:73).[87] Keeping in view these verses, it seems strange to believe that the view of the real attributes in Muslims is traceable to the doctrine of Trinity. With reference to *Disputatio Christiani et Sasaceni* by John of Damascus (d.ca.754) Wolfson states that after the conquest of Syria by Muslims in 7th century, there were debates between Christians and Muslims on the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Wolfson sketches some such typical debate between a Muslim and a Christian to show that the view of the reality of attributes in Muslims could not have arisen spontaneously but it could have originated under Christian influence in the course of debates between Muslims and Christians. In these debates a Christian tries to convince a Muslim that the second and third persons of the Trinity are nothing but the terms "Wisdom" and the "Life" or "Wisdom" and "Power" which in the Qur'ān are predicated of Allah. The Christian further argues that there is nothing in the Qur'ān against the belief that the predication of either pair of these terms reflects the existence in God of real beings, or persons or Hypostasis, as they called them. The Muslim can find no objection and accepts the view that in God there are real beings to correspond to certain terms predicated of Him in the Qur'ān. However, it is only in the course of debate when the Christian tries to argue that these two persons of the Trinity, the second and third, are each God like the First Person, that the Muslim immediately stops, refuses to go on, and condemns him quoting Qur'ānic verses against Trinity.[88]

As further proof of the alien origin of the problem, according to Wolfson, is the fact that with the gradual introduction of Greek Philosophy into Islam, the problem of attributes became identified with the problem of Platonic ideas or rather with the problem of 'universals', as the problem of Platonic ideas was known by that time and with that the controversy between the Attributists and the Anti-attributists became a controversy over 'universals' as to whether they were *intradeical* or *extradeical*. There is no concept of such 'ideas' in the Qur'ān. The Most Beautiful Names (*Asmā'-ul-Àusnah*) or attributes for that matter, are not 'ideas'. They lack the essential characteristic of the Platonic ideas, that of being pre-existent patterns of

27. Marmaduke Pikthall, translation of *The Glorious Qur'ān*, Taj Company Ltd., Karachi, Pakistan,1984. pp. 97 and 110.

28. 'The Extradeical and Intradeical Interpretation of Platonic Ideas', *Ibid*.,p.50.

things that come into existence. Hence all these discussions regarding Divine attributes in terms of universals, were unwarranted and out of place in Qur'ānic perspective.

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According to Professor A. H. Kamali the logic of the Qur'ānic term *Ism* (Name) is absolutely different from the logic of the term *Âifah* (Attribute) which was used to replace it. 'Name' is never a part or component of the being of the 'named'. The being of the 'named' is always prior and transcendent to the 'name'. 'Attribute' is always a component of the very being of the thing/person 'attributed'. It is, therefore, the principle of the priority of the being of the 'named' over the 'name' in the logic of 'naming' which essentially differentiates it from the logic of 'attributation'. This seems to be what the Muslim theologians could not attend to because of oversight, and because of their over indulgence in the un- Qur'ānic terminology of Aristotelian metaphysic. One very important thing to be remembered is that beliefs and ideas ride on the back of terms"[89]; whenever there is a transmission of terminology from one ideological setting to another, there is always a transmission of belief or ideas with it.

The Names are of two types: the personal *(dhātâ*), and the attributive(*Âifāti*). A personal name stands in the consciousness of the knower, for a real or even fictitious person/thing, through which the knower affirms for himself the being/existence or non-being/non-existence of that person/thing. The first intuition in man of the Ultimate Reality is essentially to be the intuition of an Absolute Being. Name '*Allah*' as stated in the Qur'ān is used as a personal name of this Deity believed in by the Muslims. Another way, the intuition of this Being is formed in man, is through the consciousness of the activity of this Absolute Being as expressed in Its relations with respect to other beings. Qur'ān witnesses in man, an intuition of the ninety-nine kinds of the activity of this Deity. This is the only Qur'ānic sense of the term *Âifah*, in which it can be used if it is to be used. Hence ninety-nine Good Names of Allah are stated in the Qur'ān. The term 'attribute' comes from Aristotle. It is soaked in the dualism of Aristotelian

29. *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, *Ibid*., p. 71.

metaphysics. As Aristotelian metaphysics bifurcates reality into two principles of form and matter, its logic bifurcates a thing into subject and its attributes. 'Subject' is the logical substratum of 'attributes'. 'Attributes' cannot be imagined to exist without a logical substratum. But the 'subject' in its own term cannot be conceived to exist if the attributes are withdrawn out of it. But both are real in their own right. Qur'ānic metaphysics is through and through monistic. According to it the ultimate principle of reality is One. Allah is the Personal Name of this Deity and He has other Good Names too which describe His activity or relations. There is no concept of any bifurcation of Absolute Reality i.e., Allah into His Essence and His Attributes in Qur'ānic metaphysics. It was only when the Muslims mistakenly accepted from the Christians, the Aristotelian concept of *Attribute*, as equivalent to Qur'ānic concept of *Ism* (Name) through an un- Qur'ānic concept of *Âîfah* that they translated a Qur'ānic category into Aristotelian category which gave rise to the problem of the relation of Divine Essence and its Attributes and hence the schools of Attributism, Anti-attributism and Modeism etc. And the same problem when stretched further, multiplied itself into the problem of the createdness/un-createdness of the Qur'ān. Another principle which the Muslims mostly seemed to ignore was the principle that: *Naught is as His likeness.*(42:11)[90] Had the Muslims not ignored this principle of absolute transcendence of God either, they should have been saved from bifurcating the being of Allah into His Essence and Attributes. But here they again followed the authority of Aristotle who had applied the same concept of change for God as for things.[91] Thus Aristotle's logic[92] as well as *intradeical*

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30. Marmaduke Pikthall, translation of *The Glorious* Qur'ān, Taj Company Ltd., Karachi, Pakistan,1984. p. 483.

31. Aristotle says that volition implies change, and change implies imperfection. He applies the same principle on things of this world, as well as on God in the same sense. Cf. H.A.Wolfson, 'Avicenna, Al-Ghazali and Averroes on Divine Attributes', in *Homenaje a Millas- Vallicrosa* vol. ii, 1956.

32. It were the Muslim philosophers specially Al-Fārābâ and Ibn Sânā who solely followed Aristotle on this problem. Theie approach to the problem is based on their rigid conception of the Absolute Simplicity of God as a conception of the unity (*TauÁâd*) of God, and on Aristotelian 'doctrine of the kinds of predicables'. They tried to prove that Divine Attributes are properties; since the definition of property is that it is not part of definition however logically derivable from the definition of an object, so no question

interpretation of Platonic ideas both supported each other in derailing Muslims from philosophizing in the right direction.

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of multiplicity in the being of God. For details please see H.A.Wolfson, 'Avicenna, Al-Ghazali and Averroes on Divine Attributes', in *Homenaje a Millas- Vallicrosa* vol. ii, 1956.

IQBAL'S GUIDELINES FOR REGENERATION OF MUSLIM MILLAT TO CONFRONT CONTEMPORARY WESTERN HEGEMONY

Dr. Sayyid A. S. Pirzada

The paper is an attempt to understand the present economic and political decline of the Muslim world, and how the Muslims can be lifted from this lowest state. It will begin with a short description of Iqbal's conception of *millat*, especially its constituents and scope. Later present sectarian aspect of the Muslim society, and the degree of danger it poses to the larger interests of international Islam will be discussed. It will follow a brief resume of the Muslim past in the present century, tracing the origin of various political problems facing the Muslim world. Those political and economic problems include scientific and technological advancement, acquiring of sophisticated nuclear technology for strengthening defence and economy, and elimination of the vestiges of colonialism. In the end, the Western attitude towards the Muslim world will be analysed.

The cardinal point of Allama Iqbal's political philosophy is *millat* – fraternity of believers. The bonds of this fraternity are above race, colour, region, proximity and matter. Its core is Islam, Ka'bah and the person of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The bonds of *millat* do not segregate the believers to a corner of mosque, aloof from all the decencies created by Allah. Rather they value a complete social order encompassing both spiritual and temporal life.[93] In fact individual's individuality shines in the multiplicity of *millat*. In the larger sense, it gives birth to a collective ego founded on the revealed word of Allah.

The sphere of *millat* in temporal affairs is well defined. It is not based on a utopia of Plato, or that of Marx – utopian communism and utopian

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[93]Iqbal, *Asrär-o-Rumëz*, Lahore, 1990, pp.85-86. Dr. M. Aziz Ahmad, "Iqbal's Political Theory", *Iqbal As A Thinker*, Lahore, 1944, pp.243-244.

socialism,[94] but on the person of Prophet (PBUH) who lived amongst the believers, and the practice that he left will continue until the doomsday.[95] The Islamic social system is valued by equality, independence and exploitation free economics. The essence of *TawÁâd* is equality, solidarity and freedom. The State thus founded on this bedrock "is an endeavour to transform these ideal principles into space-time forces, (and) an aspiration to realize them in a definite human organization".[96] The institution of prophethood and finality of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH)[97] is the leverage of the entire socio&legal system of Islam, as also ordained in the Qur'ān. "This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion".[98] According to Iqbal, it was a great divine favour retaining the symbolic honour and image of the Prophet (PBUH) for all times and all epoches.[99] The *millat* thus raised on these parameters will attain immortality. Similarly the doors of *ummats* were also closed as a corollary of this divine revelation.

The Islamic *millat's* constituents are inseperable, and above sectarian attachments. The idea of nationalism founded on common ties of religion, race, colour, language, geography, history, customs, traditions and above all unique economic and political interests and a will to uphold it, are alien to Islam. Islam has no room for such compartmentalisations which could explode and wreck the entire humanely created edifice. Islam therefore, is neither "Nationalism nor Imperialism but a League of Nations which recognizes artificial boundaries and racial distinctions for facility of reference only, and not for restricting the social horizons of its members".[100] This viewpoint has been amply explained by the Allama in his poetry.

He says that our allegiance with China, India, Rome, Syria, Afghanistan and Turkey is insignificant and it must be noted that all Muslims are like

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[94] This expression has also been used by Sabine. George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory,* Oxford, 1968, pp.479, 490.

[95] Iqbal, *Ibid*., pp.93, 101.

[96] Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Lahore, 1968, p.154. Here in after, *Lectures*

[97] Iqbal, *Asrār-o-Rumëz*, op. cit., p.102.

[98] *Holy Quran*, English tr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Lahore. 1975, 5:3

[99] Iqbal, *Asrār-o-Rumëz*, op. cit., p.102.

[100] *Lectures*, p. 159

birds in a garden.[101] It is with this yardstick that Allah has drawn a divider amongst the *ummat* of the lovers of the Prophet of Islam and those who are in the other camp.[102] Allah is not only Creator and an object of worship, but also the law-giver. In Islam nobody is considered immune from the injunctions laid down in Qur'ān.[103] Qur'ān-based-polity therefore, has no room for an absolute ruler, over and above the limits prescribed by Allah.[104] Those bearing the torch of the love of Prophet symbolise a bud on the beautiful branch, and turning into fruit and foliage for the weal of the humanity.[105] In the nutshell, Islamic *millat* is required to possess a real collective ego to live, move and have its being as a single individual. The development of such a consiousness depends on the preservation of the history and traditions of the *millalt.* Iqbal outlined the crux of the political system of Islam in a letter to his teacher R.A. Nicholson. He says, "The kingdom of God on earth means the democracy of more or less unique individuals presided over by the most unique individual possible on this earth".[106]

Iqbal's perception of *millat* could not be translated into political reality, and after the first World War, the infighting of Muslims, fertilized by Western intrigues through their agents matured into the dismemberment of Ottomon Empire. It gave room to the Jewish state of Israel in Palestine usurping the first *Qibla* of the Muslim world. After the second *World War*, Kashmir was added to the agony of the *millat.* Fratricidal war in Lebanon, obstructing the formation of government in Algeria by the Islamic Salvation Front committed to Islam despite a clear victory in the 1991 polls, consistent interference in Iran's internal affairs by protecting the oppressive rule of the Shah were later added to the above role of Muslim sufferings at the hands of the West. Most recent machinations of the American led West to brand Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Sudan and Pakistan (under observation for some time) as terrorist states, besides an all out campaign against the fundamentalist Muslims upholding their Islamic beliefs, represent the duplicity of the

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[101] Iqbal, *Asrār-o-Rumëz*, op. cit.,p. 112.

[102] *Ibid.,* p. 104.

[103] *Ibid.,* p. 123

[104] *Ibid* p. 121, 125

[105] *Ibid.,* p. 131

[106] M. Iqbal, *The Mystries of Selflessness*, tr. A. J. Arberry, London, 1953, p.xi. Mazharuddin Siddiqui, *The Image of the West in Iqbal,* Lahore, 1956, p.34.

Western democracy and republicanism by jeopardising the legitimate rights of the Muslim world.

The anti-Islam political stance of the West is also extended to the economic, scientific and technological spheres. The most important of them is the acquiring of nuclear technology for development and defence purposes. The worst target of this discrimination from amongst the Muslim world and Pakistan, Iran and Iraq. Pakistan's Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (hanged to death in a murder case) who did not yield to the "American pressure" to forego nuclear reprocessing plant agreement Pakistan signed to acquire from France was threatened to be made a "horrible example".[107]

The Americans have been consistently pressing on successive governments in Pakistan to "cap", "roll back" and "zero nuclear facility". The idea behind the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) remains the same to maintain the monoply of super powers in nuclear arsenal. The CTBT closes the portals of nuclear research on the new entrants, but protects the large nuclear arsenal of the five bigs, In the economic field the recently enacted World Trade Organisation guarantees the monoply of European manufactures. Slashing tariff of the poor countries in the garb of liberalisation of international trade is the death warrant for their indigenous industries and economies. The European nations blackmail the borrowing countries through debts and compel them to follow their political policies. Contemporary Pakistan and Egypt are its examples. Political blackmailing of the oil producing (entire) Arabs, saving Iraq, to fund American defence presence in the Gulf is yet another exploitation by the leading democracies of the West and America. The question is that which aspect of the democracy values such civilised loot?

The above coercive policies involving protection of the Zionist aggression against Palestinians fighting for their national homeland, lukewarmness (at UN level) towards Indian crimes against Kashmiris fighting for the implementation of the UN promise for the right of self-determination, fomenting dissension, strife and war in Lebanon, Iran and Afghanistan,

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[107] Rao Rashid, *Jo Mein Ney Deykha,* Lahore, 1988, p.222. Stanley Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan*, New York, 1993, pp.273, 299. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, *If I Am Assassinated*, Introduction by Pran Chopra, Ghopra, Ghaziabad, India, 1982, pp. 141-172, 176.

blackmailing the poor countries through tactics like trade liberalisation and commanding the controlling the economies of the borrowing nations through international monetary bodies and maintaining hegemony in the sophisticated weaponray, all enjoy the support of the Western democracies.

