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AN INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR

Naved Kahteran

ABSTRACT

"Traditional philosophies are so many expressions of the truths contained in perennial philosophy, which, being perennial, has no temporal *terminus quo*. It deals with the timeless and for that very reason is the most timely of truths." (Seyyed Hossein Nasr)

Dr. Nasr has been a persevering and staunch promoter of a better understanding and dialogue between the Islamic world and the West. Several years of hard work on my doctoral dissertation, devoted to the research of perennial philosophy and the views of Professor Nasr in particular, along with those of Guénon, Schuon and other perennial thinkers, brought me close to nearly five decades of the brilliant career of this truly most significant Muslim ambassador in the West. Professor S. H. Nasr is certainly the most important Muslim thinker of the second half of the 20th century and, God willing, of the first half of the 21st as well. I was happy to learn that this opinion of mine was confirmed by the prestigious Library of Living Philosophers, which included a volume entitled *The Philosophy of Seyyed Hossein Nasr* (June 2001), the only Muslim thinker among the torch-bearers of Western philosophy. In this way, the universalism of the Islamic model of thinking was incorporated on an equal footing into the world's philosophical heritage in the most beautiful form and with the fullness of academic expression.

Kahteran: Dear Professor Nasr, I am personally privileged with this amazing possibility to make this interview with you, i.e. with someone who is– not only according to my opinion, but that of many others– one of the most remarkable philosophers of our time. Also, you succeeded in making clearer the philosophical notions of sophia perennis and philosophia perennis to the minds of today's Muslims, minds increasingly attacked by ideologies borne out of modernism and other "-isms" that came along with it. Actually, it is but one measure of your own personal accomplishments that you have been able to attract and engage the very best philosophical minds of our

times in the Foundation for Traditional Studies and the journal *Sophia* and its publications over the last fifteen years or so. So could you, please, tell us your own definition of traditional philosophy after dealing with its contents in different fields of your investigations and intellectual deliberations?

Seyyed Hossein Nasr: To respond to your question I must first say a word about the *philosophia perennis*. Traditional thinkers like myself believe that there is a perennial and also universal wisdom to be found within the integral traditions that have guided humanity over the ages, traditions such as the Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, Confucian and Neo-Confucian, Egyptian, ancient Greek, Zoroastrian, Jewish, Christian and Islamic, not to speak of the primal and mythological traditions in which this wisdom has not been usually formulated explicitly in conceptual schemes. At the heart of this wisdom lies pure metaphysics to which I have referred as *scientia sacra* and about which I have written extensively especially in my book *Knowledge and the Sacred* in the chapter bearing that name as its title.

Now, traditional philosophy may be said to be a philosophy, in the time-honored and traditional sense of the term as understood by the likes of Pythagoras, Parmenides and Plato, that speaks in the language of the particular Tradition in which it has grown and flourished but it contains at its heart the basic universal truths of *scientia sacra* or some aspect of it. Moreover, since it can deal with only certain aspects of that truth and be based on a perspective from a particular angle of vision, on the formal level it may on occasion seem to be opposed to another school of traditional philosophy belonging even to the same tradition as one sees in Pythagoreanism, Platonism, Aristotelianism and Neo-Platonism in Greek civilization. These philosophies differ from each other on a certain level but are all based on the reality of the Supreme Principle which none of them deny even if each points to It in a different way, whether it be the Supreme Good, *Agathon*, the Unmoved Mover or the One. However, those Greek schools of philosophy that are not based on the Supreme Principle, such as Skepticism, Epicureanism and the like are not called traditional philosophy.

Furthermore, it should be evident that we understand by philosophy not what is understood by it in modern European and American philosophy but that which is understood by the traditional philosophers. Otherwise, we would not refer to *mashshā'ī* and *ishrāqī* schools of philosophy in Islam, the

Saṃkhya and Vedanta in Hinduism, Neo-Confucianism and Taoism in the Far East, or Thomism and Christian Platonism in the West as philosophy. It is to make this distinction clear that Guénon attacks "philosophy" as currently understood and speaks instead of metaphysics, cosmology, etc. when referring to traditional philosophy. Coomaraswamy and Schuon have also made this distinction clear in several of their writings.

Finally, it is necessary to recall that for us metaphysics in the sense of *scientia sacra* is not a branch of philosophy, but that traditional philosophies are so many applications of metaphysical principles to various domains from the cosmos to man, from religion to art, from the reality of the human person to human society. Nor do all traditional philosophies reflect the metaphysical principles directly to the same degree. Rather, there is often a hierarchy in the degree of clarification and crystallization of concepts pertaining to the Supreme Science. A clear example of this hierarchization is to be seen in the six Hindu *darshans*, usually translated as the six schools of Hindu philosophy, and also in Islamic philosophy when seen from the perspective of Mullā Sadrā's *al-ḥikmat al-mutaʿāliyah*, often translated as "the transcendent theosophy" to distinguish it not only from philosophy in its modern connotation but also from Peripatetic philosophy, which, although still traditional philosophy, over-systemized and rationalized metaphysical teachings, laying the foundation for the rationalism that was to appear later especially in the post-medieval period in the West.

Kahteran: In the meantime, I have personally become acquainted with the great achievements of the Foundation, and I have to ask you, Professor Nasr, how this kind of philosophy is applicable to our modern philosophical curricula, or which kind of intellectual and practical benefit we should expect after its introduction into our university programs?

Seyyed Hossein Nasr: Today in the West and even in many non-Western universities the only philosophy that is taught is the modern and now the post-modern. Traditional philosophies are either ignored or relegated to the realm of intellectual history. For the non-Western part of the world (and even to some extent for the West), introduction of the traditional philosophies associated with the world in question means first of all the recovery of one's own intellectual tradition and a deeper understanding of the more intellectual dimensions of one's own traditional culture. The

teaching of such philosophies also provides the means of looking critically at the waves of Western thought that inundate those far-away shores of the non-Western worlds, often with the violence of a stormy sea and this in turn prevents the thinkers of those worlds from being simply blind imitators of Western thought, turning at best into second-rate Western thinkers with non-Western names.

For both the Western and non-Western worlds, such philosophies also re-introduce the importance of vision and the search for truth, goodness and beauty into the barren landscape of present-day currents of Western thought. How many Western philosophers from Heidegger to Rorty have spoken of the end of philosophy? What is now ending is not, however, the traditional philosophies, but the anti-traditional philosophies that began to flourish in the West from the Renaissance onward and have now spread to other parts of the world even while having reached an impasse in the West itself. Traditional philosophies are so many expressions of the truths contained in perennial philosophy, which, being perennial, has no temporal *terminus quo*. It deals with the timeless and for that very reason is the most timely of truths. Its principles can also be applied to new problems that humanity faces today, from the environmental crisis to the present-day economic upheaval caused by the forgetting of those principles.

Kahteran: For me personally, it is really interesting to put to you the question about one of such giants of spirit, the late professor Toshihiko Izutsu, with whom you collaborated closely during his life. I am personally grateful and intellectually indebted to you both for your enormous scholarly output which enabled me to approach the philosophical traditions of the East without reluctance of any kind. Moreover, my contact with other traditions made it possible for the universalist Islamic perspective to come into full swing and reach above the formal frameworks of various philosophical, theological, and cultural patterns. So, to make it quite clear: is it possible to draw comparisons between Japanese philosophical traditions and especially Sufism stricto sensu following in the footsteps of Izutsu?

Seyyed Hossein Nasr: It might be of interest to your readers and to yourself for me to say a few words about my relation with Izutsu and the role of this relationship in Izutsu's intellectual activities in the later phase of his life. In 1962 I was a visiting professor at Harvard University. At that time Izutsu was a professor at the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University

in Montreal, Canada. The head of the Institute at that time was the famous Canadian theologian and historian of religion Wilfred Cantwell Smith who was my close friend and who later came to Harvard. Smith invited me to give a lecture at McGill. I accepted the offer and on a very cold winter day went to Montreal. Smith told me that Izutsu was there and giving a lecture in the afternoon. I had already known his fine studies on Quranic semantics and so I went to the lecture whose theme was the relation between language and meaning with a special reference to Jean-Paul Sartre. Izutsu was a remarkable linguist, master of not only classical Chinese and Japanese but also knowledgeable in Greek, Latin and many other European languages as well as Sanskrit. Besides, he was a remarkable scholar of Arabic and could also read Persian. It was, therefore, natural that his interest in the traditional schools of thought should have been focused on semantics. But he was also a metaphysician and philosopher, as his later works would demonstrate amply.

My lecture at McGill, which he attended, was about the philosophy of Mullā Sadrā. When the lecture finished, he came forward and said, "What you have discussed today is so significant that I want to devote the rest of my life to the Islamic *hikmat* tradition and change the whole direction of my research and writing. Henceforth I shall not be writing on semantics any more." This is in fact what happened. We immediately became friends. He persuaded Iwanami, the famous Japanese publisher, to bring out my *Three Muslim Sages* in Japanese. In 1970 when I visited Japan, I visited his home in Kamakura and we went together to visit the great Buddha statue in the middle of a park in that city, both wearing kimonos, I wearing one of his. He kept smiling and when I asked him why, he said because everyone is giving me a strange look asking with their eyes, "Who is this person with you who does not look Japanese but is wearing the completely traditional Japanese dress?" Later I took him to the International Congress of Medieval Philosophy in Madrid, this being the first time that he attended this Congress. It was also his first visit to Spain. During the first dinner that we were having together, I ordered food in my broken Spanish. He said that he did not know any Spanish but if I were to bring him again to dinner four days later, that is, during the last day of the Congress, he would order his own food in Spanish. And that is exactly what he did.

As you know, I have always been critical of shallow comparative studies of philosophy in which some Oriental philosopher is compared to a modern European philosopher without consideration of the radical difference between the bases of traditional philosophies on the one hand and of modern philosophies on the other. Already by the early 70's I had written sharp criticisms of such comparative studies, and Izutsu had read my works on this subject. As a result of colonialism, non-Western cultures came to have much more contact with the West than with each other. A Japanese scholar of comparative philosophy would compare some Buddhist thinker with Kant, an Arab or Persian scholar Ibn Sīnā with Descartes, etc. The extremely fecund and important fields of comparative traditional philosophies had received little attention especially when it came to let us say Hindu or Neo-Confucian philosophies and the Islamic philosophy and doctrinal Sufism or gnosis. How many serious studies can you name that compare in depth Śankara and Ibn 'Arabī or the Samkhya and Islamic cosmology? You can count the number of such studies on the fingers of your two hands. As for a relation between Islamic thought and Neo-Confucianism, it is a newly discovered continent now being studied in depth for the first time in a European language especially by Sachiko Murata, William Chittick and Tu Wei-Ming. In this latter effort there is also the indirect presence of Izutsu for when Izutsu was in Tehran I introduced two of my best students, Murata and Chittick, to him and urged them to study with him. They learned much from Izutsu that has helped them in their collaborations with Tu Wei-Ming in recent years.

In any case I found in Izutsu the ideal person to deal with comparative studies of traditional philosophies especially those of Islam and the Far East and I constantly pushed him in this direction. When I established the Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy in Tehran in 1973, I invited Izutsu to join us on a full-time basis. He accepted and spent the academic year with us every year until the Islamic Revolution. During those years he wrote seminal works on both Islamic philosophy and comparative philosophy as well as taught both Far Eastern philosophy and Ibn 'Arabī at the Academy. When archeological excavations unearthed an ancient manuscript of the Tao Te-Ching, a text that I have always loved, Izutsu invited me to work with him on the translation into Persian of this newly discovered version of the sacred text of Taoism. I accepted the invitation and we proceeded on this

remarkable task together. He would translate the Chinese text into English and I would render the English into Persian. Finally, I would read the Persian translation and he would compare it with the Chinese and make final suggestions. We finished the text in 1978 and I decided to go over the translation one more time and to add the necessary commentaries before sending it for publication. As a result of the Revolution this task was never completed but although my library was plundered and my writings in manuscript form lost, fortunately this text survived because when in January of 1979 I set out to inaugurate a major exhibition of Persian art in Tokyo without returning to Tehran until today, I put it in my handbag to work on it on the plane. Thirty years have passed since that time but I have not turned to that task. Perhaps God will give me the strength to do so in the future. I have still not lost hope in completing a work which, if published, would perhaps be the last posthumous opus of Izutsu to be published.

What I have said about Izutsu should answer the last part of your question. The works of Izutsu, especially his major opus on Sufism and Taoism, demonstrate, along with more recent works such as those of Murata, Chittick and Tu Wei-Ming, the possibility of the deepest and most fruitful comparative study of Islamic and Far Eastern thought. Although these works concern Chinese rather than Japanese thought, there is no doubt that the same types of comparative study of Islamic and Japanese schools of thought can be carried out. To turn more specifically to Sufism, it needs to be stated that it is the esoterism of the last plenar revelation of the present history of humanity, that is, Islam, and contains, therefore, in synthetic fashion, all the different esoteric possibilities within itself. There are currents in Sufism corresponding to Zen and Shingon, others to Jodo-Shin and yet others to Japanese Neo-Confucianism. One can hope that such studies will be undertaken extensively in the future in the footsteps and following the pioneering work of Izutsu.

Kahteran: Just a few words about the very future of traditional wisdom and that type of thinking in this miserable world of differentiation in so many spheres today? Shall we see in the very near future a broadening of these investigations world-wide, or the falling into new divisions, and where is the place of Islamic philosophical heritage in this matter? Can we push aside at least for now that tunnel-vision and intellectual myopia of the proponents of the so-called U-turned Islam, which, according to my own insights, is only a

deviation of that religion and its great cultural heritage? This is an extremely important question for all of us today, because we really have to find that very needed measure of balance in the interpretation of our own traditions while we have this kind of experience of living in a society where multiculturalism is the norm, which is actually our old way of living, especially in Bosnia, the norm that is to be found in our forgotten Bosnian wisdom.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr: The interest in perennial philosophy and what you call traditional wisdom continues to grow in the West as well as in a number of Islamic countries such as Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia and your own Bosnia. And all of this is being carried out in the middle of an even more intensified storm with devastating consequence brought about by modernism and post-modernism on the one hand and the so-called fundamentalism on the other. The perennial philosophy is the most potent antidote to these maladies.

As for Islamic philosophy, it is now becoming better known in the West in its integral form, and not only as a chapter of the history of Western philosophy, while its significance as a major expression of the perennial philosophy is also being recognized to a greater degree than before. For those of us who have been given the gift by Heaven to understand tradition and the perennial philosophy and to live by their teachings, what is important is to cling to their truths no matter how trying the times, knowing in our heart that no matter what appearances may signal, ultimately the Truth shall triumph and prevail. As for Bosnia, to live within the worldview of tradition and perennialism is also to defend the traditional Bosnian society within whose bosom different religions and cultures lived in peace and harmony for such a long time.

Kahteran: As we confront more and more the pressing needs for a global dialogue today, is global or world philosophy a realizable project or not?

Seyyed Hossein Nasr: To be sure there is need of a global dialogue but not one based on destroying the rich diversity of human cultures in the name of and in conjunction with a quantitative and materialistic economic globalization. If we are to avoid very dangerous pseudo-religions and philosophies that make global claims in the climate of today's world, we must be able to formulate a global and universal expression of perennial

philosophy which *is* itself the only legitimate world philosophy. I am of course all in favor of that understanding of world philosophy as found in the writings of Guénon, Coomaraswamy, Schuon and on another level Elémire Zolla, Henry Corbin, Izutsu and several other major scholars. Such an understanding is not based on the rejection of traditional forms of wisdom but on reaching the truth that they hold in common in their inner depths without the discovery of this truth– which is truly global and universal– destroying in any way the precious forms of traditional wisdom existing in particular cultures and societies. I have always been a proponent of world philosophy in this sense while standing completely opposed to those so-called world philosophies that consider traditional wisdom to be but a relic of the past and claim for themselves a future that seems to be related more to the reign of the Anti-Christ than the coming of a celestial savior such as the Mahdi, Christ in his second coming, the Kali avatar, etc.

Kahteran: Your wide-ranging work is well known to us and obviously will enhance studies in this field. Professor Nasr, you are recognized in the world as the most determined and the loudest advocate and defender of the Holy at a time that is characterized by a philosophy which is anti-metaphysical in spirit and character. So, what do you think about the very idea of finding and recollecting the philosophical resources scattered through Eastern intellectual history prior to the arrival of modern Western philosophy, resources which have yet to be recognized as part of a fuller history of philosophy?

Seyyed Hossein Nasr: I am certainly favorable towards this project which is, however, too immense to be realized immediately. It would be more feasible to start with a project such as the Western Spirituality Series, published in the United States by the Paulist Press and consisting of sixty books devoted to Christian (40), Jewish (10) and Islamic (10) mystical traditions. For this project one could have an editorial board consisting of specialists on Greek, Hindu, Buddhist, Far Eastern, Jewish, Christian, and Islamic philosophical traditions (as well as others). They could then prepare a list of the most important philosophical texts in consultation with other scholars and then bring out a series of these texts that would include translation, explanation and commentary, historical introduction, etc. Since obviously more work has been done on Western thought than on Eastern schools of philosophy in European languages, perhaps, one could begin by

including only the Eastern traditions which here must definitely include the Islamic despite the link between Islamic philosophy and Greek philosophy on the one hand and Western philosophy from the medieval period onward, on the other. Parallel with such efforts an attempt should be made to write an extensive history of traditional philosophies in a really inclusive manner without adopting 19th century European historicism and historical relativism that stand completely opposed to traditional philosophies that are based on a very different understanding of the unfolding of time.

ALLAMA MUHAMMAD IQBAL AND TRANSLATION POLITICS

Uzma Qazi

ABSTRACT

THE TRANSLATION OF IQBAL'S R*ECONSTRUCTION* IN URDU WAS BESET NOT ONLY WITH THE PROBLEM OF A DIFFERENCE OF MILIEU BUT ALSO WITH THAT OF THE UNPREPAREDNESS OF THE SUBJUGATED TO IDENTIFY WITH THE SUBJUGATOR IN ANY WAY

Sir Muhammad Iqbal was a prominent literary and political figure in the history of the Indian subcontinent. Though he died before the creation of Pakistan, he is considered to be among the first few people to talk about an independent Muslim state in the North-West India. In this respect he is venerated by Pakistanis as a freedom-fighter who used his pen to stimulate his dormant nation.

However, it is a pity to note that there is scarce research about Iqbal's ideas and philosophy in the West. He was educated at Trinity College, University of Cambridge and at Munich University, Germany, but the West often ignores him as a scholar. The most prominent western writings on him include an analysis of his writings and political life in Hamilton A. R. Gibb's *Modern Trends in Islam* (1947); Iqbal's contribution to modern Islam in Wilfred Cantwell Smith's *Modern Islam in India* (date); Iqbal's fundamental principles and his assimilation of Western ideas in Annemarie Schimmel's *Gabriel's Wing* (1963); and a detailed discussion of different aspects of Iqbal's philosophy in *Iqbal: Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan*, edited by Hafeez Malik (1971). There are a few scholarly articles by Western writers which mostly appeared in Pakistani newspapers and journals. Despite the fact that Iqbal immediately captured the attention of famous Orientalists of his time, such as Professor Thomas Arnold and Professor Reynold A. Nicholson, he could not get as much attention as was due to him. One such proof is the date of publication of the said sources– there is a difference of approximately a decade between each of them.

