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# COSMOLOGY IN THE HOLY QUR'AN

S. Mandihassan

Sayyid Zahid Ali Wasti<sup>1</sup> has published a very thought-provoking article entitled “Medicine and Knowledge of God”. It is the English version of an earlier communication in Urdu and has thereby retained some characteristic features. To begin with, according to the contents as they now appear, the article can be properly entitled “The Idea of Creation in the Qur’an”. In fact, the first paragraph is actually entitled “Creation of Man”. In this paragraph there are four statements, all independent and isolated. Creation, as subject, is treated just as a poet, composing a ghazal in Urdu, would have done. Here every line has to rhyme with the others but, apart from it, each line can carry a sense entirely its own. On this pattern we find Wasti has offered four isolated statements, including the main one from the Qur’an. It is to be noted that when he refers to medicine, there is the humoral theory which accounts for the maintenance of health and even for life-span. But knowledge, coming from the Qur’an, can only be cosmology which primarily deals with the origin of life or creation: However, most authors confuse humoral theory with cosmology just as they confuse Existence with Creation.

(1) To start with Wasti quotes from the Qur’an, xcv. 4, that “man was created in the best mould”. The statement from the Qur’an, as it stands, appears axiomatic had there been a suitable commentary upon it, the same would have become derivative. This was required and may now be offered. When the mould has been chosen as the best, man emerging from it would naturally acquire the best Form. Now, Form is properly judged by its

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<sup>1</sup> Sayyid Zahid All Wasti, “Medicine and Knowledge of God,” Hamdard Islamicus, 113 (1978), 79-87.

Function so that the best Form implies best Function. Here the Bible states that man has been created as the image of God and the Qur'an otherwise affirms that man is God's highest creation and, on that account, His representative on earth. It thus follows that man has been created to lead a noble life. When this is traced backwards we realise that man was formed in the best mould.

(2) The next statement comes as an independent one. It informs that "the ancient Greek physicians believed the corporeal part of man to comprise four (cosmic) elements, Earth, Water, Fire (Heat) and Air, and the Arabs followed them". This would be Greek humoral theory and not cosmology. Hippocrates formulated the Greek humoral theory. He was a practising physician concerned with health and longevity of man and only indirectly with the creation of the body. And to explain the maintenance of life four humours, corresponding to four cosmic elements, were necessary. The Greeks did recognise five cosmic elements which were Ether, Fire, Air, Water and Earth. But as humours Ether was not represented which calls for some explanation.

We reach our goal better if we consider the later Indian cosmology also. Here the cosmic elements are Akasha (Heaven), Air, Fire, Water and Earth. Now Divanji<sup>2</sup> has expounded that Akasha= Brahma, which rationally translated would be Creative Energy. Ether of Greek cosmology corresponds to Akasha of the Indian system and thereby becomes the element responsible for creation. Since medicine was not concerned with creation, in formulating the humoral theory, Ether was not represented. This is how there are five cosmic elements in Greek cosmology but only four humours in their humoral doctrine.

Let us now compare Indian cosmology and Indian humoral theory. The early Aryans had been nomads. When they first took to agriculture they were

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<sup>2</sup> P.C. Divanji, "Brahma-Akasa Equation," Bharatiya Vidya, Bombay, Vol. IX, p. 148.

interested in understanding plant life. They discovered that plant life depended upon three factors, Warmth (Heat), Water and Earth. These became the elements of the first system of Indian cosmology. Its impact upon medicine gave the humoral theory called the Tridosha doctrine which recognises only three humours, corresponding to Air, Water and Heat (Fire) as cosmic elements. It is obvious that in the earlier system of cosmology, and in the humoral theory, there is no element to account for creation. However, it will be noticed that given Heat, Water and Earth, the latter two represent forms of matter, while Heat is energy. Philosophically interpreted, Heat occupied the place which later on was properly taken up by Akasha, Creative Energy. Aristotle is one of those who tried to raise the importance of Heat but he could not go very far. Ibn Bājjah, as his follower, has a treatise on Soul which Ma'sūmī<sup>3</sup> has translated. Ibn Bājjah maintains that "the body that has a form is composed of Earth and Water. This transformation is possible through Heat. This heat is the organ of the soul". Thus the creative or at least the synthesising power is attributed to heat and this is a property of soul, but the source of soul is not indicated here. But we can see how the phenomenon of creation is left vague stopping merely with heat. Even paganism realised that creation must be finally traced to a Creator and, by what appeared obvious to the eye, Sun = Creator. Islam conceived a Creator deprived of all material qualities when Creator became the original all-creative power. Then the word of Divine Command, Amr Rabbī, as the word Kiln, Become, descended as quantum of creative energy, which transformed itself into matter, as Water and Earth, and entered into them, by now its own creation, as Rūh, Spirit. Thus Kun represents a quantum of "initial Creative Energy" and Rūk, "Creative Energy manifest". In this light the Quranic concept of Creative Energy is best explained by the complex 'Asir-Rūh or Kun-Rūh, which simplified becomes Rūh. Then what is Akasha in Indian cosmology would be Rūh in Quranic cosmology. In either case it is more than heat which could not be taken seriously as Creative Energy. Then

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<sup>3</sup> M.S. Hasan Mas'ūmī, "Ibn Bājjah's " 'Ilm al-Nafs," Pak. Hist. Soc., Karachi (1961), p. 38.

Quranic cosmology employs three elements, Creative Energy, Water and Earth, the latter two as material and forming the human corporeal system. The Qur'an, vi. 2, states: "God created man out of clay," when Clay=Earth. Further, the Qur'an, xxv. 54, maintains: "God created man from water." The importance of Quranic cosmology is best realised when we compare it with the earlier Indian cosmology. It will be understood that the former explains creation of human life, while the latter, the existence of plant life, and these two are: (i) Quranic cosmology: Rūh, Water, Earth: (ii) Earlier Indian cosmology: Heat, Water, Earth.

I have explained how later on philosophers tried to interpret Heat as Creative Energy but, failing to convince themselves of it, accepted Ether as a special element responsible for creation. Now, there is in Nature the phenomenon of Inversion. When an entity becomes energetic it gives rise to its opposite. But the energising power is donated by Rūh. This may be taken as axiomatic here but has been explained before.<sup>4</sup> Then Water further creates as its opposite Fire, and Earth its opposite as Air. Thus given Water and Earth as forms of matter we automatically have Fire and Air as well. But to imagine Heat as energy producing Cold, means self-annihilation, and nothing can be destroyed in the Universe. Thus the opposite of Heat, or any form of energy, can only be matter, and as such the opposite of Rūh can be matter, and we have it as Water and Earth, the primary forms of matter. By now we can state that Rūh created its opposite as matter, in the form of Water and Earth, and then entered into its own creation thereby resulting as man. Creation of man was one continuous process which, however, is understood best as two different phases of matter which produced form or the human figure, and as energy incorporated, or Rūh, imparting movement and thus life.

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<sup>4</sup> S. Mandihassan, "The Creative Principle in Alchemy," Pak. Philos. Journal, Lahore (1977), XV/2, 38-61.

(3) The third statement Wasti offers implies that the body having been created to maintain life it must assimilate substances donating energy and in turn the body also produces energy when “the sum total represents, Cotabolism+Anabolism=Metabolism. It is this metabolic process that is another name for life.” Obviously the phenomenon discussed is “vegetative” life or existence, as opposed to its origin or creation.

(4) The fourth statement inserted is thoroughly isolated. It is a couplet of Urdu poetry without even bearing the author’s name. It has, however, been translated as follows:

“Life is the proportional arrangement of the (five) elements while death is their disintegration.”

I have previously discussed<sup>5</sup> this verse which is the contribution of the famous Urdu poet, Pandit Chakbast, of Lucknow. At the same time I offered a literal translation as follows:

زندگی کیا ہے عناصر میں  
ظہور ترتیب  
موت کیا ہے انہیں اجزا کا  
پیشاں ہونا

“What is life, but the manifestation of coordination among elements.

What is death, but the disintegration of the same constituents.”

He speaks of Zindagī, or life-span, and not of Hayāt or life. There is no doubt that Chakbast, as a poet, has presented the humoral theory in a most

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<sup>5</sup> S. Mandihassan, “The Bases of Alchemy.” *Stu. Hist. Med.*, New Delhi, (1977), I/1, 54.

beautiful form. But a humoral theory cannot be identified with a cosmological doctrine. In fact, I have explained that the constituents of humoral theory are best appreciated as Creative Energy represented by the first cosmic element permeating the other four which have become four activated humours. The interested reader may refer to this articles explaining how the humoral theory has been virtually misunderstood for cosmogony.

Summary. Humoral theory is not identical with cosmological doctrine. The latter contains an element representing Creative Energy. Akasha in Indian system of thought and Rūh in the Qur'an pertain to no humoral theory but instead each to a system of cosmology. Here the elements are Rūh, Water and Earth. Rūh is Creative Energy manifest, with its initial form as the word of Divine Command. With such an original life-force, man was formed in the best mould, acquiring the best Form, to discharge the best Function, when life's aim becomes Nobility. Medicine is concerned mainly with health and not with nobility of life.

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—Editor, Iqbal Review

# THE MIRACULOUS BIRTH OF ISLAM

Muhammad H.I. Dobinson

Dr Desmond Morris, the well-known British social-anthropologist, has said of religion:

“Religious Displays, as distinct from religious beliefs, are submissive acts performed towards dominant individuals called gods. The acts themselves include various forms of body-lowering, such as kneeling, bowing, kowtowing, salaaming, and prostrating ; also chanting and rituals of debasement and sacrifice ; the offering of gifts to the gods and the making of symbolic gestures of allegiance.

“The function of these acts is to appease the super-dominant beings and thereby obtain favours or avoid punishments. There is nothing unusual about this behaviour in itself. Subordinates throughout the animal world subject themselves to their most powerful companions in a similar way. But the strange feature of these human submissive actions, as we encounter them today, is that they are performed towards a dominant figure, or figures who are never present in person. Instead, they are represented by images and artifacts and operate entirely through agents called holy men or priests. These middlemen enjoy a position of social influence and respect because some of the powers of the gods rub off on them. It is therefore extremely important to the holy man to keep the worshippers permanently obedient to the super-dominant figures, and this is done in several ways:

“1. They encourage the social rejection of worshippers of rival deities. This pressure ranges from mild disapproval to scorn and anger, and often to severe persecution. Whether or not they preach social tolerance, many

religions have practised intolerance. This is part of the role they play as cultural isolating mechanisms., The loyalty to the locally shared god-figure demands social separation from those who worship in a different way. It creates sects and breeds sectarian violence.

“2. They frequently construct convincing evidence that the deities can hurt the non-submissive. In the past, any natural disaster—flood, disease, famine, or fire—is explained as a token of the deities’ anger, sent to punish insubordinate behaviour. They exploit coincidences that have given rise to superstitions, and they play on the suggestibility of the worshippers.

“3. They invent an after-world where the subordinates who obey them will be rewarded, and those who do not will suffer torment. There is evidence that belief in an after-life existed many thousands of years ago. Ancient burial occurred with ‘grave-goods,’ supplied for the corpse’s journey to the other world. This practice dates back to the Stone Age and has continued with little change over the millennia.

“It is surprising that otherwise intelligent men have succumbed to these pressures and fears in so many different cultures and in so many epochs. There appear to be several features aiding the agents of the gods.

“First, and perhaps the most important, is the acquisition by our early ancestors of a sense of time. Other species can communicate with information about the present—about the moods they are in at the moment of communicating—but they cannot consider the future. Man can contemplate his own mortality, and finds the thought intolerable. Any animal will struggle to protect itself from a threat of death. There are many self-protecting mechanisms, but they will occur as a response to an immediate danger. When man contemplates his future death, it is as if, by thinking of it, he renders it immediate. His defence is to deny it. He cannot deny that his body will die and rot—the evidence is too strong for that ; so he solves the problem by the invention of an immortal soul—a soul that is more 'him' than

even his physical body is 'him'. If this soul can survive in an after-life, then he has successfully defended himself against the threatened attack on his life.

“This gives the agents of the gods a powerful area of support. All they need to do is to remind their followers constantly of their immortality and to convince them that after-life itself is under the personal management of the particular gods they are promoting. The self-protecting urges of their worshippers will do the rest.

“Secondly, the holy men are aided by man’s neotony. Neotony is a biological condition found in certain species in which the juvenile form of the animal becomes increasingly adult, or, to put it another way, the adults become increasingly juvenile. It is the 'Peter Pan' syndrome—the case of a species that never grows up, but starts to reproduce while still in the juvenile state. In many ways, man is a neotonous ape. He has the curiosity and playfulness of a young ape. When the ape becomes mature, he loses his infantile playfulness ; but man never loses it.

“Man’s evolution as a neotonous ape has put him in a similar position to the dog’s. He becomes sexually mature and yet he still needs a parent—a super-parent, one as impressive to him as man must be to a dog. The answer was to invent a god—either a female super-parent in the shape of a Mother Goddess, or a male god in the shape of God the Father, or perhaps even a whole family of gods. Like real parents, they would protect, punish, and be obeyed.

“Thirdly, the holy men are aided by man’s highly evolved co-operativeness. When our ancient ancestors became hunters, they were forced to co-operate with one another to a much greater degree than ever before. A leader had to rely on his companions for active co-operation, not merely passive submission. If they were to show initiative there was a danger that they would lack the blind, unquestioning allegiance to their leader or to their tribe. The intelligent co-operation that was desperately needed by the hunting group could easily work against the equally necessary group cohesion. How

could a leader command both blind faith and questioning intelligence? The answer was to enlist the aid of a super-leader—a god-figure—to take care of the blind faith and to bind the group together in a common purpose, while leaving the members of the group free to exercise intelligent co-operation amongst themselves.

“These, then, are the three main factors helping the holy men in their successful promotion of god-figures and religious behaviour: man’s need to protect himself from the threat of death; man’s need for a super-parent; and man’s need for a super-leader. A god that offers an after-life in another world, that protects his ‘children’ regardless of their age, and that offers them devotion to a grand cause and a socially unifying purpose, triggers off a powerful reaction in the human animal.”<sup>6</sup>

E.E. Kellett says of the nature and origin of religion:

“A precise definition of religion is probably impossible. Matthew Arnold’s attempt is well known: religion in his view was ‘morality touched with emotion’. Other definitions are ‘Anything that lifts man above the realities of this material life is religion’; ‘the essence of religion is authority and obedience’; and ‘it is a feeling of absolute dependence’. Unfortunately, in almost all nations, until comparatively recent times, that which all are agreed to call religion had little or nothing to do with morality: and often the first step in the construction of ethical systems was to denounce the current religion as at best non-moral. The great teachers, for example, alike in Palestine and Greece, those men whose doctrines form the basis of modern ‘religion,’ are conspicuous for the vigour with which they combated the religion of their times. If we go back earlier, the divorce between religion and morality becomes, if possible, still clearer. ‘Divorce,’ however, is the wrong word, for the two have never been united. Religion was a series of external actions, or of abstentions from actions, intended to propitiate the

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<sup>6</sup> Dr. Desmond Morris, *Manwatching*, pp. 148-52.

supernatural powers: it said nothing about what we today call 'good conduct,' and if purity of heart existed, it existed almost in spite of religious taboos...

"The more deeply we probe into early religion, the more clearly we perceive how little it has to do with the morality of which Arnold speaks, however strongly it might be touched with emotion, and at that, although sometimes the emotion of hope, far more often the emotion of fear. And, looking again, we discover that the second element entering into it was, strange as it may seem, an infantile and elementary, but none the less genuine, physical science. Surrounded by unknown influences, tormented by terrors of ghosts, demons, spirits, of all kinds, men searched, timidly and hesitatingly, into the causes of these plagues, and leapt eagerly at the first possibilities that presented themselves for avoiding or mitigating them. Like our own people during Black Deaths and other catastrophes, they ran after everyone who could promise them immunity, and seized greedily upon any talisman that happened to have been worn by someone who had himself escaped. The antagonism between physics and religion, that has filled so great a space in modern history, did not exist in early times: on the contrary, religion was the natural development of physics, and without physics could scarcely have arisen. The priest was in fact the professor, and the minister was the medicine-man. People went to him for explanations of natural phenomena, and for the relief from the fears that those phenomena aroused. Out of his esoteric knowledge, such as it was, he prescribed for their diseases and dispelled their anxieties. 'Do this or that', he said to them, 'and those terrors will vanish.'