Iqbal thoroughly analysed the Western democracy. He severely criticised the Godless and secular nature of the Western democracy. He says in Islam the spiritual and the temporal are not two distinct domains, and the nature of an action, however, secular in its import, is determined by the attitude of mind with which the agent does it. In Islam "it is the same reality which appears as Church looked at from one point of view and State from another. It is not true to say that Church and State are two sides or facets of the same thing. Islam is a single unanalysable reality which is one or the other as your point of view varies".[108] He dubbed the Godless politics of the West as Satan's maid *kaniâz-i-ahraman*.[109] He viewed the number-oriented-democratic-system to be devoid of any wisdom.[110] "Flee from the method of democracy because human thinking cannot emerge out the brains of two hundred asses".[111] In *Armughân-â-Àijâz,* Iqbal comes up with the logic as to why he considers modern democracy and medieval monarchies as synonymous. The scene is entitled *Iblâs Kay Mushâr* – The Advisors of Iblâs. An advisor responds to the other on the rising tide of democratic feelings among the masses. The latter says:

> I know, but my insight tells me that no danger is likely to me from what is merely a curtain placed upon kingship with democratic robes, as soon as man became a little self-conscious. The business of kingship does not depend upon the existence of princes and aristocrates. Whether it be the legislative assembly of a nation or the court of a Persian monarch, the king is he who casts his eyes upon the lands of others. Did you not see the democratic system of the West? A glowing bright face with the inside darker than that of a Changiz?[112]

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[108] *Lectures*, p. 154.

[109] Iqbal, *¿arb-e-Kalâm*, Lahore, 1984, p.152.
Iqbal, *Armughân-i-Àijâz,* Lahore, 1970, p.203.

[110] Iqbal, *¿arb-e-Kalâm*, p. 149.

[111] Iqbal, *Payâm-i-Mashriq,* Lahore, 1948, p.158

[112] Iqbal, *Armughân-i-Àijâz,* pp.216-218. Siddiqui, *op. cit.,* p. 35.

A similar account of the Allama is available in poem *Khiẓr-i-Rāh.*

There are edifying dissertations on the Rights

Of Men: impassioned speeches from the Forum

On the sacred Duties of citizenship; and stormy

Debates in the Houses. But all these are no more

Than so many subterfuges to get hold of the world's wealth

Just a series of gigantic frauds, worked by old adepts

At the game, who privately agree among themselves

To the share of each in the common spoils[113]

A Western scholar Freeland Abbott has come with an interesting logic to reject Iqbal's philosophy about the West and its democracy. He says that Iqbal "knew the Europe of 1905 to 1908, not a period in which democracy, as we envision it today, had made a great deal of progress"[114] And that like democracy, Iqbal's view of the "West was also imperfect". At another place he defends secularism as "an extension of religion".[115] Abbotts's comments represent his ignorance about history, philosophy and Islam in toto. He does not follow Urdu and Persian, and not even proper transliteration methodology, but he selects to write on Iqbal's philosophy and passes a sweeping verdict on Iqbal's intellect. As regards secularism *Fontana Dictionary of Modern Political Thought*,[116] as well as Western philosophers like Sabine[117] and Will Durant[118] and many others agree on the definition of secularism as "negation of religion".

Iqbal's view of exploitative culture of the West is also shared by the renowned revolutionary scholar Dr. Ali Sharâ'atâ. Sharâ'atâ regards the West to be cherishing an 'economy-worshipping-structure" founded on "exploitation". It is based on "philosophy of consumerism" and "civilized

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[113] Siddiqui, *op. cit.*,p. 36.

[114] Freeland Abbott, "View of Democracy and the West", Hafeez Malik, *Iqbal, Poet Philosopher of Pakistan*, New York, 1971, p. 176.

[115] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

[116] *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Political Thought*, London, 1977, p.564.

[117] George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory*, New York, 1950, pp. 331-336.

[118] Will Durant, *The Pleasures of Philosophy*, Lahore, 1981, p. 383.

barbarism" with the principal object of "looting".[119] The spiritual mentor of Islamic Iran Ayatullah Khomenâ was also critical of the Western political system. In a message to the pilgrims he said that owing to "apathy and negligence of the Muslim peoples, the foul claws of imperialism have clutched at the heart of the lands of the people of Qur'ān". Our national wealth and resources are being devoured by imperialism despite our supposed ownership of them. He said the poisonous culture of imperialism is penetrating to the depths of towns and villages throughtout the Muslim world. It is "displacing the culture of the Qur'ān". Our youth are being enlisted en masse to the service of "foreigners and imperialists"; and they are corrupting them day by day with new tunes and new deceptions.[120]

CONCLUSION

The overview of the Western society according to Iqbal is its *fasād-i-qalb-o-naïar* [121] – i.e. double standard or hypocrisy. Murad Hofmann, a German Muslim who served as a senior diplomat has examined this question in an article in *Islamic Studies*. He says that permission to raise high cement factories and gas kettles but wrangling for a mosque minaret, America's nuclear crime through "Christian" bomb in Nagasaki and Hiroshima but curbs on Iraq, and Pakistan not to develop "Islamic bomb", calumnious propaganda against the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (PBUH), encouraging and protecting Salman Rushdi, the author of agonising book *Satanic Verses,* castigating Professor Annamarie Schimmel who pointed out that "Rushdi had hurt the sentiments of millions of Muslims", disseminating the views of scholars like Francis Fukuyama and Samuel Huntington that "the Muslim world, sooner or later, will either disappear or become fully marginalised, ridiculing Islam, Muslim prayers, pilgrimage and fasting and tagging it with the immorality of oil-rich

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[119] Dr. Ali Shari'ati, *What Is To Be Done*, Ed. Farhang Rajaee; Foreword John L. Esposito, Texas, 1986, p. 29-30.

[120] Hamid Algar, tr. *Imam Khomeni: Islam and Revolution*, London, 1985, p. 195.

[121] Iqbal, *¿arb-e-Kalim*, p. 71.

Ibid, p.102.

Ibid., p. 139.

Ibid., p.153.

Arabs and dubbing Qur'ān as a "complete Turkish code of law", or "Turkish Bible", all speak of the inner core of the Western hypocrisy.[122]

To face this unethical, hypocrite and immoral West, Iqbal comes up with a proposal to strengthen ego. In his lectures, the Allama quotes the first philosopher historian of Islam, Ibn Khaldën and the noted theologian of Iraq, Qazi Abë Bakr Bāqillānâ "to accept the most powerful man as Imam in the country where he happens to be powerful". This idea could be the "first dim vision of an International Islam",[123] in the contemporary world. Later Iqbal quotes from nationalist poet of Turkey, Zia. The crux of his suggeston is that for creating " a really effective political unity of Islam, all Moslem countries must first become independent and then in their totality they should rang themselves under the Caliph". He considered it to be the only source of strength because in "the International world the weak find no sympathy; (and) power alone deserves respect".[124] In the opinion of Iqbal, the Muslims should turn themselves as "strong and powerful to form a living family of republics" and that is interwoven in a "League of Nations (of Islam)" which "recognizes artificial boundaries and racial distinctions for facility of reference only and not for restricting the social horizon of its members".[125] With this the ultimate aim of Islam, the "spiritual democracy"[126] will be achieved.

Iqbal proposes that Tehran should be the centre of the Muslim world: [127]

ñehrān hogar 'ālam-i-mashriq kā Janivā

Shāyad kura-i-arî kâ tārâkh badal jā'ii

One of the reasons for the decline of Muslims ever since the first World War, has been the Western complexion of the political leadership of the Muslim countries. That secular leadership has been selling the interests of the Muslims in return to skin&deep-beauty of the West coupled with other

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[122] Murad Hofmann, "The European Mentality and Islam", *Islamic Studies,* Journal of Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Vol 35, Spring 1996, Number 1, pp. 87-97.

[123] *Lectures,* p.158.

[124] *Ibid.*

[125] *Ibid*, p. 159

[126] *Ibid,* p. 180.