One reason for this oblivion is the scarcity of good translations of Iqbal's work. In order to appeal to a wider Muslim audience he chose to write in Persian; and for the masses of India, in Urdu. Both languages suited best his poetic endeavours. But when it came to addressing the whole world, he chose English, which was a natural choice for him for two reasons: first, he was educated at English-language institutions; second, he was living in a British colony. But ironically, his most representative works were not in English. Hence the West did not read him. His *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* could not win Western favour because its antecedents were not familiar to Western scholars, except for a few Orientalists of his time.

As a result, not only the Western failure to appreciate Iqbal's talent but also its indifference to acknowledge the traces of Western ideas in his work demands a revival of interest in Iqbal's works and his system of thought. I intend to draw the attention of scholarly circles, both in the East and the West, towards Iqbal and the quality of his work. A study of Iqbal is very germane to the present socio-political situations. The deplorable human condition and the impassable difference between the East and the West urge researchers to delve deep into those sources which can cement relationships between the continents and heal our wounds. One such source, no doubt, can be the work of a writer like Iqbal who stands at the meeting point between the two cultures.

I have divided my paper into two parts: part one deals with the implications of British imperialism for the languages of the subjugated Indians with a specific emphasis on Urdu; and part two dwells on the subject of translation of Iqbal's two major works, *Asrar-i-Khudi* (*Secrets of the Self*) and *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. This is germane to our present discussion as the translation issue in Iqbal's case presents a new paradigm for *translatio imperii* studies, because he had to face resistance from both the imperialists and his own countrymen, the Indians of the sub-continent.

D. J. Matthews *et al* mention in their book *Urdu Literature* that as the national language of Pakistan and as one of the official languages of India, Urdu ranks as one of the most important languages of the subcontinent of South Asia. It is one of the most widely spoken languages of the subcontinent, and has been further carried by emigration to many other parts of the world, and yet the mainstream of its literary development extends back

only some two and a half centuries, and the term 'Urdu' itself came to be applied to the language still more recently.

Urdu developed as a result of the expansion of the Muslim empire. It has always been directly linked to the Muslims of the subcontinent, though its origin can be dated only to a period many centuries later than the foundation of Islam itself. It is certain that an expedition in AD 711 led by Muhammad bin Qasim succeeded in subjugating Sind and the lower Punjab, but this remained only a peripheral outpost of the Islamic world (Matthews *et al*).

Only some three centuries later the invasions of Sultan Mahmūd of Ghazni (998-1030), who followed the historic route from Afghanistan through the Khyber Pass, established a somewhat stable Muslim presence in India. Under Mahmūd's successors the Punjab and the adjacent north-western areas were brought under the permanent authority of a Muslim kingdom, with its capital eventually established in Lahore. After a period of consolidation, further conquests of the neighboring Hindu kingdoms were undertaken by the Muslims, whose political dominance of northern India was effectively inaugurated by the conquest of Delhi in 1192 by Qūtb ud Dīn Aibak. So began the period of the Delhi Sultanate, which was to dominate for the next three centuries until the coming of the Mughals (2).

The origins of Urdu lie in this early period of Muslim rule in the subcontinent. V. P. Liperovsky mentions in *The Encyclopedia of Pakistan* that Urdu dates back to *Khari Boli* or "stable speech" which developed from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries in the Delhi, Meerut and Agra region which originally included Lahore. According to him, these regions formed "a zone of intense contact between Muslim newcomers speaking Turkic and Iranian languages and the local population" (286). Thus Urdu resembles English in being a language of very mixed origins.

The story of how these languages eventually came together in Northern India is all the more interesting for its complexity and its association with Muslim imperialism. Linguistically the most remote of all is Arabic, a member of the Semitic language family, which also includes Hebrew. Yet, in religious terms, Arabic has always been of central importance to Muslims as the language of the Quran and Muslim theology. The first expansion of Islam was accompanied by a rapid expansion of Arabic beyond its original homeland in the Arabian Peninsula. Not only was it the language of the new

religion, but it also served as the official language of the Caliphate, cultivated both for administrative and for literary purposes. It also quickly came to be adopted as a spoken language over much of the original Islamic empire, but Arabic was to prove less successful in the eastern realms of the Caliphate where Persian began to be cultivated in preference to Arabic (Matthews *et al* 3).

The Ghaznavid kingdom of Sultan Mahmud was one of these eastern successor states of the Caliphate where Persian was cultivated. Irrespective, therefore, of the actual racial origins of the Muslim invaders of the subcontinent, who included besides Persians many Turks as well as Pashto-speaking Pathans, it was Persian which was the chief language brought by the conquests to north-western India (Matthews *et al* 4). With the establishment of Muslim rule in Delhi, it was the old Hindi of this area which came to form the major partner with Persian. This variety of Hindi is called *Khari Boli*. Thanks to the association of *Khari Boli* with the central area of imperial capital, it proved the ideal basis for a widespread lingua franca, which would be spread in time over a large part of the subcontinent (6).

Although Persian continued to be universally used as the language of administration and literature in the Delhi Sultanate, its Muslim population no longer consisted of a majority of foreign, Persian-speaking immigrants, for they were soon outnumbered by a native Indian Muslim community as a result of the process of intermarriage and widespread conversion. In the conversion to Islam of a large proportion of the Hindu population of north-western India, the principal role was played not by the maulvis and qazis who upheld the religion in its strictest orthodox form, but by representatives of the mystical Sufi orders (Matthews *et al* 7). It is in the Persian account of the lives of these saints that the first garbled fragments of Urdu are recorded, in descriptions of their conversations with their disciples. Since none of this literature was recorded until later centuries, its original form can only be dimly glimpsed. But it seems that Amir Khusrau (d. 1325), the greatest Persian poet of the Delhi *Sultanate* and a disciple of a famous Sufi, Khwaja Nizam ud Din, also composed some poetry in *Khari Boli* (8).

During the middle and later years of the eighteenth century, Urdu finally supplanted Persian as the main medium of poetry in circles associated with the Muslim courts. This was the age of the great masters Sauda (d. 1781) and

Mir (d. 1810), who both grew up in Delhi, but--like so many of their talented contemporaries--were forced to move in search of patronage to the wealthy court of Lucknow, already protected against political upheaval by having been reduced to the effective status of a vassal of the expanding British power. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the British had brought the feeble remnant of the Mughal empire in Delhi under their control.

Cocooned within the web of British paramountcy, the royalty and nobility of Lucknow were able to extend lavish patronage to Urdu poetry. The first half of the nineteenth century, therefore, saw a spectacular development of Urdu in Lucknow. An ornate and Persianized Urdu was also cultivated in the circle of writers grouped around the last Mughal 'emperor' of Delhi, of whom the greatest was Ghalib (d. 1869), one of the finest of all Urdu poets, and - thanks to the vividness of his letters - one of the outstanding pioneers of prose-writing in the language.

It is also from this period that the name 'Urdu' came to be applied to the language. Throughout the period of their rule in the subcontinent Muslim writers had been casual in their references to the spoken local languages, usually describing them indifferently by such labels as 'Hindi', 'Hindui', and 'Indian'. For a while in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries other names became current, notably *Rekhta*, the 'mixed language'. Finally, however, the term 'Urdu' came to be preferred. This is derived from the Turkish word *ordu*--which is also the origin of English word 'horde'. The headquarters of the imperial army in Delhi were known as the *Urdu-e-Mualla*, or 'exalted camp,' and Urdu owes its present name to being the language of this camp, and--by extension--of the imperial capital (Matthews *et al* 10-12).

The British rulers supported Urdu as a lingua franca, though they called it 'Hindustani'. Christian missionaries used it as a vehicle to spread the Gospel as widely as possible. But the Hindu majority of India increasingly alienated itself from Hinustani/Urdu as the Muslims more vigorously clung to the language for their separate identity, especially after the mutiny of 1857. Hence two separate languages of the Indians emerged: Hindi for the Hindus and Urdu for the Muslims. This language divide helped accelerate the British imperial plan of 'divide and rule'.

Iqbal was born to a Punjabi-speaking Muslim family that converted from Brahman Hinduism to Islam just a few centuries before his birth. The family, though not highly educated, paid special attention to nurturing of their promising son, Iqbal, who was trained in Persian, Arabic, Urdu and English languages by his early tutors. Yet German was another language which he learned as a part of his PhD programme in Germany. This equipped him with the ability to communicate with felicity in languages of both Muslim and British imperialism: the use of Persian could be nostalgic; the use of Urdu was due to a separate Muslim identity; and the use of English was to show his competence in advanced knowledge and learning.

However, his mastery of these languages gets him into trouble if we analyze the reception of his two major works: *Asrar-i-Khudi* (*Secrets of the Self*) and *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. I consider both works as specimens of resistance literature: resisting both the domestic orthodoxy and the British hegemony. Stephen Slemon in his article "Unsettling the Empire" explains literary resistance as embedded in a text which resists a "definable set of power relations" (104). He further explains, "all literary writing which emerges from these cultural locations will be understood as carrying a radical and contestatory content– and this gives away the rather important point that subjected peoples are sometimes capable of producing reactionary literary documents" (106). Iqbal's *Secrets of the Self* and *Reconstruction* follow this paradigm with a twist, that is to say, Iqbal had to resist not only British imperialists but also indigenous factions who opposed his work tooth and nail.

The history of the reception of *Secrets of the Self* is very interesting as it involves the issue of translation and misinterpretation. Originally written in Persian, it was published in 1915 and provoked an uproar in the orthodox and so-called educated Muslim sections of India. Iqbal, who never hesitated from acknowledging the dynamic nature of Western Europe, proposed a change in the mystic trends then so popular in India. His introductory remarks about a famous Persian mystic poet, Hafiz Shirazi, were received with great resentment. Iqbal infused his message with new ideas of a constant struggle stemming from internal tensions and conflicts of the human being as an ego. His ideas of ego, self-determination and self-realization were interpreted as sacrilegious attempts on the part of a Westernized mind in the garb of a

liberal Muslim. In a letter to R. A. Nicholson, Iqbal enunciated his philosophy of *khudi* or ego as follows:

> What then is life? It is individual: its highest form, so far is the Ego in which the individual becomes a self-contained exclusive centre….The greater his distance from God, the less his individuality. He who comes nearest to God is the completest person. Not that he is finally absorbed in God. On the contrary, he absorbs God into himself. (*Discourses of Iqbal* 195)

The way Iqbal interpreted ego was a clear departure from the conventional interpretation of the term in Muslim mysticism. Iqbal believed that the current sufistic practices in Islam had nothing to do with the plain teaching of Islam and its Arabic essence. Though only the ego could take an individual to the heights of human perfection, the current sufistic trends could lull it into a deep slumber and make it inactive, hence paving way for subjugation of the nation. Further he draws attention towards the difference between the conventional and original meaning of the word Ego (*khudi*). In a note dictated to Nazir Niazi he explains:

> The word 'Khudi' was chosen with great difficulty and most reluctantly. From a literary point of view it has many shortcomings and ethically it is generally used in a bad sense, both in Urdu and Persian….Thus metaphysically the word 'Khudi' is used in the sense of that indescribable feeling of 'I' which forms the basis of the uniqueness of each individual. Metaphysically it does not convey an ethical significance for those who cannot get rid of its ethical significance. I have already said in the *Zubur-i-Ajam*, 'The wine of egohood is no doubt bitter, but do look to thy disease and take my poison for the sake of thy health.' When I condemn self-negation I do not mean self-denial in the moral sense; for self-denial in the moral sense is a source of strength to the ego. In condemning self-negation I am condemning those forms of conduct which lead to the extinction of 'I' as a metaphysical force, for its extinction would mean its dissolution, its incapacity for personal immortality. (*Discourses of Iqbal* 211-12)

But this ideology was far-fetched for the orthodox Muslim sections in India whose chief representatives unleashed a torrent of abuse against him and severely criticized him in newspaper essays and articles from 1915 to

1918. The most painful aspect of the dispute was that those who did not read the poem also participated in this war against Iqbal and dubbed him as infidel, enemy of Sufism and religion, advocate of the devil, and traitor. This war-mongering faction added many objectionable ideas to the original passage while translating it into Urdu.

But that was only one part of the controversy. The second part commenced with the English translation of the poem in 1920. This time the criticism came from the forces associated with the imperialists, the British. In a letter to the poem's English translator, Dr. Nicholson, Iqbal referred to the misinterpretation of his idea of Perfect Man and Ego. He objected to the view of a critic published in *Athenaeum* (London) in which the critic attempted to draw close similarities between Iqbal's Perfect Man and Nietzsche's Superman. Iqbal's reply was that he had developed his idea at least twenty years before reading Nietzsche. He further commented on the criticism of Dickinson that he did not believe in brute force, but rather in the power of the spirit:

> I am afraid the old European idea of a blood-thirsty Islam is still lingering in the mind of Mr. Dickinson. All men and not Muslims alone are meant for the Kingdom of God on earth, provided they say good-bye to their idols of race and nationality, and treat one another as personalities. Leagues. Mandates, treaties…and Imperialism, however, draped in democracy, can never bring salvation to mankind….That Muslims have fought and conquered like other peoples, and that some of their leaders screened their personal ambitions behind the veil of religion, I do not deny, but I am absolutely sure that territorial conquest was no part of the original programme of Islam. As a matter of fact, I consider it a great loss that the progress of Islam as a conquering faith stultified the growth of those germs of an economic and democratic organization of society which I find scattered up and down the pages of the Quran and the tradition of the Prophet….The object of my Persian poem is not to make a case for Islam; my aim is simply to discover a universal social reconstruction… (*Discourses of Iqbal* 204-05)

Was it a translation or transfusion? I leave it to the discerning eye and now turn to his *Reconstruction* which was originally written in English--the colonizer's language. Though Urdu/Hindustani won the favour of the British officials for administrative needs, it did not and could not enjoy equal status

with English. History proves that Urdu was taught to British bureaucrats, but the irony is that those textbooks were published in London. English had first ousted Persian as an official language and was later considered far better for the expression of ideas than the language(s) of the colonized.

Iqbal's decision to write his major philosophical work, *Reconstruction*, in English could not extricate itself from the power struggle fought on the terrain of language. This is, to some extent, what Chinua Achebe talks about in his article "Colonial Criticism". Under imperial rule "a new situation was slowly developing as a handful of natives began to acquire European education and then to challenge Europe's presence and position in their native land with the intellectual weapons of Europe itself" (58). Iqbal uses such intellectual weapons very successfully.

Reconstruction is a philosophical treatise based upon Iqbal's wish to inculcate the spirit of inquiry among Muslim youth. It consists of seven lectures which were first delivered during 1929 and 1930 to the gatherings of learned and highly-educated Indians, and that is why the medium used was English. Translation works on various levels in the composition of this book which was finally published in 1930.

First of all, Iqbal translated/interpreted around one hundred and fifty Eastern and Western scholars, which in itself is amazing. He assumed that his audience was well familiar with all those sources and anticipated no difficulty to use the sources to establish his view of the dynamic nature of the universe. By this implication he meant the dynamic spirit of Islam which had been stifled by hegemonic struggle. The proposal that he had for this revival of interest was to do a synthetic study of Islamic theology and European progress in science and technology. In a letter to a famous Muslim scholar, Syed Suleman Nadvi, he commented on his intention:

> My intention is that the Muslims should do the study of Islamic theology in the light of modern jurisprudence, but this should be a critical study rather than slavish imitation. The Muslims of the early ages did the same - Greek philosophy was once considered the acme of human intellect but when Muslims were well-equipped with critical insight, they fought against the philosophy by using Greek syllogism. I believe that we need the same drive today. (qtd. in *Zindah Rud* 413 my translation)

But this was not an easy task. First, Iqbal had to wrest his meaning from European philosophical works with great difficulty. This enterprise was dangerous in the sense that on the one hand, he acknowledged his indebtedness to Western sources, and on the other, he tried to synthesize them with the basic teachings of Islam. Here is the danger: the subjugated Muslims in the entire Muslim world had strong resentment for their colonizers. They were not mentally prepared for such a daring work which shows glimpses of the approval of the West. The ideas and above all the language in which the ideas were clothed, were of the imperialists - the suppressors'. Those who took this book seriously were few in number and those who opposed the work joined the camp of orthodox *maulvi*s who had already issued a fatwa against Iqbal in 1924. Iqbal had already been warned by his well-wishers against an Urdu translation of the book. It was first translated into Urdu in 1958, twenty years after the death of Iqbal.

The story of the composition and translation of *Reconstruction* illuminates our discussion of translation theories and imperialism. Its author had to face resistance first from the English language itself when he declared that some ideas which are the product of modern philosophical debates are difficult to represent: "I cannot, at times, find most appropriate expressions for such thoughts (*Zinda Rūd* 419, my translation)." In my view, this points to the process of decolonization via the medium of language— the English language, which was the language of the imperial power, could be used as an intellectual weapon at a very high price. In Iqbal's case, this led to the confusion and complexity of his views in the book as marked by his son, Javid Iqbal, in his biography, *Zinda Rūd*.

On the other hand, translation of the book in the language of the subjugated, Urdu, was also problematic. The terrain of this language was not then fertile enough to absorb the hail of the imperialists' ideas, no matter how much effort was put to synthesize them with Islamic sources. The irony is that the book could not win many readers in either language. Perhaps, it is waiting for yet another translation - a translation in a globalized era.

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CIVILIZATION DIALOGUE AND SUFISM: THE HOLY QUR'ĀN AND METAPHYSICS OF IBN AL-ARABI

Reza Shah Kazemi

ABSTRACT

It is our contention here that in the Islamic tradition, the Sufi school of thought associated with Muhyi al-Din Ibn al-Arabi, can be of considerable value in helping to cultivate the wisdom which synthesizes the two principles in question here: an unprejudiced, universalist, supra-confessional view of spirituality on the one hand, and a normative approach to the specificity and particularity of one's own faith, praxis, and identity on the other.

1. 'Civilized Dialogue' and the Holy Quran

The notion of 'civilization dialogue' has been proposed in recent years as an antidote to the poison disseminated by the sensational prophecy of the clash of civilizations' made by the Samuel Huntington. What is meant by a dialogue between civilizations is of course simply 'civilized dialogue', that is, a mode of dialogue between individuals of different cultures and religions which seeks to accept what Ibn-i-Arabi calls the 'Other' within a civilized framework; a mode of dialogue which respects diversity and difference, and upholds the rights of all individuals and groups to express their beliefs and to practice their faith without hindrance. In the Holy Qur'ān one finds a clear enunciation of the manner in which civilized dialogue should take place in a context of religious diversity; it does so in several verses, some of the most important of which we shall cite here as the essential background against which one should view the metaphysical perspectives on the Other opened up by Ibn al-Arabi, verses to which we will return in the course of presenting these perspectives:

> For each of you We have established a Law and a Path. Had God willed, He could have made you one community. But that He might try you by that which He hath given you [He hath made you as you are]. So vie

with one another in good works. Unto God ye will all return, and He will inform you of that wherein ye differed. (5: 48)

O mankind, truly We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one other. (49: 13)

And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the differences of your languages and colours. Indeed, herein are signs for those who know. (30: 22)

Truly those who believe, and the Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabeans– whoever believeth in God and the Last Day and performeth virtuous deeds– surely their reward is with their Lord, and no fear shall come upon them, neither shall they grieve. (2: 62)

Say: We believe in God, and that which was revealed unto Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which was given unto Moses and Jesus and the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have submitted. (2: 136)

And do not hold discourse with the People of the Book except in that which is finest, save with those who do wrong. And say: We believe in that which hath been revealed to us and revealed to you. Our God and your God is one, and unto Him we surrender. (29: 46)

Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and hold discourse with them [the People of the Book] in the finest manner. (16: 125)

It is on the basis of such verses as these that Martin Lings asserted that, whereas the universality proper to all true religions can be found within each religion's mystical dimension, or esoteric essence, one of the distinctive features of Islam is the fact that universality is indelibly inscribed within its founding revelation– as well as within its esoteric essence. 'All mysticisms are equally universal … in that they all lead to the One Truth. But one feature of the originality of Islam, and therefore of Sufism, is what might be called a secondary universality, which is to be explained above all by the fact

that as the last Revelation of this cycle of time it is necessary something of a summing up.'[1]

The extent to which the religions of the Other are given recognition, and indeed reverence, in the Qur'ān does indeed render this scripture unique among the great revelations of the world. It is thus a rich source for reflection upon the most appropriate way to address the various issues pertaining to a dialogue with the religious Other. The Qur'ānic message on religious diversity is of particular relevance at a time when various paradigms of 'pluralism' are being formulated and presented as a counterweight to the 'clash of civilizations' scenario. In the last of the verses cited above, 16:125, 'wisdom' (*hikma*) is given as the basis upon which dialogue should be conducted. The whole of the Qur'ān, read in depth and not just on the surface, gives us a divine source of wisdom; imbibing from this source empowers and calibrates our efforts to engage in meaningful dialogue and to establish authentic modes of tolerance; it thus provides us, in the words of Tim Winter, with a 'transcendently-ordained tolerance'.[2] Wisdom is a quality and not an order: it cannot be given as a blue-print, a set of rules and regulation; it calls for human effort, a readiness to learn, it needs to be cultivated, and emerges as the fruit of reflection and action. As the words of verse 16:125 tell us, we need wisdom and beautiful exhortation, and we also need to know how to engage in dialogue on the basis of that which is *a'san* 'finest' 'most excellent', or 'most beautiful' in our own faith, if we are to authentically invite people to the path of the Lord. In other words, we are being encouraged to use wisdom, rather than any pre-determined set of instructions, in order to discern the most appropriate manner of inviting people to the 'way of the Lord' and thus find out how best to engage in *da'wa*. But we also need wisdom in order to discern that which is 'most excellent' in the faith of our interlocutors in dialogue. This creative juxtaposition between *da'wa* and dialogue indicates implicitly that, rather than being seen as two contrasting or even antithetical modes of engaging with the Other, these two elements can in fact be synthesized by wisdom: if one's

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[1] M. Lings, *What is Sufism* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1975), pp.22-23. For further discussion of this theme, see our *The Other in the Light of the One– The Universality of the Qur'ān and Interfaith Dialogue* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2006).

[2] Tim Winter, 'Islam and the Threat of Europe' in *World Faiths Encounter,* no. 29, 2001, p. 11.

dialogue with the other flows from the wellsprings of the wisdom of one's tradition, and if one makes an effort to understand the wisdom– that which is 'most excellent'– in the beliefs of the Other, then this kind of dialogue will constitute, in and of itself, a 'most beautiful' form of *da'wa*. For one will be making an effort to allow the wisdom of one's tradition to speak for itself; 'bearing witness' to one's faith will here imply bearing witness to the wisdom conveyed by one's faith-tradition, that very wisdom which, due to its universality and lack of prejudice, allow or compels us to recognize, affirm and engage with the wisdom contained within and expressed by other faith-traditions. For, as the Prophet said, 'Wisdom is the lost camel (*ālla*) of the believer: he has a right to it wherever he may find it'. [3]

If wisdom is the lost property of the believer, this means that wherever wisdom is to be found, in whatever form, in whatever religion, philosophy, spirituality or literature– that wisdom is one's own. It is thus an inestimable tool in the forging of an authentic civilization. One has to be prepared to recognize wisdom, as surely as one would recognize one's own camel, after searching for it. This translates into the attitude: whatever is wise is, by that very fact, part of my faith as a 'believer': my belief in God as the source of all wisdom allows or compels me to recognize as 'mine' whatever wisdom there is in the entirety of time and space, in all religions and cultures. This does not mean that one appropriates to one's own self– whether individual or social or religious– the wisdom of the Other, rather, it means that one recognizes the wisdom of the Other as being an expression of the wisdom of God, the one and only source of wisdom, however it be expressed. How, then, is it 'mine'? Insofar as one's identity is defined by one's relationship with God as the source of all truth, beauty and wisdom, one's 'self' will be, in that very measure, inextricably bound up with the wisdom one perceives, however alien be the context or culture in which it is expressed. On the specifically Islamic level, such an approach produces this open-minded attitude: that which is wise is– by its essence if not its form– 'Islamic'. It 'belongs' to us, and we identify

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[3] This saying, cited in the collections of al-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah, complements other well-known sayings of the Prophet concerning the need to search for knowledge from the cradle to the grave, even if the knowledge be in China, etc. See al-Ghazzāli's collection of such sayings, together with Qur'ānic verses and sayings of the sages, in his *Kitab al-'ilm,* the first book of his monumental *Ihya 'ulum al-din* ('Enlivening of the sciences of religion') translated by N.A. Faris as *The Book of Knowledge* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1966).

with it. This contrasts with the prejudiced attitude: only that which is Islamic– in its form– is wise.

One should note that the universal vision of wisdom was at its strongest when the Islamic civilization was at its most authentic and confident– as witnessed in the extraordinary assimilation and transformation of the various ancient forms of wisdom in the early 'Abbāsid period; this was an exemplification of the calibrated appropriation and creative application of wisdom– from the intellectual legacy of the Greeks, and the Persians, Indians and Egyptians, Mesopotamians, Assyrians, etc.– on a grand, civilizational scale, transforming and enriching Muslim philosophy, science, and culture.[4] By contrast, it is the exclusivist, prejudiced approach to wisdom that prevails today, when the Islamic 'civilization' can hardly be said to exist anywhere. It would also appear to be the case that when the Islamic civilization existed, *da'wa* was not invested with the emotional intensity which it has acquired in our times. Modernism, with its highly developed tools of propaganda, its tendencies of ideologization, bureaucratization, and uniformalization, has influenced Muslim thought and behaviour and made Muslim *da'wa* much more like Christian missionary movements; in traditional Islam, the *da'wa* that existed was far more low-key, personal and took the form of preaching through personal example– it is not accidental, as Thomas Arnold's masterly study reveals, that the main 'missionaries' of traditional Islam were mystics and merchants.[5] The emotional intensity with which *da'wa* is invested in our times would appear to be, on the one hand, a function of the very weakness of Islamic culture, a defensive reflex used to disguise one's 'civilizational' deficiencies, and on the other, a kind of inverted image of the missionary Christian movement to which the Muslim world has been subjected in the past few centuries, a mimetic response to one's erstwhile colonizers.

One cannot deny, however, that *da'wa* has always played a role in Muslim culture and that it has a role to play today, To ignore *da'wa*, within a Muslim context, is to render questionable one's credentials as a 'valid interlocuter' on behalf of Islam. But one ought to be aware of the kind of *da'wa* that is appropriate in our times, and to seek to learn from the most subtle and

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[4] See the masterly work by Sayyed Hossein Nasr, *Science and Civilization in Islam* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1987), 'Introduction', pp.21-40.

[5] See Thomas Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam* (London: Luzac, 1935).

refined spirituality of the Islamic tradition in order to make wisdom the basic of one's *da'wa.* The kind of *da'wa* being proposed here is one which seeks to be true to the wisdom which flows from the Qur'ānic message of religious diversity, a message read in depth, according to Sufi hermeneutics, and in particular the metaphysics of Ibn al-Arabi.[6] This would be a form of *da'wa* which contrasts sharply with the kind of trumphaslist propaganda with which we are all too familiar in our times: a disdainful and arrogant call, issuing from harshly exclusivist attitudes which manifest the claim that 'my' religion is alone right and all others are wrong. A dialogue based on wisdom would also be a form of dialogue which contrasts quite sharply with a relativistic pluralism which, by reducing all religious beliefs to a presumptuous lowest common denominator, ends up by undermining one's belief in the normativity of one's religion– a belief which is so central to the upholding of one's faith with integrity. The kind of *da'wa* as the dialogue being proposed here charts a middle path, avoiding the two extremes which are in fact closer to each other than is immediately obvious: a fundamentalist type of *da'wa* which alienates the Other on account of its blatant exclusivity, and a pluralistic mode of dialogue which corrodes the Self on account of its thinly veiled assault on normativity. An effective, realistic, and practical mode of dialogue must do justice both to the Self which one ostensibly represents, and to the Other with whom one is in dialogue; there has to be room for the expression of one's belief in the normativity of one's tradition– the belief that one's religion is the best religion, failing which, one would not adhere to it.[7] The right of the Other to bear witness to his faith should, likewise, be respected.

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[6] See for a more extended discussion of Ibn al-Arabi's principles of exegesis, in the context of Sufi and postmodern hermeneutics, *The Other in the Light of the One,* chapter 1, 'The Hermeneutics of Suspicion or of Sufism?', pp.1-73. See also our forthcoming paper, 'Beyond Polemics and Pluralism: The Universal Message of the Qur'ān', delivered at the conference: 'Al-Azhar and the West- Bridges of Dialogue', Cairo, 5 January, 2009.

[7] As Frithjof Schuon observes: 'Every religion by definition wants to be the best, and "must want" to be the best, as a whole and also as regards its constitutive elements; this is only natural, so to speak, or rather "supernaturally natural", ' 'The idea of "The Best" in Religions', in his *Christianity/Islam– Essays on Esoteric Ecumenism* (Bloomington: World Wisdom Books, 1985), p.151.

The question might then be asked: how can these competing truth-claims be reconciled with the needs of dialogue– will the result not simply be two mutually exclusive monologues engaging in an unseemly type of competitive religion rather than respecting each other in an enriching dialogue of comparative religion? There is an existential argument one can make, whatever be the faith adhered to, on behalf of the 'exclusivist' claim, and this argument is based on the fact that religion is not simply a conceptual schema, it is a transformative power. In the 'clash' between rival religions, one is not only confronted by competing, mutually exclusive truth-claims, one is also presented with alternative paths to realization of a Reality which radically transcends all conceptually posited truths. One's perception of the 'truths' which fashion and delineate one's path to Reality will be deepened, and the truth-claims will be correspondingly corroborated, in proportion to one's progress along that path: therefore the claim that one's religion is 'more true' than other religions is a claim about the transformative power which one has directly experienced, and it is this which bestows an existential certainty– rather than any kind of logical infallibility– about one's claim on behalf of the spiritual power of one's religion, a degree of certainty which is absent from a purely conceptual truth-claim one might make on behalf of the dogmas of one's religion. Religion is more about realization than conceptualization; or rather, it is about an initial set of concepts which call out for spiritual action,[8] and which find their consummation in spiritual realization.[9]

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[8] 'Knowledge calls out for action', says Imam Ali; 'if it is answered [it is of avail], otherwise it departs.' Cited in the compilation by 'Abd al-Wā'id Amidī, *Ghurar al-hikam wa durar al-kalim* (given together with the Persian translation, under the title, *Guftār-i Amīr al-mu'minīn 'Ali,* by Sayyid Husayn Shaykhul-Islami (Qom: Intishārāt-i An'ariyān, 2000), Vol.2, p.993, no.21.

[9] In the words of Frithjof Schuon: 'The true and complete understanding of an idea goes far beyond the first apprehension of the idea by the intelligence, although more often than not this apprehension is taken for understanding itself. While it is true that the immediate evidence conveyed to us by any particular idea is, on its own level, a real understanding, there can be no question of its embracing the whole extent of the idea since it is primarily the sign of an aptitude to understand that idea in its completeness. Any truth can in fact be understood at different levels and according to different "conceptual dimensions", that is to say according to an indefinite number of modalities which correspond to all the possible aspects, likewise indefinite in number, of the truth in question. This way of regarding ideas accordingly leads to the question of spiritual realization, the doctrinal expressions of which clearly illustrate the "dimensional indefinity" of theoretical conceptions.' *The Transcendent Unity of Religions* (Tr. Peter Townsend) (London: Faber and Faber, 1953) p.17.

The Buddhist notion of doctrine– all doctrine– as *upaya*, a 'saving strategy', is an example of a wise doctrine which we might use here to help explain this point. This notion means, essentially, that all doctrines are veils which transmit some aspects of the truth while obscuring others: the communicable aspect of the truth in question is transmitted, but at the price of obscuring its incommunicable dimension, even if it be taken as the whole truth. The key spiritual function of doctrine is to point to a reality beyond itself, and is likened, within Buddhism, to a finger pointing at the moon: one is urged to look at the moon indicated by the finger, and not focus exclusively on the finger. [10] This reduction of the spiritual end to the conceptual means is what fanatical dogmatism does; by contrast, a more supple approach to dogma results in seeing it as a means to an end: the dogma as theory leads to spiritual praxis, and moral transformation, thanks to which the 'eye of the heart' is opened up, enabling it to 'see' that Reality to which the dogma bears witness, but which it cannot encompass or exhaust.

In regard to the function of language in the search for truth, Rumi makes this point, which resonates with the idea of *upaya*, and which highlights the need for spiritual action as an accompaniment to doctrinal learning: 'Someone asked: Then what is the use of expressions and words? The master [i.e. Rumi] answered: The use of words is that they set you searching and excite you, not that the object of the quest should be attained through words. If that were the case, there would be no need for so much striving and self-naughting. Words are as when you see afar off something moving, you run in the wake of it in order to see it, not that you see it through its movement. Human speech too is inwardly the same; it excites you to seek the meaning, even though you do not see it in reality.'

Rumi then reinforces the point, stressing the incommensurability between the kind of learning that comes through reading on the one hand, and the understanding that arises from the spiritual discipline of self-transcendence on the other:

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[10] After mentioning this analogy, Sakyamuni Buddha continues: 'Words are the finger pointing to the meaning; they are not the meaning itself. Hence, do not rely upon words.' Cited by Eisho Nasu, '"Rely on the meaning, not on the words": Shinran's Methodology and strategy for Reading Scriptures and Writing the *Kyōgōshinshō*' in *Discourse and Ideology in Medieval Japanese Buddhism* (eds. R.K. Payne and T.D. Leighton) (New York: Routledge, 2006), p.253.

Someone was saying: I have studied so many sciences and mastered so many ideas, yet it is still not known to me what that essence in man is that will remain forever, and I have not discovered it.

The Master answered: if that had been knowable by means of words only, you would not have needed to pass away from self and to suffer such pains. It is necessary to endure so much for yourself *not* to remain, so that you may know that thing which *will* remain. [11]

Similarly, another great Persian poet Abd al-Rehmān Jāmi (d.1492), who masterfully synthesized the esoteric teachings of the school of *wahdat al-wujud* in his masterpiece, *Lawāhih,* expresses succinctly the transcendence of this higher wisdom, in terms of which thought– all thought, including the mentally posited conceptions of the dogmas of religion– is not just surpassed, it is even rendered 'evil':

O heart, how long searching for perfection in school?

How long perfecting the rules of philosophy and geometry?

Any thought other than God's remembrance is evil suggestion.[12]

It is this perspective which enables one to reconcile competing truth-claims within a unique Reality which transcends all such claims, that Reality to which the 'truths' bear witness, to which they lead, and from which they receive all their value. The following words of the Qur'ān bear witness to the unique Reality from which all religions derive: *Our God and your God is One* (29: 46); as for leading back to the same Reality: *For each of you We have established a Law and a Path* (5: 48).

If the paths revealed by God are different and divergent, then they cannot but be accompanied by divergent truth-claims, that is, claims pertaining to ways of conceiving and realizing the truth; but insofar as this truth is but the conceptual expression of an ultimate Reality, and insofar as this Reality is posited as the alpha and omega of all things, the divergent conceptual claims to truth converge on a unique Reality– that of God, the ultimate Truth, the

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[11] *The Discourses of Rumi* (Fihi ma fihi) (tr. A.J. Arberry), (London: John Murray, 1961), p.202.

[12] This is from William Chittick's translation of the *Lawahih*, in Chinese *Gleams of Sufi Light*, Sachiko Murata (Albany: SUNY, 2000), P.138.

ultimate Reality– both truth and reality being in fact synthesized in one of the most important names of God in Islam, *al-Haqq*, 'The Real/The Truth'.

If the source and the summit of the divergent paths is a single, unique Reality, it is this oneness of the Real which must take ontological precedence over the competing 'epistemological' claims to truth. In other words, Being precedes thought; thought is consummated in Being.[13] The mutually exclusive truth-claims, in their purely conceptual form, might be seen as so many unavoidable shadows cast by the divinely-willed diversity of religious paths; these diverse paths, in turn, can be envisaged as so many 'lights' emanating from the one and only Light, this unique Light being refracted into different colours by the prism of relativity, and these differently coloured lights then crystallizing in the forms of the various religions, according to this symbolism. [14]

Red, blue and yellow lights remain lights even while of necessity excluding each other: no light can be identified with another, except insofar as each is identified with light as such, and not as such and such a light. Here, the Essence of the Real, or the Absolute, is represented by light as such, and the religions can be seen as colours adding to that light something of their own relativity, even while being the vehicles of that light. As will be seen below, this means of reconciling outwardly divergent religious forms within a unitive spiritual essence evokes Ibn al-Arabi's image of the cup being coloured by the drink it contains. The water, standing here for the Absolute, within the cup– the particular religion– becomes 'coloured' by the colour of the cup;

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[13] This is the very opposite of the Cartesian axiom: 'I think, therefore I am'. Here, thought trumps being, individual conceptualization precedes universal reality. Subjectivism, individualism, rationalism - all are contained in this error, and reinforce its basic tendency, which is to reverse the traditional, normal subordination of human thought to divine Reality.

[14] Schuon refers to the distinction between metaphysics and ordinary religious knowledge in terms of uncoloured light, and particular colours: 'If an example may be drawn from the sensory sphere to illustrate the difference between metaphysical and religious knowledge, it may be said that the former, which can be called "esoteric" when it is manifested through a religious symbolism, is conscious of the colourless essence of light and of its character of pure luminosity; a given religious belief, on the other hand, will assert that light is red and not green, whereas another belief will assert the opposite; both will be right in so far as they distinguish light from darkness but not in so far as they identify it with a particular colour.' *Transcendent Unity,* p.10.

but this is so only extrinsically, and from the human point of view, for intrinsically, and from the divine point of view– *sub specie aeternitatis*– the water remains colourless.

Returning to the idea of *da'wa* as dialogue, in the Christian context, those most opposed to the reductionistic tendencies of the kind of pluralism associated with John Hick argue forcefully that a Christian has both the right and the duty to 'bear witness' to his faith: to some degree at least, and in some manner, implicit or explicit, it becomes one's duty to invite others to study and investigate the wisdom that is available within one's own faith. As mentioned above, this is a crucial prerequisite for anyone who wishes to engage in dialogue on behalf of a particular faith: to represent that faith must mean to 're-present' it, to present not only its wisdom and beauty but also its *normativity*, failing which one will not be seen as a 'valid interlocutor' within the tradition one seeks to represent.

It might be objected here: it is impossible to meet every type of criterion which the different schools of thought within any given religious tradition may propose for one to be deemed a 'valid interlocutor' on behalf of that faith. Whilst this is true, it is nonetheless worth making the effort to reduce as far as possible the basis upon which one's credentials as a valid interlocutor would be rejected by one's co-religionists. And one of the main bases for this rejection is, without doubt, the perception that those engaged in dialogue are so intent on reaching out to the Other that they do not sufficiently respect the integrity of the Self– that is, they inadequately uphold the normativity of the tradition ostensibly being represented in dialogue. This is a factor which cannot be ignored if one is concerned with a dialogue that aims to be effective, not just in the debating halls of academia, but also in the wider world, wherein the overwhelming majority of believers within the various religions believe deeply in the normativity of their particular religion.

How, then, can the Muslim engaged in dialogue cultivate that wisdom which perceives the truth, the holiness, and the beauty that is contained within the religions of the Other, whilst simultaneously upholding the normativity of his faith, and the specificity of his identity?[15] The perception

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[15] This is one of the central questions which we posed and tried to answer in *The Other in the Light of the One,* pp.117-139; 185-209; 234-266.

of the validity of other, alien forms of religious belief acquires a particular acuteness in the light of the following strongly authenticated saying of Prophet; it is transmitted by Abū Saʾīd al-Khudrī:

> God appears to the Muslims on the Day of Judgment and declares: 'I am your Lord.' They say: 'We seek refuge in God from you, and do not associate anything with God.' They repeat this twice or thrice, such that some of them would be about to return. God asks: 'Is there any sign between you and Him, by means of which you would recognize Him?' They reply: 'Yes';' then the reality is liad bare … Then they raised their heads and He transformed Himself (*ta'awwala*) into the form (*ʿūra*) in which they had seen Him the first time. He then said: 'I am your Lord'. They said: 'You are our Lord'. [16]

How, then, is one to recognize the divine 'face' in the traditions of the Other; how does one recognize this 'lost camel'– the wisdom contained within the religions of the Other? For this wisdom may well be expressed in forms of divine self-manifestation which are not only alien, but, in addition, so unlike one's own received wisdom that one takes refuge from them in one's own God'. If believers on the Day of Judgement are unable to recognize God in anything other than the 'sign' furnished by their own beliefs, through the blinkers of their own prejudices, how can believers, here and now, ensure that they do not fall into this same trap?

Evidently, prejudice is one of the main obstacles in the path of any dialogue which aims at discovering the wisdom of the Other; however, one of the principal problems arising out of the removal of prejudice towards the Other is the weakening of the identity of the Self. [17] How can we reach out to the Other in an unprejudiced manner, without this absence of prejudice diluting or subverting our own sense of identity? Or again: How can we be universalist in our spiritual vision, without sacrificing the specificity of our faith and praxis?

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[16] This is part of long saying concerning the possibility of seeing God in the Hereafter. It is found in the 'sound' collection of Muslim, *Sahih Muslim* (Cairo: Isa al- alibi, n.d.), vol.1, p.94.

[17] Self is given in capitals only as a parallel to the use of the capital O for 'Others'; what is meant here is the empirical self, the individual as such, and its communitarian extension, and not the universal Selfhood of the Real (*nafas al-Haqq,* as Ibn al- Arabi calls it), at once transcendent and immanent.

It is our contention here that in the Islamic tradition, the Sufi school of thought associated with Muhyi al-Din Ibn al-Arabi, known in Sufism as 'the great shaykh' (al-Shaykh al-Akbar), [18] can be of considerable value in helping to cultivate the wisdom which synthesizes the two principles in question here: an unprejudiced, universalist, supra-confessional view of spirituality on the one hand, and a normative approach to the specificity and particularity of one's own faith, praxis, and identity on the other. It is possible to arrive at an inclusive perspective, one which, however papadoxically, includes exclusivism; this is a perspective which transcends the false dichotomy, so often encountered in our times, between a fanatical exclusivism which disdains all but one's own faith, and a relativistic inclusivism which fatally undermines the integrity of one's own faith. Upholding the integrity of one's faith is difficult if not impossible without a definitive, clearly delineated identity, which in its very specificity and particularity cannot but exclude elements of the other on the plane of religious form; by 'religious form' is meant not just legal and ritual forms but also conceptual and doctrinal forms. However, all such forms are radically transcended, objectively, by the divine essence of the religions; and all the modes of identity commensurate with these forms are just as radically dissolved, subjectively, within the consciousness of one whose soul has been effaced within that essence. These are natural corollaries of Ibn al-Arabi's complex and challenging perspective on the dynamics of religious consciousness.

This metaphysical– or supra-confessional– perspective of ibn al-Arabi should be seen as the result of following faithfully and unreservedly certain spiritual trajectories opened up by the Qurʾān, and not simply as the product of his own speculative genius, however undeniable that genius is. Within this perspective there is a clearly defined relationship between the essence of religion– which is unique– and its forms– which are diverse. Verses such as the following should be borne in mind as the rest of this paper proceeds:

He hath ordained for you of the religion (min al-din) that which He commended unto Noah, and that which We reveal to thee [Muhammad],

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[18] For the most comprehensive biography of this seminal figure, see Claude Addas, *Quest for the Red sulphur* (Tr. Peter Kingsley) (Cambridge: Islamic Tests Society, 1993); for a concise overview of Ibn al-Arabi's thought, see Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1988 repr), Ch.3, 'Ibn Arabi and the Sufis', pp. 83-121.

and that which We commended unto Abraham and Moses and Jesus, saying: Establish the religion, and be not divided therein … (42: 13)

Say: We believe in God and that which is revealed unto us, and that which is revealed unto Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and that which was given unto Moses and Jesus and the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have submitted. (3:84)

Naught is said unto thee [Muhammad] but what was said unto the Messengers before thee. (41:43)

It is that essential religion (*al-din*) which was conveyed to all the Messengers, whence the lack of differentiation between them on the highest level: the Muslim is not permitted to make an essential distinction between any of them: *we make no distinction between any of them* (3:84; 2:285, et passim)

Understanding this distinction between the essence of religion and its forms is crucial for those engaged in dialogue; a correct understanding of this fundamental distinction enables one to engage in dialogue with wisdom, and on the basis of a principled universality; this, in contrast to an unprincipled or rootless syncretism, and in contrast to a well-meaning but ultimately corrosive relativistic pluralism. Syncretic universalism stems from a sentimental and superficial assimilation of the sacred; it thus has no intellectual or metaphysical principle which can either discern authentic religion from spurious cults or maintain a total commitment to one's own religion whilst opening up to religions of the Other. In syncretism, indiscriminate openness to all sacred forms in general– or what are deemed to be such– cannot but entail a disintegration of the specific form of one's own religion. Principled universality, by contrast, leads to an intensification of commitment to one's own religion; the sense of the sacred and the need to follow the path delineated by one's own religion not only coexists, but each may be said to be a *sine qua non* for the transformative power of other. For effective access to the sacred is granted, not by an abstract, purely discursive conception of the sacred in general, but by entering into the concrete, specific forms of the sacred which are bestowed by the grace inherent with one's own sacred tradition. From this spiritual process of plumbing the depths of the sacred emerges the comprehension that there is no access to the essence of the sacred, above all religious forms, except by

means of those authentic formal manifestations of the Essence: the divinely revealed religions. Such a perspective flows naturally from reflection upon the meaning of the verses from the Qur'ān cited above, and in particular, 5: 48: *For each of you We have established a Law and a Path. Had God willed, He could have made you one community, But that He might try you by that which He hath given you* [He hath made you as you are]. *So vie with one another in good works ...*

This minimal definition of authenticity– 'true' religion being that which is divinely revealed– derives from the Qur'ān and is reinforced by what Ibn al-Arabi says about obedience of God determining one's salvation:

> He who prostrates himself to other than God seeking nearness to God and obeying God will be felicitous and attain deliverance, but he who prostrates himself to other than God without God's command seeking nearness will be wretched. [19]

We are using this criterion to distinguish true from false religion, in the full knowledge that authenticity or orthodoxy as defined within each true religion will have its own distinctive and irreducible criteria. In this connection it is worth noting that there was never any central ecclesiastical authority in Islam, comparable to the Church in Christianity, charged with the duty of dogmatically imposing an 'infallible' doctrine. According to a well-known saying in Islam: 'The divergences of the learned (*al- ulama*) are a mercy.'[20] This saying can be seen as manifesting the ecumenical spirit proper to Islam; orthodoxy qua doctrinal form has a wide compass, its essence being the attestation of the oneness of God and of Muhammad as His messenger, these comprising the *shahadatayn, or* 'dual testimony'. Accordingly, in Islamic civilization, a wide variety of theological doctrine, philosophical speculation, mystical inspiration and metaphysical exposition was acceptable so long as the Shariah, the Sacred Law, was upheld. We might speculate here that the principle of the saying quoted above can also, by transposition, be applied to the religions themselves: the divergences of the religions constitute a 'mercy'.

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[19] Cited in William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge – Ibn al-Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: SUNY, 1989) p.365.

[20] *Ikhtilaf al-ulama rahma*. This is often cited as a Hadith, but is more authoritatively ascribed to al-Shafii.

This mercy is expressed in the divine will for religion to be characterized by a diversity of paths: *Had God willed, He could have made you one community.*

The capacity to recognize other religions as valid, without detriment to the commitment to one's own religion, evidently requires a certain spiritual suppleness; minimally, it requires a sense of the sacred and an inkling of the universality of revelation; at its most profound, it is the fruit of spiritual vision. With the help of Ibn al-Arabi's doctrine, itself evidently the fruit of just such a vision,[21] we can arrive at a conception of a principled universality, that is, an awareness of the universality of religion which neither violates the principles of one's own religion nor dilutes the content of one's own religious identity.

2. Universality and Identity

The relationship between the perception of religious universality and the imperatives of one's identity is brought into sharp focus by Ibn al-Arabi in his account of his spiritual ascension (*miraj*), an account describing one of the spiritual peaks of his inner life.[22] In this spiritual ascent– distinguished from that of the Prophet, which was both bodily and spiritual– he rises up to a spiritual degree which is revealed as his own deepest essence. But one can hardly speak of personal pronouns such as 'his' at this level of spiritual experience: whatever belongs to him, whatever pertains to 'his' identity, is dissolved in the very process of the ascent itself. At the climax of this ascent, he exclaims: 'Enough, enough! My bodily elements are filled up, and my place cannot contain me!', and then tells us: 'God removed from me my contingent dimension. Thus I attained in this nocturnal journey the inner realities of all the Names and I saw them returning to One Subject and One Entity: that Subject was what I witnessed and that Entity was my Being. For

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[21] Ibn al-Arabi claims that everything he wrote was contained in his first vision of the 'glory of His face'; al his discourse is 'only the differentiation of the all-inclusive reality which was contained in that look at the One Reality.' *Sufi Path*, op.cit., p.xiv.

[22] The following pages contain reflections of material which can be found elaborated in greater detail in our *Paths to Transcendence - According to Shankara, Ibn 'Arabi and Meister Eckhart* (Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2006), pp.69-129.

my voyage was only in myself and pointed to myself, and through this I came to know that I was pure "servant" without a trace of lordship in me at all.'[23]

It is of note that immediately following this extraordinary revelation of the deepest reality of 'his' selfhood within the divine reality, Ibn al-Arabi should proclaim, not the secret of oneness with God, or his 'Lordship' in the manner of a Hallaj ecstatically declaring *ana'l-Haqq* (I am the Truth), but the very opposite: he came to know through this journey that he was a pure servant (*abd*), without any trace of lordship (*rububiyya*). The highest realization is accompanied by the deepest humility. Self-effacement, rather than self-glorification, is the fruit of this degree of spiritual station, the very opposite to what one might have imagined. It is the essence or *sirr*– 'secret' or 'mystery'– of consciousness within the soul of the saint that alone can grasp the truth that it is not conditioned by the soul. The conciousness *within* the soul knows that it is not *of* the soul– this being one of the reasons why this inmost degree of conciousness is referred to as a 'secret': its immanent, divine identity is veiled from the soul of which it is the conscious centre. Herein lies one of the meanings of the Sufi saying: the sufi is in the world but not of it.

The particular dynamics of being within the ontology of Ibn al-Arabi helps us to understand why specificity and self-effacement should be the natural expression of universality and self-realization; these dynamics also help us to see the intimate relationship between the deconstruction of identity and the perception of the universality of religion, as well as the necessity for the reconstruction or restitution of identity within a specific religious matrix. These 'religious' corollaries of Being will be explored later in

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[23] James Morris, 'Ibn al-Arabi's Spiritual Ascension' in M. Chodkiewicz (ed.), *Les illuminations de La Mecque/The Meccan Illuminations* (Paris: Sindbad, 1988), p.380. One is reminded by the words 'my place cannot contain me' of Rumi's lines: 'What is to be done, O Muslims? For I do not recognize myself? I am not Christian, nor Jew; not Zoroastrian, nor Muslim.' This is a succinct expression of the transcendence of all religious identity in the bosom of the unitive state, which is alluded to later in the poem:

'I have put duality aside … One I seek, One I know, One I see, One I call.

He is the First, He is the Last, He is the Outward, He is the Inward'. [paraphrasing 57:2]. *Selected Poems from the Divan-i Shams Tabriz* (Ed. And Tr. R.A. Nicholson [translation modified]) (Cambridge: CUP, 1977), pp.125, 127.

this section. For the moment, attention is to be focused on the fact that at the very summit of this spiritual ascent to ultimate reality and self-realization, Ibn al-Arabi receives from the Reality the verse of the Qur'ān (cited above):

> Say: We believe in God and that which is revealed unto us, and that which is revealed unto Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and that which was given unto Moses and Jesus and the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have submitted. (3: 84)

He then adds these words: Henceforth I knew that I am the totality of those (prophets) who were mentioned to me (in this verse)'; and also: 'He gave me all the Signs in this Sign'. [24]

Since the word for 'sign' is the same as that for 'verse' (*āya*), this can also be taken to mean that all revealed verses are implicitly contained in this verse which establishes the universality and unity of the essence of religious message, despite the outward differentiation of its formal expression. This last point is clearly implied in another account of a spiritual ascent, in which Ibn al-Arabi encountered the Prophet amidst a group of other prophets and is asked by him: 'What was it that made you consider us as many?' To which Ibn al-Arabi replies: 'Precisely (the different scriptures and teachings) we took (from you).'[25]

Heavily implied in the Prophet's rhetorical question is the intrinsic unity of all the revelations. This principle is expressed in the following verse of the Qur'ān (cited above), which Ibn al-Arabi quotes and then comments upon:

> He hath ordained for you of the religion (min al-din) that which He commended unto Noah, and that which We reveal to thee [Muhammad], and that which We commended unto Abraham and Moses and Jesus, saying: Establish the religion, and be not divided therein. (42: 13)

Then he quotes from another verse, mentioning further prophets, and concluding: *Those are they whom God has guided, so follow their guidance.*(6: 90) He comments as follows:

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[24] Quoted in J.W.Morris, 'Ibn al-Arabi's Ascension', p.379.

[25] Quoted in J.W. Morris, 'The Spiritual Ascension: Ibn al-Arabi and the Mirāj', *Journal of the American Oriental Society,* vol.108, 1988, p.75.

This is the path that brings together every prophet and messenger. It is the performance of religion, scattering not concerning it and coming together in it. It is that concerning which Bukhārī wrote a chapter entitled, "The chapter on what has come concerning the fact that the religions of the prophets is one". He brought the article which makes the word "religion" definite, because all religions come from God, even if some of the rulings are diverse. Everyone is commanded to perform the religion and to come together in it … As for the rulings which are diverse, that is because of the Law which God assigned to each one of the messengers. He said: *For each of you We have established a Law and a Path. Had God willed, He could have made you one community.* (5: 48). If He had done that, your revealed Law would not be diverse, just as they are not diverse in the fact that you have been commanded to come together and to perform them.'[26]

One sees clearly that Ibn al-Arabi is suggesting here a distinction between religion as such on the one hand and such and such a religion on the other; it is religion as such that warrants the definite article (*al-din*). But such and such a religion, far from being marginalized in this perspective, is endowed with an imperatively binding nature by virtue of the absoluteness of its own essence, that is by virtue of being not other than religion as such. For, on the one hand, religion as such, *al-din*, is the inner substance and inalienable reality of such and such a religion, and on the other, it is impossible to practise religion as such without adhering to such and such a religion. Apprehending the universal essence of religion, far from precluding particularity and exclusivity of formal adherence, in fact requires this adherence: to attain the essence one must grasp, in depth, the form by which the essence reveals itself. This is why, in the passage quoted above, Ibn al-Arabi continues by stressing the specific path proper to the final Prophet. It is that path 'for which he was singled out to the exclusion of everyone else. It is the Koran, God's firm cord and all-comprehensive Law. This is indicated in His words:

This is My straight path, so follow it, and follow not diverse paths, lest they scatter you from its road. (6: 153)[27]

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[26] Cited in *Sufi Path*, p.303 (translation modified).

[27] Ibid.

This 'straight path' both excludes and includes all other paths: excludes by why of specific beliefs and practices, and includes by virtue of the single Essence to which the path leads, and from which it began. But one cannot reach the end of the path without traversing its specific trajectory, without keeping within its boundaries, and thus making sure that one does not stray into other paths: *And each one has a direction* (Wijha) *toward which he turns. So vie with one another in good works* …' (2: 148). One is instructed to turn towards one's particular goal, in a particular direction, and this is despite the fact that the Qur'ān tells us that *Wherever ye turn, there is the Face of God* (2: 115). The ubiquity of the divine Face, then, does not imply that in one's formal worship, the direction in which one turns to pray is of no consequence. For the Qur'ān also says: *Turn your face towards the sacred mosque, and wherever you may be, turn your faces toward it* [when you pray]. (2: 144)

For Ibn al-Arabi, such combinations of principal universality and practical specificity are paradoxical expressions of a principle that goes to the very heart of his ontology, his understanding of the nature of reality: for 'part of the perfection or completeness of Being is the existence of imperfection, or incompleteness within it (من كمال الوجود وجود النقص فيه)'– failing which Being would be incomplete by virtue of the absence of incompleteness within it.[28] This is an example of the bringing together of opposites (*jam' bayn al-ziddayn*) which is emphasized repeatedly in the writings of Ibn al-Arabi, pertaining to the paradoxes required on the level of language, if one is to do justice to the complexities of existence. Just as completeness requires and is not contradicted by incompleteness, so the incomparablility (*tanzih*) of God requires and is not contradicted by comparability (*tashbih*), universality requires and is not contradicted by particularity, inclusivity requires and is not contradicted by exclusivity, and nondelimitation (*itlaq*) requires and is not contradicted by delimitation (*taqyid*).

Returning to the direction in which one must pray: on the one hand, the instruction to turn in a specific direction 'does not eliminate the property of God's Face being wherever you turn', and on the other, the fact that God is there wherever one turns nonetheless implies the bestowal of a specific 'felicity' (*sa'āda*) as the consequence of turning in a particular direction for

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[28] Ibid., p.296.

prayer. 'Hence for you He combined delimitation and nondelimitation, just as for Himself He combined incomparablility and similarity. He said; "Nothing is like Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing" (42:11).'[29]

Nothing is like Him: this denial of similarity, this expression of pure *tanzih* or transcendence, is immediately followed by an apparent contradiction of this very incomparability, for 'He is the Hearing, the Seeing'. As human beings also hear and see, this statement inescapably entails establishing modes of similarity or comparability between man and God. Ibn al-Arabi, however, does not allow the mind to be restricted by this conceptual antimony, but rather takes advantage of the appearance of contradiction, using it as a platform from which to rise to an intuitive synthesis between these two opposing principles: the divine incomparability is perfect only when it is not conditioned by the very fact of being unconditioned by similarity, and vice versa. The divine nondelimitation is only properly grasped in the light of delimitation, and vice versa. This paradox is powerfully delivered in the following passage:

> He is not declared incomparable in any manner that will remove Him from similarity, nor is He declared similar in any manner that would remove Him from incomparability. So do not declare Him nondelimited and thus delimited by being distinguished from delimitation! For if He is distinguished then He is delimited by His nondelimitation. And if He is delimited by His nondelimitation, then He is not He.[30]

Without possessing or manifesting an aspect of finitude, God cannot be regarded as infinite; without assuming a mode of delimitation He cannot be nondelimited; without the relative, He cannot be absolute. Without the innumerable manifestations of these apparent contradictions of His own uniqueness, without such multiplicity within unity, and unity within multiplicity, 'He is not He'. The very infinitude of the inner richness of unicity overflows as the outward deployment of inexhaustible self-disclosures; this process is described as the *tajalli* or *zuhūr* (theophanic revelation/ manifestation). It is a process wherein no repetition is possible (*la tikrar fi'l tajalli*); each phenomenon is unique in time, space and quality. In this

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[29] Ibid., p.11.

[30] Ibid., p.112.

complex and subtle conception of *wujud*, there is no contradiction between asserting the uniqueness of each phenomenon– each distinct locus for the manifestation of Being, each *mazhar* fot the *zuhūr* or *tajalli* of the one and only Reality– and the all-encompassing unity of being which transcends all phenomena. Multiplicity is comprised within unity, and unity is displayed by multiplicity.

This ontological perspective is to be applied on the plane of religion: there is no contradiction between asserting the uniqueness of a particular religion on the one hand and affirming the all-encompassing principle of religion which transcends the forms assumed by religion, on the other. The transcendence in question leaves intact the formal differences of the religions; for these differences, defining the uniqueness of each religion, are by that very token irreducible; the formal differences can only be transcended in spiritual realization of the Essence, or at least, an intuition of this Essence. They cannot be abolished on their own level in a pseudo-esoteric quest for the supra-formal essence. For these differences are divinely willed; religious diversity expresses a particular mode of divine wisdom, which man must grasp if he is to do justice both to the formless Essence of religion, and the irreducible uniqueness of each religious form.

Ibn al-Arabi's conception of *al-din*, or religion as such, a religious essence that at once transcends and abides at the heart of all religions is in complete accord with the Qur'ānic perspective on religious diversity; it helps one to see that an orientation towards this quintessential religion does not in the least imply a blurring of the boundaries between religions on the plane of their formal diversity. For one does not so much conceptually posit as spiritually intuit this essence of religion– in other words, one sees this 'heart' of religion with one's own 'heart', rather than one's mind:

My *heart* has become capable of every form: it is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks,

And a temple for idols and the pilgrim's Ka'ba and the table of the Torah and the book of the Koran.

I follow the religion of Love: whatever way Love's camels take, that is my religion and my faith. [31]

The defining spirit of principled universality thus pertains to inner vision and does not translate into any modification of one's outer practice. It is on the basis of this religion of love, perceived by spiritual intuition, not formulated by rational speculation, that Ibn al-Arabi can issue the following warning to narrow-minded exclusivists:

Beware of being bound up by a particular creed and rejecting others as unbelief! If you do that you will fail to obtain a great benefit. Nay, you will fail to obtain the true knowledge of the reality. Try to make yourself a Prime Matter for all forms of religious belief. God is greater and wider than to be confined to one particular creed to the exclusion of others. For He says: 'To whichever direction you turn, there surely is the Face of God.' (2: 115).[32]

One should note that this counsel resonates with a Qur'ānic warning to the same effect. This verse come just before 2: 115, quoted in the previous citation from Ibn al-Arabi. Here, the attitude of religious exclusivism is censured, and the Muslim is told to transcend the level of inter-confessional polemics and focus on the exxential pre-requisites of salvation: not belonging to such and such a religion, but submitting to God through one's religion, and manifesting the sincerity of that submission through virtue:

And they say: None entereth paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian. These are their own desires. Say: Bring your proof if ye are truthful. Nay, but whosoever surrendereth his purpose to God while being virtuous, his reward is with his Lord; and there shall be no fear upon them, neither shall they grieve.' (2: 12)

The Qur'ān excludes this kind of chauvinistic exclusivism by virtue of an implicit, and occasionally explicit, inclusivism; but it also includes its own mode of exclusivism, both implicitly and explicitly, in affirming the need to

[31] *The Tarjumān al-Ashwāq- A Collection of Mystical Odes* (tr. R.A. Nicholson) (London: Theosophical Publishing House, 1978), p.52.

[32] Cited by Toshihiko Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism- A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts,* Berkeley/London: University of California Press, 1983), p.254. With modifications, see note 15 above.

follow the particular religion of Islam. The Akbari principle of paradoxical synthesis of two apparently contradictory principles can clearly be seen at this level of revelation, and is indeed the ultimate source of Ibn al-Arabi's elaborate metaphysics. In keeping with the spirit of this metaphysical perspective, one must assert: it is only on the basis of the vision of the religion of love that one can be 'liberated' from the limitation of one's own faith, for then, the escape is upwards, towards the essence of one's own, and every, faith; any attempt to loosen the bonds of one's own belief system, in the absence of this upwardly and inwardly essentialising movement of consciousness, is tantamount to simply dissolving the roots of one's religious identity, and leaving nothing in its place on the level where one cannot do without a sense of identity, that is, the human personality. The conciousness which is alone capable of transcending the formal limitations or religion is supra-personal: it has nothing to do with the empirical ego.

In passing, one might note that it is this dissolution which postmodern deconstruction engenders, deliberately or otherwise; one aspires to be liberated from the 'constructions' of belief, language, history, tradition, etc. by systematic demolition of these elements. But, in stark contrast to the spiritual 'deconstruction' of an Ibn al-Arabi, there is no reconstruction of thought, belief and identity on a higher plane of being.[33] Here it would be appropriate to return to the spiritual ascent, or *mi'raj* of Ibn al-Arabi mentioned earlier. It is important to note that in the course of this ascent, he undergoes a process of dissolution by means of which he is divested of various aspects of his being, such that he becomes aware that 'his' consciousness is no longer 'his' and the Real is realized as the essence of all consciousness and being. The degrees leading up to this unitive state are given in a description of the 'journey' of the saints to God, within God. In this journey the composite nature of the saint is 'dissolved', first through being shown by God the different elements of which his nature is composed, and the respective domains to which they belong; he then abandons each element to its appropriate domain:

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[33] Some have tried to see similarities between this type of spiritual self-denouement and postmodern deconstructionism. See our *The Other in the Light of the One*, pp.23-58, for a presentation of the irreconcilable differences between the two approaches to reality.

[T]he form of his leaving it behind is that God sends a barrier between that person and that part of himself he left behind in that sort of world, so that he is not aware of it. But he still has the awareness of what remains with him, until eventually he remains with the divine Mystery (*sirr*), which is the "specific aspect" extending from God to him. So when he alone remains, then God removes from him the barrier of the veil and he remains with God, just as everything else in him remained with (the world) corresponding to it.[34]

The constitutive elements of human nature are 'dissolved' (or deconstructed) through being absorbed by those dimensions of cosmic existence to which they belong. Consciousness becomes rarified, purified and disentangled from matter and its subtle prolongations. As seen above, the 'culmination revelation' coming just before the experience of extinctive union, was given in relation to the essence of all religions. Just as this realization of the essence of all religions does not entail any diminution of adherence to the form of one's own religion, likewise, as regards consciousness as such, the realization of the essence of the Real in no way entails any diminution of one's slavehood before the Real: 'The slave remains always the slave', according to a saying often repeated in Ibn al-Arabi's works. The ego remains always the ego, and this level of personal specificity cannot but entail what Ibn al-Arabi refers to as *ubūdiyya*, slavehood.

In other words, in this process of spiritual ascent there is both *tahlil* and *tarkib*, dissolution and reconstitution, dissolution of all elements pertaining to the ego, and then reconstitution of this same ego, but on a higher plane: that of a conscious realization of one's actual nothingness. Higher the plane reached by essentialized consciousness, deeper is one's awareness of one's slavehood. In contrast to deconstruction, this dismantling of specificity and identity in the movement towards universality and transcendent Selfhood is accompanied by a return to the specific identity, which is now vibrant with the spirit of the ultimate Self: the individual sees the Face of God everywhere, because of the very completeness of his self-effacement; and on the plane of religion, the specific form of his religion as such within such and such a religion, the absolute, nondelimited essence of religion is revealed by and within the relative, delimited religion, just as the Self of the Real (*nafs*

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[34] James W. Morris, 'Ibn al-Arabi's Spiritual Ascension', p.362.

al-haqq) subsists as the ultimate reality within the soul of the individual, who now comes to understand that he is both 'He' and 'not He'. Each religion is both a form, outwardly, and the Essence, inwardly; just as man is 'the transient, the eternal'.[35]

The religion of love, or the religion of the 'heart', thus re-affirms and does not undermine one's particular religion, or any other revealed religion; rather, this conception of 'the religion' or religion as such presupposes formal religious diversity, regarding it not as a regrettable differentiation but a divinely willed necessity. The infinite forms of existence are integrated, 'made one', according to the unitive principle of *tawhid*, in the very bosom of, and not despite, this infinite unfolding of Being; we observe an analogous synthesis between multiplicity and unity on the level of religious phenomena: the dazzling diversity of religious forms manifests the principle of inexhaustible infinitude, just as the degree proper to 'the religion', or religion as such, is the expression, in religious mode, of the principle of absolute oneness. This synthesis between infinity and oneness of the religious plane implies, then, both diversity of revealed forms, and the uniqueness of each specific revealed form. Each revealed religion is totally unique– totally 'itself'– while at the same time being an expression of a single, all-encompassing principle, that of Revelation, a principle within which all religions are integrated, or 'made one', in the rigorously metaphysical sense of *tawhid*.

To conclude: It is clear that for Ibn al-Arabi the unity of religions lies in the unity of Revelation, and that this position is rooted in the message of the Qur'ān:

> Say: We believe in God, and that which was revealed unto Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which was given unto Moses and Jesus and the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have submitted. (2: 136)

The following verse might well be read as an allusion to the mystery of this unity of the celestial cause and the diversity of terrestrial effects:

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[35] This is from Ibn al-Arabi's *Fusūs al-Hikam,* translated by R. Austin as *Bezels of Wisdom* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980) p.51.

And in the earth are neighboring tracts, and gardens of vines, and fields sown, and palms in pairs, and palms single, watered with one water. And we have made some of them to excel others in fruit. Surely herein are signs for a people who understand. (13:4)

The 'water' of Revelation is simultaneously one in its substance and multiple in its forms. In terms of the image of the water and the cup, briefly alluded to above: the cup might be seen to symbolize the form taken by Revelation, while water stands for the Essence of Revelation. Water, in itself, is undifferentiated and unique, whilst undergoing an apparent change of form and colour by virtue of the accidental shape and colour of the receptacles into which it is poured. The receptacles, the forms of Revelation, are fashioned according to the specificities of the human communities to which the specific revealed message is addressed: *And We never sent a messenger save with the language of his folk, that he might make the message clear for them* (14:4). Just as human communities differ, so must the 'language' of the 'message' sent to them: the cups cannot but differ. However, the one who knows 'water' as it is in itself, that is, the essence of that which is revealed, and not just its forms, will recognize this 'water' in receptacles other than his own, and will be able to judge all such receptacles according to their content, rather than be misled into judging the content according to the accidental properties of the container.

To accept God fully, therefore, means to accept His presence and reality in all forms of His Self-disclosure, all forms of revelation, all beliefs stemming from those revelations; while to limit Him to one's own particular form of belief is tantamount to denying Him: 'He who delimits Him denies Him in other than his own delimitation … But he who frees Him from every delimitation never denies Him. On the contrary, he acknowledges Him in every form within which He undergoes self- transmutation …'[36]

Nonetheless, the ordinary believer who may thus 'deny' God by adhering exclusively to his own belief is not punished because of this implicit denial: since God is Himself 'the root of every diversity in beliefs', it follows that

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[36] The reference here is to God's capacity to transform Himself in keeping with the 'signs' by which the believers can recognize Him, as expressed in the Hadīth cited earlier in this article, and which Ibn al-Arabi cites several times in his works. *Sufi Path,* pp.339 – 340.

'everyone will end up with mercy'.[37] Also, in terms of the water/cup image: the water in the cup, however delimited it may be by the container, remains water nonetheless, hence the ordinary believer benefits from his possession of the truth; even if this truth be limited by the particularities of his own conception, it adequately conveys the nature of That which is conceived, but which cannot be attained by concepts alone. Thus one returns to the principle that all 'religions' are true by virtue of the absoluteness of their content, while each is relative due to the particular nature of its form.

Each particular religion vehicles the Absolute, even while being distinct from It: the absoluteness of a religion resides in its supra-formal, transcendent essence, while, in its formal aspect, the same religion is necessarily relative; and this amounts to saying, on the one hand, that no one religion can lay claim, on the level of form, to absolute truth, to the exclusion of other religions, and on the other hand, that each religion is true by virtue of the absoluteness of its origin and of its essence. One continues to conform to the dictates of one's own religion, and does so, moreover, with a totality that is commensurate with the absoluteness inherent in the religion;[38] and at the same time one is aware of the presence of the Absolute in all those religions that have issued from a Divine Revelation, this awareness being the concomitant of one's recognition of the formal and thus relative aspect of one's own religion; and this recognition, in turn, arises in proportion to one's ability to plumb the metaphysical implications of the first testimony of Islam, 'There is no god but God': only the Absolute is absolute.

This kind of approach to the question of religious diversity and interfaith dialogue ensures that the formal integrity and distinctness of each faith will be respected, and at the same time establishes the proper level at which we can say that all religions are at one. It is not on the level of forms that they are one; rather, they are one in God as their source, and they are as one in respect of the substance of their imperative to man: namely to submit to the Divinely Revealed Law and Way. Principles such as these, expounded with subtlety and depth in the metaphysical perspective of Ibn al-Arabi, can help greatly in avoiding both the pitfalls of bridge-building between faiths and

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[37] *Sufi Path*, p.338

[38] And, as seen earlier, one can conform to one's religion in the sincere belief that it is the *best* religion, without this detracting from the universality of one's perspective.

cultures on the one hand and the dangers of religious nationalism on the other: that is, it can help to prevent a fragmentary sense of the sacred from arbitrarily or indiscriminately assimilating apparently 'religious' forms out of sentimental desire; and inversely, it can help prevent an over-zealous sense of orthodoxy from summarily anathematizing alien religious forms out of dogmatic rigidity. Such a perspective shows that there is no incompatibility between believing absolutely in one's particular faith and cultivating reverentially a universal sense of the sacred.

EXISTENCE OF EVIL, THEODICY AND SUFISM

Muhammad Maroof Shah

ABSTRACT

THE PRESENT PAPER ATTEMPTS TO PRESENT SUFI THEODICY AND ARGUES THAT IT IS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SUFISM THAT THE VEXING PROBLEM OF EVIL COULD BE CONVINCINGLY TACKLED. READING CRITIQUES OF THEODICY IN THE LIGHT OF SUFI METAPHYSICAL THOUGHT AND ARGUING FOR REORIENTING THE FRAMEWORK FROM WHICH THE QUESTION OF EVIL IS USUALLY APPROACHED IN CONTEMPORARY DEBATES ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION, IT HIGHLIGHTS THE MUCH IGNORED PERSPECTIVE OF ISLAMIC THEODICY AND ALSO ATTEMPTS A CRITIQUE OF THE PESSIMIST-ABSURDIST MODERNISM.

The problem of evil is arguably the most difficult problem for all theistic worldviews. Modern age is characterized by the extreme obtrusiveness of evil and it could well be argued that it is the changed perception or cognizance of evil that differentiates the modern humanist secularist worldview from the traditional religious worldviews. The problem constitutes perhaps the foremost challenge to traditional theology in modern times. Any attempt to secure a rational foundation for religion in modern times must seriously reckon with the problem. And theodicy has become a notoriously difficult job for any theologian in modern times. It has been a canker in the heart of theism. The usual theological apologies or answers are hardly convincing and have been subject to searching criticism from various quarters. However, the traditional metaphysical approach to the problem, as presented in the writings of Sufis, has largely been ignored in academic debates on the philosophy of religion. The present paper argues that the problem of evil hardly appears such a disturbing issue from the perspective of Sufism.

We may begin with a brief reference to the limitations of scholastic approach to the problem of evil. The Qur'an has quite explicitly made certain statements in connection with God's relationship to evil that have defied satisfactory theological exegesis and that appear incongruous to the generally

accepted image of the Qur'anic God. The statements, hard to be understood at theological plane, include such verses which state that God leads astray whom he wills, God does what He wills, God is the creator of your actions, from God everything originates and to Him everything returns, evil comes from your own hands and from God comes only good everything happens by the grant of God. The Qur'an emphasizes in the same breath the apparently divergent attributes of Mercy and Wrath. It declares God to be both wise and omnipotent. It also declares God's unity and absoluteness in an uncompromising tone and leaves no space for any recourse to a dualistic thesis in accounting for evil. The question of fate or the problem of predestination has always resisted a consistent theological treatment. All this necessitates a shift to traditional metaphysics and the metaphysical conception of *Tawhid* as Oneness of Being. This alone would make possible a coherent theodicy. This is what Sufism and such Sufi metaphysicians as Ibn "Arabi have done and this is what the perennialists– who include Sufi metaphysicians like Frithjof Schuon– argue for. Heresies like the necessetarianism of Jabarites and a veiled dualism of Qadarites and certain paradoxes and dilemmas of the Ash'arite theology are all avoided by taking recourse to traditional metaphysics. We must shift to traditional metaphysics if we are to make sense of these assertions. Such critics of theism and theodicy (especially Islamic theodicy) as Flew could be easily and convincingly refuted by taking recourse to the Sufi perennialist metaphysical approach. The question of moral evil or the existence of sin is approached from a quite different perspective in Sufism. The problem of evil is solved if one transcends the moral plane without denying its validity at its own level– the good-evil duality. These points will be argued in this paper.

The fact that the existence of suffering is no problem at all for faith and is perhaps precisely the very opposite in that it serves to kindle it is best perceived by Sufis. If we grant that Sufism is the inner or esoteric dimension of Islam, we could well say that there is no such thing as the problem of evil for Islam. Islam, understood as submission to the objective truth or reality, by definition, solves the problem of evil. Perhaps the most profound statement (that could be made only by those who don't blink on seeing the face of the sun of Truth) of Islam vis-à-vis evil is that both good and evil are from God. Not only we, but our actions also, are created by God, declares

the Qur'an. *Iblis* too has been created by God. God offers no explanation, no apology for the creation of evil. He has nothing to be ashamed of. All the creation sings His praise. But the Qur'an is also emphatic that God carries all goodness in His hands. And that the good comes to men from God but evil comes to them through themselves. God is not only good, but merciful and compassionate. He defeats evil. The traditional formulation of the Islamic creed reflects all these "contradictory" statements of the Qur'an. *Iman-i-mufassal* (the detailed formulation of faith) has a clause wherein it is stated that 'both good and evil are from God'. Even the extreme logical extrapolation of this formulation is accepted or owned by the Qur'an as it says that it is God who leads astray whom he wishes. Yes it is the same God who demands faith and punishes in hell those who disbelieve. The problem of evil is closely tied to the question of predestination. It is God who made Adam and who created *Iblis* and the serpent and it is He who planted the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil and the Tree of Eternity in the garden of Eden and who could thus well be accused of tempting Adam to sin - to eat the forbidden fruit. It is He who seals off the hearts against belief. It is the God-given freedom that man has misused in a world that has the ideally congenial environment for the breeding of sin or evil. It is God who has moulded the clay of man who is predisposed to evil. God has moulded man from the lowly earth and has created the ever-vigilant Devil who perpetually chases Adam and leads him away from God to the hell of one's sin and despair. It is God who has decreed one's place in heaven and hell before one is even born. Nothing can alter this decree. The moving finger having writ writes on and not all the tears of the world can lure it to cancel half a line. Islam thus seems to affirm the polar opposites – the contradictory propositions of freedom and predestination or God's goodness and His responsibility for evil in the world simultaneously. This is too difficult for the exoteric theology to appropriate and properly reconcile and synthesize. It has led to either atheism or a morbid pessimism and fatalism.

The great excesses of an exclusively scholastic approach have proven a menace in the Muslim history. It is especially the issues like predestination and theodicy that have been so hard to be properly dealt with from the scholastic-theological approach. Indeed the many heresies and blasphemies connected with the scholastically oriented Muslims have sometimes resulted in rejection of the whole discipline of *kalam* at the hands of Sufis and even a

class of jurists-cum-theologians. Ratiocination in such matters as that of predestination had already been castigated by the Prophet of Islam. Indeed it could well be said whether there is any orthodox warrant for theodicy - especially what is called philosophical theodicy - in Islam. Perhaps it is no accident that Muslim philosophy and theology (and of course Sufism) have not traditionally been preoccupied with theodicy. However we could decipher outlines of consistent and convincing theodicy in Sufi thought. It is *tasawwuf* that alone has tackled the problem of evil in a manner that can't be problematized by the usual critiques of theodicy. Muslim theologians had marginalized the problem of evil in many ways and managed to avoid it. It is the Sufis alone that have seriously reckoned with the problem of evil and the tragic sense of life. Sufi poetry reveals an acute sense of pain and suffering; indeed the question of evil and suffering contributes a lot to its genesis. It is the agony and frustration of temporal living that prompts one to respond to the music of the eternal. Pain has well been seen as the megaphone of God. The hunger for the infinite and the eternal is directly proportional to dissatisfaction with the finite, the temporal (that is the realm of limitation, and thus evil). Pessimism and asceticism are conditioned by a negative estimate of this world of space and time. Sufism has been accused of both, and if we restrict our view to their estimate of this finite and temporal world only, this charge is justified. The Sufi's preoccupation with the transcendent world – the realm of peace and bliss – could well be seen as a response to evil that characterizes the realm of immanence. The Sufis have highlighted the evils of this world (Ma'ari could well be seen as an extreme example of this streak of Sufi thought). Ghazali devotes a whole chapter to the evils of the world in his *Ihya. Tasawwuf* has been dubbed as escapist by its critics. However, this so-called escapism is connected with the Sufi's cognizance of the world's fleetingness and the preponderance of evil in it. The Sufi looks at the world squarely and finds it not worthy of love and thus turns to God. We will return to this point later.

The problem of evil is essentially a problem of (exoteric) theology. Sufism answers not by advocating any argument but by seeing and experiencing. The Sufi has the intellectual intuition of the goodness of God and the voidness of evil. He crosses the dark night of the soul and eradicates the cause of evil or suffering (*dukkha* in Buddhist terminology), and attains the Bliss unspeakable, a state of total victory over evil. He sees with the inward eye that the

goodness and mercy of God is written large on the face of the heavens and the earth and thereby proves that evil is naughted. He, as Rumi says, passes beyond the duality of poison and sugar as he scents unity. He knows that there is no solution to and escape from evil as long as the heavens and the earth are there, as long as we are caught in the realm of space and time, as long as there is a separative principle of ego, as long as we are exiled from the Garden of Eden and don't return home, as long as the Beloved's face is hidden from us.(It is only posthumously when neither space or time thus characterize our finitude and the flesh that can't but be heir to all kinds of sufferings that every type of suffering finally cease.) There can be no salvation or final triumph over evil as long as 'we' are there or 'I' is there, until everything comes to naught and there remains nothing but the face of the Lord. As long as existence is afflicted by the curse of thingness, this-ness or that-ness and I-ness or individuality, time and finitude and the consequent dualism of any kind there can be no salvation, no enlightenment, no heaven or *baqa* in the absolute sense. Religion (whose object is God who reconciles all opposites, whose vision transports a gnostic beyond the realm of good and evil) is the hunger of the soul for the impossible, the unattainable, the inconceivable as Stace– building on Whitehead– elaborates in these powerful words:

> The religious impulse in men is the hunger for the impossible, the unattainable, the inconceivable – or at least for that which is these things in the world of time …. Religion seeks the infinite and the infinite which by definition is impossible, unattainable. It is by definition that which can never be reached. Religion seeks the light. But it isn't the light which can be found at any place or time. It isn't somewhere. It is the light which is nowhere. It is the light which never was on sea or land. Never was, never will be even in the infinite stretches of future time. This light is non-existent.[39]

> Yet it is the great light which illumines the world as the Qur'an calls God the Light of the World. Religion's object is something which is the

[39] Stace, W.T. *Time and Eternity*, p.4.

ultimate ideal, but the hopeless quest, something whose possession is the final good, and yet is beyond all reach, as Whitehead said.[40]

The above quoted characterization of religion by Stace is essentially mystical. The Sufi's ideal is thus not something that we can think about, reason about, catch hold of, be advocates of. His God is Beyond-Being, the totally other. He is No-thing. He is best described by the Upanishadic *neti* and *neti* and the Qur'anic "nothing is like Him." Evil is not conquered (or God's vision isn't possible) in this world. The Mystic's God isn't an object out there, some being or a being among other beings, some humanized subject (in a subject-object dualism– the veracity of which is presupposition of all theologies and theodocies as traditionally understood by literalist exotericism; binaries of good and evil, God and the world, have any meaning only in a worldview that takes the subject-object dualism for granted), an entity of which this or that could be predicated, some cosmic power or force that could be appealed to or invoked– in short that could be made a party in the trial on account of evil in the universe. He is best described by "It" and nothing answers the question as to 'what is It' as Al-Jili has said.[41] It is the supraformal Essence stripped of all attributes. It is best "revealed" in silence. It is silence (and all the prophets, like the Buddha, have been silent, in their own ways, on the ultimate questions. The Prophet of Islam emphasized this silence on the questions of God's nature and predestination) that answers all questions, all problems including the problem of evil. Mystics have wisely been silent. It is the theologian, the scholastic who has always (and characteristically so) been a rhetorician. Rumi asks God that he be transported to a state where speech comes without words. When we transcend the realm of thought, of logic, of propositions, of words, of time then alone is God revealed; then alone are answers clear and then alone we know the truth that the Truth can't be grasped, conceptualized, or divulged. The theologians have emphasized the importance of mystery at the heart of things, and mystery in God's doings. In fact *iman* is belief in the unseen, the *ghayyib*, the unknowability of the ultimate ground of Being or Existence. It is faith in the mystery and goodness of Being. Faith isn't knowledge. A knowable God is no God at all. God known as an object is no God at all.

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[40] Quoted by Stace, op. cit., p.3.

[41] Quoted by W. N. Perry in *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, Bedfont, UK, 1979, p.987.

God as an object, as a reachable ideal, doesn't interest the religious or mystical soul. Religion refuses, on principle, to demystify existence. The original sin consisted in approaching the Tree of Knowledge. The mystic builds no altar for the God in his heart. He isn't interested in the knowledge of God or understanding His ways or the rationale of His actions. He is incredulous towards all narratives of dogmas and creedal formulations. It is absurd to build a science of God– which is the literal meaning of the word theology– from the Sufistic perspective. As Oshu puts it: "Revelation comes the moment knowledge ceases. The known must cease for the unknown to be. And the true, the real, is unknown."[42] And that "a person who claims knowledge may be a theologian, a philosopher, but never a religious person. A religious man accepts the ultimate mystery, the ultimate unknowableness, the ultimate ecstasy of ignorance, the ultimate bliss of ignorance."[43]

There is a difference between theology and religion (whose inner dimension is mysticism). I again quote Oshu:[44] "Theology goes on talking about God. Religion talks God, not about God. The 'about' is the realm of theology …. Religion isn't talking about reality. Religion talks reality."[45] A mystic doesn't feel obliged to advocate, to apologize for God and His governance. He has no one to defend for or against. All the worlds are in him. As Rumi, in his *Divan-i-Shams Tabrez,* has said: "Knowledge, virtue, temperance, faith and piety/Blazing fire of hell, fierce flaming am I." Evil is within us. It is ourselves who are accountable. We need to fight a battle. We need to escape the hell we are in and this hell hasn't been created by some external agency. God and heaven aren't to be found out there but experienced within. He who knows his self knows God. And the Self needn't justify its ways. The world isn't an object lying outside the infinitude of the Self or God. It hasn't been created out of nothing as literalist creationist theology believes. It has been always there, as an unrealized idea in the

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[42] Oshu, *Psychology of the Esoteric: New Evolution of Man*, Orient Paperbacks, New Delhi, 1978, p.114.

[43] Ibid., p.114.

[44] Whose exposition of mysticism by his life and works - though deeply affected by certain modernist anti-traditional and anti-metaphysical tendencies and thus quite objectionable on perennialist grounds– does still pithily express the essence of esotericism.

[45] Oshu, *Come Follow Me: The Sayings of Jesus*, Vol.2, 1977, p.199.

knowledge of God. God has only manifested what was already there (in His eternal knowledge) in a sense. The concept of creative emanation isn't opposed to the idea of *creatio ex nihilo*; it only explains it. God, the world and man aren't three separate existences. There is a unity of Being. *Tawhid* implies a God who is all-comprehending, all-encompassing. Only God exists. *La Mawjuda-Illallah*. Perhaps none of the presuppositions of an Epicurean-Humean formulation of the problem will be shared by the Sufi. In that formulation one presupposes that God is some objective being among other beings, some power that is operating from outside and fashions world or makes it as He wills. He is responsible for the world. The world is an object for God the subject. God could have made some other world, in some other way. He had a choice to make while designing the world. He is, in short, conceived in man's image, in anthropomorphist terms. As a humanized subject He becomes an idol. The world is His creation and not manifestation. Another assumption is that God could possibly be known, or conceptualized. He is not the infinite and the *Muhit*, the outward and the inward, the first and the last. We could pass judgments on His character by studying the world. We are subjects and God is an object of knowledge. Attributes are *Dhat* or they exhaust *Dhat*. There is no distinction made between Being and Beyond-Being, and the latter too is reduced to being. God isn't taken to be something wholly outside the order of time. He isn't "the dark mist" (*ama*), "the wild waste," "the nameless formless nothing," as mystics have described Him. Omnipotence extends to His nature. It is His plan that is being executed in the universe. We are accidents, thrown into the world. We are dispensable. The knowing subject couldn't have been there. We haven't been consulted when we were created or when the world was made. We register our complaints against heavens both when we are born and when we depart. Man is an object who is manipulated by the forces outside him. He is in a position to scan God and file a suit against Him. The Epicurean critique of theodicy presupposes a literal exoteric sense of basic religious terms like God.

But mysticism, Sufism being Islamic mysticism, has more or less emphasized the symbolist character of religion's God. His goodness or love isn't conceived literally but symbolically. Stace, an eminent mystical philosopher, well emphasizes this point. The Sufi is ideally silent. He knows that the wings of words are clipped for soaring into the realm of God. All

words fall short in describing God and His relation to the world. The Sufis are fond of using elliptical and oblique phrases and use evocative imagery. Finding nothing that could fully convey the ineffable, they resort to various strategies. This has also contributed a lot in giving rise to contradictions in the mystic's utterances and his disparagement of thought-language. One thing is clear– the Sufi takes religion and its terms symbolically rather than literally. All force in an Epicurean-Humean formulation and critique of theodicy is dependent on taking these terms (God, God's goodness and His love and wisdom) literally. Thus this critique isn't valid on the Sufi theodicy. The Sufi isn't interested in being an advocate of God. He is not bothered with justifying His ways. The Sufi believes ultimately only in the goodness of Self or the goodness of Life. His prayer is nothing but gratitude to existence. A Sufi transmutes evil into goodness through the alchemy of love. He sees the face of the Beloved in even the ugliest of things (for him *Iblis* too is a sort of intensely jealous lover of God, *Khawja ahli firaq* in Rumi's phrase). He celebrates the goodness of life and existence. Nothing is profane in his worldview. He sees God and none but God (and thus Good and only Good) in the phenomenal world. He identifies his Self with the whole of existence and sings its celestial song.

The Sufi vision is the vision of blessedness and bliss. He finds everything beautiful after crossing the dark night of the soul, after opening wide the doors of perception or the third eye. He sings so ecstatically of the beauty of life. He is the last man to contemplate suicide. He is for the "pristine" affirmation of life. He loves life so intensely that he contemplates of winning immortality. He aspires for the life that is in heaven, or eternal bliss, the life that has finally defeated death and sorrow. No optimism can be more daring and so consistent. Paganism (e.g., that of Camus and Gide) can't see life's eternal dominion, its heavenly kingdom. The Sufi celebrates life and sees it as God's gift, the supreme benediction. He makes no complaints. Despair never overcomes him. He, drunk with the soul of love, is ever in a state of bliss. He is in a state where neither good nor evil entereth, in the words of Ba Yazid. He achieves a sort of omniscience and given the knowledge of alpha and omega of the universe, he is liberated– liberated from sin and from finitude. He regains paradise here and now. His hands become God's hands. He sees with the eyes of God. God descends to ask him what he wants, as Iqbal would say. He enjoys eternal felicity. He beholds God everywhere and always

as the God of Love. This God is revealed (manifested) in all forms as every form derives its existence from His *tajalli*. He surrenders his ego, his will and basks in the ocean of Existence. He possesses no ego, no separate consciousness or 'I'. Thus he surrenders all his claims over and against Existence, fate or God. His will merges with God's will. Having no desires there is no room for despair or tragedy of unfulfilled desires. He has renounced the desiring self and thus eliminated *dukkha*. He no longer feels what the existentialists call *angst*– the feeling of being condemned and exiled in the world or thrown into the world. Peace comes by submitting to God, i.e. by becoming a Muslim. There is no problem of alienation, of the Fall, of Sin for any non-human existence for such people because they have already submitted– they are already Muslim by their response to the call of existence, to God's command to "be" (*kun*). They have no will, no separative ego over and against the *Tao*. Islam demands a similar conscious attitude, chosen out of free will, towards God and His will and summons. It demands saying yes to life, affirmation of life and accepting it as a blessing. To be a Muslim (especially as the Sufi understands the term) means to annihilate the separative self-consciousness and attain God-consciousness. It demands *fana* as a prerequisite to attain *baqa*, the Bliss unspeakable, the joy everlasting, the felicity eternal. The Sufi is the king of both the worlds because he has renounced both of them. He clings to nothing. Thus no evil can touch him. One can conquer evil by refusing to be. This alone leads to innocence of becoming and that is what the notion of surrendering to God means. Islam means total acceptance and total submission and that implies patience and resignation and thus there is no such thing as resentment and the consequent despair. Islam's is an existential response to the existence of evil. It concentrates on a practical solution rather than mere speculation on its metaphysical genesis. It dissolves the problem by showing us how we can conquer it, transmute it. This point is forcefully argued by Evelyn Underhill in her classic *Mysticism*. It is hardly interested in philosophical theodicy but what may be called as religious theodicy that presupposes the existence of evil and proceeds to show how it could be used for the purpose of good. The Qur'an hardly indulges in any apologetics that attempt to justify the ways of God to man. It is man– that frail, weak-willed, impetuous, fallible, ungrateful creature that has to justify God's faith in the human project. The onus lies on man, rather than on God.

Dr. Mir Valiuddin claims that it is only Sufism in Islam that has solved the problem of evil. The present author agrees with this claim, and now we will be proceeding to technically discuss the Sufi metaphysical thought that pertains to the discussion on evil. Valiuddin begins by pointing this out:

Both for philosophers as well as divines, the problem of evil is the most delicate and most abstruse one. It is undoubtedly an enigma which the sages and philosophers are unable to solve. Particularly those systems of thought which are established on a theological or teleological basis try to solve this problem but on being frustrated in achieving their end they exclaim: "There was a Door to which I found no key, there was a veil past which I couldn't see."[46]

Ibn Sina is quoted to the effect that no perfect solution of the problem of evil has been reached by the sages.

The secrets of Existence look hazy and are but partially revealed,

The best of pearl scarcely shows its thread bole.

Everyone has but surmised,

The thing that matters remains still unsaid.[47]

Valiuddin resorts to that familiar strategy of mystical philosophers attacking the traditional Aristotelian logic of non-contradiction to answer the rationalist critics of theodicy. We must resort to alternative logics or just emphasize the limitations of traditional logic and the conceptualizing intellect in apprehending the nature of the Ultimate. I quote him:

God has been admitted as the creator of good and evil, yet evil has not been ascribed to God (by Islam and Sufis). Apparently this statement appears to be self contradictory; however you should learn this art of 'commingling of contradictions' from the Sufis of Islam and remember:

Affirmation and denial are at times both valid

When aspects alter, relationships vary![48]

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[46] Valiudin, Mir, *The Quranic Sufism*, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1987,rpt. p.129.

[47] Ibid., p.129.

[48] Ibid., p.134.

Our author, however, doesn't much dilate on this logic of contradictions. So we will discuss it in a little detail, borrowing from Stace's brilliant and lucid exposition. This discussion of the mystical or Sufistic logic must form a prolegomena to our discussion of theodicy. Stace notes that men have always found that, in their search for the ultimate, contradictions and paradoxes lie all around them. This is because, as Whitehead's famous definition of religion that he quotes in the beginning of his *Time and Eternity* shows, contradictions and paradoxes lie at the heart of things. He says that either God is a mystery or He is nothing at all. All attempts to make religion purely a rational, logical thing aren't only shallow but would, if they could succeed, destroy religion.[49] He also notes that this conception of the divine nature as incapable of being apprehended by the logical intellect is identical with the conception of God as the 'utterly other', as wholly outside the natural order. He dismisses the interpretation of this 'utterly other' or utter transcendence of God (that the Qur'an so emphatically asserts) that takes it to mean as only another exaggeration, because in that case we should think of God as one among other things in the universe, although a vastly greater, nobler, more powerful being than any other. He advocates a second interpretation:

> He isn't a part of the universe, one thing among others, but that His being lies in a plane, order or dimension, wholly different from the system of things which constitutes the natural order. This is exactly the same thing as asserting that God isn't capable of being apprehended by concepts. For the concept is, in its very nature, that power of the mind by which it traces relations between one thing and another in the universe. And if God isn't one among these things, then the logical intellect can never find Him.[50]

He rightly asserts that a contradiction in the ultimate is itself a religious intuition as evidenced by the mystic's utterances. He also notes that philosophies based on mysticism also contain irresoluble contradictions.[51] He cites the Upanishadic statement that God is both being and non-being as direct and literal repudiation of the logical law of contradiction.[52]

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[49] Stace, W.T., op.cit., p.9.

[50] Ibid.,p.155.

[51] Ibid., p.158.

[52] Ibid., p.159.

Contradictions arise in the ultimate because mysticism and all the philosophies based on it assert the proposition that the Ultimate is one and infinite. This proposition necessarily leads to the precise contradiction that the world both is and is not identical with God. This contradiction is ultimate and irresoluble. He explains that it arises from the very logic of the Ultimate Reality:

> [The] Ultimate being infinite, can have nothing outside it. Therefore the world can't fall outside it. There can't be any difference, any otherness, as between the Absolute to the world. Therefore the world is the Absolute. But the ultimate, being one is relationless without parts, without division, without manyness. The world, on the other hand, is the arena of manyness, division and relation. Therefore it isn't the Absolute, isn't contained in it, falls outside it.[53]

Stace links this issue of contradictions and inability of the conceptualizing intellect to apprehend God to the symbolist character of religion:

> For our view, that God is utterly other, is also identical with the interpretation of religious truth as symbolic. For if we take any religious proposition, such as 'God is love', the literal interpretation of it will imply that there is a comparison between God's love and that of men. God's love is then greater only in degree, not in kind. And God himself is only one loving personality among others. If, on the other hand we take the proposition to be symbolic, then this will imply that there is no comparison at all between God's love and ours, that His love, and He himself, belong to a wholly different order from that in which we, in our natural moments in the time order, live and move.[54]

Stace thus shifts the formulation of theodicy to a different plane. If we grant the symbolist character of such propositions as 'God is love' and God is good' and 'God is wise' and deny application of the logical law of non-contradiction to the Absolute, we could easily refute the premises of Epicurus. However, Stace makes it explicit that the Ultimate itself can't be either self-contradictory or self-consistent:

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[53] Ibid, pp.161-162.

[54] Ibid., p.155.

It is an indivisible one, without parts; whereas self-contradiction means the logical opposition of one part to another, while self consistency means the logical opposition of one part with another. The ultimate can be neither self-consistent nor self-contradictory. For both of these are logical categories. It is neither logical nor illogical but alogical. What we should say, rather, is that the contradictions are in us, not in the ultimate. They arise from the attempt to comprehend the ultimate by logical concepts. The Ultimate rejects these concepts, and when we seek to force them upon the only result is that our thinking becomes contradictory.[55]

It is the heart that perceives God as Good, as Love, as Bliss, as Eternal, as Infinite. There is *a priori* intellectual intuition of God's goodness in us that is the basis of all theodicy. The logical argument has only secondary function for a believer, it will never convince us if we weren't *a priori*ly certain through an intuitive perception of Being's goodness, as Schuon says. Oshu, repeatedly emphasizes the vanity and futility of all theology and critiques its reliance on logic in ultimate questions. He too, more boldly than Stace, rejects as patent fraud all theodicy. It is heart that knows and is intuitively convinced of the blessedness of life and the goodness of Being. Such Sufi metaphysicians as Ibn "Arabi have well argued the case of theodicy and there is an elaborate metaphysics that deals with the problem of evil. It is to this that we now turn, borrowing heavily from Dr. Valiuddin's account of the same in his book *The Qur'anic Sufism*.

We need to know the traditional doctrine of essences and attributes as presented by the Sufis. According to the Sufis, the solution of all problems, including the problem of evil can be had in understanding the simple words of knowledge, the knower and the known. They hold that God Almighty is the knower, knowledge belongs to Him alone in reality and in itself; the essences of created beings are all His objects 'known' or ideas. The attribute of knowledge is in reality peculiar to God alone, it is solely ascribed to Him alone. The Qur'an confirms that "It is He who has knowledge and power." The attribute of knowledge is inseparable from the Being of God who is the knower since eternity. Since knowledge without objects known is impossible the things known to Him too are eternal. God creates things with knowledge as the Qur'an says. Therefore, it is proved, that everything is essentially a

[55] Ibid., p.153.

known object and from eternity subsists in the Divine knowledge. In the terminology of the Sufis, the created things which are, from eternity, objects of God's knowledge, are called the "essences of things" (*'ayan thabita*). They are also termed the "ideas of God." They are the modes of the Divine knowledge. They are termed as non-entities as they are the forms of knowledge and don't possess external independent existence. The Sufis regard these essences as other than God. The essence of God and the essences of the created things are totally the 'Other' of one another. The Qur'an implies their "Otherness" when it asks: "There will you fear other than God?" They are relative non-entities and not real non-entities because they don't have a permanent being of their own. God alone is self-existent. As they don't have 'being' of their own, it is clear, they don't possess real 'attributes' of their own since in God the real being is His own; He alone possesses existential attributes viz. life, knowledge, power, will, hearing, sight and speech and all of these have no existence in the essences of the created beings. The absence of existential attributes in created beings is synonymous with the presence of non-existential attributes.

Now we come to the basic Qur'anic assertion that God is the creator of man and his actions as well. He is the only real Agent or Doer. Whatever happens, happens because of His will and permission. He is thus the creator of both good and evil. Action, in the real sense, isn't attributed to created beings. As we saw above that the essences of the created beings are devoid of being and attributes, so we could well ask how can action be ascribed to them? Actions are committed through attributes and attributes subsist in being as existence. When the attributes of existence are negative, actions too are negated. Effects (*athar*) too couldn't be produced by such a being. As there is no being there would be no effects of being too.

The 'known' of God, which are the essences of things, or external realities, together with their concomitant peculiarities or aptitudes, or in the terminology of the Qur'an, *shakilat*, have subsisted in the knowledge of God since Eternity. As they don't have external existence, so they aren't termed created; on the contrary, they are uncreated. When God's knowledge is eternal, His ideas, the objects known, too, will be necessarily eternal, and when these are eternal, their peculiarities or aptitudes too will be eternal and immutable.

It is the Sufistic doctrine of creation that qualifies or reinterprets the traditional theological idea of *creatio ex nihilo* that is crucially important in understanding the Sufistic perspective on evil. We now turn to it. The question is how are the essences of things, latent in His Being, created in the external? It is clear that things aren't created out of nothing, because nothing or not-being doesn't exist at all, and out of nothing will come nothing. Creation is only the external manifestation or actualization of the ideas of God, or the essences. In manifesting Himself God remains unchanged as ever He was, is, and shall be. He manifests Himself according to the 'aptitudes' of the things in which He is manifesting Himself. He bestows His attributes on His ideas or forms and they become things. These remarks suggest an answer to the problem of predestination vis-à-vis freedom. There is really nothing in existence except God. Valiuddin quotes Jami's formulation of the whole idea:

The Beloved takes on so many different forms

His beauty expresses itself in varied artistry, Multiplicity is there to heighten the charm of unity.

The One delights to appear in a thousand garbs.[56]

Valiuddin refers to a key Qur'anic verse in this connection, "God created the heavens and the earth from *Haqq*." All the ideas or essences of things have appeared from *Haqq*. The root of "*Haqq*" (God) and "*Haqiqat*" (Reality) is one and the same. This is the secret of "He is the outward" which is explained by the verse "God is the manifest truth" i.e., God alone is manifest or God alone is "*Haqq*" that is manifest. This is further supported by the verse: "God is the light of the heavens and the earth." These are profound statements of the Qur'an in connection with the relation of God to the world and thus His attribution to Himself the 'Is-ness' of things. God is the most Real. He is the Truth. Whatever is, or whatever partakes of the reality, is in a way God. God isn't some abstract utterly transcendent principle that sees the world from outside. I quote Iqbal's Sufistic view of creation that we could well deploy in approaching the tricky problem of evil:

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[56] Valiudin, Mir, op.cit., p.138.

Finite minds regard Nature as a confronting 'other' existing *per se*, which the mind knows but not make. We are thus apt to regard the act of creation as a specific past event, and the universe appears to us as a manufactured article which has no organic relation to life of its maker, and of which the maker is nothing more than a mere spectator.… From the Divine point of view, there is no creation in the sense of a specific event having a 'before' and an 'after'. The universe cannot be regarded as an independent reality standing in opposition.[57]

From this perspective the existence of evil appears in a very different light. Pantheistic and Christian responses to evil (God "suffers" and "dies" to redeem his sinful creation) too could be appropriated in this light. We are all because of Being's perfection. *Iblis* too can't be excluded. Hell too is an expression of God's Mercy, as Ibn 'Arabi, al-Jili and other Sufis have understood it. Evil needn't be excluded, marginalized. God 'owns' it. The saint owns the sinner.

The Sufis call God *al-Haqq*, who is pure existence the absolute good; His Being is perfect, His actions are perfect and His attributes are perfect. That is why He is the Absolute Good. Being *qua* Being is Good. Non-being is evil. Things or created beings don't possess either existential attributes or actions of their own and due to this non-being they are absolute evil. The Sufi's assertion that "Being is absolute good and non-being is absolute evil" has the same meaning. As real being is absolute good, it necessarily follows that all the existential attributes too are good. "God is Beautiful and nothing but beauty comes out of Him" and conversely, if non-being is absolute evil all the non-existential attributes would be evil; therefore, evil will always be evil. Evil isn't good.

As absolute non-being doesn't exist, so also the absolute Being or Pure Being or Beyond-Being (*Zat i baht*) or in Vedantist terms the Unmanifest *Brahman* (which is pure objectless consciousness) is not made manifest, because for manifestation a form or determination is necessary. It is only the Being that creates or is manifested. Now only some aspects of Being can appear in forms and most of them can't make their appearance. The aspects which manifest themselves are the same whose aptitude the forms possess.

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[57] Iqbal, M., pp. 52-53.

The Absolute Being manifests itself according to the real aptitudes of forms. Jami has clarified this point thus: "Essence were like glasses variegated in colour: Red, Yellow and Blue/The sun of Being spread its blaze over them, and came out through them in their colours."

Evil and pain and ugliness which appear in the manifestation are due to their aptitudes and receptivity only. This is the aspect of non-being. The attributes of Being will appear according to these aptitudes of the essences only, in consequence of which most of the attributes of Being will not be able to manifest themselves. The evil which is being fancied in things is due to non-existence of the attributes of Being (aspects of not-being); otherwise, attributes of Being as being existential aptitudes are good (aspects of being). The whole of this philosophy has been expressed by Jami thus:

Wherever Being's ambit doth extend,

Good and naught but good is found, O friend,

All evil comes from non-being, to wit,

From 'other' and on 'other' must depend.

The following prophetic tradition could thus be understood: "All good is in Thine Hand and evil is never related to thee." The following Qur'anic verse, that otherwise appears so hard to comprehend, thus becomes quite clear: "Whatever good (O, man!) happens to thee is from God but whatever evil happens to thee is from Thy own soul." The word "thy soul" implies, as Valiuddin says, the aptitudes or receptivity of essence. Jami's following couplets elucidate this verse. "All good and all perfection that you see/Are of the "Truth" which from all stain is free/Evil and pain result from some defect, some lack of normal receptivity."[58]

We can now also understand the verse: "God created you and what you make," because action is a necessary concomitant of Being and the same Being is called God. The metaphysical conception of *Tawhid* as the Unity of Being dissolves the problem of creation and evil. Valiudin refers to the oft-quoted Light Verse of the Qur'an to shed further light on the issue. Since creation means manifestation, i.e. the external revelation and manifestation is

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[58] Valiudin, Mir, op.cit., p.141.

a concomitant of light (*Nur*), which reveals itself and reveals others– and light is an attribute of God, therefore, light is nothing but Being itself. "God is the light of the heavens and the earth." To manifest all 'ideas' together with their real aptitudes or peculiarities from the unseen stage is a peculiar characteristic of Being which is called Allah. Hence the Qur'anic verse: "Say, all things are from God." This explains the doctrine of Islam: "Every good and evil comes from God."

It is our intuition of God as eternal or unchanging that provides the clue for a solution to the problem. As the Being of God is eternal, therefore the ideas or essences can't be but eternal, and since we can't separate the essences from their aptitudes or real concomitants they too are eternal and uncreated. But for these essences to appear with their real aptitudes and effects, *Haqq* (God) is needed; that is why the relation of manifestation is ascribed to Absolute Being. As Valiuddin puts it:

> All matters go back to God. The origin of evil is due to our essences which are relative non-being; evil is a concomitant of the relative non-being because determination denotes distinction, hence some one or other aspect of Being is left out, which is not being and that alone is evil. [59]

It is the conception of God as a mind or a person and the inevitable contradiction between a positive and a negative divine in religious consciousness as apprehended by the conceptual intellect that creates the problem of evil.

God's goodness or love taken anthropomorphically - without considering His impersonality or Beyond-Being (that is well emphasized in the tradition of a negative divine) - is the root cause of the theologian's perplexity. We examine the traditional notion of a personal God that is unqualifiedly taken by many Muslim and Christian theists. We start by discussing the proposition that God is love understood literally. What the literalist view implies and why it is not true, Stace thus answers:

> Taken so, the doctrine implies that God is a person, a mind, a consciousness, and these words, too, must be taken in their literal

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[59] Stace, W.T., op.cit., p.58.

meanings. Love is some kind of emotion or feeling or attitude or desire or at least a purpose– perhaps the purpose to act in a certain way, for instance, to achieve the happiness and good of created beings. But, can any of this be literally true of God? Only, apparently, if God be thought of as a finite center of consciousness, one mind among other minds. This mind, God, loves that mind, a human soul. But apart from this, to attribute emotions to God conflicts with the very definite religious intuition that God is unchanging. He is "without shadow of turning."

This critique of a literal interpretation also applies to other psychological terms we use of Him, such as 'mind,' 'consciousness,' 'purpose,' 'love'.

It may be the overemphasis on the positive divine in monotheistic theologies, especially that of Islam, that makes the problem of evil apparently unanswerable. "It is the part of the positive divine to affirm activity of God, the creative activity which results in the existence of the world, as well as those activities which are involved in guiding and controlling the world and in the loving care of His children." This is the dynamic conception of God which has been foregrounded to the extent that the equally essential concept of a passive God, God as an unchanging Absolute, has been marginalized and almost totally excluded by mainstream theology, ignoring the protest of the mystics who have been the guardians of the tradition of negative divine. What the Sufis refer to as Pure Being or Beyond-Being Stace calls Non-Being. As Stace points out, God's unchangeableness and inactivity conflicts with the dynamic conception, yet both the dynamic and the passive are equally necessary elements in religious consciousness.[60] The conception of God as a mind or a person in a literal sense not only conflicts with His unchangeableness but also contradicts His infinity:

> For no mind can be infinite, in the ordinary sense of the word infinite, which means the mathematical infinite. For a mind… necessarily changes. But that which changes can't be infinite. The notion of change implies that the changing thing possesses a character at one time which it lacks at another …. But that which lacks anything isn't mathematically infinite …. The activity of God conflicts just as much with the conception of a religious infinite. For change is the passing from this to

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[60] Ibid., p.59.

that, and in the unity and infinity of God there is no distinction of this from that.[61]

The mystical philosopher Stace boldly concludes that "all propositions about God are false, if they are understood literally. This will apply to the proposition that "God exists" as well as to any another. It will also apply to the proposition that "God doesn't exist." God is above both existence and non existence."[62] This conclusion is forced upon us because all propositions are a work of the logical intellect. We have already seen that to the conceptual intellect, the road to God is barred. However, there must be a direct vision or apprehension of the divine, otherwise religious symbolism will be mere verbiage.

Religious symbols aren't mere metaphors. They aren't non-sensical as the logical positivists would like to believe. God is the manifest truth. He is not just a hidden or veiled inward but the outward and the manifest. So it isn't the case that God, the positive God, the God of love, can't be apprehended at all, that we can't speak of the goodness of God in any meaningful sense. The only problem is this:

[God] can't be apprehended by the concept. This is the very meaning of "incomprehensibility" of God, as also of the negative divine, God as Nothing, the Void. But He does reveal Himself to man, not negatively but positively, in that form of human consciousness which, for lack of a better term, we have called intuition.[63]

Stace further elaborates:

The symbolic proposition about God doesn't stand for another proposition– a literal one about God. It stands for and represents the mystical experience itself. It isn't a proposition about God which is symbolized but God Himself as He is actually found and experienced "in the heart," that is, in the mystical vision.[64]

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[61] Ibid., pp.59-60.

[62] Ibid.,p.61.

[63] Ibid., p.65.

[64] Ibid., p.65.

It isn't that there is irresoluble conflict between faith and belief, that the head and heart are eternally pitched against one another. The contradiction between the Being and the Non-Being is resolved by this discovery:

> [God's] positive nature is revealed in religious intuition, but is veiled to the conceptual intellect, and that it is this blankness and nothingness to the intellect which, as the negative divine give rise to those expressions of God as the void or as nothing, which are familiar in the literature on mysticism. This implies that all religious and theological language is symbolic, since any literal application of words and concepts to the 'nameless' God is blocked by the conceptual character of all thinking and speaking.[65]

The problem of evil in Islamic perspective is closely tied to the issue of determinism and freewill. It may well be argued that the fatalism of Islam expresses– in more popular language and idiom (that could be understood by the masses)– the Sufistic doctrines that we have discussed. We are responsible and yet it is God's eternal decree that such and such a thing should happen. Psychologically, the effects of belief in *karma* (and some sort of rebirth) are similar to the belief in fate or God's decree. Both inculcate an attitude of acceptance and submission and cure the malady of despair. Both posit belief in something which we just can't ignore, nor somehow do away with. We must own our actions and whatever evil befalls us. God is exonerated as our essences or aptitudes are natural bearers of our actions. Both posit some sort of a metahistorical covenant with God of which we are the witnesses. There is no room for any complaint against God. The doctrine of karma and reincarnation has been hailed as the most logical and rational explanation of evil (though not believable on certain other grounds according to some). However, we could argue that the Islamic doctrine of fate, combined with its doctrine of hell and *barzakh* and emphasis on orthopraxy is no less rational explanation of evil. Indeed it could be read in reincarnationist terms as the perennialists like Schuon argue. The essence of Hindu, Buddhist and Islamic perspectives on karma or fate and salvation is similar. This is not to justify the orthodox credentials (from both the Hindu and Islamic perspectives) of the popular Hindu belief in reincarnation that the perennialists reject, as does Rumi, but only to show the essential

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[65] Ibid., p.67.

similarity on psychological and metaphysical planes of Hindu and Muslim answers to the problem of evil.

The Islamic theological doctrine of *iktisab* (acquisition) both reconciles the binary of free will and determinism as well as rationally solves the problem of evil. Valiuddin thus states the doctrine of acquisition and appropriates it in his account of Sufi theodicy:

> …actions are being created exactly according to the essential nature of things. In other words, whatever there is in the essence is being manifested through the agency of the creator. When all the incidents are happening according to my aptitude, and nothing is imposed on me against my nature, I am, then free in the true sense of the word. That is why Shaykh al-Akbar says: "Whatever has been definitely determined about us is in conformity with our nature, further we ourselves are determining it according to our aptitude". This tallies verbatim with the commandment of the Holy Qur'an– "And He giveth you of all that ye ask for." At another place it is stated more explicitly. "Lo! We shall pay them their whole due unabated." "For God's is the final argument." The author of *Gulshan-e-Raz* makes God say: "The good and evil in thee, /Owe their being from thine own nature (*ay'*)/ It is my grace that gives a form/To what is implicitly therein."[66]

The Qur'anic reference to the Preserved Tablet has been very difficult to comprehend for Muslim theologians. The most difficult part of the Qur'an is its views on predestination and resurrection of the dead in afterlife. We could better understand them in the light of the oriental perspectives– and certain difficulties in the latter are better understood from the Qur'anic perspective.

The essence of every person is, as it were, a book in which are recorded all his real aptitudes and characteristics. God is creating things exactly in accordance with it. Valiuddin quotes Jami again:

Thy nature is but a copy of the original book

It discloses what there is in the book of eternal secrets.

Since it contained all preordained decrees,

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[66] Valiudin, Mir, op. cit., pp.123-124.

God has but acted in accordance therewith, and

In accordance with the demand of the known action follows,

If it demands pain, pain is measured out, if grace, grace is given.

Thus the decree of predestination applies to essential natures (*'ayan),* i.e. the creation of God is in accordance with the aptitudes of Essences. That is why it is asserted that "You are the Destiny" and "It is for you to decree."

> We feel calm and contended and our relations from others are severed. We regard our own being as the source of good and evil; and the meaning of the saying "whatever has befallen us is the outcome of our own acts and attributes." Neither do we regard God as a tyrant, nor do we blame and deprecate our fellow beings, or speak ill of the environment. On the contrary, we take the responsibility on our own shoulders and addressing our own self, say "Thine hands only have earned, and thy mouth only has blown." True it is "whatever of misfortune striketh you, it is what your right hands have earned."[67]

The psychological effect of reincarnationist doctrines and the consequent attainment of resignation is similar. Predestination, perhaps the most misunderstood doctrine of Islam, is best understood when approached from the perennialist point of view.

It is Sufism that shows us how we can transcend the good-evil binary and how the perfect man is beyond good and evil, like God. The Sufi is in a state where neither good nor evil entereth. The most fundamental binaries of good and evil or Satan and God are deconstructed in the great moment of Self-realization. When we apprehend the Absolute we realize the relativity of good and evil. It is at this level that we can answer Dostoevsky's Ivan. One realizes the vanity of phenomenal life, both its good and evil. One experiences the unreality of evil. One becomes a witness to the death of death, of the illusion of evil. "Verily the truth has become manifest and the untruth (*batil* or evil) has been noughted; indeed the *batil* is doomed."

In the first place, evil isn't absolute. It has no independent existence. It is doomed. At the origin and at the end, there is no evil. It is only after the Fall

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[67] Ibid., p.125.

and thus in the cycle of creation that we encounter evil. The lost innocence and bliss could be regained. Religion's *raison d'etre* is showing us the way to home, to arrange our return ticket to God, to regain for us our lost paradise. Religion establishes the sovereignty of the Kingdom of God or the Good. It shows how evil is there because of our passions or desires – the tempting of the evil one (*nafs*, Eve, serpent, Satan). It shows us the path to Enlightenment, the Bliss of heaven or *nirvana*– the state of absolute bliss untouched by evil or sorrow. To the blessed one, the enlightened one, being is revealed in its most beautiful form. He sings the songs of universal love and beauty. The Beloved's imprint is seen on every blade of grass, on everything in the realm of manifestation. One sees existence as a blessing and the attitude of gratitude to existence is what is called a prayerful attitude. One celebrates the holiness of life, of the self or Divine Spirit which is Bliss. Religion is the realization of Self's essential goodness, innocence and bliss. The Sufi sees through God's eyes and thus comprehends everything good or evil. On everything is God's Mercy. God's perfection demands diversity and distinctions– both good and evil. God's *akhlaq* or attributes are appropriated by a Muslim; he sees from God's perspective and from that vantage point there is no problem of evil in the traditional sense of the term. The Sufi appropriates the whole universe with all its good and evil, nothing being external to the Self. Heaven and hell are in us, Satan too is in us. Whitman approaches very close to the cosmic mystic vision as he owns everything, celebrates everything. Nothing or no good or evil is external to or excluded from the mystic's consciousness. Rumi identifies with the whole realm of manifestation and thus appropriates the whole created order:

The two and seventy creeds and sects in the world

Don't really exist: I swear by God that every creed and sect it is I

Earth and air and water and fire, nay body and soul too– it's I

Truth and falsehood, good and evil, ease and difficulty, from first to last

Knowledge and learning and asceticism and piety and faith– it is I

The fire of hell, be assured, with its flaming limbos

Yes, and paradise and Eden, and the Houris– its I

This earth and heaven with all they hold/Angels, Peris, genies and Mankind– it is I.[68]

The mystical vision of God as Love resolves all conflicts between good and evil as it transcends all dualities or dichotomies.

God is the ultimate source of all good and evil, faith and infidelity and all other contraries. In Sufism all these contraries are nothing more than the reflection of His attributes, such as beauty, power, mercy and their contraries, through which God reveals Himself to us; but in reality they have only apparent basis in the world of phenomena. Both the good and the evil that are in us are to be transcended or surpassed and then we shall reach the Origin, the one unity of everything where there is no contradiction. The real nature of bitterness and sweetness can't be understood by this eye; they can be seen through what Rumi calls *darichie aqibat[69]*, the window of the ultimate. *Talkh-o shirin zi nazar napadeed/Az dareiechai aaqibat daned deed.[70]* Only the perfect soul knows the real nature of good and evil and sees them like the two sides of a coin or different waves of the ocean. The contraries of good and evil have any existence only in the brief duration of the creation of the world, after the fall of Adam. He will be returned back to God after a lapse of time and then there will be no good and evil. In the Edenic Garden Adam didn't know of good and evil until he approached that Tree of Good and Evil. It is with the contraries that the edifice of creation is built. Otherwise, there is no good and evil, no element of contraries which is the basis of creation. There is only One– the Great Truth, where reigns Eternal Bliss. As Rumi says: "The world is established from this war (of contraries)– think of these elements, so that it (i.e., the source of all difficulties) may be solved."[71] The eternal Bliss is the original or natural state of the Self. As long as we don't see it or are debarred from this ideal, we are to suffer from these contraries. This is because we cling to desire. The world is burning with the fire of lust, the fire of desires. Thus there can be no realization of the inward Bliss, the Bliss of heaven that we had tasted and lost but could regain.

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[68] Quoted and translated by Nicholson in *The Mystics of Islam*, London,1975, p.161.

[69] Rumi, Maulana Jalaluddin, *Mathnawi,* Vol.I, v. 297.

[70] Ibid.,v. 2582.

[71] Ibid., VI/248.

The esoteric interpretation of the legend of the Fall helps us to clarify the origin of evil. At first Adam knew no evil. But he was destined to be more than an angel, to be the vicegerent of God. So he was given the faculty of choice. This however also implied his capacity of doing evil, which he was to avoid by the training of his will, and he was warned against this danger. But he fell and thus realized the evil. Yet God gives him the chance on a lower plane to make good and recover the lost states of Innocence and Bliss. This is the predicament of being human.

There are two aspects of the one Truth or God– the good and evil. The relative good, (as, for example, represented in Adam) is proceeding stage by stage, slowly but surely, towards the Eternal Good and Bliss and when that will be regained there can't be any relative good and evil. It is all Truth. With this consciousness of the ultimate destiny and state of man, one clearly sees that the divine destiny or the will of God is for his good. So he patiently endures all suffering and overcomes all obstructions in the path. But to a person who doesn't feel like that (as the modern man, the alienated rebellious, exiled, fallen man) any suffering will prompt him to blame the Divine destiny as the cause of his sufferings.

Islam's most profound theological insights concern its scheme of salvation, its eschatology. All souls count in the Islamic scheme of things. God takes account of all of us. He ensures that all souls, all creation returns to Him, willy-nilly. God is the Origin and the End. The Qur'an is emphatic about our ascension, stage by stage, towards God. Man can't escape Him. Even if it necessitates hell's tortures, man must pass through it. The dross in his nature will be made gold. "And God knows how to accomplish His ends," the Qur'an declares. We will conquer evil and death. The vision of God will be our final refuge, our ultimate destiny. Hell will be emptied, declared the Prophet of Islam. Islam ensures that evil is conquered and it comes to nought. Hell isn't eternal in the Islamic (Sufistic) scheme of things. A majority of the Sufis have reinterpreted the doctrine of hell in such terms that qualify its eternity as well as the theologian's interpretation of it as punishment. Salvation for all and sundry is somehow ensured. This is implied in the Islamic vision of apocatastasis and reabsorption of all things in God. The modern man having confined his perspective to this territorial plane feels overwhelmed by the presence of evil in the world. He doesn't know either the origin or the end of things. That is why despair has overcome him.

He is unable to see how his own salvation is being accomplished every moment; how he is expiating for his wrong-doing and sin. The Qur'an is emphatic that the man will not pass unaccounted for and untried. He will have to pass through the tests and trials. God will not leave him as such. God, through us, is accomplishing His purpose. We are condemned to choose the hard climb of the straight path. Not choosing or living inauthentically leads us to hell and we must find the exit. There can be no annihilation or defeating the God's purpose. Even *Iblis* is an accomplice of good; he acts as God's agent. The fact that some Sufis have praised *Iblis* is understandable in this context. The Sufi doesn't fear evil or *Iblis*; he befriends *Iblis*. Through Divine dispensation even poison may become digestible to the God-intoxicated saint– evil doesn't prove injurious to him.[72] The Sufi views suffering as spiritual test and trial leading ultimately to God. Even loathsome things become lovely since they form the pathway to God. The purified soul isn't afraid of any evil; it comes out like gold more brightened than ever in fire. Rumi says:

> O brother, don't flee the flames of Azar, what if you enter them for test
>
> By God they willn't burn you (instead) they will illuminate your face
>
> Like gold, for you belong to the race of Abraham and you have been
>
> familiar (with fire) since olden times.[73]

Following the Qur'an, Rumi regards all privations, like hunger and loss of property, as 'tests' which develop the soul and bring out its real worth.[74] In the realm of pure Being, the vision of which they enjoy there is no opposition between good and evil; the rose springs from the thorn and the thorn from the rose.[75]

Iqbal also gives the same analogy of rose and thorn and affirms his belief in the unity of good and evil at their source.[76] However, Iqbal leaves

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[72] Ibid., v.2599-2600.

[73] Ibid., v.75-77.

[74] Ibid., II/2963-65.

[75] Ibid., I/2472.

[76] Iqbal, M., *Payam i Mashriq*.

unsettled the question how has one evolved into many. In the God's heaven all desires are fulfilled. Rumi explicitly makes the point that the righteous men living for God's sake attain whatever they desire.[77] The Upanishads declare that evil is an illusion and that it is real. Evil is unreal in the sense that it is bound to be transmitted into good. It is real to the extent that it does require our effort to transform its nature.[78] The Sufis see this point clearly. For Rumi "Nothing is vain that is created by God – of anger, clemency, good council and stratagem."[79] Everything works for the good. The Sufistic analysis of the origin of evil echoes Buddha's analysis of the same. To quote Rumi: "Know, then, that any pain of yours is the result of some/deviation (from the truth) and that calamity of your affliction is due to (your) greed and passion."[80] "All these sufferings that are within our hearts arise from the dust of vapour of our existence."[81]

Like the Buddhist "pessimism", the Sufi's apparent pessimism mostly hides something else– exposing the absurdity of selfishness and an ego-centred alienated life. Richard Burton in his *Kasidah* puts this point succinctly: "And this is all, for this we are born and weep and die/So sings the shallow bard whose life labors at the letter 'I'."

It is the narrowness of the straight path or difficulty of salvation, of defeating the stratagems of *nafs* or Satan, or escaping the viles of *Mara* and the consequently poor moral record of man that makes the Sufi pessimistic. The Buddha's famous fire sermon laments the sorry state of man. The world is burning with the fire of lust. Man clings to this and that thing (*shirk* or idolatry could well be taken as this clinging to non-God), and that creates suffering. He gives his soul to Satan rather than to God more easily. The heaven is surrounded by thorns and the hell crowned with flowers. The man succumbs to temptations and falls. Very few indeed are blessed. Only the sacred few are chosen as Shelley notes in his great poem *The Triumph of Life*.

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[77] Rumi, op.cit., IV/6

[78] Quoted by S. Radhakrishnan in *Indian Philosophy*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, Vol.I, p. 242.

[79] Rumi, op. cit., I/ 2606.

[80] Ibid., V/3988.

[81] Ibid.,v. 2966.

The vast multitude is condemned to hell fire. It needs prior purifying experience of hell for a vast majority of men to enter heaven. The soul-making ordeal is indeed hard and most men are incapable of it without suffering tremendously in hell. Man can surrender everything but his ego. Islam demands a very hard thing indeed from Muslims– to surrender their will, to submit without questioning, to be ready for *fana*. Most men, regrettably, chose to disbelieve. Very few can face squarely the nothingness at the heart of existence. Everything (to which man clings) is liable to be destroyed (except the face of God) and God isn't a thing, an object. He doesn't even exist in the ordinary sense of the term. God is above existence. He is not of this world and that world. No one can behold God. Only God can see God. When 'I' is annihilated, only then could God be experienced. The Sufis have emphasized various evils of the world, evils of the *nafs*, and evils of life as ordinarily lived. Crossing the dark night of the soul isn't easy. Man is indeed created in trouble, and most men are disbelievers (incapable of seeing God or realizing the divinity of the Self) and thus condemned to hell, according to the Qur'an. No prophet has had too sanguine an estimate of man's moral worth. God is indeed a hard taskmaster, as Jesus said. Laws of karma are indeed inexorable. God respects our moral decisions. The Prophet has wept more and laughed less. The Sufistic "pessimism" is thus fully warranted. An existentialist's pessimism is warranted from the objective facts of human life. No great philosophy has subscribed to facile optimism. Ours is a fallen world. The desiring self cannot be easily got rid of and thus the fact of suffering is there to stay. Religion's is an objective estimate of the situation although it is animated by the hope of ultimate victory of good and convinced of the essential goodness, beauty and bliss of life.

We now refer to al-Jili's discussion of some aspects of the problem in this connection. Our discussion is primarily based on Nicholson's discussion of the same in his *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* (Adam Publishers, 1998) in the chapter titled "The Perfect Man."

When God created the soul of Muhammad from His own Essence, which comprises all contraries, He created from the soul of Mohammad both the sublime Angels in respect of His attribute of Beauty, Light, and Guidance, and *Iblis* and his followers in respect of His attributes of Majesty, Darkness and misguidance. *Iblis* refused to bow down before Adam as he didn't know that to worship by God's command is equivalent to worshipping God; *Iblis*

was banished from the divine presence until the Day of Judgment, i.e. for a finite period. After the Day of Judgment the creatureliness which hinders the spirit from knowing God as He really is will be counted amongst its perfections and *Iblis* will then be restored to his place beside God.[82]

The Perfect Man is the lord of both the worlds. He mirrors God and universe; he manifests all the attributes of God. Nothing is 'other' to him. He can thus own evil in a way. Nicholson quotes al-Jili in this connection:

Mine is the kingdom in both worlds. I saw there is none

 but myself, that I should hope for his favour or fear him.

I have made all kinds of perfection mine own, and lo, I am

 the beauty of the majesty of the whole. I am nought but It

 Whatsoever thou seest of minerals and plants and animals, together with Man and his qualities,

And whatsoever thou seest of elements and nature and original atoms (*haba*) whereof the substance is (ethereal as) a perfume

And whatsoever thou seest of spiritual forms and of thing, visible whose countenance is goodly to behold,

And whatsoever thou seest of thought and imagination and intelligence and soul, and heart with its inwards,

And whatsoever thou seest of angelic aspect, or of phenomena

Whereof Satan and the Spirit. Lo, I am that whole is my theatre. It is I not it that is displayed in its reality.

Verily I am a providence prince to mankind; the entire creation is a name and my essence is the object named,

The sensible world is mine and the angel-world is of my moving and fashioning; the unseen world is mine and

The world of omnipotence springs from me

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[82] Nicholson, R.A., *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, Adam Publishers and Distributors, 1998, p. 120.

And mark! In all that I have mentioned I am a slave

Returning from the essence to his Lord.

Poor, despised, lowly, self-abasing, sin's captive, in the bonds of his trespasses.[83]

For Al-Jili every Name and Attribute (of God) produces its own characteristic effect. For example, God is the true Guide (al-*Hadi*); but He is also the Misleader (*al-Mudill*). If any one of His Names had remained ineffectual and unrealized, His self-manifestation wouldn't have been complete. Al-Jili also says that all God's creatures worship Him in accordance with His nature. Infidelity and sin are effects of Divine activity and contribute to Divine perfection. Satan himself glorifies God; in as much as his disobedience is subordinate to the eternal will.

So the point that al-Jili makes is that the perfect man is both omnipotent and omniscient and one needn't ask God the whither and whence of evil. The question of God's goodness and wisdom doesn't arise for a perfect man. One realizes the need of fighting evil rather than discussing its origin and questioning God's goodness and omnipotence. The problem of evil is the problem of crossing the dark night of the soul.

We will now discuss specifically Rumi's views on evil from his *Mathnawi* and *Fihi ma fihi*. Rumi interprets the famous tradition that speaks of God as a hidden treasure in what appears to be his rendering of metaphysical notions of All-Possibility and God's Infinitude. The universe is a manifestation of His infinite creative power and desire for self-revelation. Every creature by virtue of its very existence proclaims the glory of God and manifests God to Himself, regardless of whether it is aware or unaware of itself being a locus of divine manifestation. All men are revealing God; though some are unaware of this.[84] It has been quite a hard task to understand God's attributes such as *Qahar,* Wrathful for the theologians. However, what is needed is an objective understanding of Divine Nature and transcending the popular theological notion of a personal God. The Divine Attributes are divided into two categories: Attributes of the Essence and Attributes of the Acts. The

[83] Ibid., pp.107-108.

[84] Rumi, 1961. *The Discourses of Rumi*, trans. A.J. Arberry. London: John Murray, p. 185.

Attributes of the Essence are all the Names (*asma'*) whose opposites are not applicable to God, for example, God is the Living (*al-Hayy*), the Knowing (*al-'Alim*) and the Holy (*al-Quddus*). As for the Attributes of the Acts, both the Names and their opposites are applicable, for example, God as the Exalter (*al-Rafi*) and the Abaser (*al-Khafid*), the Life-Giver (*al-Muhyi*) and the Slayer *(al-Mumit*). In Rumi's view, the positive qualities denote God's Gentleness (*lutf*) and their opposites, God's Severity (*qahr*). