

IQBAL REVIEW

Journal of the Iqbal Academy, Pakistan

October 1992

Editor

Mirza Muhammad Munawwar

IQBAL ACADEMY PAKISTAN

Title : Iqbal Review (October 1992)
Editor : Mirza Muhammad Munawwar
Publisher : Iqbal Academy Pakistan
City : Lahore
Year : 1992
Classification (DDC) : 105
Classification (IAP) : 8U1.66V12
Pages : 34
Size : 14.5 x 24.5 cm
ISSN : 0021-0773
Subjects : Iqbal Studies
: Philosophy
: Research



IQBAL CYBER LIBRARY

(www.iqbalcyberlibrary.net)

Iqbal Academy Pakistan

(www.iap.gov.pk)

6th Floor Aiwan-e-Iqbal Complex, Egerton Road, Lahore.

Table of Contents

Volume: 33

Iqbal Review: April 1992

Number: 3

1. THE QUR'AN AND MAN'S SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION 4
2. REASON AND FAITH IN THE NATURAL THEOLOGY OF IQBAL..... 14
3. GOD, MAN, WOMAN AND THE UNIVERSE..... 29

THE QUR'AN AND MAN'S SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION

Prof. MUHAMMAD MUNAWWAR

The Quran informs man that in respect of creation, he is not different from other animals;

وَاللّٰهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَابَّةٍ مِّن مَّاءٍ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَمْشِي عَلَىٰ بَطْنِهِ و مِنْهُمْ مَّن يَمْشِي عَلَىٰ رِجْلَيْنِ و مِنْهُمْ مَّن يَمْشِي عَلَىٰ اَرْبَعٍ يَخْلُقُ اللّٰهُ مَا يَشَاءُ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

"And God has created every animal from water. Of them there are some that creep on their bellies, some that walk on two legs and some that walk on four. God creates what he wills. For, verily God has power over all things" (24:45)

This verse shakes man and wakes him up from his slumbrous conceit. It tells man that as a biped he has nothing to boast of. His is a lowly beginning. He has to rise to manhood. He has to grow up physically as well as mentally. His growth is slow in both respects-spiritual growth is slower still. In the words of Iqbal;

Indeed the evolution of life shows that though in the beginning, the mental is dominated by the physical, but the mental as it grows in power, tends to dominate the physical and may eventually rise to a position of complete independence.¹

Man's potentialities are boundless. Man can learn and achieve what no animal can. To begin with, man has a spatial aspect, and thus is strongly prone to be governed by material pulls. This state manifests the domination of instincts. They are but natural but their running riot is wrong. All forces need control, but control does not mean elimination. Controlled instincts are like broken horses, who are much more useful than the unbroken ones. And it takes long to reach the stage where strong instincts bow before the commanding rational self, which means the dominance of spirit over matter. The impulse for change is an ingrained trait of man. Factors from outside,

¹ The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam. Sh. M. Ashraf, 1944. p.106

only shake the dormant inner potentialities in to wakefulness.. Without inner capacity no foreign aid can be of any use.

Man must therefore achieve his destiny. Religion alone can and should mould man's attitude into fighting his way out of all sorts of opposing forces resulting in apparent chaos. Julian Huxley observes.

Hard fact and transforming value together build future reality-1 believe that the whole duty of man can be summed up in the words; 'More life', for your neighbour and yourself. And I believe that man, though not without perplexity, effort and pain,- can fulfil this duty and gradually achieve his destiny. A religion which takes this as its central care and interprets it with wide vision; both of the possibilities open to man and of the limitations in which he is confined, will be true religion, it is coterminous with life, it will encourage the growth of life, it will itself grow with that growth. I believe in the religion of life.²

But life means, the life of a human being i.e. a biped has to outgrow his material self. By conquering the material self a person can rise to such great heights and become capable of progressing towards the Status where the conquest of the universe may look possible. Man in his own self is a microcosm. And he who can rule the microcosm should be potentially capable of ruling the macrocosm. But summum bonum, it is man's God-ward journey only which frees him by degrees, from baser earthly bondages. By living according to the God's commands man ascends above the protoplasm of flesh that he is. Then he fears God only. The fear of material loss or the hope of material gain, by and by lose their grip and significance. That is the stage where man feels that he is his own master and his intellect, moral stature and rightful determination begin to form his personality.

Man's God-ward journey is a unifying experience. His unity within, grows in proportion to his freedom from the dominance of matter, He should become one, provided he imbibes the attributes of the One, a state attainable only through abiding by God's law and thus becoming God-centred. A man who does not believe in God remains not only at the animal level, rather, according to the Quran, he can be characterised as the worst of the animals.

² Religion without Revelation, Watts and Co: London, 1940, p.113

ان شر الدواب عند الله الدين كفرو افهم لا يو منون

"The worst of all animals in God's sight are the human beings who reject Him. They will not believe in Him. (8:55)

It is clear that every animal has its limits commensurate with the species it belongs to. All the potent characteristics of an animal can be defined. The extent of an animal's intelligence according to its species, is always obvious. Hence the utmost that can be done by a certain animal is always clearly understandable. On the contrary, man has no such categorical or special limits. He can be good. He can be evil. And in that respect, there are no upper or lower levels foreseen. He can soar aloft and touch the uppermost heights. He can fall and touch the lowermost depths of degradation. No wonder, Milton in 'Paradise lost' had to exclaim oh! from what pernicious heights thou fallen.. And a man who does not believe in God sincerely and hence fails to realise "manhood" can do more harm to human individuals and societies than any of the animals. The reason is evident. A person who is not brought up according to the laws of God is internally an animal. Now we can very well visualise an animal with the intelligence and cunning of man. The cruelest of ferocious animals cannot use weapons other than their teeth, horns, claws, legs, tails, and etc. Hence the scope of their rendering harm is always limited. But man, if bent upon doing mischief, can perpetrate untold damage. He can conspire. He can originate intrigues. And above all, he can invent and wield destructive weapons. His angry fist or kick are not the only expression of his wrath. He has extended the reach of his hand and legs by using clubs. From clubs he came to swords and spears and arrows. Then he used bullets. Now the bullets have been augmented with tanks, bomber planes and bombs - atomic bombs as well as hydrogenic ones. Animals are incapable of 'inventing anything. Man can invent elixirs of so many kinds. He can make panaceas for all sorts of diseases. At the same time, he can make the atmosphere poisonous and endanger the human race. Therefore, man should always be capable of taking care of himself. He should know that he is accountable to God for what he does. The Qur'an Warns: (19:90).

و كلهم اتيه يوم القيمة فردا

"And every one of them will come to him singly on the Day of Judgment".

Nobody can cast the burden of his misdeeds on others. Moreover, Islam does not entertain the idea of 'Original Sin'. Man has to be taught where to use his fist. Similarly he must be taught where not to use it. In it lies his own good as well as the good of others.

We place things where they are safe. We touch fragile things with care. We take care of infants. We do not allow children to do what they will, lest they should get injured or do some harm to themselves as well as to others. At times children insist on having things or on doing what can cause even death to them. Their elders forcibly check them back. They can call names, cry and kick but they have to be saved from themselves. Also, there are individuals and groups who come of age, even grow old, without maturing. And yet, in contradistinction, there is another kind of people who learn and rise to high pedestals of knowledge. They receive dazzling accolade and degrees in different scientific fields. They march forward to the highest academic excellence. But in spite of it when they transgress, mentally they remain infants. They have not matured as true human beings. They may, therefore, act irresponsibly any time and cause danger to themselves as well as to others. They also are to be taken care of. Like infants they are haughty. They will do what they like.

These are the complexities to be understood.

Man is not his own creator. He, therefore, can never really know himself nor can he know others. He can know himself only through his creator, the Almighty Allah. Then and only then can he understand what is the worth of the lives of other human beings. Only the creator knows in what order and gradation, guidance is to be provided to humanity. We Muslims believe that without Divine guidance, man can not bring about rules of ethics nor can he propound theories regarding man's respect for man. Man's respect for man, in actual fact is the hall mark of man's maturity. But it is a long way from biped to man.

George. D Kelsay observes:

"Man is truly man and truly person only if he responds in obedient love to the Divine call. He is so created that he has no true life except in God. He is

an independent being who can only be himself in free response to the call of God in every detail of his life.³ "

The best concrete example of good persons whose lives were the embodiment of the followers of God's guidance in all aspects of their lives; were prophets of God. All Prophets had superior selves. As compared to the peoples of the societies they were enjoined to live with and preach in. The basic teachings of all of them were essentially the same. The prophets of God epitomised God's mercy on human beings, because left to themselves, human beings could have no clear vision of truth and falsehood, justice and cruelty, pride and humility-courteousness and sacrifice and so on. Prophets of God were in fact the epitomes of Godly virtue. According to the Quran it was God's favour conferred in the guidance to the right path given to mankind. 'Straight is the gate and narrow is the path but few he there who enter it, was also conveyed in the scriptures. That is why the Quran made it manifest several times that those who accepted Islam should not behave as if they had done some favour to the Prophet (P.B.U.H).

يَمْنُونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا قَلِيلًا لَمْ يَمْنُوا بِلِلَّهِ بِمَا هَدَىٰكُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ أَنْ يَهْتَدُوا بِرِجْزِ اللَّهِ فَهُمْ لَكَاظِمُونَ
لَا يَمْنُونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا قَلِيلًا لَمْ يَمْنُوا بِلِلَّهِ بِمَا هَدَىٰكُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ أَنْ يَهْتَدُوا بِرِجْزِ اللَّهِ فَهُمْ لَكَاظِمُونَ

"They impress upon you as a favour that they have embraced Islam. Say! count not your Islam as a favour upon me. It is God on the contrary who has conferred a favour upon you that he has guided .you to the faith, if you be true and sincere". (49:17)

Without the examples of the prophets of God, human beings could form no idea of an integrated personality and character, which means they could not have achieved manhood by themselves.

In Hamid-i-ud-Din Khan's opinion;

"The ideology of Islam is based upon the teachings of the Quran which prescribes a definite set of principles and relations governing every aspect of human life both individual and collective".⁴

Human being are potentially different from all other living beings. They, therefore, had to be brought up differently. All animals, as such, were given

³ Racism and the Christian understanding of Man. p.76

⁴ History of Muslim Education, Academy of Educational Research, Karachi. p.132

instincts to motivate them, to warn them, to pull them, to deter them. In short, in instincts lies the guidance of almost all kinds of animality. But man is superior to all other beings in respect of spiritual potentialities. His life, according to the revealed books, is a particle of Divine breath. This explains that for man the possibilities of progress are unlimited. He, according to the Qur'an is called upon to assume the tinge of God.

صبغة الله و من احسن من الله صبغة و نحن له عبدون

"Ours is the dye of Allah. And who is better at dyeing than Allah. And we are his worshippers"

"In other words the Quran prepares its votaries to develop their intellect, understanding and physique in such a harmonious way that they become perfect model of Islam".⁵

Similarly, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.S.) urged human beings to inculcate in them the Godly ways.

تخلقوا باخلاق الله

Inculcate in you the habits of God

How could they be asked to do this if they were not capable of doing it? They can, therefore, they should. Such men i.e. genuine men, deserve to be called God's vicegerents on earth. They have to act as the guardians of mankind.

All prophets- of God were the trustees of God. No prophet could be untrue to God's trust. The followers of prophets, therefore, always should be capable of being trustworthy. They have to account for all sorts of trusts at their disposal. Says the Holy Quran

وما كان لنبي ان يغفل و من يغفل يات بما غل يوم القيمة ثم توفى كل ماكسبت وهم لا يظلمون

No prophet could ever be false to his trust. And if any person betrays his trust he shall, on the Day of judgment restore what he misappropriated; then shall every soul receive its due whatever it earned. And none will be

⁵ Ibid. p.133

dealt with unjustly. Men of God overwhelm others because of their better initiative and wakefulness. This state can be achieved by following the guidelines expressly conveyed by the prophets of God who are nearest to him on account of their God-Centeredness.

C.A. Richardson characterized such superior human beings as sons of God. This is how it is so in his opinion.

"Moreover as God is imminent in Monads' the metaphor of sons of God may be applied to all as Christ himself pointed out, otherwise as transcendent, God is distinct from Christ as from all monads. The imminence of God, in a very highly developed personality, would result in an exceptional manifestation of His Nature through that personality and this is in accordance with Christian belief."⁶

E. Clinton Gardner's statement, in this respect, is also very encouraging, God's kingship is present in a special way in the lives of those who obey His will. His rule is even now more fully manifest by the righteous man who obeys the laws of God and thereby takes upon himself the yoke of the kingdom.⁷

All wisdom and guidance revealed to the prophets was passed on to respective societies to which the prophets were ordained. The prophets of God were the embodiments of truth and trust. And in the form of Muhammad's prophecy (P.B.U.H.), prophecy attained perfection. The trust became complete in all respects. That is why the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) is entitled al-Amin . "The most trustworthy."