[127] Iqbal, *¿arb-e-Kalim*, p. 147.

ancillary sicknesses of the Western culture. The Islamic revolution of Iran is, therefore, focus of both the Muslim world and also the West. There are frequent references to the Khomeni revolution in the Muslim countries. It is because of this reason that the Western society feels frightened from Islamic Iran whose ideological mentor died as a poor man while living in his two room ancestral abode in Qum. The West, therefore, is applying its entire resources to trounce the Islamic Iran. As regards the Muslims, for enlarging the scope of the revolution, or more precisely exporting the revolution, Iran has to dispel the valid impression that the objective of Khomeni was to uphold a Shiâ'ah version of Islam only, and to root out the Sunni Islam. I do not want to start a debate here, but would to a few realities. These include *bay'at* of fearless Amâr ul Mu'minân 'Ali at the hands of the three Caliphs, his association with their governments in the capacity of a Mufti, and demonstration of his high love for those Caliphs by naming his sons after them as Abë Bakr, 'Umar and Uthmān, and finally his affection for MuÁammad bin Abë Bakr and his marriage with the widow of Caliph Abë Bakr. These facts have been recorded in *Nahjul Balāghah*.[128] I think if this impression is eliminated, the common Muslim from across the world will warmly embrace the idea to make Tehran as the centre of *millat* and universal *Imāmat* referred to by Iqbal. Only the character-oriented-leadership imbued with the spirit of Islam can only the face the Western hegemony in the Muslim world. I hope Muslim intellectuals will come forward to work on closing the ranks of Shâ'ah and Sunni Muslims by developing a consensus like *Ijtihād* on the acceptability of at least pious caliphate as a symbol of Islamic polity, to confront the Western hegemonic designs.

[128] *Nahjul Balāghah,* tr. Sayyid Rais Ahmad Ja'fari Nadvi, Maulana Murtaîa Husain, Abdul Razzaq Malihabadi Nadvi, Lahore, 1957, pp. 33, 247-248.

THE BACKGROUND AND CENTRAL ARGUMENT OF DR. S. Z. HASAN'S REALISM REVISITED

Dr. Absar Ahmad

The book– ***Realism: An Attempt to Trace its Origin and Development in its Chief Representatives–*** originally published by the Cambridge University Press in 1928 is, in my judgement and estimate, is the outcome of late Dr. S.Z. Hasan's postgraduate studies at Oxford University in the twenties of this century which earned him D. Phil in Philosophy. Dr. Hasan, along with a few other top intellectuals and writers like Allama Muhammad Iqbal, Dr. Mir Waliuddin, Dr. S. Wahiduddin, Prof. M. M. Sharif, and Dr. Khalifa Abdul Hakim, played a significant role in the intellectual resurgence of Muslims in the first half of this cuntury. Dr. Hasan's academic credentials are uniquely great and perhaps unparalleled at least in the Indo-Pak subcontinent insofar as he has the honour of having two doctoral degrees: Dr. Phil from Oxford and Dr. Phil from Erlangen– a topmost university of Germany between the two World Wars. Prof. M. Saeed Shaikh, who has been a student of S. Z. Hasan at the Philosophy Department of the Aligarh Muslim University in the years 1942-44, told me that Prof. Hasan's long stay in Germany extending over almost seven years had made him an exceptionally great expert of German language and thought. His command over that language– the premier language of recent philosophy–also comes out clearly while going through the pages of the present work in the form of technical terms and passages in German. As a matter of fact, his German book on Spinoza's Monism brought him the distinction of fellowship to the International Academy of Philosophy at Erlangen, and was taken up as part of "Series of Great Philosophers" by Rossal verlag Munich at the instance of Prof. Goesta Ecke. Perhaps this was an academic honour bestowed upon very few Asiatics.

Moreover, the fact that the book carries a foreword by no less an academician than Prof. J. A. Smith – the then Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy at Oxford – is highly significant. A few lines by way of introducing him and his philosophical position will be in order here. It was J. A. Smith with whom closes the line of Hegelian idealists in England

which started with J. H. Stirling, T. H. Green and others in the second half of 19th century. Like so many of his predecessors, he was trained at Oxford, and at Balliol College from which the movement sprang, where he came early into personal contact with its outstanding representatives, Jowett, Edward Caird, and Nettleship. The Hegelian stock of ideas came to him also, though in a less faithful form, through Bradley and Bosanquet. While H. H. Joachim, J. A. Smith's colleague at the College, kept the Hegelian flag flying at Oxford, he himself turned South for his idealism: to the writings of B. Croce and G. Gentile. In brief, he was content to announce his general allegiance to the Croce-Gentile "philosophy o the spirit." The author tells us that Prof. J. A. Smith and Mr. H. W. Joseph were his teachers at Oxford with whom he learned to think philosophically. However, I am sure that in the old tradition of Oxbridge education, J. A. Smith must have been not just a teacher but a warm and affectionate tutor and research supervisor and through him Dr. Hasan must have acquired a respect, if not a philosophical conviction, for idealism. This comes out unmistakably when he repeatedly says in his book that realism as an epistemology is opposed to subjective idealism and not to objective or absolute idealism. Prof. Smith pays him a great tribute when he says. "I have read it more than once with enlightenment to myself… In his introduction he outlines a view to which he has been led in the course of his study and criticism of the Realistic position. Here he opens out lines of speculation on which he proposes to develop his own independent thinking."

In undertaking a massive and thorough study of Realism Dr. S. Z. Hasan, I guess, must have found equally strong motivation from an antagonistic trend also very much present in Oxford of that time. Through all the triumphs of Idealism there, a sort of resistance movement had continued to state the case for Realism. Thomas Case, Professor of Metaphysics and Morals there from 1899 until 1910 and President of Corpus Christi College until 1924 published his *Physical Realism* in 1888 at the height of Idealism's success. His somewhat younger contemporary, John Cook Wilson swung Oxford opinion against Idealism. Dr. Hasan has discussed Cook Wilson's rationalistic Realism in Chapter III (Section One) of the book, while a brief notice of Case's position along with numerous other neo-realist philosophers has been taken in the appendix.

This much about the intellectual climate in which Dr. Hasan was nurtured philosophically. Now let us try to have a closer look at the subject of the book. Speaking very generally, in the early history of Philosophy, particularly in the medieval thought, the term "realism" was used in opposition to mominalism, for the doctrine that universals have a real, objective existence. In modern Philosophy, however, it is used for the view that material objects exist externally to us and independently of our sense experience. Realism is thus opposed to idealism, which holds that no such material object or external realities exist apart from our knowledge or consciousness of them, the whole universe thus being dependent on the mind, or in some sense, mental. It also clashes with phenomenalism or "Sensaism", which, while avoiding much idealist metaphysics, would deny that material objects exist except as groups or sequences of sensa, actual and possible. Dr. Hasan's purpose is to trace the development of realism from its origin in the common consciousness of man to its fulfillment in the philosophical writings of Prof. G. E. Moore. It is not an easy book to read and certainly a thorough grasp of the subtle arguments and counter-arguments requires patience and close reading. On the one hand he seems to view the development of realism as a continual battle between opposing views in which there are various "enemies" to be overcome. On the other hand, he regards it as an Hegelian dialectic, the final synthesis of which is achieved by Prof. Moore.

The origin of realism is to be found in the conviction of common consciousness that there is a real external world, or, as Dr. Hasan puts it, "Man believes in the existence of the world and its direct perception by a necessity of his nature." (p.2) This necessity of man's nature is then referred to as the "realistic instinct", which is said to involve "two main theses: the reality of the external world and the direct revelation of it to our sense&apprehension". To say that the external world is real is to say that it exists independently of us. But this independence is of finite mind, not necessarily of infinite mind. Realism has nothing to say to the view that there "may be an infinite mind, say God, who holds the whole universe of men and things on the palm of his hand, and on whom it depends for its being and its nature." Subjective idealism is said to be the only metaphysics that is inconsistent with realism, whilst "objective idealism is but realism plus the hypothesis of an infinite subject" (p.9). Thus realism is treated as a theory of

knowledge, but Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza, Hegel, and Kant are all said to be realists. To my mind, this seems a bit curious conclusion. It is difficult to see what definition of *realism* could justify the classing of these philosophers in one group with the authors discussed in this volume. Moreover, it is hardly possible to separate Plato's theory of knowledge from his metaphysics, and to regard the latter as "realism."