"Thus, while not every philosophy is a religion, every religion is a philosophy. Religion, to be worth anything at all, must cast out fears, allay bewilderment, solve perplexities: and this cannot be done without the formation of theories, that is, without philosophizing. No one can conceive an object of worship, however crude or loathe-some, unless he has first reflected on the 'cause of things' and without such reflection he will be the

victim of 'terror and insane distress,' of which he can hardly imagine even the least advanced of human beings to rid himself."<sup>7</sup>

It was with the coming of Neanderthal man that a first glimpse is caught of man's innermost thoughts. In some caves the skulls of bears were carefully arranged and stored, perhaps providing a shrine or talisman for the hunt. The dead too were often carefully buried in a foetal position with weapons, in such a way as to leave little doubt that Neanderthal man had some hope of or belief in survival after death. These people lived in Europe for 100,000 years, and then, 30,000 years or so ago, they became extinct.

The Neanderthalers were replaced by the Cro-Magnon race. The culture of Cro-Magnon man was distinctive for he buried his dead with reverence and ceremony and ornament. One tomb of twenty individuals is known in which the bodies are flanked with carefully arranged mammoth bones. The skeletons of the dead were often adorned with necklaces of shells and fossils and coloured with red ochre. With this reverence for death went a zest for life. Cave paintings of great beauty and sensitivity are known from Russia to the Pyrenees, and with these things a great landmark is reached in the history of mankind, for here is the end of the evolution of man the animal, and the dawn of man the unique—a self-conscious, rationalising, artistic, worshipping creation.

The rise of an advanced civilisation in Egypt is one of the most fascinating developments in the history of human societies. The simple neolithic farmers of the fifth millennium B.C. gave way to more advanced predynastic cultures when village life developed, pottery became more refined, and the communities became more artistically conscious as witnessed by their ivory spoons, bracelets, and combs, and the many beautiful vases they shaped from local stone. Many burials of these ancient Egyptians have been found, crouched and waiting for rebirth in a spirit world with pottery

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<sup>7</sup> E.E. Kellett, *A Short History of Religions*, pp, 10-12.

and other items beside them, presumably to help them on their journey into the next life. Religion and mythology were certainly playing an increasingly important part in their lives.

Crete lies in the southern Mediterranean between the mainland of Greece and Egypt. It is a fertile and well-watered island and a flourishing culture developed there. From this there emerged about 2000 B.C. a highly organised civilization based on large palace complexes, quite different from the civilizations of the Near East with their overpowering and conventionalised cities. The Cretan civilization was named Minoan by Sir Arthur Evans who began excavations at Knossos in 1899 and identified it with the seat of King Minos of Greek legend.

The many small shrines of Minoan religion contrast sharply with the great temples of the contemporary Near East. Some were within the palaces, but others were in caves where numerous votive offerings were left. Scenes on seals suggest that there were also small outdoor shrines, with a pillar or sacred tree. Sacred symbols, like the double axe and “horns of consecration” were always associated with the Cretan Great Goddess. A male deity rarely appears, although a young god, always smaller and subordinate to the goddess, may have been her consort. The Cretans buried their dead in caves or in collective tombs above or below ground level. There are no royal tombs with rich grave goods.

Evidence of Mycenaean religion comes from finds of figurines, scenes, on seal-stones, and from the Linear B tablets at Pylos, which list offerings to different deities. The names of the twelve Olympian gods and goddesses of later Greece appear in the tablets, possibly arising as different aspects of the Cretan Great Goddess and her male consort. But in contrast to Minoan religion, the male element dominates the female, the god Poseidon, whose name means “earth husband,” being the most revered of all deities. Unlike the Minoans, the Mycenaeans made life-size statues of their gods. But despite such divergencies, the Mycenaean religion was derived from the Minoan,

sharing its preference for small shrines, its use of identical ritual vessels and symbols such as the double axe, and reverence for the snake. Mycenaean deities and cult centres survived into Classical Greek times, and the four great sanctuaries of Delphi, Olympia, Eleusis, and Delos all had Mycenaean origin.

The Mycenaeans were an Indo-European people who came into Greece around 2000 to 1700 B.c., probably from Iran via northern Anatolia. Mycenaean Greece reached the height of its power between 1500 and 1300 B.c., but its decline after this was accelerated by the Trojan War which probably took place about 1250 B.C.

Unlike animal rituals, those of humans rarely relate to pressing biological needs, but they are types of community signals nevertheless. Human rituals are in fact stereotype behaviour patterns, consciously enacted by the individuals in a group, and with set words and actions. The meaning for such activity is not easy to analyse, but there seems little doubt that the development of hominid ritual is bound up with the perpetuation of certain kinds of knowledge of long-term survival value to the community. In other words, it is another kind of language that can be interpreted only within the particular social context. It has been suggested that ritual was somewhat earlier in hominid cultural evolution than language, a first means as it were to take note of human achievements. With the advent of language and later of writing, myths were developed as an attempt to record some of the ritual content of a community.

Where rituals bind the community together as a whole, they might be regarded as religious. The more communal effort and skill is needed in performing these religious functions, the more the individuals in the group are likely to feel a closeness with their fellows. This is by no means the only interpretation that can be given, and Dr Desmond Morris, for example, sees religious activities as a coming together of large groups of people to perform repeated and prolonged submissive displays to appease a dominant

individual. But religion clearly has far more to it than that. We have only to think of the Ten Commandments to appreciate that religion also emphasises worthwhile laws in a society.

Religion, like other major aspects of human society, has adaptive value as it helps man to come to grips with his fellow-men and the world around him. Whether magic witchcraft, ancestor worship, or reverence for high gods, it is a part of the struggle for existence and part of the survival plan for each community. Of course, myths and rituals may be carried through the generations long after they cease to serve a useful purpose, but this does not alter the fact that they initially developed in a society to fulfil a need. The major religions—Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, etc.—are not so easy to analyse as are those of so-called “primitive” societies because they have, developed into large and complex philosophies of life that now cut across various societies in various countries. At times, however, remarkable similarities in action and human response can be seen even when comparing aspects of “primitive” and “advanced” religion.

Basic to all religious activity is really man’s awareness of the uncertainties of the universe around him—and even today science by no means knows all the answers ! When this sensitivity to the unknown evolved in the hominids we do not know. Certainly half a million years ago our brain size might have permitted the beginnings of doubts and fears beyond those experienced by other mammals, but concrete evidence is not forthcoming until the ritual burials of Upper Pleistocene times.

Primates such as chimpanzees have been observed to show considerable distress and even long-term depression as a result of the death of a close relative, but man alone has contemplated death and reacted to it at a religious level. Burial customs certainly go back at least forty, thousand years, some Neanderthals having been buried with great ceremony. It is a short step between thinking of the recently dead and those remembered from long ago, and ancestor worship has provided further ritual behaviour that clearly had

value in binding the group together, There is thus in rituals—even those that at first sight seem exotic and valueless—a strong underlying factor of reason that is geared to the well-being of the group as a whole.

To quote E.E. Kellett again:

“Whether early man ever hit on the idea of a Supreme Being, in anything approaching our sense of the word—whether he conceived of God, as distinct from a multitude of gods—this is one of the questions, so easy, to put, that might never be solved. It is the theory of some, especially of those who take a strict view of the revelations of Scripture, or of those who regard the great religions of the Far East to have been originally monotheistic, that mankind was also originally monotheistic, and that polytheism is a corruption of a purer religion. To them, the evidence seems to point to the fact that men, so far from having, more or less steadily, struggled upwards from savagery, have declined from a state of moral and mental enlightenment. Alike in men’s behaviour and in their conception of the Deity, the first ages were the best, and we have by no means recovered the Paradise that we have lost.

“This is a theory worthy of all respect ; it was held by the great ancients who believed in a Golden Age ; it was held by the Hebrews and the early Christians ; and it is still a basic conception of Catholicism. In any case, it is fairly certain that early man had no idea of God in any way approaching the abstract and refined conceptions of modern philosophers. The definition of Him as 'an Infinite and Eternal Spirit,' set forth in so many catechisms, would have been far beyond the profoundest Palaeolithic thinker, although demons of the stone, the wood, or the stream I think it not improbable that they had.

“It seems to me that the idea of God is of slow growth, and that by very gradual steps are His cruder anthropomorphic characters stripped from Him. It was very timidly and imperfectly that even the Jews advanced towards monolatry, or the conception of one God to one country ; more gradual and

more tentative still was it that their great thinkers—religious geniuses of the highest order—went forward to proclaim the doctrine of a God ruling the whole earth, the heavens, and Sheol under the earth. In many countries, philosophic minds may have contrived to reconcile monotheism with the prevalent polytheism by picking out, more or less arbitrarily, one god, out of the vast number of possible candidates, to be the elect of the hierarchy.

“In any case, whether or not early men ever reached the idea of a Supreme Being, it is certain that they, like the majority of their descendants to the present hour, paid comparatively little attention to Him. He was 'too far from every one of us' and had to be approached, if at all, through intermediaries. The services offered to Zeus in Greece were few compared with those offered to nymphs, heroes, demigods, and the spirits inhabiting trees, fountains, and stones. It has been well remarked that the supreme divinity of the Romans was not Jupiter Optimus Maximus, but the Eternal City itself—a sort of anticipation of the Hegelian goddess, the State, who played so great a part in German history during the last century. In India, for one prayer to Brahma there are perhaps millions paid to the fertility-images that are so visible in every street. In the less enlightened parts of the Catholic world, even today, it is the saints who receive the adoration ; God the Father is a vague Personage in the background ; precisely as if we are to believe the Prophets, the people of Israel neglected Yahweh and worshipped their local Baals and Astartes under every green tree and on every high hill. There is no reason to think that 'primitive' man acted otherwise.

“The worship was a ritual consisting rather in a series of symbolic acts, and the crooning of incantations, than in prayer: although prayer was not entirely absent—at least if we count flattery and cajolery as forms of supplication. But the ritual almost always included some offering that would titillate the senses, or satisfy the appetite, of the god. The best must be given to him—one must not, like Prometheus, offer the least tasty or digestible portions of the victim. In many cases, the god was known to prefer blood to any other drink—and plenty was given to him ! In the early days, even of

Judaism, he claimed every first-born, whether of man or of beast, and human sacrifices were freely offered... .

“There is an astonishing likeness. amid trifling differences, in the rituals of all nations, in all parts of the world, at certain stages of their religious development. The ritual, once established, displays an obstinate tenacity, and is often not driven out save by foreign conquest and the forcible imposition of a new cult. Even then, it may continue an underground existence, as the worship of the Horned God went on in Europe for centuries despite clerical denunciations of Satanism, and despite all the terrors of the Inquisition...

“.. natural science is one of the chief elements of early religion. But it is the characteristic of science to be progressive, whereas, in comparison, religion is almost stationary. The physicist asks questions that go to the root of the religious organism, and the answers he gets are such as seriously to shake it...

“Men arise to whom ritual is not only useless and based on scientific error, but positively repugnant; who cannot abide vain oblations, and who detest the priest ; who demand right conduct rather than sacrifices, and purity of heart rather than corroborees or ceremonial cleanliness. Such men were the Jewish prophets, who were in perpetual hostilities with the priests of Bethel and Dan ; and such are those today who dislike institutional and sacramental religion, and tend to regard true worship as a matter between the individual and the Deity. Some of these men have become solitaries or mystics: some, like Milton, absent themselves from public worship altogether; others, like Micah, openly announce that God cares nothing for ceremonies, and desires merely the doing of justice, the love of mercy, and a humble walk.

“Many institutional religions have found it possible to make room for the solitary, the prophet, and the mystic: others have contrived a compromise with physical science; and no great religion today divorces itself from morality. On the contrary, the claim of most is that true morality is

inseparable from religion ; many theologians will assert that the truest morality is only to be found in their religion, that any goodness to be detected outside it is either derived from that religion or a poor mockery of it. Perhaps the most important revolution in history is this annexation of morality by a system that once had nothing to do with it.”<sup>8</sup>

The unique and distinctive contribution Islam made to religion was the Doctrine of Unity; the unity of God, man, and the universe; the interrelationship, communion, and communication between the Supreme Deity (the One God, Allah), mankind, and the rest of Creation being the unique and universal meaning of the Holy Qur’ān and the Message of Islam.

With the mission in the seventh century C.E. of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and the revelation of the final Great Word of God enshrined in the sacred text of the Holy Qur’ān, a system of morality, natural philosophy and natural science, social, economic and political justice, the equality of man, the sanctity of life and domestic values, the true emancipation of women, the protection and safeguarding of the rights of widows, children, orphans and slaves (prisoners of war), a penal code, obligatory charity, and laws of inheritance was instituted. Polytheism, idolatry, sacrifices to idols, unlimited polygamy, polyandry, usury, the partaking of intoxicating beverages and narcotic drugs, the eating of unwholesome food (e.g pig’s flesh), gambling and games-of-chance, divination by arrows, false oaths, priesthood and the priestly class, monasticism, meaningless ritual, witchcraft and sorcery and superstition were either abolished or condemned. Relations between the sexes were strictly regulated, and the family made the basic unit of Muslim society. Thus did Islam eliminate the undesirable elements in the older religions and strengthen the desirable ones, at the same time introducing desirable elements unique to itself.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 29-36.

Islam is the natural and rational religion and way of him for mankind, of God and from God, and in the very nature of man himself. It is in the great Prophetic Tradition having been taught by all the true Prophets of God from Adam (the first modern man and the first of the human species *Homo-sapiens sapiens*) through Abraham, Noah, Moses, Jesus, and finally Muhammad, the Holy Prophet of Islam and the “Seal of the Prophets,” all peoples in all times having had their own prophets preach to them. The Word was the same, only the Law (*Shari’ah*) differed to suit different peoples, times and circumstances. Islam, therefore, is the oldest, yet, paradoxically, the youngest of the great religious systems of the world. It is the very perfection of religion and the final and ultimate stage in the evolution of religious systems, universal and suitable for all men for all times past, present and future ; and the Muslims (vide the Holy Qur’an, iii. 110) are “the best of peoples ; evolved for mankind ; enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong”.

As E. E. Kellett says

“We shall be able to trace, almost without exception, these elements of ritual, prophethood, priesthood, philosophy, mysticism, practicality, ethics, in each of the religions we are about to study (the religions of the ancient Romans and Greeks, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Sikhism, Confucianism, and Taoism). They will be present in differing degrees and in varying proportions, but they will be there. We shall also often trace a kind of circular movement in the process; sacerdotalism yielding to mysticism and reasserting itself after a total or partial eclipse; institutionalism giving way to personal religion, and then returning; morality asserting itself against ritual, and then retiring into the background. Jupiter may depose his father, but ‘redeunt Saturnia regna’; Paul may outshine Peter, but Peter recovers his prestige; a Reformation comes, but a counter-Reformation follows, to be succeeded by another counter-Reformation. The tide advances, and seems irresistible; but it declines, and the sands reappear,

to be covered again when the time comes... Whatever happens, it [Islam] will always remain one of the wonders of the world.”<sup>9</sup>

The Revelations of the Holy Qur’ān vouchsafed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad were indeed veritable miracles of the highest order (if not the very greatest!) in the long history of the evolution of mankind and have stood the test of time and adverse circumstances, and the way in Which Islam and the Muslims have endured due to their God-given inborn strength and vitality is indeed another miracle of human history. Let the Muslims of the world today, and their successors, continue to endure, as their predecessors did, by all means at their disposal by striving to maintain the purity of their Faith and bring about another great miracle of human history.

The very survival and future evolution of the human race utterly depend upon this!

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

# IQBAL AND THE QUR'AN

Mohammad Ahmad Shamsi

Many laudable attempts have been made to trace the mainspring of Iqbal's thought and to elucidate the concepts which are his own. Consequently all the European philosophers and thinkers in general and Hegel, Bergson and Nietzsche in particular have been pressed into service to support the viewpoint of the critics who assert that one or the other of the Western philosophers inspired our poet or influenced him deeply. Some of these enthusiasts go so far as to claim that Iqbal's ideal of the "true believer" is but an Eastern version of the Superman of Nietzsche. They also put forward the theory that Iqbal's admiration for the Eagle is, in fact, a developed form of the worship of brute force which occupies a central position in Nietzsche's philosophy of life. Iqbal's deep knowledge of and his extensive studies in the European philosophy have given a semblance of truth to these fantastic theories of his critics, as there is no denying the fact that what we read, not only affects our modes of thought, but also moulds our total personality.

However, the most surprising thing about this plethora of studies on Iqbal is that he has not been studied in depth as an interpreter of the teachings of the Qur'an, although the Holy Book is the prime source of his philosophical thought and poetic inspiration. In fact, he has lit the torch of his thought at this very beacon of light and the bulk of his poetic utterances is a mere footnote on the text of the Scripture. Repeatedly, resonantly and even reprovably he reminds us of this origin of his muse. Sometimes he warns us:

میری نوائے پریشان کو  
شاغری نہ سمجھ  
کہ میں ہوں محرمِ رازِ درونِ  
میخانہ<sup>10</sup>

[Don't take these tumultuous outpourings of my heart as mere exercises in poetic composition,

For I know all that takes place in the heart of the universe.]

Now and then he strikes a plaintive note and says:

مرے ہم صغیر اسے بھی اثر  
بہار سمجھے!  
انہیں کیا خبر کہ کیا ہے یہ  
نوائے غاشقانہ!<sup>11</sup>

[My fellow-poets mistook my effusions to be the outcome of a balmy day in spring season. They know but little as to the real nature of my love-song.]

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<sup>10</sup> Bāl-i Jibrīl (Kulliyāt-i Iqbal Urdū), p. 51/343.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 15/307.

Once .he makes the following pointed reference to the purpose of his poetic compositions:

راز حرم سے شاید اقبال با  
خبر ہے  
ہیں اس کی گفتگو کے انداز  
محرمانہ<sup>12</sup>

[Perhaps Iqbal is in the know of the destiny of the Muslims of the world:  
The way he talks gives him out as one who knows.]

He also declares in all sincerity and earnestness:

نعمہ کجا و من کجا ساز  
سخن بہانہ ایست  
سوے قطار می کشم ناقہ بے  
رزام<sup>13</sup>

[I have little urge and less aptitude to play the lyrist.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 55/355.

<sup>13</sup> Zabūr-i ‘Ajam (Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Fārsī), p. 551447.

My lyrics are just a pretext to draw the straggling dromedary to its fold.]

But we have paid scant heed to these proclamations and protestations of Iqbal. That is why even now we do not know it for certain that the muse of this poet of Indian origin is Arabian in its inspiration. But the fact speaks for itself that whatever he says, or sings of, is based on the insight he has acquired from a thorough study of the Qur'an.

If we cast a cursory glance at the titles of his volumes and at the new phraseology which he himself has coined and popularised or which he has invested with new meanings, it becomes crystal clear that most of his poetic utterances are dyed in or imbued with Quranic teachings. "The Blow Struck by Moses" (barb-i Kalīm). "Persian Psalms" (Zabūr-i 'Ajam) and "Gabriel's Wing" (Bāl-i Fibril) are the titles which only a discerning and dedicated reader of the Qur'an could think of as titles for collections of his verses. The title "The Blow Struck by Moses" is so rich in its allusive associations, particularly in the context of the period of the first publication of the book, that it could not have occurred to one who had no intimate acquaintance with the Scripture.

Every great poet makes the discovery for himself that old vocabulary is inadequate to express his new experiences, novel ideas and individual susceptibilities. So he coins new words and phrases or invests old ones with new connotations and employs them as symbols of his modern sensibility. A study of these newly-coined words and phrases and original symbols helps us to a better and deeper understanding of his emotional incentives, mental processes and basic tendencies. Iqbal borrows copiously and freely from the Quranic terminology and the Quranic stories in coining his own words, phrases, similes and symbols.. "The Lamp of Muhammad," "the spark of the Father of Flame," "the trumpet of Isrāfīl," "Lāt-o Manāt," the two principal idols of Pagan Arabs,' "the rod of Moses," "arise by the leave of God," "Moses and Pharaoh and Sīnā'ī," "a member of the brotherhood of those who never despair," "the verse of the Universe," "the Book of Destiny,"

“the Pen,” “the spell of Sāmīrī,” “the idols of Azar,” “the sayer of 'show-thyself-to-me’,” are a few phrases of Iqbal’s coinage. As he uses them repeatedly, forcefully and consistently, it is evident that he has so thoroughly imbibed the teachings and the vocabulary of the Qur’ān that he unconsciously turns to its words and stories to express himself.

He uses Quranic phrases as rhymes and often adopts them as titles of his poems. A simile of rare beauty and rich significance from one of his well-known pieces fully reflects this attribute of his poetic composition. Defining a true believer he says:

فطرت کا سرود ازلی اس  
 کے شب و روز  
 اہنگ میں یکتا صفت  
 سورہہ رحمن<sup>14</sup>

[His nights and days are spent in perfect unison with the music of Nature, eternal and serene:

They are unique in their resonance like Sarah Rahmān.]

The Quranic verse “Allah bears witness that there is no God but He”<sup>15</sup> is a hemistich of the fifth poem of *Darb-i Kalīm*<sup>16</sup> entitled *La llāha ill-Allah* (“There is no God but Allah”) is aglow with that spirit of monotheism and iconoclasm which is the essence of the Quranic teachings. In it he dubs the world as a house of idols, speaks of an iconoclast as Abraham and characterizes the modern world as an era looking for its own Abraham. All these images are purely Quranic, and the goal to which the poet calls us and

<sup>14</sup> *Darb-i Kalīm* (Kulliyāt) p. 60(522).

<sup>15</sup> iii. 17.

<sup>16</sup> *Darb-i Kalīm* (Kulliyāt), p. 15/477.

the destination to which he wants us to direct our steps, are Quranic, too. In the third couplet of the poem he uses the phrase “goods and chattels of deception” precisely in the same sense in which it is used in the following verse of the Qur’an: “For the life of this world is but chattels and goods of deception.”<sup>17</sup> Similarly, the fourth couplet of the poem:

یه مال و دولتِ دنیا یه  
رشته و پیوند  
بتان و هم و گمان! لا اله الا  
الله

[All the riches and treasures of the world, all the bonds of blood and social relationships, Are creations of whims and fancies.

There is no God but Allah] is based on a clear perception of the Quranic warning:

“Know ye (all), that the life of this world is but play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting, and multiplying (in rivalry; among yourselves, riches and children.”<sup>18</sup>

In its form and substance no less than in its approach, the poem entitled “The Earth Belongs to God” is a commentary on the following verses of Sarah Wagi’ah:

“See ye the seed that ye sow in the ground? Is it ye that cause it to grow, or are we the cause?”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Iii.184.

<sup>18</sup> Ivii. 20.

<sup>19</sup> Ivi. 63.64.

“See ye the water ye drink? Do ye bring it down (in rain) from the cloud or do we?”<sup>20</sup>

Not only the interrogative form of these verses is retained in the following couplets of Iqbal’s poem, but also the same line of argument is taken up:

پالتا ہے بیج کو مٹی کی تاریکی میں  
کون؟

کون دریاؤں کی موجوں سے اٹھاتا ہے  
سحاب؟

کون لایا کھینچ کر پچھم سے باد سازگار  
خاک یہ کس کی ہے؟ کس کا ہے یہ نورِ  
اَفْتاب؟

کس نے بھر دی موتیوں سے خوشہء  
گندم کی جیب  
موسموں کو کس نے سکھلای ہے  
خوئے انقلاب؟<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ivi. 68-69

<sup>21</sup> Bāl-ī Jibrīl (Kulliyāt), p, 119/411.

[Who is it that nourishes the seed in the darkness of the soil ? Who is it that raises thick clouds from the waves of the river? Who is it that ordered the favourable wind to blow from the west? Who is it that owns the earth and is master of the light and heat of the sun?

Who is it that has filled the are of wheat with pearls of grain? Who is it that has taught the seasons to rotate in such an orderly fashion?]

This identity of form and substance between the Quranic text and Iqbal's verses is neither accidental nor deliberate; it is just spontaneous and inevitable. It shows how deeply absorbed the poet was in the. study of the Scripture, as a result of which what he studied was transmuted into his personal observations, and what he observed was transformed into his inner sensibilities, which, in their turn, be-came his yardstick for measuring each and everything.

The ingredients which are the making of the "true believer," the elements which are the warp and woof of his very being, the duties which have been enjoined upon him, can all be traced back to the. following verse of the Qur'an:

"Muhammad is the apostle of Allah ; and those who are with him are strong against unbelievers, (but) compassionate among them-selves,"<sup>22</sup>

When we read the following couplets in the light of the above verse, we at once realise that their inspirational and galvanizing quality flows directly from it:

ہو حلقہء یاراں تو بریشم کی

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<sup>22</sup> xlvi. 29.

طرح نرم  
رزمِ حق و باطل ہو تو فولاد ہے  
مومن<sup>23</sup>

[In the company of his friends (the true believer) is soft like silk, But in the fight between the just and the unjust he is hard like steel.]

جس سے جگرِ لاہ میں ٹھنڈک ہو  
وہ شبِ نیمہ!  
دریاءوں کے دل جس سے دہل جائیں  
وہ طوفان!<sup>24</sup>

[He is as refreshing as dewdrops which bring coolness and comfort to the heart of a tulip.

He is also as fierce as a storm which strikes terror into the very heart of a river.]

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<sup>23</sup> Darb-i Kalīm (Kulliyāt), p. 45/507

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 60/522.

اگر ہو جنگ تو شیران  
عاب سے بڑھ کر  
اگر ہو صلح تو رہنا عزال  
تاتاری!<sup>25</sup>

[When war breaks out, he is fiercer than the wildest lion;

When peace reigns supreme, he is graceful like a gazelle of Tartary.]

مصاف زندگی میں سیرت فولاد پیدا کر  
شبستان محبت میں حریر و پرنیاں ہو جا  
گزر جا بن کے سیل تند رو کوہ و بیابان  
سے  
گلستان راہ میں اے تو جوئے نعمہ  
خوان ہو جا<sup>26</sup>

[Acquire the hardness of steel in the battlefield of life,

But in the bower of love be soft like gauzes and muslins.]

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 171/633.

<sup>26</sup> Bāng-i Darā (Kulliyāt), 274.

Rush over mountains and through wastelands like an irresistible storm,  
But when you come to a garden, go through it like a meandering stream.]

The last line of verse 85 of Sūrah Ban[ Isrā'il (xvii.) is as follows:

“Of knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you (O men) !”

Iqbal remembers it when he confesses he has but limited knowledge:

تو ہے محیط بیکراں، میں ہوں  
ذرا سی اَب جو<sup>27</sup>

[You (O God) are a boundless sea whereas I am but a rivulet.]

In Sūrah Sānt (xxxii.) we are given a piece of dialogue between Abraham and Ishmael in which the former tells the latter:

“O my son! I see in vision that I offer thee in sacrifice. Now see what is thy view.”<sup>28</sup>

The son makes the following reply to his father:

“O my father! do as thou art commanded: thou wilt find me, if God so wills, one practicing patience and constancy.”<sup>29</sup>

Iqbal presents the essence of this dialogue, its moral contents and spiritual implications in the following couplet:

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<sup>27</sup> Bāl-ī Jibrīl (Kulliyāt), p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> xxxvii. 102.

<sup>29</sup> xxxvii. 102.

یہ فیضان نظر تھا یا کہ مکتب کی  
 کرامت تھی  
 سکھائے کس نے اسمغیل کو  
 اَدابِ فرزندى؟<sup>30</sup>

[Was it his close contact with a great soul-or was it a miracle wrought in a school?

What was it that taught the code of filial duty to Ishmael?]

The Qur'an stresses the point over and over again that disobedience, insurgence and flouting the laws of God result in self-destruction for men. Whenever a community disregards the limits set by the Divine Law, it is tyrannized over by a despot or wiped out of existence by disasters. Iqbal puts forth this great truth in the following words:

کرتی ہے ملوکیت اثار  
 جنوں پیدا  
 اللہ کے نشتر ہیں تیمور  
 و چنگیز!<sup>31</sup>

[Monarchy makes people lose their sanity and run wild

Tīmūr and Genghiz are but surgical operations performed by God on ailing, insane humanity.]

<sup>30</sup> Bāl-i Jibrīl (Kulliyat), p. 14/306,

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 26/318.

In some religions of the world we do find the concept of a supreme power, but this power appears to be inactive, as if, after the creation of the universe, its work were over, and now it were wholly detached, uninterested and even powerless, no matter what happened to its creation. The Qur'an negatives this concept. In Sarah Rahmān (Iv.) God speaks of Himself in these words:

“Of Him seeks (its need) every creature in the heavens and on earth: every day in (new) splendour does He (shine).”<sup>32</sup>

In the verse of Sara Bagarah (ii.) in which two of the attributes of God —”the Self-Subsisting, the Eternal”—are mentioned, it is also Said of Him that: “No slumber can seize Him, nor sleep.”<sup>33</sup> This concept of never-resting, ever-creative God is clothed by Iqbal in the following couplet:

یہ کائنات ابھی نا تمام ہے  
 شاید  
 کہ اَ رہی ہے دما دم صدائے  
 کن فیکوں!<sup>34</sup>

[Perhaps the universe is not a completed act as yet.

That is why the Divine command of “Be” and the hum of the resultant activity are still resounding throughout the creation.]

The Qur'an has exploded the theory that the universe has come into being by itself and that there is no set purpose or plan behind it. The following verse is very emphatic in this regard:

<sup>32</sup> . liv. 27.

<sup>33</sup> ii.255.

<sup>34</sup> Bāl-i Jibril (Kulliyāt), p. 28/320.

“Not without purpose did We create heaven and earth and all between.”<sup>35</sup>

According to the Qur’an, the world is not an idle show organised for mere sport and sheer amusement of a god who is now wholly forgetful of it as it no longer interests him. God says in Sūrah Anbiyā’ (xxi.):

“Not for (idle) sport did We create the heavens and the earth and all that is between.”<sup>36</sup>

Iqbal has based his philosophy of Ego on these very texts. If we do not believe that the creation of the universe has a definite purpose and that human life has a basic significance, the discussion of education and training of human Ego, its evolution and sublimation becomes irrelevant and meaningless. These beliefs are, in fact, the cornerstones without which the edifice of Iqbal’s philosophy of Ego cannot be raised. That is why he gives us the gist of the foregoing verses of the Qur’an in these words:

تو ہما کا ہے شکاری ابھی ابتدا ہے  
تیری  
نہیں مصلحت سے خالی یہ جہان  
مرغ و ماہی<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> xxxviii. 27.

<sup>36</sup> xxi. 16.

<sup>37</sup> Bāl-i Jibrīl (Kulliyāt), p. 45/330.

[You are destined to attain to great heights; this is just a humble beginning for you O man!

This world of fowl and fish is not without a basic plan and purpose.]

As is explained in the following verse of the Qur'ān, this basic purpose is to test who is the doer of good deeds among men:

“He who created death and life, that He may try which of you is best in deed.”<sup>38</sup>

As Iqbal puts it, the purpose of the creation of the universe is the evolution of human Ego, man's conquest of all that is in heaven and on earth, his sharing the creative activity of God and gradual emergence of that power in him which enables him to conceive of a better world, and with the help of which he transforms what is into what it ought to be.

بے ذوق نہیں اگرچہ  
فطرت  
جو اس سے نہ ہو سکا، وہ  
تو  
39 کر

[Though Nature has her own sensibilities, Thou shouldst do what she has failed to do.]

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<sup>38</sup> lxvii. 2.

<sup>39</sup> Bāl-i Jibrīl (Kulliyāt), p. 89/351.

In his “Sāqī Nāmāh” Iqbal calls the world the first milestone in the long march of the evolution of human Ego and says that every-thing in the universe is awaiting man’s innovation in thought and action. Then paraphrasing the scriptural text he declares:

یہ ہے مقصدِ گردشِ  
روزگار  
کہ تیری خودی تجھ  
پہ ہو اَشکار<sup>40</sup>

[The succession of night and day has only this purpose behind it, That thou shouldst realize all the hidden potentialities of thy Ego.]

In our humdrum life this purpose is often sacrificed at the altar of our bodily needs. We mistake our fellowmen to be our Providence and we bow down our heads in submission to them. A single gesture of theirs fills us with fear of starvation and terror of death and a slight softening of their facial expressions holds out high hopes of a happy and prosperous career for us. Thus the tormenting devil—the worry of earning our livelihood and supporting our family—crushes our independent spirit and reduces us to walking corpses. It is to guard against these very baseless apprehensions that the Qur’ān explicitly declares that the strings of our livelihood are in the hands of God and God alone: “For God doth provide for those whom He

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 129/421.

will, without measure.”<sup>41</sup> So we should be afraid of no one and look up to no one other than God for increase in our food and sustenance. The following verse of the Qur’ān reminds us of this great truth

“O men! call to mind the grace of God unto you. Is there a creator, other than God, to give you sustenance from heaven or earth? There is no God but He: how, then, are you deluded away from the truth?”<sup>42</sup>

Iqbal translates the verse in the following couplets of his:

اپنے رازق کو نہ پہچانے تو  
محتاج ملوک  
اور پہچانے تو ہیں تیرے  
گدا دار او جم  
دل کی آزادی شہنشاہی،  
شکم سامان موت  
فیصلہ تیرا ترے ہاتھوں میں  
ہے دل یا شکم؟<sup>43</sup>

[Thou art a mendicant of kings so long as thou dost not know who provides thee with food;

If thou knowest Him, Darius and Jamshīd turn up as mendicants at thy door.

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<sup>41</sup> xxiv. 38.

<sup>42</sup> xxxv. 3.

<sup>43</sup> Bāl-i Jibrīl (Kulliyat), p. 33/324.

Independence of spirit is true kingship, whereas pampering thy own belly is a death sentence for thee.

Now it is up to thee to decide whether thou wantest to preserve independence of spirit or to pamper thy own belly.]

When Iqbal declares that

سروری زیبا فقط اس ذات ہے  
ہمتا کو ہے  
حکم راں ہے اک وہی باقی  
بتان اَزری<sup>44</sup>

[True sovereignty belongs to Him and Him alone Who has no equals; He alone is the true sovereign while others parading themselves as gods are no better than idols made of clay] he is, in fact, paraphrasing the following Quranic verse: “The command rests with none but God.”<sup>45</sup>

The most cogent argument of the Qur’ān against ascribing partners to God and worshipping false gods is that those who do so wrong themselves. Their refusal to bow down their head in submission to Him sends them with a begging bowl in their hands from door to door and their despair of His favour lays them prostrate before a thousand tin-gods. Thus their Ego is destroyed: they cannot exploit to the full their potential powers which are a gift of God to them. A man can acquire knowledge of his inner “self” only when he is just to himself and guards his Ego. If he does so, the truth dawns upon him that in his own right he, too, is as worthy of adoration as a holy shrine. That is why the believers have been given the warning: “And be not

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<sup>44</sup> Bāng-i Dark (Kulliyāt), p. 261.

<sup>45</sup> vi. 57.

like those who forgot God ; and He made them forget their own souls.”<sup>46</sup>  
Iqbal repeats the same warning in these words:

اپنے من میں ڈوب کر پا جا  
سراعِ زندگی  
تو اگر میرا نہیں بتتا ، نہ  
بن ، اپنا تو بن!<sup>47</sup>

[Dive deep into thy own heart and discover therein the true purpose of life.

It matters little whether thou art true to me or not, but the all-important thing is that thou shouldst be true to thyself.]

It is impossible to understand the mysteries of life and to find the

path of true guidance without Divine help: we are shown the right path only by the grace of God. “But God will choose for His special mercy whom He will.”<sup>48</sup> Iqbal presents the same maxim in this way:

خرید سکتے ہیں دنیا میں

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<sup>46</sup> Qur’an, lix. 19.

<sup>47</sup> Bāl-i Jibrīl (Kulliyāt), p. 31/323.

<sup>48</sup> Qur’an, ii. 105.

پر ویز                      غشرت  
خدا کی دین ہے سرمایہ غم  
فرہاد!<sup>49</sup>

[Our personal efforts can help us buy the luxurious living of the mightiest of the kings in the world;

But the immense wealth of the burning soul of a true lover can be ours only by the grace of God.]

There are certain preconditions and irreversible rules governing the bestowal of this priceless jewel on men. The first prerequisite is that a keen and sincere desire for the search of the Ultimate. Reality should be kindled in the heart of a man, and that he should earnestly resolve to travel through the vale of life as a seeker after truth. And one of the irreversible rules is that only those who are receptive of guidance are guided to the right path. Hence God says:

“O ye that believe! fear God and believe in His apostle, and He will bestow on you a double portion of His mercy: He will provide for you a light by which ye shall walk (straight in your path).”<sup>50</sup>

“O ye who believe! if ye fear God, He will grant you a: criterion (to judge between right and wrong), and remove from you all evil (that may afflict you).”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Bel-i Jibrīl (Kulliyāt), p. 701362.

<sup>50</sup> lvii. 28.

<sup>51</sup> viii. 29.

Iqbal is inspired by these very Divine assurances in writing the following couplet:

دل زندہ و بیدار اگر ہو تو

بتدریج

بندہ کو عطا کرتے ہیں چشمِ

اور<sup>52</sup>

نگراں

[If you have a living and wakeful heart, by and by

You are given a deeper insight into the nature of things.]

When a man is in communion with God, he is set free from all fears and apprehensions. Such a man is very rich in spite of his apparent poverty: even when he has nothing, he has all, as the most adverse circumstances cannot snatch from him his serene smile. Since he loses his own will in the Will of God, he is impervious both to good luck and misfortune. For him a burning fire is turned into a bed of roses. Iqbal has given vent to these verities in different garbs in various collections of his poems and ghazals. Of these I quote only two couplets:

وہ ملتفت ہوں تو کنجِ قفس

آزادی

بھی

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<sup>52</sup> Bāl-i Jibrīl (Kulliyāt), p. 156/448.

نہ ہوں، تو صحنِ چمن بھی  
مقامِ <sup>53</sup>مجبوری

[So long as one enjoys the sunny side of God's favour one is truly free and buoyant even when one is confined within a dark dungeon.

But his indifference turns vast expanses of sunny parks into a place of imprisonment and privation,]

پاس اگر تو نہیں، شہر ہے ویراں  
تمام  
تو ہے، تو آباد ہیں اجڑے ہوئے  
کاخ <sup>54</sup>و کوہ

[My awareness of Your Presence with and Favour to me turns ruins into scenes of a bustling life for me, whereas a populated city looks deserted and desolate to me when you have left me to my poor self.]

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 42/334.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 92/384.

These couplets are replete with the conviction that God is enough for His servants. This conviction is a sincere affirmation for the following verse of the Qur'ān: "Is not God enough for His servants?"<sup>55</sup>

To series their political interests our British rulers made us believe that the Hereafter was for the believers and the world was for in fields; hence the former should not strive to secure temporal power and worldly authority which are subject to death and decay. The believers should, therefore, leave the world to be managed by others and devote themselves to the performance of their religious duties to get to heaven after death. Iqbal's was the first voice to be raised in the subcontinent against this misleading philosophy of life. He gave us the clarion call in these couplets:

عالم ہے فقط مومنِ جاں باز کی  
 میراث  
 مومن نہیں جو صاحبِ لولاک  
 نہیں ہے! <sup>56</sup>

[The whole universe is the patrimony of the militant believer;

He is not a true believer who is not the master of both the worlds.]

<sup>55</sup> xxxix. 36.

<sup>56</sup> &1-t Jibrīl (Kulliyāt), p. 34/326.

جہاں تمام ہے میراثِ مردِ  
مومن کی  
میرے کلام یہ حجت ہے  
نکتہء لولاک<sup>57</sup>

[The whole universe is the patrimony of the true believer.

I cite the tradition of Lolak<sup>58</sup> as proof of-the correctness of this assertion of mine.]

یہیں بہشت بھی ہے ، حور و  
جبریل بھی ہے  
تری نگہ میں ابھی شوخیء  
نظارہ<sup>59</sup> نہیں

[Paradise, Houries and Gabriel—they are all present here in this world as well.

What keeps you from seeing them is your own lack of vision.]

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 67/359.

<sup>58</sup> These are the first words of a Tradition.

<sup>59</sup> Bāl-i Jibril (Kulliyat), p. 44/346.

These are not any novel discoveries of Iqbal; they all flow from the Quranic promise: “My servants, the righteous, shall inherit the earth “<sup>60</sup> ; “For you must gain mastery if you are true in faith.”<sup>61</sup>

The foregoing quotations and illustrations make it, I hope, amply clear that Iqbal’s poetic creations in their bulk are direct or indirect summaries, commentaries, expositions and explanations of some of the verses of the Qur’ān. The following incident of his boyhood as narrated by one of his biographers, provides us the clue as to what made him such a keen and perceptive commentator and interpreter of the Qur’ān: “One day he was reading the Qur’ān when his father happened to come into his room. Seeing the young man absorbed in the holy Book, he said to him: O my son! you must study the Book as if it were being sent down to you just now.”

The obedient son seems to have treasured the advice and acted upon it for the rest of his life. As a result of it, the burthen of mystery was lightened of his heart, his prayers to God were all answered and he was granted a deep insight into all fields of life —religious, economic, historical and political. This insight enabled him—the offspring of a Kashmiri Brahmin though he was—to keep the flag of Islam flying high at a time when the British power, science and diplomacy had bought the very heart and soul of the scions of the oldest and most highly venerated religious families in the subcontinent, and they prided themselves on being its henchmen. Even today he is a beacon of light for the Muslims of the world because he lit his thought at the candle of the Qur’ān and also because he yearned that

کہ بھٹکتے نہ پھر میں ظلمتِ شب

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<sup>60</sup> xxi. 105.

<sup>61</sup> iii. 139.

[The wayfarers should not lose their way in the darkness of the modern age].

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<sup>62</sup> Bal-I Jibril (Kulliyat), p. 76/368.

# THE MIND-BODY PROBLEM AND IQBAL'S POINT OF VIEW

Naeem Ahmad

## I

The problem of mind-body relationship has been a source of trouble and confusion in the history of philosophy. Right from Aristotle to date philosophers and scientists have been trying to account for the apparent interaction of two fundamentally different but mysteriously united phenomena, i.e. body and mind. We can find no satisfactory explanation of the matter either in Materialism or in Idealism or in Mentalism.

The problem first appeared in Plato who had made a complete dichotomy between the world of Ideas and the world of Becoming. He was aware of the inherent inconsistency of his system and, to over-come it, he had introduced the idea of God by which he tried to explain the interaction between Form and Matter in general. But it was not at all satisfactory, and Aristotle's whole metaphysics was essentially an attempt to overcome the dualism of Form and Matter.

The problem continued to occupy the mind of the Scholastics, but we find no significant attempt to resolve it. The problem appears with all its dimensions and difficulties in Descartes and his successors. Descartes, who is usually regarded as the father of modern philosophy, in his endeavour to find certain and durable foundation for philosophy, drew certain conclusions from the so-called axiomatic principles which led him to utter dualism of body and mind, and all his attempts eventually failed to account for the

interaction of the two. A brief review of Descartes' position will help us understand the problem with its various dimensions.

For Descartes, the definition of substance as presented by the Scholastics is a self-evident idea since it bears two marks: clarity and distinctness. "Substance is that which is in itself and needs nothing other than itself in order to exist" is the Scholastic definition which Descartes accepted as an axiomatic truth. He believed in complete mechanism and determinism in the realm of matter, but at the same time he had an equal degree of belief in the freedom of soul or mind. Thus he was led to postulate the theory of "two substances," body and mind. Extension constitutes the essence of all material things, whereas thought is the most fundamental and essential attribute of mind. In the realm of extension there is complete mechanism. Even human body is like a machine whose movements are predetermined. Soul or mind, however, is a distinct substance whose characteristics are fundamentally opposed to those of extension. Thus the common-sense view of body and mind found philosophic expression in Descartes. But this dualism becomes terribly baffling when he tries to explain human personality in which mind and body are so intricately and mysteriously united that a deep and subtle interaction between the two cannot be denied. A mere idea or a desire can lead the body to strenuous activity. Similarly, physiological changes, or, what Descartes would call, material phenomena, can have their impact on the mind, for example, an accident or the smell of chloroform can result in the loss of consciousness. We cannot say that body is real and mind is derivative or vice versa. Both are equally real and independent substances. They are fundamentally different. Yet they interact and influence each other. Descartes tried to account for the interaction between the two by referring to the "pineal gland" as the point of contact, but its inadequacy was evident, and he himself finally confessed in a letter to Queen Elizabeth that he had failed to solve the problem.

The inadequacy of the theory of interactionism led the subsequent thinkers to different theories regarding mind-body relationship. Arnold

Geulinx gave the theory of “two clocks” or parallelism according to which mind and body do not interact at all, yet they correspond to each other. They are analogous to two synchronized clocks. The tick of one corresponds to the tick of the other without there being any causal relationship. An event in the mind, say, my will to raise the arm, would correspond to an event in the body, i.e. the physical act of raising my arm, since the “two clocks” keep absolutely perfect time. God has so perfectly wound up both the clocks that the tick of one provides an occasion for the tick of the other to take place. This theory is also known as Occasionalism. Russell raises a very serious objection to it:

“...There were of course serious difficulties in this theory. In the first place it was very odd; in the second place, since the physical series was rigidly determined by natural laws, the mental series, which ran parallel to it, must be equally deterministic. If the theory was valid there should be a sort of possible 'dictionary,' in which each cerebral occurrence would be translated into the corresponding mental occurrence. An ideal calculator could calculate the cerebral occurrence by laws of dynamics, and infer the concomitant mental occurrence by means of the 'dictionary'. Even without the dictionary, the calculator could infer words and actions, since these are bodily movements.”<sup>63</sup>

There is another theory which is known as Double-Aspect, or Identity Theory, the chief advocates of which are Spinoza and Kant for whom ultimate or basal reality is neither physical nor psychical. Both the physical series and the psychical series derive from this reality and are causally connected. The members of the movement of New Realism also subscribe to this theory. They hold that the physical and the psychical can be reduced to neutral entities. This is why their doctrine is sometimes called Neutral

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<sup>63</sup> B. Russell, *History of Western Philosophy* (London : George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1969), pp. 545-46.

Monism or Neutral Realism.<sup>64</sup> A little reflection would reveal that this theory is only a disguised form of occasionalism and suffers from the same defect as has been pointed out by Russell. The physical series is subject to certain rigid natural laws and is to be explained mechanically, whereas mind has no spatial reference and is capable of shaping the future events. Moreover, this theory uses the hypothesis of an unknown or an unknowable to explain the mind-body relationship.

In the history of thought, we come across certain theories in which the problem is approached in rather another way. The fundamental procedure of such theories is to eliminate one of the offending parties and ascribe reality and primacy to the other. These theories are some-times called Epiphenomenalism and Psychic Monism. According to Epiphenomenalism, the mind does not exist on its own account as an independent substance. It is just an outgrowth of material processes. “The one real substance is matter. The stream of consciousness is a phenomenon accompanying certain neurological changes. What we have called mind is a glow or shadow that appears under some conditions ; certain processes taking place in the brain and nervous system produce sensations, feelings, emotions, imagery, thought, or other types of consciousness.”<sup>65</sup> In almost all types of Materialism mind is regarded as an epiphenomenon or an outgrowth of matter. Thus we find in Dialectical Materialism that Marx and Engels ascribed primacy and reality to matter. Mind for them is a qualitative change which arises from quantitative changes. Despite its seemingly in-corporeal character, it is rooted in matter.