The revealed wisdom and guidance aimed at enabling human beings to become human beings in the real sense of the word. It was God's mercy on man. The Divine wisdom perfected and contained in the Quran is surely the greatest of God's boons bestowed on man. Through the Quran man can attain his ultimate destiny and can become really the man, as desired by God.

Given a perfect code of life to follow, now man could be left free to make his own choice. In this regard E. Clinton Garden Says:

⁶ Happiness Freedom and God, George & Harrap and Co., London, 1944, p.202.

⁷ Biblical Faith and Social Ethics, Harper and Row, N. York, 1960. p.48

Moral freedom means the capacity for self-determination in the sense that man is free to choose the ends, the goals and the values which he will seek, and he free to accept or to reject the demands of duty.⁸

As in the words of Holy Qur'an, revealed fourteen hundred years ago:

لا اكراه فى الدين قد تبين الرشد من الغى فمن يكفر بالطغوت ويؤمن بالله فقد استمسك بالعروة الوثقى لا انفصام لها والله سميع عليم

"Let there be no compulsion in religion. Truth stands out clear from error - whosoever rejects evil and believes in God hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold that never breaks. And God hears and knows all things."

Ahduallah Yusuf Ali explains the above verse in the following words:

"Compulsion is incompatible with religion because:-

1. Religion depends on faith and will, and these would be meaningless if induced by force.
2. Truth and Error have been so clearly segregated by the mercy of God that there should be no doubt in the minds of any person of good will as to the fundamentals of the faith.
3. God's protection is continuous, and His plan is always to lead us from the depths of darkness into the clearest light.

Man is free to accept or reject what the Quran offered and what the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) preached and practiced. Moreover, it is clear in the minds of Muslims that the universe with all its expansion is to be taken as a circle within which there are billions into billions of small circles. But they are all concentric. The very centre of all is the Almighty Lord. Then the world of man, taken as a circle, also cannot have more than one centre. And that centre of the world of man is the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H). Mankind must unite around him. According to Iqbal:

In Islam prophecy reached its perfection in discovering the need for its culmination de finale.⁹

⁸ Biblical Faith And Social Ethics. p.4.

⁹ Reconstruction, p.127

We Muslims believe that God's revealed teaching and guidance became perfect in the form of the Holy Quran which not only bears testimony to the truth of all previously revealed books but also represents them all with much more to add. Similarly the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) represents all prophets and is the embodiment of the perfection of prophecy.

Finality of prophethood is one of the greatest favours of God conferred on mankind because this gives one and only one source of perfect and standard morality to be imbibed by humanity so that they become one vast brotherhood with one common behaviour and the similar outlook on life and necessarily with common rights and duties. Islam being the last revealed religion has to serve as the spiritual rallying point for humanity. Islam as such has the capacity to stand for a fatherland as well as a family in the eyes of a Muslim. Thus humanity may get rid of racial territorial' and colour prejudices which serve as perpetual prompters towards man-killing and other manifold collective outrages perpetrated by man against man.

Man should know himself so that he may be able to know others. He should learn to respect himself so that he may be able to respect others. That has been the vocation of all prophets of God. And hereinafter, till the Day of Judgement, this solemnity is to be performed by those who believe in the prophethood of Muhammad (P.B.U.H), the last messenger of Allah.

Man is not mere body nor sheer soul. He is both body, soul and much more. Both body and soul need suitable nourishment. Apart from environmental and social factors, body hungers for material food and soul hungers for a different kind of sublime nutrition. Among these are love, belief, worship etc. It is evident that physical growth, as the growth of all living bodies, has categorical limits. Man can become boundless. He possesses an atom of Divine light in his soul. It is God's breath – Says the Quran.

وتفخت فيه من روحي

I breathed into him My Spirit.

The gist of all moral teaching; oral, written and practical, is the respect of man for man. But man cannot do so unless he knows his own self through the knowledge of his own self. Only through the consciousness of his own significance can he respect the other selves. Yet to be fully conscious of his

own self means the attainment of one's self which shows that the self became one and an integrated whole. Unless it is so, it is no self and hence not fully conscious not realized. The integrated self is self-conscious as well as conscious of other selves. Only thus all humanity can become one large brotherhood and in the words of Iqbal that would be the spiritual democracy which is the ultimate aim of Islam.¹⁰

In that democracy there would be no high handed racial groups of ruling masters and miserable sections of serving serfs, no color bar, no class hatred. Men have been created through one breath of life Hence they should all turn to One and the only. It is their own basic spiritual need. They are created like that.

¹⁰ Reconstruction, p.179

REASON AND FAITH IN THE NATURAL THEOLOGY OF IQBAL

Part I

Azizan Baharuddin

Born in Sialkot in Punjab, Muhammad Iqbal (1878-1938) is widely known as a famous poet-philosopher of the East. Much has been written about his poetry and the so-called influence of the western philosophy on his thinking. However there is sufficient evidence that his overarching concern was in fact the relation of his traditional beliefs with the predominant materialistic thinking in his day. He wanted to prove to himself the universal claims of his faith. However, more than that, he also wanted to create a new synthesis between a very important aspect of modern secular culture, which is science, with the most important aspect of his traditional culture, which is Islam. This synthesis can be seen in his *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* which was first published in 1930 in Lahore. Other treatises covering the same theme were to follow but Iqbal died before he could put his thoughts on paper.

Iqbal's efforts could under no condition be called a form of religious apology. At the basis of his thinking lies a problem which is common and prevalent even today and which I observe other modern religious - philosophical scholars have also perceived to be the root of the many crises of the present world - the conflict between reason and faith.¹¹

The so-called rationality of science and philosophy has given man a tremendous amount of knowledge about the physical universe and enabled him to create sophisticated technology for the comforts of his life. Despite this, however, modern man also knows that material progress alone is not enough; moral and spiritual values are also needed. Unfortunately many find that when they turn to traditional modes of thought for help, they find that there is often an insurmountable gap between the temporal and the spiritual. In other words either traditional thought eg. Religion is found irrelevant or that it seems to oppose materialism, if not in toto, in principle. However

¹¹ See for example Don Cupitt, *The Sea of Faith*, London 1934 and F. Capra, *The Turning Point - Society and the rising culture*, London 1983.

some have persevered, and the results of such analysis between the two (science and philosophy on the one hand, and religion on the other) have taught them that what is actually required is a 'new language' to explain the truths of these traditional ideas. In other words, such men believe that the truth is one and science -- philosophy and religion are merely two aspects of this truth

What was of even more immediate value was the utility of his synthesis for the formation of a practicable *weltanschauung* for a society which was not only in a state of transition but also in disorder and in need of fresh orientations. If a closer look is cast on this synthesis and on others like it, vital lessons could be drawn for the needs of -present man. In this paper I propose, therefore, to draw attention to, amongst others, the following questions and issues:-

- (1) How was Iqbal able to create the synthesis between traditionalism and modernism? The evidence suggests that sufistic elements played a decisive role in the development of his thinking and these sufistic elements seem closely related to H. Bergson's concepts of 'higher religion' and C. Hartshorne's process theological ideas about.¹²
- (2) What were the main contents of this synthesis?
- (3) What are the lessons that can be drawn from the synthesis?