Although realism has its origin in the "unconscious convictions of man", these convictions must be questioned before realism as a philosophy can be established. One the one hand, the epistemological doctrine of representationism denies the directness of perception– one main thesis of realism; on the other hand the metaphysical doctrine of subjective idealism denies the independent reality of objects – the other main thesis. Dr. Hasan conceives the development of the doctrine as consisting first in the exclusive assertion of the one thesis, then in the exclusive assertion of the other. Accordingly, his exposition falls into three main divisions, with smaller sub-divisions. The beginnings of realism are found in Descartes, Locke, Reid, and Hamilton, They, however, failed to secure the directness of perception. The modern movement begins in Schuppe, Mach, and Avenarius who, however, do not succeed in making the subject of perception independent. Meinong, Stout, and the American "critical realists" are grouped together. They overcome subjective idealism, but do not succeed in overcoming representationism. Dr. Hasan's mode of dealing with these philosophers is well brought out in the following quotation: "The first of the series of unsuccessful attempts (Descartes. Locke, Reid) asserts only the existence of objects; the second (Schuppe, Mach, Avenarius) emphasizes only the directness of perception; the third (Meinong, Stout, "critical realists") aims at being a synthesis of both these movements, only the aim falls short of attainment. The attempt, however, succeeds in bringing out the paramount necessity of combining both the moments; it repeats more clearly and at a higher level the need which Reid had felt" (p. 45).

Realism proper "starts with Moore at the beginning of the century" (p. 107). The context is now regarded as centering in the conflict of thought and sense. This conflict is said to give rise to three species of realism: 1) the rationalistic realism of Cook Wilson, Prichard, and Joseph; 2) the empirical realism of Samuel Alexander, E.B. Holt, and Bertrand Russelt 3) the critical realism of Moore, Dawes Hicks, and Laird. These writers are treated in this

order, much the greatest amount of space and attention being given to Prof. Moore, Dr Hasan's exposition is very clear and in fact is an intellectual feast for the thoughtful reader. Those who are not familiar with the writings which he criticizes may find it easy to grasp what exactly are its authors' views. Dr. Hasan painstakingly expounds their views by means of critical comments on papers which they have written about each other.

Before stating very schematically the current position with regard to realism in philosophical debate and Dr. S. Z. Hasan's own contribution on the subject, let me first mention a few writers and books which contain citations of Hasan's work. Prof. L. Susan Stebbing opines in a critical notice of the book that Dr. Hasan has rendered a valuable service to students of modern realism by giving such a full account of Prof. Moore's writings. It is all the more valuable since Prof. Moore had refused to republish, in accessible form, the articles which had so greatly influenced contemporary philosophers. In her view, Dr. Hasan is perhaps the first writer to have stated clearly the extent to which modern philosophy has been influenced by Prof. Moore's views. She rightly appreciates that the book is exceptionally well-documented and gives her opinion that Dr. Hasan seems to have read nearly everything that had been written by the philosophers whose views he expounded and criticized. She is also all praise for the very full and well-arranged bibliography. Similarly, another leading professor of philosophy, in view of its thorough and exhaustive treatment, called it the "Bible of Realism." The book has been referred to and discussed in numerous other works by British, American, and Australian scholars. The renowned American philosopher D. S. Robinson reproduced and discussed Dr. Hasan's explication of realist position in his *Introduction to Modern Philosophy*. Dr. Rudolf Metz in his classical *A Hundred Years of British Philosophy* (first published originally in German in 1938) pays glowing tribute to the analytical skill and intellectual acumen of S. Z. Hasan in expounding objectively and meticulously the doctrines of scores of realists with finer differentiation and shading. Leaving many other citations, I shall finally mention John Blackmore's excellent article entitled "On the Inverted use of the terms 'Realism' and 'Idealism' among Scientists and Historians of Science" published in an academic journal in 1979 in which he ranked S. Z. Hasan with the eminent philosopher Lovejoy in making most informative and exact distinctions in realist position.

This book of course now is mainly of historical interest as the author could not even consult the more mature ideas presented by G. E. Moore after October 1925 (the writing of the book was finished by then). In the tradition of Thomas Reid, common-sense realism was further revived and extended by Moore along with common-sense view of perception. Moore's defence was primarily of the certainty of such simple perceptual statements as "This is a hand"; he argued that denial of these statements leads to inconsistency in beliefs and behaviour and that the grounds for their denial involve propositions less certain than they are. His "A Defence of Common-Sense" and "Proof of an External World" published in his *Philosophical Papers* (London: 1959) state his position clearly. However, his analysis of such statements in terms of sense data led away from direct realism and the common-sense view of the nature (as opposed to the reliability) of perception. Defence of common-sense became ultimately associated with the Oxford linguistic analysts. The staunchest recent defenders of the common-sense against the argument from illusion are J. L. Austin, Quinton, and Ryle. Simultaneously, however, much interest is also being shown currently in a variety of realism known as "perspective realism" or the variegated forms of the theory of appearing. Roderick M. Chisholm, as its chief representative, maintains that direct realism can deal with illusions, or at least perceptual relativity, by saying that sensible qualities are not possessed by the object *simpliciter* but are always relative to some point of view or standing conditions. We always perceive sensible qualities in some perspective – spatial, even temporal, or illuminative. Such perspective-realist statements as "The table is round from here" sound forced, for the natural word to use is "looks," not "is," and it is possible to express this kind of direct realism in terms of looking and appearing. Physical objects simply are such that they appear different from different position, and we see them as they appear from a view-point. Whether this kind of reasoning is satisfactory has also been disputed. It is true that there is nothing over and above Mr. X, for Mr. X himself appears – here there *is* something to do the appearing. But when there is no physical object at all, what does the appearing (as in hallucination)? Perhaps we must resort to sense data again – or if this term is too theory-laden or immersed in invalid distinctions, we must resort to something we admittedly do have, and we are once again back to sense

experience. And so the dispute continues and surely there is nothing like finality in philosophy.

Let us now finally address the question squarely: Did S. Z. Hasan put forward a theory of his own on the issues about which the book undertakes to explore the ideas of so many thinkers in such detail? My firm and considered answer to this will be "yes – he did." While closely reading the Introduction of the book (indeed a long drawn out Introduction of 39 pages in which he suggests a blue-print for complete philosophical justification for realism in times to come) I get the impression that Dr. S. Z. Hasan was at heart a deeply religious person and the basic metaphysical tenets of Islam permeated his thought very deeply and thoroughly. He took particular care to explain that his Realism, so far from issuing in Materialism, harmonized better than any other with genuine artistic, ethical, and religious consciousness of man. According to him all knowledge, perceptual knowledge included, cannot be understood on the analogy of physical relations; knowledge is not a case of causality. It is a fact *sui generis* – it cannot be explained. To my mind, behind Dr. S. Z. Hasan's notion of the 'instinctive' or 'common consciousness of the un-sophisticated man' and 'the ultimate human nature' lurks the Qur'anic notion of *fi□rah* (the primordial mold or pattern) on which God created man. And this *fi□rah* has a built-in affirmation of the duality of self and not-self, not-self covering all material objects existing in the external world. Elaborating it he wrote" "My object is given to me as existent… Its existence, rather it or its existent nature is before me. There is no question of belief or conviction about it yet. The existent nature is simply there. It is sight – *sui generis* and distinct from the other forms of my apprehension, viz., ideation or thought" (p. 5). Indeed, Dr. Hasan finds a number of concepts and ideas to be *sui generis*; that is, he frankly admits them to be irreducible, unanalyzable, and of a peculiar nature of their own. For example, discussing the status of appearance, he wrote: "Is it a physical or psychical entity? In truth it is neither. It is simply appearance. Its mode of being is *sui generis*. It is other than real and therefore other than physical or psychical" (p 8) Again, both sensa and images are characterized as modes of being *sui generis*; one never passes into the other, as Bergson urges. Thus he seems to take many human experiences, including percipience, as something given and essentially unexplainable.