A similar attempt is made in various forms of mentalism or spiritualism to get rid of matter instead of mind. Now, mind is regarded as primary and fundamental and matter as of secondary importance. “Psychical monism is the view that the causal series is con-fined to the mental and that what we

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<sup>64</sup> Titus, *Living Issues in Philosophy* (New York : American Book Company, 1959), p. 174.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175.

call matter is a shadow cast by thought. Matter is essentially an appearance. The body is an externalization of mind. All idealists insist on the permanent significance and reality of mind. They do not all claim that the body or the physical is mere appearance—that is, not all idealists are psychical monists—but psychical monism in some form is supported by the idealists such as Lotze, Fechner, Eduard van Hartmann, W.K. Clifford, Friedrich Paulsen and C.A. Strong.”<sup>66</sup>

We can very easily see that both types of theories commit the same mistake, i.e. asserting the reality of one and explaining away the other. If one believes with the materialists that matter is the only reality and mind is just a projection of it, then one has to include the attributes peculiar to matter in one’s conception of mind. Similarly, if one believes that mind is everything and body just its externalisation, then one should also believe that matter is conscious. Marx and Engels, while arguing against Hegel’s idealism, had thought that they were busy “setting him on his feet”. The same type of remark can be directed to them by an idealist with equal force. The fact is that these types of theories—the denial of matter or the denial of mind—give no solution to the problem.

A widely popular solution to the problem is provided by the theory of Emergent Evolution. In his famous book *Emergent Evolution*, C. Lloyd Morgan has tried to establish that life is an elaborate “regrouping of physiochemical elements”. He criticizes both mechanism and vitalism. Mechanism, according to him, cannot explain the creative aspect so peculiar to the evolutionary process of Nature. The claim of vitalism that life-principle is the only determining factor in the process of evolution is also not justified because creativity and the emergence of new qualities are commonly found in the development of matter. Morgan believed in various levels or stages of the process of evolution in which matter and mind are just two levels. Both are equally real and there is no essential dualism. Mind, however,

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<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176.

is a distinct and higher level where certain new qualities emerge which cannot be described in terms of the concepts of previous levels. The process of evolution is like a ladder having various levels which are mutually integrated and related. Each level is distinct and offers a set of new qualitative changes due to fresh integration or relatedness. Thus matter, life and mind, despite being distinct, are mutually integrated. "There is no mind without life and no life without some physical basis. There are matter systems, there are life-matter systems and there are systems involving mind at various stages of development. Life stands to matter in the same kind of relation as mind stands, to life."<sup>67</sup> Thus the theory of Emergent Evolution claimed to have solved the perennial problem of body-mind relationship by the notion of creative synthesis which takes place at each stage of development. In this theory, matter, life, mind and moral distinctions all are regarded as real. Mind is interpreted as organisation and activity which presupposes all previous stages. The self is not that being whose essence is mere thinking as Descartes had thought. The self, on the other hand, is the being who has not only physiological needs and interests but has also thinking, creative imagination and moral sense. The thinkers who subscribe to this theory believe that only in this way the problem is solved satisfactorily.

## II

Iqbal seems to be in general agreement with the theory of Emergent Evolution. But his conception of matter is different. What we call matter is not something "situated in an a-dynamic void". His method of inquiry consists in a study and interpretation of conscious experience which, "as unfolding itself in time, presents three main levels—the level of matter, the level of life, and the level of mind and consciousness—the subject matter of physics, biology, and psychology, respectively".<sup>68</sup> The conclusions of

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<sup>67</sup> C. Lloyd Morgan, *Emergent Evolution* (New York : Holt, 1923), p. 11.

<sup>68</sup> Allama Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore : Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1977), p. 31.

Einstein's Theory of Relativity led him to formulate his idealistic conception of matter. He writes:

“Personally, I believe that the ultimate character of Reality is spiritual: but in order to avoid a widespread misunderstanding it is necessary to point out that Einstein's theory, which, as a scientific theory, deals only with the structure of things, throws no light on the ultimate nature of things which possess that structure. The philosophic value of the theory is twofold. First, it destroys, not the objectivity of Nature, but the view of substance as simple location in space—a view which led to materialism in Classical Physics. ‘Substance’ for modern Relativity-Physics is not a persistent thing with variable states, but a system of inter-related events. In Whitehead's presentation of the theory the notion of ‘matter’ is entirely replaced by the notion of ‘organism’. Secondly, the theory makes space dependent on matter. The universe, according to Einstein, is not a kind of island in an infinite space ; it is finite but boundless ; beyond it there is no empty space In the absence of matter the universe would shrink to a point.”<sup>69</sup>

Thus Iqbal believes that matter is not a static fact situated in empty space, “but a structure of events possessing the character of a continuous creative flow which thought cuts up into isolated immobilities out of whose mutual relations arise the concepts of space and time.”<sup>70</sup>

As regards life and consciousness, Iqbal; like Morgan, believes that they are distinct levels of the same ladder of development:

“Consciousness may be imagined as a deflection from life. Its function is to provide a luminous point in order to enlighten the forward rush of life. It is a case of tension, a state of self-concentration, by means of which life manages to shut out all memories and associations which have no bearing on

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

a present situation. It has no well-defined fringes ; it shrinks and expands, as the occasion demands.”<sup>71</sup>

Iqbal further thinks that matter, life and consciousness, although mutually related, are distinct and the higher cannot be explained through the concepts of the lower. The mechanical laws of matter are inadequate to explain the free creative nature of life and consciousness. This is why he rejects the epiphenomenal theory and also criticises Darwinian attempt to explain the phenomenon of life and consciousness in terms of mechanism.

He believes that Reality is an indivisible whole in which matter, life and consciousness interpenetrate. But since various sciences deal with distinct aspects of Reality, we are erroneously led to think that they are isolated:

“Natural Science deals with matter, with life, and with mind ; but the moment you ask the question how matter, life, and mind are mutually related, you begin to see the sectional character of the various sciences that deal with them and the inability of these sciences, taken singly, to furnish a complete answer to your question. In fact, the various natural sciences are like so many vultures falling on the dead body of Nature, and each running away with a piece of its flesh.”<sup>72</sup>

Natural sciences, being sectional in character, cannot give us a true and complete picture of Reality. The concepts suitable to one level of Reality are totally inadequate to explain the new qualitative changes of another level. The concept of cause and effect, for example, is no doubt true at the level of matter. But it cannot work to explain the behaviour of a living and conscious being which can be understood only by means of a concept of a different order which, according to Iqbal, is the concept of “purpose”.

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., pp. 40-41.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

Human ego arises out of the creative development in which matter, life, and consciousness permeate each other, and as a living and intelligent being his nature is purposive and teleological (for Iqbal, purpose or end is not a distant goal towards which the actions of the ego are directed ; it is rather an inner principle which does not impinge upon his creativity). Thus human ego exhibits two distinct levels, i.e. the level of body or, what Iqbal calls, the colony of sub-egos, and consciousness which is a systematic unity of experiences. The verse quoted by Iqbal<sup>73</sup> also refers to these two distinct levels:

“ ‘Now of fine clay have We created man: There We placed him, a moist germ, in a safe abode ; then made We the moist germ a clot of blood: then made the clotted blood into a piece of flesh ; then made the piece of flesh into bones: and We clothed the bones with flesh: then brought forth man of yet another make’ . . . (23: 12-14).<sup>74</sup>

The “yet another make” is the emergence of a new series of qualitative changes out of the physical organism. The distinction between the two levels, however, does not imply the separation of body and mind. Iqbal has levelled a detailed criticism against Cartesian dualism of body and mind. Likewise he has rejected parallelism and interactionism because in these theories the dualism of body and mind is presupposed. He is also not satisfied with the Leibnizean solution to the problem. If we take body and mind as mutually independent and having no apparent causal connections, then their “correspondence” is to be explained by means of some kind of “pre-established harmony”. In this case the same kind of objections will arise as have been raised by Russell against Geulinx’s theory. Iqbal thinks that the doctrine of pre established harmony makes the mind “a merely passive spectator of the happenings of the body”<sup>75</sup> and denies its active and free role.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 105.

Body and mind, he thinks, become one and indistinguishable in action. In his own words:

“We have seen that the body is not a thing situated in an absolute void; it is a system of events or acts. The system of experiences we call soul or ego is also a system of acts. This does not obliterate the distinction of soul and body ; it only brings them closer to each other. The characteristic of the ego is spontaneity ; the acts composing the body repeat themselves. The body is accumulated action or habit of the soul ; and as such undetachable from it. It is a permanent element of consciousness which, in view of this permanent element, appears from the outside as something stable. What then is matter ? A colony of egos of a lower order out of which emerges the ego of a higher order, when their association and interaction reach a certain degree of co-ordination. It is the world reaching the point of self-guidance wherein the ultimate Reality, perhaps, reveals its secret, and furnishes a clue to its ultimate nature. The fact that the higher emerges out of the lower does not rob the higher of its worth and dignity. It is not the origin of a thing that matters, it is the capacity, the significance and the final reach of the emergent that matters. Even if we regard the basis of soul-life as purely physical, it by no means follows that the emergent can be resolved into what has conditioned its birth and growth. The emergent, as the advocates of the Emergent Evolution teach us, is an unforeseeable and novel fact on its own plane of being, and cannot be explained mechanistically. Indeed the evolution of life shows that though in the beginning the mental is dominated by the physical, the mental, as it grows in power, tends to dominate the physical and may eventually rise to a position of complete independence. Nor is there such a thing as purely physical level in the sense of possessing a materiality, elementally incapable of evolving the creative synthesis we call life and mind, and needing a transcendental Deity to impregnate it with the sentient and the mental. The Ultimate Ego that makes the emergent emerge is immanent in nature, and

described by the Quran as 'the First and the Last, the visible and the invisible'.<sup>76</sup>

The following points are clear as regards mind-body relationship in Iqbal:

(i) That mind and body are not two independent substances in Cartesian sense.

(ii) That matter, life and mind belong to one and the same continuum as inseparable aspects.

(iii) Despite being inseparable, matter, life and mind are distinct and can be distinguished from one another.

(iv) Life and mind emerge as creative synthesis in the course of evolution.

(v) It is God or the Ultimate Ego Who makes possible the emergence of life and mind.

### III

No doubt there are some philosophers who still regard The mind body problem as a genuine philosophical problem and are trying to find out a solution to it, but some thinkers are not ready to accept it as a genuine problem at all. For example, Professor A.L Ayer is of opinion that the actual problem stems not from facts but from our conceptual systems. The physiologist's account is complete in itself. He has the concepts of nerve cells, electrical impulses, etc. The difficulty arises only when efforts are made to mingle these concepts with an entirely different type of concepts, e.g. feelings, thoughts, desires, etc. Ayer thinks that there are two entirely different sets of observations (the mental and the physical) which can be

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., pp. 105,07,

easily “correlated”. If such is the case, then we do not stand in need of finding “causal connection” or “a point of contact”. This procedure may lead to the difficulty of analysing and interpreting two different sets of observations, but not to the difficulty of explaining the “mysterious interaction” between mind and body.

Ayer concludes:

My conclusion is, then, that mind and body are not to be conceived as two disparate entities between which we have to make, or find, some sort of amphibious bridge, but that talking about minds and talking about bodies are different ways of classifying and interpreting our experiences. I do not say that this procedure does not give rise to serious philosophical problems ; how, for example, to analyse statements about the thoughts and feelings of others ; or how far statements about people’s so-called mental processes are equivalent to statements about their observable behaviour. But once we are freed from the Cartesian fallacy of regarding minds as immaterial substances, I do not think the discovery of causal connections between what we choose to describe respectively as mental and physical occurrences implies anything by which we need to be perplexed.”<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Peter Laslett, Ed. (Ayer): *The Physical Basis of Mind, A Series of Broadcast Talks* (Oxford : Basil Blackwell, 1957), p. 74.

# IMPORTANCE OF ‘ALLAMAH IQBAL’S WORT, IN THE PROPAGATION OF ISLAM IN THE WESTERN WORLD

Jan Muhammed

The fact that ‘Allamah Iqbal’s importance in the spreading of Islam is an aspect of his work which has up till now materialised in only a few isolated cases does not make it any less relevant to us for ‘Allamah was essentially a poet of the future as he himself indicated in his introduction to *Asrār-i Khudī*:

نعمه ام از زخمه بے  
پرواستم  
من نواے شاغرِ فرداستم  
غصر من داندءه اسرار  
نیست  
یوسف من بهرِ این بازار  
نیست<sup>78</sup>

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\* Read on ‘Allamah Iqbal’s Death Aniversary held on 21 April 1981.

<sup>78</sup> *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Farsī*, p. 6. English translation by R.A. Nicholoon: *Secrets of the Self*, pp. 3-4.

[I have no need of the ear of Today

I am the voice of the poet of Tomorrow;

My own age does not understand my deep meanings,

My Joseph is not for this market.]

History testifies to the fact that for any movement to transform society it must combine in itself the dual qualities of 'ishq and 'aql. Iqbal had acquired the first quality by virtue of his inherently Islamic spirit to which his mad devotion to the Messenger of Allah (may blessings of Allah be upon him) and natural and spontaneous understanding of the Holy Qur'an bear testimony. The second quality, besides being inbred in him, was further cultivated by the opportunities that he utilised to the utmost of benefiting from some of the greatest intellects of his day. The hope that this combination might ensure success for his movement for an Islamic renaissance can be derived from such excerpts of his works as the following from Jāvīd Nāmāh:

غربیاں را زیرکی ساز

حیات

شرقیان را عشق راز

کائنات

زیرکی از عشق گردد

شناس

حق

عشق چوں با زیرکی  
ہمبہر شود  
نقشبندِ عالمِ دیگر شود  
خیز و نقشِ عالمِ دیگر  
بنہ  
غشق را با زیرکی  
اَمیزدہ<sup>79</sup>

[For Westerners intelligence is the stuff of life for Easterners love is the mystery of all being.

Only through love intelligence gets to know Allah, love's labours find firm grounding in intelligence ; when love is companioned by intelligence, it has the power to design another world.

Then rise and draw the design of a new world, mingle together love with intelligence.)

In his Reconstruction lectures Iqbal has proposed three things which are needed by humanity today: “a spiritual interpretation of the universe, spiritual emancipation of the individual, and basic principles of a universal import directing the evolution of human society on a spiritual basis.”<sup>80</sup> He observes that it is due to the fact that thought put forward on a purely rational level

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., pp. 65/653.

<sup>80</sup> Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam (Lahore : Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1977), p. 179.

does not possess the human quality to appeal to the individual and transform society that the idealistic system which Europe has built up on these lines has always lacked the spark to ignite everyday life and enlighten the mass mentality; it is naql (Divine revelation) rather than ‘aql (intellect) which brings that fire of living conviction needed to elevate individuals and transform societies, so this can be accomplished only by religion which works through the agency of personal revelation. “Believe me,” Iqbal writes, “Europe today is the greatest hindrance in the way of man’s ethical advancement,”<sup>81</sup> and the same verdict has been delivered elsewhere in poetical form:

اَدْمِيتِ زَارِ نَالِيدِ از  
فَرَنگِ  
زَنَدگِیِ هِنگامِه بَرچیدِ از  
فَرَنگِ  
یورپِ از شَمشیرِ خُودِ  
بَسْمَلِ فَتادِ  
زیرِ گَرْدُونِ رَسْمِ لادینِ  
نِهَادِ  
مَشکَلاتِ حَضْرَتِ اِنسانِ  
اَزوستِ  
اَدْمِيتِ رَا عَمِ پَنهائِ

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

ازوست  
در نگاہش اَدَمی اَب  
و گل است  
کاروانِ زندگی بے منزل  
است<sup>82</sup>

[Humanity has groused from the effect of Europe  
Life has raised a commotion on account of Europe...  
Europe fell, slaughtered by its own sword  
Having initiated irreligiousness under the heavens,  
The afflictions of noble man are due to her  
as are the inward griefs of humanity.  
In her sight man is but water and clay.  
And the caravan of life without any destination.]

Compared to this pitiful state of affairs, however, “The Muslim ... is in possession of these ultimate ideas on the basis of a revelation, which, speaking from the inmost depths of life, internalizes its own apparent externality. With him the spiritual basis of life is a matter of conviction for which even the least enlightened man amongst us can easily lay down his life ; and in view of the basic idea of Islam that there can be no further revelation

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid. (Pas Chih Bāyad Kard), p. 43/839.

binding on man, we ought to be spiritually one of the most emancipated people on earth.”<sup>83</sup>

From this passage we can see how essential the finality of prophethood is to the full spiritual emancipation of the individual. The idea of finality is expressed within the Muslim ummah in the abolition of such clerical institutions as priesthood and monasticism, and their replacement by jihad, as is clear from the Hadith:

لا رهبانية في الاسلام ولكن رهبانية هذه الامة الجهاد في  
سبيل الله

[“There is no monasticism in Islam but the monasticism of this ununai: is Thad in the path of Allah.”]