The natural theology of Muhammad Iqbal has been rather neglected. It is arguable that, in contrast to the usual opinion that he was primarily a poet-philosopher, Iqbal was also equally a theologian and that he formulated a very important kind of natural theology. I would like to suggest that his supervening concern was in fact the relation of Islam and modernity, of religion and science. He wanted to prove the universal claim of religion. In other words, he was in search of a universal synthesis, and he saw this in the scientific-rationalistic exposition of his religion, i.e. in a natural theology.

Natural theology is knowledge of God acquired and demonstrated by the use of reason.¹³ Revealed theology on the other hand is the body of

¹² L. Kolakowsky, *Bergson*, Oxford, 1985; C. Hartshorne, *A natural theology for our time*, La Salle, Illinois, 1979.

¹³ J.H. Brooke, *Natural Theology in Britain from Boyle to Paley*, Milton Keynes, 1979, p. 8-9.

doctrines, and their interpretation which could be deduced from God's revelation to man. There is another type of theology the theology of nature which is a set of beliefs about God's relationship the natural world and it is usually based on both; a revealed and a natural theology. As we shall see, Iqbal was primarily immersed in a natural theology and a theology of nature. In the rest of the paper, however the finer distinctions will be waived and for convenience I shall only refer to his theological thought as his natural theology.

The natural theology of Iqbal not only provides useful insight into Muslims' discourse on the relations between science and religion, but that, it also bears comparison to the best that western natural theology has produced ever since. Contrary to some opinions it should be stressed that the thoughts of Iqbal are too rich to ignore.

For Iqbal the question of the status of the scriptures never arose. Rather, the new science and its ensuing philosophy of science or *weltanschauung* led him to believe that religious experience is objective or, that a rational account could be given of religious experience. In the preface of his *Reconstruction of Religious Thoughts in Islam* he wrote:

"religion today requires a method physiologically less violent and more suited to a coherent type of mind. In the absence of such a method the demand for a scientific form of religious knowledge is only natural."¹⁴

Two major contributory factors to the development of his thought seem to be the political apathy of his people and the Muslims in general, in conjunction with the so-called overt materialism or 'soullessness' of the post industrial western man; and secondly the developments in physics with its attending relativistic view of nature in which, he found 'sanctification' from his Sufi mentors. A Sophistic outlook is implicit in his overall thinking.

Iqbal was not directly involved with science *per se*. However this need not detract from the substance of his natural theological efforts. Taking his cue from notable thinkers, philosophers and scientists as diverse as William James, Bergson, Whitehead, Nietzsche, Spengler, McTaggart, Einstein, Eddington, Haldane amongst others, he embarked on a reinterpretation of

¹⁴ M. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Lahore 1968, p.v. The book was first published in 1930.

Sufism and Islamic religious thought in the light of modern science and modern knowledge in general.

In his theology he employed two main scientific concepts, the meanings of which were both undergoing revolutionary change - as is evident from the writings of scientists, philosophers and theologians at the turn of the century. These were the concepts of evolution and 'space-time' which were fast developing into the ideas of emergent evolution and relativistic space-time respectively. It is not surprising that these two concepts caught so much of Iqbal's attention, because, as he was trying to show, they were the key concepts in Sufism as well.

Only the new physics could have enabled the mystical theology of Iqbal to come into full bloom. Whereas Sufism was only the spirit which enabled others to be open to the west, for Iqbal Sufism was itself the subject of integration with science.

On the whole, one can see Iqbal's intention to fulfill two objectives via his natural theology: -

(1) To provide a new theology for the increasingly westernized and science oriented Muslims of the early twentieth century and the later; the distinctive theological character of this part of his thought is quite easily discernible.

(2) To naturalize what had hitherto been considered supernatural by arguing that Sufism or Islamic mysticism should be understood in terms of religious psychology accessible to all. Because of what H. Bergson¹⁵ and F. Capra¹⁶ would call the limitation of our ordinary language, this part of his thought sometimes had to be expressed by Iqbal more metaphysically or poetically.

Through these endeavors, Iqbal hoped, not merely to coax his people and the Muslims in general out of their inactivity and torpor but also to enlarge their mental horizon. Iqbal had imbibed too much of the spirit of the west, and the record of his life activities and experiences shows, that he could not help but transcend the attitude usually attached to the 'East versus West'

¹⁵ See Kolakowsky, Bergson, Oxford, 1985

¹⁶ See F. Capra, The Tao of Physics - an exploration of the parallels between modern physics and Eastern mysticism, London 1987, p. 41.

cliche. As such he also saw in his ideas, a working hypothesis of a unified understanding of the meaning of the Reality - the two main components of which he understood to be man and God or the 'ego' and the 'Super Ego'.

Before we go any further, let us look more closely at Sufism and the nature of the Sufi mentality. The element of Sufism is stressed because when talking about Islam, Muslims and Westerners alike often have the impression of a certain rigidity of thought that the followers of Islam must presumably have. In other words only the 'law' is important in Islam, that Muslims regard God as nothing else but a wholly transcendent Being. Who despite His Divine Mercy is alien to the idea of Love. The attitude seems to be, that God is indescribable not because He cannot rationally be so described but because one should not even 'think' of such a proposition to begin with.

I would like to emphasize however, that the image of Islam that emerges from Iqbal's reconstruction is quite a different one and that one of his achievements was to bring out what he saw as the universal appeal of his faith and religion.

The subject of Sufism is relevant for several reasons: -

(i) The Sufi mentality seems to be the basic ingredient of open-mindedness and the courage of the Muslims to dare venture out and seek what could be described as the 'living proof of faith',

(ii) It is arguable that Iqbal was attempting to show that Sufism could be the 'link' between science and religion. In this context Sufism can be taken to mean (a) mysticism guided by revelation and (b) the understanding of God and Divine revelation via intuitive experience that can either be explained scientifically or have parallels in science. In other words, Iqbal wanted to "scientific" or "empiricism" Sufism. Science to him, is the first step while Sufism the second, in our understanding of Reality.