Perhaps taking a cue from Kant, Hasan presents a happy blend of idealism and realism or, in other words, his realism has a tinge of idealism, as we read: "Independent existence is a pure concept of the understanding. It is not given by sense – sense cannot give it. What it gives is a presentation, and not the independent existence of the presentation. That in fact is a conviction, a belief that accompanies the presentation and is other than it. It is a concept supplied by thought or understanding" (p. 10). He maintains that there is no veil between the knower and the known which has to be raised; that reality is there, we only come to see. In other words, the theory involved is that knowledge is revelation, and not that it is reproduction of the object or production of the object. Dr. Hasan regards vision or intuition as the very ideal of true knowledge and asserts that even philosophers like Kant and Spinoza do not disagree with the ordinary man on this point. In the last but one paragraph of the Introduction, he very succinctly summarizes the underlying religio-metaphysical basis of realism thus: "If man is the ultimate reality, then the object must depend upon him – and we have subjectivism. But if God is the ultimate reality, then the object depends upon Him, and not on man – we have realism." This can quite reasonably be regarded as the consummate expression of his philosophical analysis of realism.

I was told by quite a few old students and disciples of Dr. S. Z. Hasan (M. M. Ahmad, Burhan Ahmad Faruqi, and Chaudhary Abdul Hameed among them) that gradually Dr. Hasan became disenchanted with the empty, sterile, and unincisive logic-chopping and hair-splitting analyses of Anglo-American philosophers and, so to say, gradually switched over to "political realism" in the then socio-political scenario of the Indian subcontinent. He is on record to have constantly kept two books on his office table in philosophy department of Aligarh Muslim University: the Holy Qur'an and Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. The religious impulse in him asserted itself more and more and prevailed over the purely philosophical one. In so doing, he moved from the scholastic analyses of perception, sense data, presentationsim, and representationsism, etc., to what German intellectuals call " lebens philosophy": a philosophy of life in concrete setting. From the early thirties onwards, he became passionately involved in the freedom struggle of the Muslims of India and devoted most of his time and energy in discussions and efforts geared to establishing the religious identity and political autonomy of Muslims of this region. In this connection, he also met

and corresponded with Allama Muhammad Iqbal and earnestly tried to organize a well-disciplined group of Muslims on the basis of *bay'ah* (vow of allegiance) in order to launch Islamic revivalist work in addition to the strictly political dimension very well represented and advocated by the Muslim League. But unfortunately all these efforts did not materialize and fizzled out in very preliminary stages. In my opinion Dr. Hasan's shift of interest from the narrow confines of the intricacies of academic philosophy of realism to politics and religious assertion of Muslims was not erratic or accidental. Partly the political exigencies of that time were the causal factors for this shift. But at a deeper level this was the result of a Kantian-style progressive development of thought. I have already noted above that the imprint of Kant's philosophy on his mind was very deep. In my view, the present work *Realism* represents the 'Critique of Pure Reason' phase of Hasan's intellectual development. Following in the tracks of Kant, he moved on to 'Practical Reason' and this phase is represented by his engagement in Muslims' freedom struggle and Islamic resurgence. As things turned out, he eventually migrated to Pakistan but alas did not live long. He passed away in 1949 at Lahore and was buried in the graveyard of Miani Sahib. May his soul rest in peace. Amen.

THE ARDENT PILGRIM

Reviewed by: Sheila McDonough

***The Ardent Pilgrim*, Iqbal Sing**, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1997, Pp. 182, pb. C.

This revised version of the study of Iqbal, which was first published in 1951, contains much of the new biographical information that has been published since that time, but the basic approach has not changed much at all. The original approach was very similar to that of Wilfred Cantwell Smith in his seminal analysis in *Modern Islam in India.* The latter, first published in Lahore in 1943, was the first attempt to put forward a class analysis of the ideas of the Indian Muslim modernist thinkers. Two German thinkers towards the end of the nineteenth century, Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch, had begun the method of studying the history of the religious ideas of Christian thinkers in their historical contexts. Close study of the ideas in their contexts makes clear that ideas develop and change over time as the social and economic conditions of life change. For example, when the historical situation is such that no change in the actual conditions of life seem feasible, thought tends to be more other-worldly, whereas when change seems more possible, thought tends to focus on a this-worldly understanding of the religious symbols, namely that the religion teaches that the world can and should be made better. Smith came out of the milieu of Christian thought at Cambridge where the study of Christian history was making it clear that Christian religious thought had always been linked to the social contexts of the period.

When Smith got to Lahore in the late 1930, where he was teaching at Forman Christian College, he applied the same approach to the social situation of the Indian Muslim. Smith was the first scholar to apply a sociological analysis to the last two hundred years of Indian Muslim thought. He was actively involved in conversations with Muslim and other intellectuals in Lahore in the late 1930s and early 40s. The mood in his book reflects the mood of himself and his friends in that place at that time. The book *Islam in Modern India* indicated that the author had a cheerful and optimistic confidence that science, notably sociology of religion, was going to remove confusion from people's minds about religion, and that it would quickly be possible to make the world a rational and well-ordered place in

which social justice would be implemented. Iqbal Singh's original version of *The Ardent Pilgrim* reflected very similar attitudes. His recent revised edition of the book continues to acknowledge the brilliance of Smith's analysis, and he quotes Smith's conclusions about Iqbal as representative of his own opinion. In brief, Iqbal Singh, half a century later, still thinks that Smith was right to characterize Iqbal the poet as confused between progressive and reactionary ideas.

Smith himself, however, did not retain his original perspective. He was shaken up by the experiences of partition violence, and by the discovery of the Gulag and other atrocities of Stalin's regime in Russia. He was forced by experience to rethink his simple-minded socialist confidence that forces immanent in history were going to make the world better. Smith abandoned his simplistic socialist analysis of history, and his early critical interpretation of the alleged confusion of the Muslim poet-philosopher. Iqbal Singh, however, has apparently learned nothing from historical experience, and continues to insist, almost a lifetime later, that his original ideas when he first wrote the *Ardent Pilgrim*, are still correct. Singh does have considerable feeling for the beauty of the Muslim author's poetry, but he disparages Muhammad Iqbal as significant religious and political thinker. He continues to portray the Muslim poet as essentially confused, and a more or lets witless tool of reactionary bourgeois interests.