By striving to emulate the Prophet by practising *amr bi'l-ma'rūf* and *nahī 'anal-munkar*, the ummah of Muhammad has the potential to become “the best community extracted on behalf of mankind”. This vital link between the perfection of prophethood in Islam and the consequent excellence of the Muslim ummah has been expressed in various ways by 'Allamah Iqbal. For instance, in *Reconstruction* he writes:

“In Islam prophecy reaches its perfection in discovering the seed of its own abolition. This involves the keen perception that life cannot for ever be

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<sup>83</sup> *Reconstruction*, pp. 179-80.

kept in leading strings ; that in order to reach full self-consciousness man must finally be thrown back on his own resources.”<sup>84</sup>

And in *Rumūz-i Bekhudī* the same theme is put another way:

لا نبی بعدی ز احسانف  
خدا است  
پرده ناموسِ دینِ مصطفی  
است  
قومِ سرمایه قوت ازو  
حفظِ سرِ وحدتِ ملت ازو  
حقِ تعالی نقش بر دعوی  
شکست  
تا ابد اسلام را شیرازه  
بست  
دل زعیر الله مسلمان بر  
کند  
نغره لاقومِ بغدی مے  
زند<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>85</sup> *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Fārsī*, p. 102. English translation by A.J. Arberry: *The Mysteries of Selflessness* (London :John Murray, 1958), p. 21.

[No Prophet after me is of God's grace,  
And veils the modest beauty of the Faith  
Muhammad brought to men. The people's strength  
All rests in this, that still the secret guards  
Of how the Faith's Community is one.  
Almighty God has shattered every shape  
Carved by imposture, and for evermore  
Stitched up the sacred volume of Islam.  
The Muslim keeps his heart from all but God  
And shouts abroad, No people after me.]

In his book *Rūh-i Iqbāl*, Dr Yūsuf Husain has written: "If we wish to trace the origin of Iqbal's philosophy of *Khudī*" (individuality), then we must look solely to Islamic traditions. In the Holy Qur'an the grandeur and excellence of man's individual personality has been described in various ways.

Naturally enough, the traditions to which we must refer concern the very origin of man's appearance on the scene of the worldly spectacle. Every aspect of the Islamic concept of the creation of man is conducive to elevation of his personality and individual status: the blowing into him of the spirit of Allah ("and I blew into him of My spirit" [xv. 28]) ; the angels being commanded to prostrate to him ("and remember When We said to the angels: 'Make sajdah before Adam, and they did so except for Ibīs [vii. 10]) ; the bestowal upon man of special knowledge concerning the reality of things

(“and We taught Adam all the names” [ii. 30]) and the command to inform angels of these realities so that man should fully assert his superiority over them (“We said: O Adam ! inform them of the names” [ii. 32]).

‘Allarmah Iqbal has explained in a captivating passage of Payām-i Mashriq how the creation of Adam was also the creation of man’s individuality, and this was the secret of man’s superiority over the angels and the reason why a tumultuous commotion occurred in the cosmos on the sensational occasion of his creation:

نعره زد عشق کہ خونیں جگرے  
پیدا شد  
حسن لرزید کہ صاحبِ نظرے  
پیدا شد  
فطرت اَشفت کہ از خاک  
جہانِ مجبور  
خود گرے خود شکنے خود  
نگرے پیدا شد  
خبرے رفت ز گردوں بہ شبستانِ  
ازل  
حذر اے پردگیانِ پردہ درے پیدا  
شد  
اَرزو بے خبر از خویش بہ

اَعُوْشِ حَيَاتِ  
چشمِ واکرد و جهانِ دگرے پیدا  
شد  
زندگی گفت کہ در خاک تپیدم  
ہمہ عمر  
تا ازیں گنبدِ دیرینہ درے پیدا  
شد<sup>86</sup>

[“Here is one with a bleeding heart,”  
Rang abroad Love’s joyous cry.  
Beauty trembled and said, “Look.  
Here’s one with a seeing eye,”  
Nature was surprised to see  
From its passive dust appear,  
All of a sudden, one who was  
Of himself maker, breaker, seer.  
Whiseprs travelled all the way  
From Eden to night’s dark abode,

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 85/255. English translation by M. Hadi Hussain : A Message from the East (Lahore : Iqbal Academy. 1977), p. 47.

“Look out, veiled ones, here comes one  
Who will tear up every shroud.”  
Not yet self-aware, Desire  
Lay curled up in Being’s lap.  
Opening its eyes, it saw  
Before it a new world unwrap.  
Life exclaimed, “O happy day  
I writhed in dust aeon after aeon.  
Now has opened at long last  
A door out of this ancient prison.]

The descent of Adam to the world is also not in a state of ignominy for his repentance was totally accepted. Rather it was so that he may fulfil his enormous potential and be established as Khalīfah on earth.

نائب حق در جهان بودن  
خوش است  
بر عناصر حکم را بودن  
خوش است<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid. (Asrār-i Khudī), p. 44. English translation by R.A. Nicholson, op. cit., p. 79,

[‘Tis sweet to be God’s vicegerent in the world

And exercise sway over the elements.]

From Iqbal’s commentary on the event of the Fall of Adam in the Reconstruction it is clear how radically and significantly the Quranic narrative of the incident differs from the Biblical version. Whereas the former elevates man’s position, the latter relegates him to an inherently sinful creature incapable of earning his own salvation, for which he is dependent upon a saviour. The Qur’ān exonerates Adam of all sin and defines the initiation of individuality in his actions. The Bible on the other hand incriminates him for having involved the whole of the human race in trial and affliction. Whereas the Old Testament curses the earth for Adam’s act of disobedience, the Qur’an declares the earth to be the dwelling place of man and a source of profit for him:

ولكم في الارض مستقر و متاع  
الى حين

[“And you are to have in the earth a dwelling-place and a source of profit for a while” (ii. 29).]

So we can see how the Quranic legend of the Fall does not deal with man’s first appearance on this planet. “Its purpose,” Iqbal says, “is rather to indicate man’s rise from a primitive state of instinctive appetite to the conscious possession of a free self, capable of doubt and disobedience. The Fall does not mean any moral depravity; it is man’s transition from simple consciousness to the first flash of self-consciousness, a kind of waking from the dream of nature with a throb of personal causality in one’s own being.

Nor does the Quran regard the earth as a torture-hall where an elementally wicked humanity is imprisoned for an original act of sin. Man's first act of disobedience was also his first act of free choice; and that is why, according to the Quranic narration, Adam's first transgression was forgiven. Now goodness is not a matter of compulsion; it is the self's free surrender to the moral ideal and arises out of a willing cooperation of free egos. A being whose movements are wholly determined like a machine cannot produce goodness. Freedom is thus a condition of goodness. But to permit the emergence of a finite ego who has the power to choose, after considering the relative values of several courses of action open to him, is really to take a great risk; for the freedom to choose good involves also the freedom to choose what is the opposite of good. That God has taken this risk shows His immense faith in man; it is for man now to justify this faith."<sup>88</sup>

How different this encouraging, stimulating and challenging interpretation is to the Christian notion of a sinful undignified fall unatonable for by man's actions. The Qur'ān states that man's status is inherently lofty:

لقد خلقنا الانسان في  
احسن تقويم

[“We have fashioned man in the best of forms” (xcv. 4).]

He may either endeavour to maintain that position or stoop to the lowest of the low.

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<sup>88</sup> Reconstruction, p. 85.

One example of the deterioration of the quality of the individual in the West is the general consideration of art and other forms of entertainment as ends in themselves, where excess social energy is channelled and ineffectually expires. Iqbal sought to put this matter in its true perspective by pointing out that art should be judged according to the standpoint of personality, that which fortifies it being good and that which weakens it bad. In the New Era he writes: “The ultimate end of all human activity is Life—glorious, powerful, exuberant. All human art must be subordinated to this final purpose and the value of everything must be determined according to its life-yielding capacity. The highest art is that which awakens our dormant will-force, and nerves us to face the trials of life manfully. All that brings drowsiness and makes us shut our eyes to the reality around—on the mastery of which alone life depends—is a message of decay and death. There should be no opium-eating in Art. The dogma of Art for the sake of Art is a clever invention of decadence to cheat us out of life and power.”<sup>89</sup>

And in his poem Din-o I-lunar (Darb-i Kalīm) he writes:

سرود و شجر و سیاست کتاب و  
 دین و ہنر  
 گہر ہیں ان کی گرہ میں تمام  
 یک دانہ!  
 اگر خودی کی حفاظت کریں تو  
 عین حیات

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<sup>89</sup> The New Era, Lucknow, 28 July 1917, p. 251. Reproduced from Latif Ahmed Sherwani, Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal (Lahore : Iqbal Academy, 1977), p. 125.

نہ کر سکیں تو سراپا فسون  
وافسانہ!

ہوئی ہے زیرِ فلک امتوں کی  
رسوائی

خودی سے جب ادب و دیں  
ہوئے ہیں بیگانہ!<sup>90</sup>

[Melody and poetry, politics, literature, religion and accomplishment Are pearls in the knot of which is one seed...

If they protect individuality, then they are life itself,

If not, then they are just enchantment and tales.

Communities have been disgraced under the heavens

When literature and religion have been separated from individuality.]

As Iqbal himself repeatedly predicted, it seems as if it will only be a matter of time before the decrepit, swaying ship of Western civilisation finally capsizes. We Muslims must endeavour to ensure that their battered ship is rehabilitated inwardly and outward by means of the Islamic strategy which Iqbal has laid out for us, so that the desperate passengers will settle for the seemingly easier, but eventually more disastrous course of social and political revolution without spiritual rectification to support it. The Qur'ān has laid down a very important principle of revolution:

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<sup>90</sup> Kulliyāt-i Iqbal Ueda (Darb-i Kalīm), p. 100/562.

ان اللہ لا یعیّر ما بقوم حتی  
یعیّر ما بانفسہم

[“Indeed Allah does not change the conditions in which a people live until they change what is in themselves” 12).]

So how can there possibly be political and social upheaval with spiritual rectification first. Iqbal ridicules the claim of Communism that it is a social improvement as capitalism for “it rises up in revolt against the very source which could have given it strength and purpose”. It is Islam alone which provides real and lasting equality in a society, for it looks at equality as an expression of Tauhid in man’s social life. The contrast between Islamic equality and communist/ capitalist versions of the same slogan is clear from this excerpt from Javīd Nāmāh:

عریباں گم کردہ اند افلاک  
را  
در شکم جویند جان پاک را!  
رنگ و بو از تن نگیرد جانِ  
پاک  
فرہ تن کارے ندارد اشتراک

دینِ اَن پیغمبرِ حقِ ناشناس  
بر مساواتِ شکمِ دارد اساس  
تا اخوت را مقامِ اندر دل  
است  
بیخِ او در دل نه در آب و گل  
است!<sup>91</sup>

[The Westerners have lost the vision of heaven,  
they go hunting for the pure spirit in the belly,  
The pure soul takes not colour and scent from the body;  
and Communism has not to do save with the body.  
The religion of that prophet who knew not the truth  
is founded upon equality of the belly;  
The abode of fraternity being in the heart,  
its roots are in the heart, not in water and clay.]

It is my deep conviction that the millions in Europe and America who are deeply disillusioned by the failure of Western religion to fulfil the spiritual needs of man, and of Western political institutions to solve his economic and social problems, would be strongly influenced by ‘Allamah Iqbal’s novel presentation of Islam’s all-healing teachings. It is our responsibility to convey

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<sup>91</sup> Kuliyyāt-i Iqbal Fārsī (Jāvīd Nāmāh), p. 69/652.

these teachings to them in the same vein that the 'Allamah did, and do our best to implement them in our everyday life, so that no one will be able to claim that it is an impractical ideal not feasible in the modern day and age.

# THE EFFECT OF THE MONGOL INVASION ON THE COURSE OF IRANIAN HISTORY

D. Isfahanian

Among many foreign invasions to which Persia has been subjected in her long history, three more than others have influenced the culture and civilisation of the people of this country. These three invasions were those of Alexander, the Arabs, and the Mongols.

The Mongol invasion is considered the most destructive of all the invasions by the people of Central Asia. The invasion was motivated by three factors: first, material benefit ; second, acquisition of new pastoral and agricultural land ; third, revenge. This being the case, the invasion should not have really affected the Iranian society and its culture, for any human action which is based on force, material benefit and temporary success is usually superficial and of short duration. It is only when man's action is based on his philosophical convictions that the overall effect of his acts leaves a lasting impress.

Despite this fact, the Mongol conquest of Iran left such an effect on the totality of the Iranian society, its economy and culture that today even after seven centuries we can still witness the influence of the Mongol invasion in the country.

The original home of the Mongols was the Gobi desert, where Changiz Khan succeeded to unite its various Mongol tribes and to invade China proper at the beginning of the thirteenth century.

We know that about this time there existed diplomatic relationship between the Khwārazm Shahs and the Mongol emperor, Changiz Khan and that the latter wished such relationship to continue. The Utrar incident, of 1216, however, precipitated the Mongol invasion of the Islamic world.<sup>92</sup>

The effect of the massacre of the inhabitants of the cities of Iran, the destruction of an urban civilisation, and an advanced rural economy adopted by the invaders were so strong that it took Iran many centuries to recover from this historical calamity. The agricultural economy was replaced by stock-raising which was one of the characteristics of nomadic life. Tribal life became once again the way of life and as a result the central authority collapsed everywhere in the country, In addition to a new ruler the farmers found a new enemy, that is to say, a number of tribes which later gave support to the Safavids, the Afsharids, Zends and the Qajars.

Another social effect of the Mongol invasion of Iran was withdrawal of the people from worldly affairs and their attraction to the mystical movement.<sup>93</sup>

This was naturally the product of a general sense of insecurity that prevailed throughout the country. Similar condition is witnessed in Iran after the Afghan invasion of the country.

The poets and writers whose works bore gnostic and mystic colour were specially affected by the Mongol invasion. Linguistically, the Mongol invasion brought a series of Mongol and Turkic vocabulary into the Persian language through bureaucrats' official correspondence, royal decrees and direct contacts between Mongols and native Persians.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> A.A. Juwainī, *Tārīkh-ī Jahān-Gushā*, edited by Muhammad Qazwīnī (Leyden, 1912), I, 63.

<sup>93</sup> J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (London : Oxford University Press, 1973), p, 54.

<sup>94</sup> For further information on this see G. Doerfor, *Turkische rind mongolisehe*

Although more negative points can be mentioned in reviewing the Mongol invasion of Iran, there are several positive points: the invasion contributed to the economy and politics of the country, the termination of the Abbasid Caliphate by Hulagu and of the moral and religious domination of the Arabs in the Persian society.<sup>95</sup>

As we know, from the beginning of the Abbasid Caliphate to its end, the rulers tried with all their might and by every means at their disposal to discourage the rise of a national government and national unity in Persia.

Another positive result of the Mongol invasion was what we may term the promotion of international trade. Prior to the formation of the Mongol empire there existed in both West and East Asia many independent States that made it difficult for commercial goods to transit easily throughout the continent and from there to Europe. With the establishment of the Mongol empire borders between various States in Asia were opened and commercial goods easily reached, not only from one point to another in Asia itself, but also from Asia to the European continent. The commercial relationships between various parts of Asia and Europe opened for the first time a channel for cultural and scientific exchange between the two continents.<sup>96</sup>

It was, for example, in the Mongol period that many European merchants, travellers and religious groups visited Asia, especially Persia and China. The case of Marco Polo who travelled from Europe to distant East in order to acquire some knowledge of the way of life in Asia and also to gain material wealth is a classical example of this development. Likewise, it was in the same period that a caravan of ambassadors from Mongol dominions was

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Elemente im Neupersischen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung älterer neupersischer—Geschichtsquellen, Vor allem der Mongolen und Timuridenzeit, 4 Bände : Wiesbaden, 1963-1975.

<sup>95</sup> Bertold Spuler, *History of the Mongols*, trans. from the German by Helga and Stuart Drummond (Los Angeles : University of California, 1972), p. 115.

<sup>96</sup> J.J. Sanders, *The History of the Mongol Conquests* (London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1971), p. 175.

sent to Europe to establish diplomatic relationship with various States in that continent’.

## CAN MUSLIMS SAY THEIR PRAYERS IN THEIR MOTHER TONGUE?

In February 1932, a Reuter message from Constantinople stated that Kemal Pasha enforced saying of prayers in Turkish instead of Arabic in the mosques of Turkey. Dr Sir Mohammad Iqbal, when approached on the matter, expressed the following view:

The step taken by Mustafa Kemal is not a forward step ; it is a backward step. All ancient religions were rational in its significance. Christianity looked upon religion as a matter of individual conscience. Islam fully recognizes the value of individual conscience in religious life, but its aim is much wider. Its outlook is social, indeed, in view of its structure, it aims at a universal society. Muslim prayer in the Turkish language is an attempt to give Islam a national significance. This is looking at Islam with the eyes of a pre-Islamic ancient people. That is why I say that the so-called reform is a backward step and not a step in advance...

"My own belief is that the congregational prayer, i.e. the prayer conceived as a world institution, must necessarily be in Arabic the language of the revelation, and, further, the language of the country which occupies the central position between the Continents. What matters most in the congregational prayer is the social fact and psychologically a uniform attitude of mind. The intelligibility of language, though helpful in securing the uniformity of mind, is of secondary importance. . . . The congregational prayer in which man stands for a world society must always be in Arabic all the world over."

—Weekly Light, Lahore, 16 February 1932

# MUSLIM CHILDREN IN HOLLAND<sup>97</sup>

J.M.S. Baljon

The most important questions we put ourselves while preparing this paper were:

(1) In what aspects Muslim children differ from Dutch children (Christian and non-Christian) and what do they have in common?

(2) What are the possibilities to educate the child as a Muslim child in the West European cultural climate?

The most important Muslim groups in Holland are formed by immigrant workers from Morocco and Turkey (since + 1970), followed by their families, and the Muslims hailing from Suriname. Their total number is about 300,000, so that in Holland at present Islam is the second religion. To be brief, I restrict myself to the Mediterranean group. Although I am fully aware of the differences between Turks and Moroccans, I will treat them as one entity. In the scope of my subject it might be even more appropriate to make a distinction between migrants who come from villages and those from towns. However, in spite of ethnic differences, the similarities between the groups appeared to be striking, especially regarding first, family system and relations, second, the role of women and men, and, third, ends and means of education.

By these three points the main cultural differences between the Netherlands (West Europe) and the Mediterranean Muslim cultures are

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<sup>97</sup> From the text of a paper read at the 13th Seminar on Islamic Thought, Algerian Sahara, September 1979.

indicated. I do realise the danger that lies in generalizations. The difference, for example, between a Western educated physician in Rabat and a Berber peasant from the Rif mountains will be much greater than that between this physician and his colleague in, say, Bordeaux. The same can be said about very strict orthodox Christian groups in Holland who have sometimes more in common with Rif villagers than with compatriot artists in Amsterdam. But, still, the bulk of the migrant workers in this country come either directly from agrarian areas or have first migrated to a city and then to Europe, keeping ties with their villages. Only very few come from intellectual classes.

Family System. Many migrant workers originate from an “extended family,” i.e. a family in which three or more generations are living together: when the sons marry they stay and live with their wives and children in their fathers’ house. Such a family used to be an economic unit and in agrarian areas it was more or less self-supporting

On the other side we have the modern family where father and mother and children live apart, on their own, the so-called “nuclear family”. At present this is the rule in Western Europe and is no longer an exception in Mediterranean countries, especially in the cities and industrial areas, being a concomitant to the evolution from agrarian to industrial societies. It is an easily understandable process: as long as the family was self-supporting, an economic unit of production and consumption, the father could exert his authority and the sons had to submit to it. But when a son got to work in a factory and to earn his own income, his father’s authority in the economic field automatically diminished. There was less need to stay at home, and so the family began to split up. However, as a rule, the change was not too radical and, as we shall see later, family ties still remained very strong. Migrant workers in Holland come mostly from an extended family. Some other striking aspects of the Mediterranean family system are:

(a) In-group versus Out-group. In-group is the people with whom you have a personal relation: family, friends. Members of an in-group give mutual

help, are responsible for each other, can depend on each other's solidarity. Out-group is strangers, outsiders, to-wards whom feelings of reserve, distance, competition, even hatred, animosity may prevail. As a result of this dichotomy in in-group and out-group we also observe two different codes of behaviour. In regard to the out-group it is necessary to dominate the situation, in regard to the in-group the rule is: "You have got to help your friends and relations, even if they are wrong."<sup>98</sup>

(b) Honour and Shame, another aspect of family-life on which many codes of behaviour are based. Honour is here not a personal quality, but a point which regards the whole group, and for which the whole group is responsible. This latter point explains the strong mutual control in the group. Generally speaking, we can say that hospitality, generosity, modesty, discretion, the capacity to avoid conflicts risking your life for the well-being of the group, are characteristics that give honour, prestige.- But of supreme importance is the chaste and worthy behaviour of the female members of the group. Here the mutual control is very severe.

(c) The Group Comes before Individual Members. The person is subordinated to the group as a whole. This notion is much stronger. in Mediterranean countries than in West Europe, and it has momentuous implications in the field of education: the personal development of the child does not come first, but his functioning as a member of the group.

Members are responsible, not only for honour and prestige of the group, but also for each other's well-being. It is a duty to take care of sick, poor and old relatives, and this claim remains equally relevant when you are working in Europe.

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<sup>98</sup> L. v. d. Berg-Eldering, Marokkaanse gezinnen in Nederland (1978), p. 43.

(d) The last distinction between the Mediterranean and the European family of importance to immigrants lies in the psychological realm, viz. between the positional and the personal family.<sup>99</sup>

The positional family, not typically Muslim, can be found in places with little social mobility, so again in rural areas. It presupposes a stable social environment. In the family, and in the society, every member has his/her place and knows what is expected from him/ her. Mutual understanding is quickly gained. It is a kind of family that gives certainty and helps a child to establish his own identity.

Everybody knows that a specified place in the social order demands a fixed role and implies inherent obligations and prerogatives.

A child that asks “why must I do this ? “ gets the answer: “Because you are a boy/girl” (sex role), or “Because you are the youngest” (seniority), or “Because your father tells you to do it”(hierarchy).

The problems arise when this child (or adult) has to find his way in another society. The reverse side of certainty and safety turns out to be a lack of flexibility. The personal family which predominates in Western Europe is to be found in societies with greater social mobility. The code of behaviour is not founded on a fixed social order with a clear hierarchy but on a number of basic feelings (e.g. not harming the other, honesty). From a very young age the child gets used to the idea that more than one reaction on a given situation is possible. Which answer is given depends on his/her personal decision. It cannot be denied that even in this kind of families the parents (in the first place) play an important role in the structuring of the child’s super ego.

On the question of the child “Why must I do this ?” the mother’s answer in a Dutch family is not: “You are a girl, and girls have to do the

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<sup>99</sup> G. H. Stoye, *Cultuur, het beeld van de werkelijkheid Identiteit*, (1978), p. 58.

washing up,” but: “You are the only one at home now, and I have a bad headache ; would you like me to be working in the kitchen then ?” So an appeal is made on the personal feelings of the child. But the parents know that the (desired) reaction won’t be automatic. Hence there remains an openness to other focuses, and the goal of our Western education is to help the child make his own personal decision. The advantage is that the child develops a certain sense for other people’s feelings and expectations in different cosmologies, acquiring in this way a greater flexibility in different social surroundings. The disadvantage can be that there often remains a certain doubt if the expression of the feelings and assumptions reaches the other (“How am I understood ?”). Another drawback can be that a child has too little certainty about his own place and his own identity. I know modern parents in our country who are so afraid to “force a role on their children” that they refrain principally from giving their boys technical toys, for instance, or dolls to girls. “They must find their own preference and identity,” they say, forgetting that part of that identity is what the environment expects from them. In some cases it is thus made very hard for the adolescents to know who they are, and unpleasant issues are the result.

Now what happens when a Mediterranean man with this back-ground has left his village to work in Europe ? His wife stays behind with the children, either living with his- parents, or in a separate house, but mostly close to the family. As long as the children are small, things are not too bad: the mother takes care of the children at home, and one of the male relatives looks after the “out” affairs. But when the children, especially the boys, grow older, over seven, eight years, they also go “out” into the male world, and here the mother cannot enter and loses control over them. There are many variations possible but the fact is that this kind of problems concerning chiefly the education of his children induces a man to the decision of letting his family come over to Holland. This course of affairs started about 1970. Statistics tell us that in that year 82.2% of the migrant population from

Mediterranean countries was economically active, in 1974, only 34%, and in 1975 the total amount had gone down to 24%<sup>100</sup>.

But alas, once the family arrived in Holland, other troubles arise. The primary cause of the new difficulties, as events proved, is the different approach of children by Dutch and Moroccan parents. Therefore, it might be useful to dwell at some length on this matter.

A Dutch baby's life is at first rather strictly regulated. Not many mothers give it breast-feeding longer than three months; usually the child is suckled at fixed times, gets fixed quantities and is put in bed between the meals in a separate room. During its first years a Mediterranean child is treated in a much easier and relaxed manner. It can suck whenever it feels hungry, and if it cries there is always somebody near by to take it into one's arms or to rock it.

But later on, when the children grow a bit older, Dutch parents, as a rule, become rather permissive and friendly towards them, whereas Moroccan parents begin to show a certain formality and distance towards them, in particular in the more traditional families. Their authority, they think, requires such an attitude. In her study of Moroccan families in Holland, Mrs van den Berg reports a conversation she had with a young Mediterranean mother who was proud of her seven-year old daughter, for she could already do the washing up and tidy the kitchen. In her opinion a girl of ten ought to be able to manage the whole household. When Mrs v.d. Berg was a little complaining about her own young daughter, the other mother said: "You approach it from the wrong end. You, Dutch, have a far too informal way of dealing with your children. They are not your friends ; are they ? If you don't keep more distance, she, will never do as you tell her..."<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> L.v.d. Berg-Eldering, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p, 118.

Yet, in, spite of the demand of strict obedience, conflicts run high in these families. I will mention two reasons which give rise to frictions.

(a) During the period that father was in Holland and wife and children in Morocco, either some other (male) relative had to exert father's authority (with more or less success) or the boy himself had to do this toward the younger children. In both cases they outgrew each other, and it is easily understood that it is difficult for the son after so many years to play again the role of obedience and submissiveness which his father expects from him. It happens that the father asks the police or the teachers at school to take over his authority (which these refuse). In most cases they establish a kind of "avoidance relations": both of them take care that the contacts are scarce and superficial.

(b) At school the children meet an absolutely contrasting atmosphere. In the Dutch school system it is not the functioning in the group that comes in the first place, but the development of the child as an independent individual. So discipline is slack (certainly in Moroccan eyes), the intercourse between teachers and children is informal and open; talking about everything, with the inclusion of sex, is stimulated. This is difficult for the Muslim parents but is also confusing for their children who are living in two separate worlds.

Now I will elaborate on some variations of these problems, and the connection they have with the age of the children, the activity and degree of education of the mother (if she has a job or not, for example) and the adaptation of the children to the school.

As for the age of the children, on arrival in Holland we can distinguish three groups: pre-school-age (0-6 years), school-age (6-13) and boys and girls of 13-24 years

{a} Pre-school Age. In Holland children younger than two years stay at home, or go to play-rooms-for-toddlers (two to four years) or crèches (under

two years). At the age of four, children can go to the kindergarten, infant school.

The crucial point of the child's contacts with the institutions lies in the language. Very young children easily pick up a foreign language, but only superficially. At the same time they quite soon forget their mother's language and begin to speak with a stammer, for both the parents working all day do not have sufficient time to talk with the child. Thus the child knows neither language really well and this causes an estrangement which hinders the emotional and mental development. It would be best if there could be a bilingual staff in the crèches and play-rooms so that they could speak and develop their own language at the same time getting some familiarity with Dutch in a safe environment. There are some crèches with a mixed staff and members of these staffs are usually entirely devoted to their task. Unfortunately they are too few in number. Hence the Muslim parents have to look for other solutions.

If the mother does not work outdoors, it is better for the young children. The disadvantage of this is that the mother has no contacts with Dutch life, so she remains a stranger in the society into which the children will enter in a few years. She has had no opportunity to adapt and learn. If both father and mother work outdoors, the awkward situation that arises is evident. In most cases the parents are so busy with material and financial problems (often necessary because of the claim of support by the family in Morocco or Turkey) that they have no idea of the increasing estrangement between them and their children.

Added to the language problem is the ambiguity of the parents towards the host country. Many of them still have the intention to go back home once and not to return in Europe any more. The ties with the home country and family are very strong. On the other hand, the economic impossibility to return to the home' country for him becomes more and more apparent. Consequently the children live in a kind of no-man's-land between two

countries, two cultures, two languages, between staying and returning. As for them the home country is farther away than for their parents ; this intensifies the estrangement.<sup>102</sup>

When at arrival in Holland the children are of school age, the troubles emerge even quicker. Often there had already been problems in the home country, owing to the father's absence, and mostly these were exactly the reason for the family reunion. The children, in particular the boys, of this age have to some extent already developed their own cultural pattern. They have some experience with the Moroccan school system: classical, the teacher is a (severe) authority, what he says cannot be questioned, he keeps aloof, he can even beat you. The Dutch teacher with his easy ways is, in the boy's eyes, soft, effeminate, he shows no authority, so the boy feels no respect for him. Moreover, the boy is continuously in a position of inferiority: he is in a strange environment, he does not speak the language properly. His upbringing has taught him that it is unmanly to be in such a position: if it happens to you, you must either try to regain command, or otherwise evade the dishonourable plight. Consequently, at first his motivation to learn the Dutch language is very strong. However, if the response of the school on this desire is slow or not adequate, he soon loses his motivation and retires from the lessons in order to compensate his inferiority in other ways: in aggressive behaviour to other boys, in the association of gangs, thefts, etc.

These are extreme examples, but even if-the boy manages more or less in the school he has to lead a split life: at school, the inter-course with the teacher is informal and friendly, he is stimulated to formulate his own opinion and to behave as an independent personality (the more so regarding his fellow-pupils). At home, he has to be considerate towards his father, obedient, respectful, must not show his emotions, should accept the decisions of his parents regarding his future, work and marriage. The parents

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<sup>102</sup> M. Hartman-Eeken, *Turkse kinderen in Niemandsland* (1977).

are convinced that the Dutch school corrupts their children and undermines their authority.

For the girls the problems are a bit different: they are more used to being in a situation of inferiority, and aggression in a girl is never accepted. So they adapt themselves more easily. But they are sooner kept home to look after the younger children; a girl's chances on advanced education, therefore, are much smaller since father often does not think it necessary.

At present there are special classes: "linking classes" to help the children in adapting to the Dutch school. Also there are special teachers (Moroccan, Turkish) available as soon as fifteen foreign pupils can be brought together for lessons in their own language and culture.

For girls and boys of sixteen to eighteen years the adaptation is mostly very hard, For them school is no longer obligatory, but they can attend part-time education for two days a week. This is done in special institutions. It is very useful for the newly arrived young people: they can learn the language and get information about Holland, their work, possibilities and rights. Some, however, do not want to miss the wages of these two days. Sometimes it is difficult to convince the fathers that it is good for the girl and safe for the family honour since there are only girls in the group and only female teachers. Still it is often the mother whose opinion is decisive: either she doesn't want to stay alone those two days or she agrees that the girl must not stay isolated, and then the girl gets permission to go!

Religion Islam is a unifying factor, especially for the first generation of migrant workers: most of them are educated in religious tradition and had attended Qur'an schools. For the second generation it is more complicated: these children go/went to Dutch schools and are influenced by the Western European style of life. Their father's work makes it difficult for them to perform the salāt five times a day; at the most they can do it in the evening. Consequently the children pick up the ritual only incompletely unless the parents are very pious and consciously work on it. How strictly the obligation

to perform the salāt is kept depends on sex, age, background and education. Older men from the Rif mountains, or the regions round Tanger and Tetuan are, as a rule, most strict. It is also they who are always urging for mosques and Qur'ān schools. Not without result: by now there are in Holland more than sixty places for worship, mosques, or other buildings where the Muslims can gather for the Friday salāt in most of the places where Muslims are concentrated. Also there are set up more and more Qur'ān schools.

If the younger generation of Muslims in our country becomes a bit neglective of the salāt, Ramadan is observed by most of the Muslims, young and old. They buy the special food that is (to be) eaten during these weeks in Morocco or Turkey during their holidays or their relatives take it with them to Holland. They are more often ill than in other periods. This is partly caused by fatigue and shortage of sleep, but also by psychic stress. They feel more than usually "apart" from their environment. During lunch time in factories they retire together. Their mutual solidarity and ties with the Muslim community are stronger.

There are a few factories that have a special time-table during this period, enabling the Muslims to go home early in the afternoon. For the migrants without a family it is more difficult to fast. But as soon as their family is there they are strict in observing it (partly because then the problem of cooking the meal at night is solved, partly because the social control is stronger).

The dietary laws are an important factor to strengthen the identity of the Muslims and their children as being "different" from the "impure" others. Not only is it prohibited to eat pork, also the animals must be slaughtered in the right way according to Quranic prescriptions. This can be done at most of the abattoirs. It is actually an impediment to entering into close relations with the Dutch, since the Muslims always (often) keep a slight suspicion that the food be impure.

The main festivities celebrated by the Muslims in Holland are: the feast of immolation ; the sacrifice after the birth of a child ; (tandrah) circumcision.

ʿīd al-Adhā. Migrants who are alone in Holland mostly go to their home country for this festivity. But as soon as their family is with them they remain in Holland and celebrate it together. There have been some difficulties to overcome, especially because the rules for the ritual slaughtering on this occasion are stricter than usual. For Dutch officials it was hard to recognise that it is impossible for Muslims to accept the electrical anaesthesia of the animal. It also was difficult for them to understand why the sons should be present at the ceremony. As the director of an abattoir put it: “It made the whole affair so chaotic.” How to explain that it is vital for this feast that the father can teach his son the way of slaughtering. Let us hope that they will learn to accept it.

ʿAqīqah. Since the Moroccans in Holland have found ways to slaughter illegally, they kill a sheep and give this feast after almost the birth of each child. It gives a lot of pleasure and bustle. The women help each other, cakes and bread are baked, couscous is steamed, the meat of sheep and chicken is prepared. Often friends and family from France and Belgium come over... It need not be held exactly on the seventh day after the birth. Mostly it is done on a Saturday night. It often is an expensive affair, but it gives prestige, and they enjoy it.

Khitān is mostly celebrated amidst the relatives in Morocco. The family would not accept it otherwise. As there is a large range of time in which it can be done (seven days—thirteen years, though the Moroccans prefer to do it before the boy is six years), this can be arranged quite well: if they cannot afford it during one holiday, they wait till the next.

How religiosity will develop in the second generation has still to be awaited. There is little reason to fear that the Dutch government will hinder them in this respect. For the greater part the result depends on the Muslim parents themselves.



# A PLEA FOR PHILOSOPHY'S LIBERATION

Absar Ahmad

Contemporary Anglo-American philosophy is at a dead end. Its academic practitioners have all but abandoned the attempt to understand the world, let alone change it. They have turned philosophy into a narrow and specialised academic subject of little relevance or interest to anyone outside the small circle of professional philosophers. The result has been that serious philosophical work beyond the conventional sphere has been minimal.

In pronouncing this judgment I am not at all being highhanded or presumptuous, rather it is informed by my personal experience of studies at British universities a few years ago. Moreover, I have an authority, Bacon, on my side when he said: "For where philosophy is severed from its roots in experience, whence it first sprouted and grew, it becomes a dead thing." The great mass of human beings undoubtedly have a real need for a philosophy—that is, for a consistent worldview and a body of guiding principles and clearly defined aims. This mass is effectively deprived by contemporary academic philosophers of any ideological material which might prove relevant to their existence.

Complacency, The present-day academic philosophy is created and transmitted in an atmosphere of "scholarly detachment". It appears to be entirely remote from the struggles and needs of the world. Academic philosophers, both in their thought and in their lives, it would appear, have almost entirely withdrawn from any relationship with the concrete social reality around them. They frequently boast of their "coolness," their

“detachment,” their “ethical neutrality,” etc., etc. In short, they seem to have abdicated from any socially valuable role, and their work consequently appears to be entirely trivial and irrelevant. It is characteristic of this type of philosophers that they come to think they can dismiss a complex theoretical system such as a theistic point of view in a few deft “moves” or with a few clever points, and to distrust whatever is not put in the professional patois of “claims,” unpacking, entailment, and which does not have the sleek professionalism and glibness that now passes for rigour and brilliance.

But clearly the claim of ethical neutrality and dispassionateness on their part is a farce. The social and political function of present-day analytical and linguistic philosophy is diabolically conservative and reactionary in the main. In fact, these philosophers exhibit total complacency towards any idea of changing and revolutionizing the established order. I knew and befriended many a radical students in Western universities who regarded the whole academic set-up as a fraud, perpetuated to group up the status quo.

Philosophical thinking, historically speaking, is closely related with religious beliefs, with science, and with art. It has often culminated in the attempt to do intellectually what religion has done practically and emotionally: to establish human life in some satisfying and meaningful relation to the universe in which man finds him-self, and to get some wisdom in the conduct of human affairs. There has been a general agreement on the type of problems with which “wisdom” and hence philosophy is centrally concerned. They are those which raise the question of the meaning of human life, and the significance of the world in which human life has its setting, in so far as that character has a bearing on human destiny. And what is that destiny itself? What activities and pursuits should he follow? What kind of life is most worthwhile individually and collectively? To the best of my knowledge, linguistic and analytical philosophers of the West do not address themselves to any of these questions. But surely we in the developing countries cannot afford the teaching of a philosophy which, though replete

with technical jargon, is empty, formal and sterile. We should stand for less academics and more self-understanding and concrete social change.

Third World We must not neglect, as is now fashionable with the Western thinkers, the cultural problems of the Third World. Anthropology left the Third World with a theory of acculturation, but Marx was far closer to reality when he wrote of the Indian subcontinent

“England has broken down the entire framework of Indian society, without any symptom of reconstruction yet appearing. This loss of his old world, with no gain of a new one, imparts a particular kind of melancholy to the present misery of the Hindoo [and, I add, the Muslim also] and separates Hindustan, ruled by Britain, from all its ancient traditions, and from the whole of its past history” (Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernization).

The alienation of the native from his own culture is a problem that hangs over much of the cultural activity in the Third World. Western experts are not reluctant to fill the debate with the most ludicrous philosophical rubbish—like the idea of converting the entire Third World to secular scientism in order to foster economic growth. Philosophy in the heroic sense provides the key to the reconstitution of national culture, the necessity for which Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Allama Iqbal clearly saw.

Yet philosophy is often regarded as an unnecessary luxury in the Third World. The bourgeois economists, who otherwise accuse Marx of reducing human life entirely to economic relations, happily reduce the people of the Third World to homo economicus, pure and simple. Philosophy, they assert, should be abandoned for more useful economic pursuits. I shall narrate a very interesting episode here which I came to know from private communication with a Nigerian friend. Professor Ernest Gellner of London School of Economics was asked by a Nigerian University on the advisability of setting up a philosophy department, and he replied that a developing country does not need one. But such an answer attains its plausibility entirely

through the mystification of words. Replace “philosophy” with a synonym like “clear and ordered thinking” (or “critical understanding”) and we get:

- (a) A developing country does not need clear and ordered thinking.
- (b) A developing country does not need critical understanding.

Certainly Gellner would have a case if he meant that a developing country does not need philosophy as presently carried on in the English-speaking world ; but then who does ? Such a philosophy is “an attempt to combine the appearance of being in earnest and taking trouble about the subject with an actual neglect of the subject altogether”. In *Consciencism*, one of the best books on general philosophy from contemporary Africa, we read:

“Whereas the great philosophers, the Titans, have always been passionately interested in social reality and the welfare of man, many of their twentieth-century descendants in the West serenely settle down to a compilation of dictionary of sentences as opposed to a dictionary of words engulfed in their intellectual hermitage, they excuse them-selves from philosophical comment on social progress or social oppression, on peace or war. While they thus pursue they exact sense of the word,’ all authority, political or moral, passes ever more firmly into the hands of the politicians” (Kwame Nkrumah).

It would be entirely mistaken to view the argument presented here as merely ideological or dogmatic. Philosophy in the true sense is an intrinsic part of man’s self-fulfilment, and the case argued for here is that the Third World develops its philosophical resources in order to help its societies flower creatively and intellectually, to become instances of humanity fully becoming itself. In contrast to the issues that are usually associated with the Third World in Western discussions, such as population explosion, birth control, more or less aid, infiltration of “dangerous” ideas, etc., two themes can be said to occupy the major part of intellectual activity in this region:

(1) How to counter racist imperialist aggression emanating from the West but often mediated by local agents. This aggression is not to be taken in a limited political or economic sense only, rather in a very broad sense of cultural, moral and educational aggression and oppression.

(2) The ends and means of developing wholesome and independent society where each man is free to fulfil himself—to “be him-self” in the true Quranic sense.

All this, it might be thought, is not of much concern to the West. “If the Third World wants to develop its own philosophy let it do so, but we are concerned with our own problems.” Not only is this wrong because the problems which beset and obsess Western intellectuals closely affect members of the Third World, but also wrong because the search for a vision of the whole man, proclaimed by eminent sages of the past, is a matter concerning all men. Surely we do not intend to replace a Western chauvinism by a Third World chauvinism. Take for instance the question of growing interest in the social responsibility of science and ideological orientation of the scientific paradigms which a society adopts. It is clear that what is needed is to be established within its very centre, for it is inadequate merely to humanise science: there must be the creation of science as a humanism. In the Third World where science departments are not heavily encrusted by a tradition and where sciences are often/just being established, such a vision has great and urgent relevance.

A Third World philosopher should participate in the tasks of (i) liberating the study of Third World societies, cultures and economics from inhuman and enslaving philosophical presuppositions and reconstrue it within a broad religio-humanistic framework; (ii) creating science as a humanism, as a technology at one with the whole spirit of Man and development of an anthropology of the spirit that would destroy the tearing apart of man from himself, that has epitomized both the West and its blind imitators in the Third World; and restore to man his essential unity, having as

its purpose the increased awareness of what makes man fully human and the exploration of the nature of man's fulfilment.

Islamic Eclecticism. When the words "physics," "chemistry," "medicine," or "history" are mentioned in a conversation, the participants usually have something in mind. No matter how many points of dispute there may be in these fields, at least the general line of their intellectual work is universally recognised. The prominent representatives more or less agree on subject-matter and methods. The situation in philosophy, however, is diametrically opposed to this. Here refutation of one school by another usually involves complete rejection, the negation of the substance of its work as fundamentally false and misconceived. This attitude would not be shared by what I propose to call, for want of a better expression, "Islamic Eclecticism"—a kind of dialectical philosophy. Islamic eclecticism, for example in keeping with its principles, will tend to extract the relative truths of the individual points of view and introduce them in its own comprehensive theory. Other philosophical doctrines, such as contemporary positivism, have less elastic and accommodating principles, and they simply exclude from the realm of knowledge a very large part of the philosophical literature, especially the great meta-physical systems of the past.

The idea of Islamic eclecticism is firmly based on one of the that the conceptual structure of science be constituted and a human - sayings of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) according to which wisdom and gems of knowledge are a Mumin's lost property, and he is advised to acquire them from which-ever quarter they are available. A Muslim mind is rightly characterized as an open one, ready to accept truth from any source or region it may emanate. Obviously many philosophies and thought-systems, even Marxism and psychoanalysis, contain an amalgam of truth and untruth, and it is the duty of a Muslim thinker to sift the genuinely true elements from falsehood and incorporate it into the Islamic thought.,It is in this sense that Iqbal speaks of "them principle of movement" in the

structure of Islam. In the following lines I shall further delineate the characteristics of Islamic eclecticism.

Islamic eclecticism will explicitly aim to avoid the academicism of the existing Western philosophical schools: an academicism which trivializes philosophy and manifests itself in an uncritical attitude to social ideologies and metaphysical worldviews. It will make a point of taking a synoptic and integrated approach to knowledge—an approach which cuts across academic departmental divisions. It will draw on alternative philosophical traditions as a way of overcoming the inadequacies of prevalent analytical philosophy. This is not to say that any of the other dominant traditions offers a ready-made alter-native, which could be adopted wholesale. To be fair, it would be wrong to neglect altogether the analytical tradition. It would of course be absurd to dismiss all the work that has been done within it as futile and irrelevant. Even where one is critical of analytical and linguistic philosophy, it is important to assess it and reckon with it, not just to turn one's back on it. Most clearly, analytical philosophers tend to stop the inquiry just where a practical man in the world begins to ask questions. There has been virtually no attempt among analytical philosophers to press further, to ask critical questions about the origin and development of social institutions and practices which shape what we are. This failure has especially left its mark on social and political philosophy which have been virtually non-existent, and on ethics which has tended to become an arid, scholastic jungle.

Philosophy in the framework of Islamic eclecticism cannot be squared with an anti-activist or "spectator" view of it which aims merely at an enlargement of the understanding. Indeed it here becomes an essentially practical subject: it seeks to get people to do things. It cannot remain uncommitted to social action. The attack on spectatorism which we find in Existentialism and in the pragmatists is very relevant to current philosophical scene. Moreover, Anglo-American academic philosophy is presently built around the assumption that its true centre is epistemology. This assumption is apparent particularly in the structure and content of university courses.

Now, the approach to the various areas of philosophy via the problem of knowledge is one possible way of organising one's conception of philosophy. But the outcome has been the abstraction of "man as knower" from the rest of human life, and in particular from human practice. This has been a distinguishing feature of the empiricist tradition and epistemology is still dominated by that tradition: the so-called "problems of knowledge" are the problems of the isolated individual knower confined to the world of his own sense-perceptions. Conversely, it is essential to see the activity of "knowing" as arising out of, and part of, man's general attempt to organise and cope with his world, in order to vindicate the status of human knowledge as a meaningful totality rather than a series of discrete sense-impressions.

During my stay in England I met a number of students who became fed up with the Oxford mixture served up to them as philosophy. The endless and usually pointless analysis, the clever, showy logic-chopping, the crossword-puzzle attitude of the professionals bored them stiff ; they had expected something far better from philosophy, something with a real-life purpose, not just an esoteric game. Perhaps it is in the bizarre meanderings of the so-called moral philosophers that they realized the boredom of the subject masks something more important—its pretended a-morality .and a politically. Surely, philosophy should be a moral activity, not merely a discussion of piano practice (Stevenson) or red motor cars (Hare). They saw that the boring triviality of linguistic philosophy is inextricably bound up with the general isolation of the academic, the ivory tower atmosphere of the universities. What they want to do is to change things, not to be mere elitist intellectuals. What Russell did in public had nothing to do with his limited "theory of knowledge," though everything to do with his "philosophy of life". And that is the point; for us Muslims the faith philosophy of Islam is the one system of thought that requires the marriage of theory and practice, the one metaphysics available to us which is a complete philosophy of life and plan of action. We should not expect any deep understanding of social, moral and economic oppression from a straight philosopher. Only religiously

committed thinkers can take seriously in their lives and in their thinking the need for, and possibility of, a radical and liberating transformation of human life on earth.

In the Islamic context, philosophy has not only a conceptual spiritual being, but also a social-material existence. Islam has never allowed the speculative and active lives to become totally divorced from each other: thought and reflection have always been wedded to action. On the one hand, according to a Prophetic tradition, an hour of thoughtful reflection is better than sixty years of acts of worship. But knowledge without action has been described as a tree without fruit. Contemplative thought (tafakkur) and reflection in Islamic spirituality is essentially a knowledge that relates the knower to higher modes of being. Only in this manner we hope to remove the root cause of a strong dissatisfaction with the present state of philosophy. Fortunately, a great deal of work has recently been done by Muslim thinkers in detecting the subtler mechanisms of widespread false consciousness perpetrated by materialistic philosophies, An enormous amount remains to be done along the same lines.