(iii) By drawing upon the 'mystical' views of William James, Bergson, Whitehead and others in the West, who talk about the 'mystical' experience as being a valid form of human experience and showing how similar it is to Sufism in Islam, Iqbal tried to show that religion at its purest or in its essence is really only a special kind of experience describable in psychological terms.

By establishing this he was hoping to defend the very necessity of religion in the life of man. Traditionally there has been a problem with Sufism, its so-called negative 'world-shunning' and 'fact-avoiding' aspects.¹⁷ What Iqbal wanted to do was to revive Sufism with these negative aspects removed, ensuring that Sufism and mysticism would be looked at as experiences quite natural and normal.

In principle, at least, Iqbal can also be considered to be providing a basis for the revival of the Muslim mentality especially in the context of the current Muslim search for identity regarding science and modern knowledge in general.

The 'means' which Iqbal saw, by which to mobilise the thinking of his people, as well as other Muslims towards this end was his concept or idea of the khudi or self. This, as it turned out to be, was inextricably bound up or enmeshed with the whole of his religio-philosophical outlook which was in turn the product of an attempt at reconciling western knowledge (science and philosophy) with Islam (the Shariah) or law and the deeper metaphysical aspects of the religion or Sufism which Iqbal wanted to improve upon. It is in this latter goal that I see in Iqbal the perpetuation of a real effort to construct a natural theology.

I feel that this natural theology bears valuable insight in to the matter for those of us today who believe that the Truth is always one and that the physical and the spiritual are merely two aspects of it. Due to the positivistic view which had dominated science in the past, however, these two aspects seem not to have any continuities with one another. I would like to suggest that Iqbal's natural theology or philosophy actually gives us valuable insight into the nature of the link between these two, realms.

Iqbal's natural theology

There is no doubt that in Iqbal's thinking we can see the realization of the significance of religion for the discoveries of the new science. Many of his critics and commentators have dealt with the purely philosophical significance of his thought, but I would argue that not only the premises of his arguments but also an important portion of what is normally called his philosophy is comprehensible in the context of natural theology.

¹⁷ M. Iqbal, *op. cit.* 1968, p. 182.

As to whether he did indeed have an intention that was natural theological in essence, there can be no doubt, for he explicitly admitted that this was his goal. The title of his main natural theological treatise, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* is already an important indication of his contention. As one commentator has said, despite his wide knowledge and involvement with philosophy and metaphysics proper in the early stages of his thought, in the mature period of his thinking he tried to dissociate himself from all philosophy which was not "connected with God."¹⁸

A few words are necessary here concerning his usage of the term 'religion'. First and foremost, religion to Iqbal is synonymous with Sufism or mysticism which stands for a deep knowledge of and a personal contact with (or experience of) God. Although he hated its usual connotations of pantheism and life-denying quality, Iqbal was still very much in the usual tradition of mysticism,¹⁹ the concept of which he strove to empiricise and legitimise in the rational fashion. In this context, it can be argued that Iqbal's ideas also gravitated towards those of William James. (He also mentioned James in his *Reconstruction*) In the latter's *On the Varieties of Religious Experience*. James' article 'A suggestion about Mysticism (1910)²⁰ described in empirico-psychological terms what the mystical experience could be like. I shall be talking more about this later in the section "Is Religion Possible".'

It also ought to be pointed out that even though the *Reconstruction* was the only major work by Iqbal that explicitly expounded his natural theology (despite the fact that he intended to write a number of works that dealt with science and religion),²¹ it does not mean that there is a dearth of material for our understanding of his natural theology. A deeper study of his poetry will show that there is inevitably a close link between the works in prose and those that were in verse. The *Reconstruction* was itself originally a series of lectures delivered at the universities in Hyderabad, Madras and Aligarh as a result of special invitations and were written over a period of three years.

¹⁸ See M Rafiuddin in M.S. Sheikh ed. *Studies in Iqbal's Thought and Art*, Lahore, 1971, p. 75.

¹⁹ This is because, despite his different treatment of them, Iqbal was still dealing with the same sufistic idea.

²⁰ See William James, *Collected Essays and Review*, London, 1920, p, 500-505.

²¹ M. Iqbal in J. Iqbal (ed.), *op. cit.*, 1961, p 49-50.

Iqbal had hoped that it would lay the groundwork for religion and science to "discover hitherto unsuspected mutual harmonies."²²

Some of the problems analysed by Iqbal include the questions of Intuition, Nature and God, Freewill and Determinism, Destiny and the problem of Good and Evil, Evolution and the question of Whether Religion is Possible.

Intuition

Iqbal's philosophy placed a great deal of emphasis on intuition as a source of knowledge. Intuition could be described as a mental state in which a direct revelation is made to the mind comparable to the direct revelation which accompanies the exposure of a physical object to the eye.²³ This type of knowledge "is irresistible and, like bright sunshine, forces itself immediately to be perceived as soon as the mind turns its attention to it, and leaves no room for hesitation, doubt or examination, but the mind is perfectly filled with the clear light of it."²⁴ Thus general meaning of intuition as used by Iqbal knows with absolute certainty.

Is intuitive knowledge possible?

The question of the possibility, indeed the validity of intuitive knowledge was of the utmost importance to Iqbal. Only if intuitive experience was possible could it follow that both metaphysics and religion were possible. In other words, the reality of religion or validity of religious knowledge depends on the "provenness" of intuition and its metaphysical derivatives. In his *Reconstruction* Iqbal stated that Kant had rejected the possibility of metaphysics because it dealt with that which could not be systematised by the categories of space and time.²⁵ Iqbal argued that supposing there was more than one kind of space and time, then it should also be quite possible that there were other levels of human experience; capable of being systematised by these other orders of space and time.²⁶ In these levels of experience, logic and analysis would not play the same role as

²² H. Malik (ed.), op. cit., 1971, p. 28.

²³ R. Hasan, *The Main philosophical Ideas in Iqbal's Writings*. Ph.D. University of Durham, 1968, p. 85.

²⁴ Ibid. p. 56.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ M. Iqbal, op. cit. 1968, p 5-6.

they would do in the case of our normal experience.²⁷ Therefore, Iqbal tried to show the possibility of the existence of other categories of space-time in order to prove the validity of the religion.