In his later book, *Islam in Modern History*, Wilfred Cantwell Smith explained his change of his mind, and his subsequent conviction that the Marxist analysis was wrong because its metaphysics was wrong. The wrongness came, in his opinion, with a refusal to take the human person seriously as unique. Those who thought they understood 'objective' reality has in practice turned out to be ready to use the state to annihilate opposition. The state had been made superior to the individual person. The repentant Smith came much closer eventually to the poet Iqbal's conviction that the fundamental reality is the person, who is always much more than the product of his class. Smith came close in this later analysis to what Iqbal himself had said about Marxists, namely that their adherence to a closed system of ideas forced them

to distort their understanding of the complexity of existence –"twisted minds".[129]

Since the poet Iqbal's dynamism did not lead him to embrace the cause of revolution, the socialists of Lahore in the 1940s labeled him as essentially bourgeois. Much of Iqbal's Singh's analysis is taken up with attempting to prove the bourgeois nature of Iqbal's life and thought. The fact that Iqbal the poet did not bother much about trying to make a lot of money is not considered significant. Iqbal Singh continually labels as confused and unsystematic Iqbal the poet's awareness that social change is a complex unruly process, and that societies cannot be transformed overnight. This class analysis of Iqbal's thought is simplistic and out-dated. In Smith and Iqbal Singh's early volumes, the assertion was made, doubtless characteristic of the intellectual milieu of young socialists in Lahore in the late 30s and early 40s, that Iqbal the poet did not understand socialism. From the perspective of more than fifty years later, this sounds like arrogant young men thumbing their noses at the elderly philosopher of their town. The truth is rather that the elderly poet understood, but did not agree.

Iqbal Singh, unlike his original mentor Smith, has apparently neither grown in his own understanding, nor increased his appreciation of the poet Iqbal. What is much worse is that he uses character assassination techniques to undermine the respect which readers might have for the poet. This kind of attack was present in a minimal way in the two early books, that of Smith and that of Iqbal Singh, which were charactering the poet as bourgeois and unimportant for he young radicals of their generation. The original critique was that Iqbal was reactionary about women. Iqbal Singh repeats this, and even suggests that nothing is known about the fate of Iqbal's daughter, with the implication that something bad must have happened.[130]

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[129] See "Iblâs kâ majlis I Shërā", *Kulliyat i Iqbal*, Urdu, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1989, p. 709. (Editor)

[130] Though it seems like a platitude for the Pakistani readers we would like to mention, for the information of the uninitiated readers, that Iqbal's daughter, Munira Bano received good education. She was married to a gentleman from one of the prominent families of Lahore and after leading an active life of social responsibilities and community work, now lives peacefully amidst her children and grandchildren. (Editor)

What is particularly unpleasant about the revised edition of *The Ardent Pilgrim* is in that the gratuitous character assassination is nastier than it was in the original version. Iqbal Singh just tosses off the thought that Iqbal would have become a fanatic Muslim if he had lived to see Pakistan come into existence. The Indian writer emphasizes that he sees Iqbal as a failure for several reason. 1. The poet's ideas were used by a particular class to justify their seizure of power. 2. The poet sinned against his elder son by refusing to have anything to do with him.[131] This is presented as a serious character flaw. 3. The poet was intellectually confused because he did not have an integrated set of ideas about the objective reality of his situation.

On the intellectual level, the problem with this perspective is well stated in Cantwell's Smith second book, *Islam in Modern History* in which he says what was wrong with his youthful socialist arrogance. What was wrong was the idea that persons are nothing more than representatives of class values. Smith later affirms, as Iqbal did, that the individual is more that his context, and that it is always necessary for the individual to keep revising his purposes and adapting to new situation. The flaw of Iqbal Singh is that he does not understand this aspect of Iqbal's thought, and that he retains the simplistic Marxist notion that a person's thought is no more than the product of his context. Iqbal Singh's naïve trust that 'objective reality' can be clearly grasped by a right-thinking person shows how little he has learned since the days of his enthusiastic socialist youth. This kind of Marxist analysis inevitably concludes that dissenters are confused and bad persons.

Iqbal Singh keeps insisting that Iqbal the poet would have been more intelligent if his thought had been integrated and systematic, and if he would not have irritated his readers by seeing so many complex and apparently contradictory aspects of reality. The answer to this from Iqbal the poet's perspective, and from that of the later Cantwell Smith, is that reality itself, if we are open to it, does not permit us to have totally integrated and systematic thought. A person with a closed intellectual system is, by definition, closed to the impinging of the complexities of existence. It is Iqbal Singh who is simple-minded, and not Iqbal the poet.

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[131] Here, as at other places in his book, Iqbal Singh betrays that he, perhaps, came across authentic sources of Iqbal's biography (like *Zinda Rud*) but, nevertheless, relied on the fictional accounts gleaned from secondary sources. (Editor)

All this is not to deny that social justice is an important goal. One of the best Muslim philosophers of the 1990s, Farid Esack of South Africa, fought hard with his Muslim group, the Call of Islam, for the cause of Nelson Mandela, and for social, racial and gender justice in this country. His sophisticated contemporary philosophical position, expressed in his book *Quran, Liberation and Pluralism*[132] is a very articulate expression of a position similar to that of Muhammad Iqbal, namely that the struggle to articulate how to implement ideals in concrete social forms remains always urgent. One does not need a closed intellectual system to see the need for justice in a particular context.

[132] Farid Esack, *Quran, Liberation and Pluralism*, Oneworld, Oxford, 1997. (Editor)

WOMEN AND RELIGION

Debates on a search

Reviewed by: Zoë Hersov

A symposium on ***Women and Religion*** was held in Thailand in March 1996, under the auspices of the Heinrich Böll Foundation in Asia. The published proceedings consist of ten papers, each followed by a lively discussion. One's immediate reaction is to join Beth Gelding in hailing "this wonderful assembly of women, from so many religious traditions and so many societies".

An impressive range of views and experiences is represented, with significant contributions from the Buddhist, Hindu, Christian and Islamic traditions. In addition to the expected differences, some surprising convergences emerge in unlikely places.

Durre Ahmed and Madhu Khanna point to the parallels – even 'synthesis' – between Hinduism and Islam in the subcontinent. Gudrun Ludwar-Ene's account of female spirit mediums in Africa evokes an interesting response from Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, who compares the phenomenon to the medium cult in Thailand. Hema Goonatilake then exclaims: "While listening to Gudrun, I was thinking, 'Oh my God, am I in Sri Lanka?" Sri Lanka is one of the world centers of Buddhism and side by side, we have this spirit kind of thing which we call Tovil."

This sort of interchange conveys the atmosphere of the meeting in a way that set pieces alone cannot do. Probably the best way to review such diverse material is to select and examine certain salient themes that run through both the papers and the discussion.

First of all, there is the familiar feminist denunciation of the wrongs wrought by patriarchies of the past that have led to the subjugation of women. It is charged that not only 'male science', but psychology and religion too, have been viewed "through a masculine lens", producing a jaundiced picture of women and their role.

The concepts 'male' and 'western' frequently go together, as in the "distorted western Judeo-Christian hyper-masculine consciousness".

Certainly in Christian writings woman is often depicted as the cause of the Fall, the wicked temptress and destroyer of mankind. In the battle between the flesh and the spirit, the female sex is firmly placed on the side of the flesh. As Angelika K⇗ster-Lossack observes, the purity of Mary is contrasted with the impurity of Eve.

However, not all the blame for women's plight can be laid at the door of the Judeo-Christian heritage. Madhu Khnna maintains that the Hindu patriarchy was supported by the theology of the subordination of the Feminine. Misogynist passages in Buddhist texts rival those found in their patristic counterparts. Even in Sufism, according to Annemarie Schimmel, there is an ambivalent attitude to women, who are equated with the *nafs*, or lower soul, that seeks to ensnare the pure spirit. In general, one has to conclude that androcentrism and misogyny, far from being unique to Western thought, play an equal part in other cultures. Some apparently anti-women phenomena are universal. A striking example is the menstrual taboo. The Judaic apprehension of pollution is codified in the ritual laws of Leviticus (15.19,24,28), a concern that later appears in the Qur'an (2:222). The notion of women's impurity is also found in Africa and in the orthodox Brahman Tradition.

Many reasons are given for this belief that is often associated with the conviction of women's inferiority. There is an underlying fear of women and their seemingly insatiable sexuality. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh quotes a saying in the Jataka: "Women's lust cannot be filled. It's like a well – no matter how much you put in it you can never fill it up." As Angelika L⇗ster-Lossack puts it: "women as sexual partners, as life-giving mothers, as life-preserving nurturers of children have been considered 'impure', because their sexuality and reproductive functions were interpreted as basically threatening to the male-defined spiritual goals of human life." At the same time, Roshan Dhunijibhoy points out that "there is not only fear, but also envy in the relationship between men and women", as men covet women's creative powers.

Only because they have been powerless and oppressed certain benefits may be involved. The 'curse' of menstruation provides a welcome respite from household tasks. Durre Ahmed says she has always believed that women invented the taboo "because it suits us… It is a way of taking a

break, you don't have to cook, clean, worry about anything… and everybody is in fact terrified. I don't see why we keep going back and saying, let's remove it, it is impure, and so on!"

To sum up, this first theme has been the standard feminist critique of ideas and practices that are traced to the prevailing male definition of women. The entire subject is expressed in Western intellectual terms, even in places that involves the rejection of the West. The themes that follow are more original and contain some surprising and illuminating ideas. In the case of all the participants, the response to the legacy of misogyny and subjection is a summons to return to the origins of their faith. Hema Goonatilake explains: "My approach has been particularly in Buddhism, to sometimes use the word 'fundamentalism'. I am being a fundamentalist for my advantage in order to transform society." The call to go back to the Buddha is echoed by the call to return to the teaching and practice of Jesus or the example of the Prophet.

The search for women's original contribution leads to an investigation of the "lost legacy", revealing the hidden women of Buddhism, women Zen masters, Sri Lankan nun-historians, women in the Bible and medieval abbesses, as well as the more shadowy witches of Germany and priestesses in the Philippines. In particular, this search demands the reclamation and reinterpretation of religious texts that, it is charge, were deliberately concealed by male interpolations and omissions. Bishop Jepson asserts that the scriptures were edited by men and used for their own ends. In the same way, Chatsumarn Kabilsingh claims that Buddhist texts were written by men to preserve their interests. Beth Goldring confirms the necessity "of redeeming Buddhism and Buddhist practice from the limitations of male chauvinism and sexism…. [in order to] bring Buddhism far closer to what the Buddha was and intended." It is therefore important to distinguish and separate the 'fundamentals' formulator additions-an exercise familiar to the modern Biblical critic.

Women of all faiths are equally keen to uncover the "core teaching" and the 'Original practices". In quest of a culturally pure heritage, they single out the ethical, egalitarian principles that are an integral part of the great religions. The Buddha taught that men and women have equal potential to achieve enlightenment. The Book of Genesis contains the simple statement of the equality of the sexes, made together in God's image, and Christianity

form the earliest times centered on the universal application of the Gospel. In the Qur'an, God speaks repeatedly of "Muslim men and women", "the faithful men and women", and the same religious injunctions are valid for both sexes.

The feminists' endeavour to recover what is authentic from their past to counter what they find objectionable in the present can prove both positive and enlightening. However there are dangers in choosing what aspects of the past to preserve. When merely an expression of subjective preference, the selective process can lead to the rejection of important texts. Such as the uncomfortable sayings of St Paul, while at the same time laying undue weight on peripheral figures and sects. In the Christian context, one could end up opting for the Cathar heresy because it granted equality to women! It is also surely simplistic to attribute all the difficult passages to the male hand. In a fascinating paper, Madhu Khanna tells us that men in fact largely wrote the Tantras, which accord an extraordinarily high place to women!

In women's quest for their own spirituality, undoubtedly the most fruitful sphere is mysticism, which transcends gender and creed, and in which, as Sister Mary John says: "all religions become one". An interesting point that emerged in the Symposium was the importance of an attitude of passive receptivity. Gudrun Ludwar-Ene observes that in the case of the African medium, "the power implied is the power of the spirits granted under the condition of self-negation". Durre Ahmed explains that the meaning of the word Islam is surrender – submission – peace, and concludes that "a ready receptivity is equally valid for all traditions, all religions."

The last and most instructive theme for the Western reader is the distinctive perspective of the Third World women. There is, first of all, the stress on unity and connections, in contrast to the Western penchant for separation and 'opposites'. As Hema Goonatilake remarks in the course of the discussion: "We never could see religion, culture and traditions separately in our society [Sri Lanka]."

There is an insistence on the masculine and feminine elements in religion. Durre Ahmed calls attention to the parallels in Islam to the concepts of Yin and Yang and the significance of the name of God "*Al-Rahman'*, the Compassionate, derived from the root of the word for womb in Arabic. All traditions recognize balance as an essential feature. Durre Ahmed points to

"the balance between numerous aspects of human relationships, between male and female, among people, with nature and God". Chatsumarn Kabilsingh describes Buddhism as the Middle Path – a term typically associated with Islam.

While emphasising the necessity for unity and balance, most of the participants readily recognize the dissimilarities between men and women. Durre Ahmed remarks that "the question 'Who am I?" has very different answers for men and women." The approach to the sacred is not the same. As Beth Goldring puts it: "Men simply do things differently… Of course we understand that all paths are one, but may be the steps at every moment are not necessarily identical."

The divergence between the sexes is not only apparent in the spiritual quest. The current denial of all differences, coupled with the insistence on treating men and women as through they were identical, has had disastrous effects in the West. The demand for sexual freedom for all has, as Beth Goldring observes, resulted in the exploitation and abuse of women. The integration of men and women in the armed services in the US and UK has produced a spate of claims of sexual harassment and rape, together with a not surprisingly high pregnancy rate among women sent to sea with men.

Religious settings are not immune. Beth Goldring gives a horrifying account of abuses by Buddhist teachers in the US- and experiences that is echoed in Sister Mary John's allusions to incontinent priests and Protestant ministers. Chatsumarn Kabisingh argues that both men and women are vulnerable in these situations, and Durre Ahmed remarks, on a note of welcome realism, that "whereas men tend to rape, women tend to seduce. It's just a difference of style."

To conclude, it has been very rewarding to review these proceedings and to have the opportunity to follow a group of intelligent, articulate women striving to find a feminine ethos within their various traditions. Those from the Third World prove wise and confident enough not to feel that they have to abandon their own cultures in favur of alien customs and beliefs. Although the rhetoric of feminism is freely used, the Western feminist agenda is not swallowed whole.

A great advantage of seeking to formulate a women's platform base on one's own heritage is that the results are rooted in time and place and

transcend social class. Undiluted feminism tends to appeal only to a Westernized upper middle class and generally neglects the real concerns of the people. Madhu Khanna notes that development programes based on Western models tend to disregard popular religion and culture, and Roshan Dhunjibhoy refers movingly to the comfort offered by "the religions of the poor". This whole subject would be a fruitful area of investigation for a future conference.

The attitude of the participants throughout the Symposium is, as Hema Goonatilake comments, non-Confrontational and inclusive. They eschew the stand of the radical feminists that encourages women to adopt the worst qualities of men (aggression and promiscuity), with dire consequences for marriage, the family and human relationships. There is recognition that the sexes can be different *and* equal. Minimizing or denying all differences diminishes the possibility for men and women to complement each other. It is admitted that men have problems too. Their frustration and rage at poverty and powerlessness is often, in turn, deflected onto women. Far from increasing the gulf between the sexes, it is essential to make common cause and work together for the regeneration of society.

The voice of these new women of the third World rings out with clarity and vigour. This is the first generation of women to be literate, able to analyse history and produce 'herstory', and come together to discuss their ideas and their experience. Not only have these women an enormous contribution to make to their own societies, but we in the West have much to learn from them. There is a clear need for more meetings of this kind to continue the 'debates on a search'. As Durre Ahmed says, we live at a unique point in time. It is our duty and responsibility to use it well.