In his discussion he utilised concepts from the new relativity physics as well as analogous ideas from Islamic Sufi literature to support his contention. In doing so he also hoped to show that there were parallels between Sufi-mystical concepts and those of modern physics as he understood them. In this respect he wrote:

"In the history of Muslim culture we find that both in the realm of pure intellect and religious psychology, by which term I mean higher Sufism, the ideal revealed is the possession and enjoyment of the Infinite. In a culture with such an attitude the problem of space and time becomes a question of life and death."²⁸

It is not surprising therefore, that Iqbal devoted a considerable portion of his lectures (i.e. the Reconstruction) to discussing the question of the nature of space and time.

Intuition in relation to consciousness and time

In his essay "The Introduction to Metaphysics", Bergson asserted that it is intuition that enables us to reach the reality of a thing. Intuition can give us direct, though not sensual contact with reality; direct, meaning that it dispenses with abstract concepts.²⁹ The intuitive insight which he contrasted with analytical thinking can embrace various phenomena of which mystical union is a privileged instance.³⁰ One can see how Iqbal was inspired by Bergson because in contrast to the mainstream of European philosophy then, he (Bergson) believed that metaphysics is both possible and can be built on the basis of the existing stock of empirical science if only we are able to discard philosophical prejudices.³¹ In the Reconstruction he wrote that

²⁷ Ibid. p. 183

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ H. Bergson, Introduction to Metaphysics, 1903 in L. Kolakowsky, Bergson, Oxford, 1985, p. 28.

³⁰ L. Kolakowsky, Bergson, Oxford, 1985, p. 28.

³¹ Ibid.

among the representatives of modern thought, Bergson was the only thinker who had made "a keen study of the phenomenon of duration of time."³²

The Bergsonian formula was that life is time and time is consciousness or self, of which there are two aspects; i.e. to Bergson each of us is a body among bodies, and our mind, in so far as it is an organ of life and acts according to the body's needs. That in us the self which obeys the laws of matter makes up the 'superficial self' which concerns itself as a part of the spatially homogenous universe.³³ The other aspect of the self is the profound self, "the core of personality. It is not a tool of life, nor an aspect of our practical efforts, whether individual or social "³⁴ As we are normally too absorbed with our everyday survival, we are often not aware of it. Both selves are part of the same consciousness, although the superficial self is the impersonal part of the person.³⁵

Similarly when discussing what consciousness is, Iqbal talked of the two-selves - the 'appreciative' and the 'efficient' the efficient self (Bergson's superficial self) enters into relation with the world of space. But because we are often too absorbed with the external order of things we seldom get a glimpse of the appreciative self, which is the inner centre of experience. We can, however, reach it, says Iqbal, in moments of profound meditation.³⁶

It is also important to note that Iqbal's concept of 'time' is very much like Bergson's. When Bergson said that time is real, he meant that the future does not exist in any sense.³⁷ Unlike the determinists, for whom time is like a machine that unwinds a film reel which has been there all along, with its entire story, bergson asserted that "the life of the universe is a creative process, whereby something new and thus unpredictable appears at every moment."³⁸ Bergson's idea of time is also different from the time of physics which sees time like a type of space breakable into homogeneous segments sitting next to each other in an indefinitely long line.³⁹ This to Bergson is

³² M. Iqbal, op. cit. p.63, emphasis is mine.

³³ L. Kolakowski, op. cit., 1985, p.17.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ M. Iqbal, op. cit. 1968, ibid, p. 95-108

³⁷ Bergson in L. Kolakowsky, Bergson Oxford, 1985, p.2.

³⁸ Ibid. p. 2-3..

³⁹ Ibid. p. 3.

'artificial' time; real time, or what he called 'duree' is not divisible, "It is in fact, what we are and what we know intuitively, from direct experience."⁴⁰ As such, real time is only possible through memory or consciousness.

Both Bergson and Iqbal point out the limitation of language in describing the profound self. In his *Creative Evolution* Bergson said:-

"...language cannot grasp it without immobilising its mobility or 'pure duree' (duration)".⁴¹

However both believe that our intelligence can still make an effort to go beyond itself and our language built as it is on spatial relationships, can overcome, to some extent, its limitations and open a path to another understanding of reality, i.e. via poetic and symbolic language. This is in fact what Bergson tried to do.⁴² Iqbal as we already know wrote mostly in verse.

To Iqbal, therefore, intuition which is a glimpse' of the profound self or the window as it were to Reality, is possible, also valid and can be communicated, albeit not as directly but simply as objective knowledge. This can be seen from his description in the *Reconstruction*:

The unity of the appreciative ego is like the unity of the germ in which the experiences of its individual ancestors exist, not as a plurality but as a unity in which every experience permeates the whole....It appears that time for the appreciative self is a single 'now' which the efficient self in its traffic with the world of space pulverises into a series of 'nows' like pearl beads on a thread.⁴³

Iqbal then tried to use this idea to interpret the Quranic verse that speaks of the time duration involved in creation. Creation, if apprehended, intellectually, lasts through thousands of years, yet one divine day, says the Quran, is equal to one thousand years and in the verse 54:50 the whole creation is a single indivisible act "swift as the twinkling of an eye". In other words, the 'time' mentioned in the Quran can be better understood in terms of the single 'now' of the appreciative self as he had explained it.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid. p. 18. Iqbal uses the term 'ego', self, and consciousness simultaneously.

⁴³ M. Iqbal, op. cit. 1930, p. 65.

⁴⁴ Ibid. p.66

"Pure time" as revealed by a deeper analysis of our conscious experience is not a string of separate reversible instants; it is an organic whole in which the past is not left behind, but is moving along with, and operating in the present, "and the future is given to it only in the sense that it is present in its nature as an open possibility."⁴⁵

As has been mentioned, and as will become more obvious. Iqbal's main concern into understand the nature of the 'Ultimate Reality' i.e. to 'know' God better'. We have also mentioned that the keys to that understanding are the concepts of space and time. For the moment we are going to see how he also found similar ideas or precepts about space-time in the writings of the medieval Sufi Iraqi who was also trying to reach a greater understanding of the ultimate nature of Reality. Iraqi's ideas, as explained by Iqbal, are quoted below not for their scientific value but for their relevance to Iqbal's theology. More importantly they help to show how Iqbal put close together knowledge obtained via mystical - experience and science⁴⁶ to achieve a dynamic understanding of Reality

To Iraqi,⁴⁷ the secret of time and space was the greatest secret. To know it is to know the secret of the being and attributes of God. The existence of some kind of space in relation to God is clear from the following verses of the Quran:⁴⁸

"Doth thou not see that God knoweth all that is in the Heavens and all that is in the Earth? Three persons speak not privately together, but He is the fourth; nor five, but He is their sixth.... wherever they be He is with them." [Q 58:8] And again

"Ye shall not be employed in affairs, nor shall ... ye work any work, but we will be witness over you when you are engaged therein; and the weight of an atom on Earth or in Heaven escapeth not thy Lord (Q 10:62). "We created

⁴⁵ Ibid. p.67. Again this is comparable with what Bergson said about his *duree*:- "In the actual *duree* nothing is lost, but nothing is reversible either: each moment carries within it the entire flow of the past and each is new and repeatable. "L. Kolakewsky op. cit., 1985, p.3.

⁴⁶ Philosophy. Science and mysticism.

⁴⁷ See M. Iqbal, "A plea for deeper study of Muslim scientists", *Islamic Culture*, April, 1929, p. 201-29.

⁴⁸ Iraqi.

man; and we know what his soul whispereth to him, and we are closer to him than his jugular vein." [Q 50:15]

We must not forget, however, said Iraqi, which the words proximity, contact and mutual separation, which apply to material bodies, do not apply to God. Divine life is in touch with the whole universe on the analogy of the soul's contact with the body. Iraqi described the soul as being neither proximate to, nor separate from it. Yet its contact with every atom of the body is real, and it is impossible to conceive this contact except by positing some kind of space which befits the subtlety of the soul. Therefore the existence of space in relation to God cannot be denied, yet what this space is, must be explained.⁴⁹

Iraqi delineated three kinds of space - the space of material bodies; the space of immaterial bodies and the space in respect of God. The space of material bodies can be divided into three types:-

i. the space of gross bodies, where movement takes time, bodies occupy places and resist displacement.⁵⁰

ii. The space of subtle bodies is occupied for example by air, and sound. In this space, bodies resist one another, and their movement is measurable in terms of time which however appears to be different from the time of gross bodies.⁵¹

iii. The space of light is different from the spaces previously explained. The light of the sun instantly reaches the farthest limits of the Earth. Thus in the velocity of light, time is reduced almost to zero.

It is clear that the space of light is different to the space of air and sound. The light of a candle spreading in all directions in a room without displacing the air in it, shows that the space of light is more subtle than the space of air, which has no entry into the space of light.⁵² But while the element of distance is not entirely absent, there is no possibility of mutual

⁴⁹ M. Iqbal, op. cit. (note 186), 1929, *ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.* p. 207.

resistance in the space of light; e.g. the light of a hundred candles intermingles in the same room without displacement.⁵³

Iraqi stressed that it is not possible to distinguish the various types of spaces except by purely intellectual analysis and spiritual experience.⁵⁴ This remark is significant because, in a way, it characterizes the attitude that Iqbal took; i.e. spiritual experience wherever possible should be coupled with intellectual (scientific) analysis in order to satisfy what Iqbal describes as the modern mind.

Iraqi then described varieties of space operated on by immaterial beings like angels. While their subtlety enables them to pass through a stone wall, they cannot dispense altogether with motion which, according to him, is imperfection in spirituality. The highest scale in spatial freedom is reached by the human soul which, in its essence, is neither at rest nor in motion. Lastly we reach the divine space which is absolutely free from all limitations and constitutes the meeting point of all infinities.⁵⁵

Iraqi then dealt with the subject of time in a similar manner. He considered that there are infinite varieties of time relative to the varying grades of being, intervening between materiality and pure spirituality.⁵⁶

The time of gross bodies which arises, from the revolution of the earth around the sun is divisible into past, present and future; and its nature is such that as long as one day does not pass along, the succeeding day does not come. Even the time of immaterial bodies is serial in character; but if compared to the gross bodies, its passage is much quicker. A whole year in the time of the former, for example, may not be more than a day in the time of immaterial bodies.⁵⁷

Thus, as we rise higher and higher in the scale of immaterial beings we reach the notions of 'Divine Time' which is absolutely free from the quality of passage, and consequently does not admit of divisibility, sequence and change. It is above eternity; it has neither beginning nor end. The 'eye' of

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

God sees all the visibles and his 'ears' hear all the audibles in one indivisible act of perception.⁵⁸

In Iqbal's opinion, because he viewed 'Divine Time' as being utterly devoid of change (a view obviously based on an inadequate analysis of conscious experience) it was not possible for Iraqi to discover the relation between Divine Time and serial time. He was, therefore not able to reach through this discovery, which for Iqbal was the essentially Islamic idea of continuous creation, which means a growing universe. Despite this criticism, however, it is quite obvious that Iqbal was quite impressed by Iraqi's Sufistic-intuitive insight into the nature of space and time-relation to God.

He said:

"From this summary you will see how a cultured Muslim Sufi intellectually interpreted his spiritual experience of time and space in an age which had no idea of the theories and concepts of modern mathematics and physics."⁵⁹

(To he continued)

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

GOD, MAN, WOMAN AND THE UNIVERSE

Maryam Jameelah

The Tao of Islam, A Source Book on Gender Relationships in Islamic Thought, Sachiko Murata, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1992, pp.397.

Hardly any aspect of Islam is more grossly misunderstood than its view on gender as book after book appears in the West showing how terribly the poor Muslim woman is "oppressed." The "solution" offered is always drastic reforms on the modern western standard designed to overthrow the patriarchal extended family. The present work is unique in that it is by a Japanese scholar who, by a comparison with traditional Chinese thought in the very words of leading Sufi thinkers, presents the profound spiritual outlook of Islam on male and female from its own view point.

As an undergraduate studying family law at a university near Tokyo, Sachiko Murata grew increasingly fascinated with the family law of the Shar'iat which allows a man four wives while at the same time expected to preserve domestic harmony and peace. Eventually after working in Japan for a year in a law firm, an Iranian friend offered to arrange a scholarship for her at Tehran University to study Islamic law. After learning Arabic and Persian from Professor. Toshihiko Izutsu, she attended regular classes at the Faculty of Theology at Tehran University where, in addition to islamic law, she was, above all, attracted to the study of the Islamic intellectual tradition according to the school of Ibn al 'Arabi. For several years she was a student of Seyyed Hossein Nasr where she met her husband, William Chittick, also an outstanding exponent of traditional Islamic thought. After the Revolution, she fled from Iran to America where, joining the faculty of New York State University, she continued her research on the Islamic intellectual tradition.

In dealing with her students' deep prejudices against Islam and especially its view on women, she realized the advantages of approaching Islam from a Far-Eastern perspective. This book thus approaches gender relationships not so much from the social view of Shar'iat but from the vantage point of - Theology, Cosmology and Sufism with extensive quotations from the works of Sayyidina Ali, al-Ghazzali, Jalalud-din Rumi, Ibn al-Arabi and many other Sufi thinkers extending over a period of more than a thousand years.

"What I am trying to do is to bring out certain salient features of Islamic thought by referring to certain principles drawn from a non-Western tradition. By doing so, I hope to avoid various presumptions about the nature of reality and especially about gender relationships found in most western studies of Islam. My hope has been that a relatively novel point of view might bring out something important in Islamic thought that had been missed by the usual approaches."(p.6)

The *Qudsi Hadith* states "I (Allah) was a Hidden Treasure and I desired to be known: therefore, I created the world."

And Holy' Quran says that "We did not create the Universe in play. If we had wanted amusement, we could have found it among ourselves if ever we did. We created the world in Truth"

The ninety-nine Names or Attributes of Almighty Allah are reflected in all creation-minerals, plants, animals and man. The Holy Quran says everything in the heavens and earth praises Almighty Allah. But man, among all creatures, occupies the central place, all others being peripheral. Man is created in the very form and image of God. The perfect man or Insan al-Kamil reflects the totality of all the Divine attributes while the beasts have only some of them. In this respect, other creatures are partial; only man is total. Other creatures are fixed in the nature of their species; they can never be other than what they are. Man is unique in his free-will and capability to choose voluntarily to submit to Almighty Allah or to disobey and rebel. Man can be saint or psychopath. It is only man who creates sin and evil in the

world. It is only mankind who can upset and despoil the harmony and equilibrium of creation. The Holy Quran has no illusions about the heights and depths of human nature. "Surely we created man in the best of stature and then reduced him to the lowest of the low save those who believe and do good works and theirs is a reward unfailing." The creation of mankind was intended to express all possibilities from the highest beauty and goodness to the depths of the ugliest depravity and wickedness. The Wrathful, the Avenger, and the Chastiser and the Merciful and Compassionate' are inconceivable without the punishment or forgiveness of sin.

Like Yang and Yin of Chinese tradition, so also in Islam everything was created in pairs - active and receptive, masculine and feminine qualities, male and female. In Quran and Hadith, Almihty Allah is both transcendent and immanent, severe and gentle. He is Great, Majestic High, Creator, King, Wrathful, Avenger, Slayer, Depriver, Harmer and Just but also Beutiful, Near, Merciful, Compassionate, Loving, Gentle, Forgiving, Life-Giving, Enricher and Bestower. Islamic jurisprudence and Theology places greater emphasis on the severe Divine attributes and by Sufism on the gentler or more feminine qualities. One can attain spiritual development by the awe and terror of submission to the Divine and then through the close supervision by a recognized spiritual guide achieve freedom from the Nafs or base self in the full light of Divine love. Although women cannot he prophets, 'they can attain sainthood as Islamic history so amply demonstrates.

Islam startles many Christians because of its positive view of sex. The marriage act is considered the highest good, not only for procreation but also for the mutual pleasure it gives both to husband and wife. The role of male and female is, above all, complimentary - not competitive. The part yearns for the whole which is acheived in the union of the sexual act-provided it is within the marital bondall sexual deviations and pre-marital or extra-marital relationships regarded by Islam as the worst sin and social crime deserving of the harshest punishments according to Shar'iat. The restrictions of Hijab or Purdha upon the Muslim woman can be viewed, not so much in terms of

'female Oppression', but an expression of the supreme values of marriage, home and family. According to Ibn al-'Arabi, the highest love for women as the Holy Prophet loved his wives, reflects the direct radiance of God. But he is also quick to point out that very few people are able to experience this.

Although legally and socially, Islam is male-dominated, it recognizes the spiritual superiority of some women to most men. Women have rights over men to be supported, protected and treated with kindness; and husbands expect loyalty, respect and obedience from their wives. Since Eve was created from Adam, men have a degree above women although male superiority is always qualified and never absolute. Femininity reached its highest spiritual perfection in Islam in the Holy Virgin Mary. Pain, hardship, illness, suffering and impending death can have a positive value in the expiation of sins and turning men towards God. In times of dire calamity; men's thoughts naturally turn to God. In our weakness and utter helplessness, we turn to the One source of strength: Unlike the westerner, the traditional Muslim never seeks to banish poverty, disease and death for that is impossible - but rise above them. Yet it is quite common for people in the contemporary West and westernized East to lose faith in God for having made them suffer, especially in the early and sudden death of a loved-one. Recently the reviewer saw a letter to the Editor of a prominent daily by an American who confessed that after the tragic death of his beloved young wife, he never again prayed or attended church. In a similar manner, a well-known Palestinian writer and activist who adhered to Marxism wrote about his suffering the fate of a homeless refugee during the Palestine war of 1948 as follows:

I. myself a child educated in a strict religious school, doubted whether this God really wanted to make men happy. I also doubted whether this God could hear and see everything. ... I was sure that the God we had known in Palestine had left it too and was a refugee in some place I did not know, unable to find a solution to his problem.The colored pictures which we rehanded out to us in the school chapel showing the Lord having compassion on children and smiling in their faces, seemed like another of the

lies made up by people who open strict schools just in order to get higher fees....⁶⁰

Thus do such moderns reveal their total ignorance about the nature and attributes of God described so vividly in the work under review.

It would have been inconceivable for too traditional Islamic sciences to study creation without any reference to the Creator. Rather, nature and the natural phenomena were contemplated as reflection of the signs of God and not for their own sake or as ends in themselves.

Sachito Murata presents masculinity and femininity according to the Islamic thinkers she quotes as having both positive and negative aspects. She regards negative masculinity expressed today by the insatiable craving for dominion over the earth and heavens without submission or accountability to God as the most dangerous trend of our times. The result in the form of spectacular scientific and technological 'progress' since the European Renaissance is directly responsible for the present environmental crisis and the rape of the earth. Tragically, the militant activist fundamentalists groups in Muslim lands now uncritically endorse technological progress and "development" and oppose the Islamic intellectual and spiritual traditions almost as bitterly as westerners themselves.

In conclusion, the author of this work regards the aim of the Muslim is to fully realize his or, her spiritual potential as male or female in the noblest sense. Islam asks of us nothing but to really know ourselves and to be human. The feminist conception of a unisex society is diametrically opposed to everything Islam stands for. As Murata concludes, the question of the equality of women with men is entirely irrelevant here. What matters is only that men be truly male and women truly female in order to conform to the

⁶⁰ Ghassan Kanafani, *Men in . the Sun and Other Palestinian Stories*, Three Continents Press, Washington D.C., 1978, pp.58-59.

nature and purpose for which Almighty Allah created the two basic kinds of human being.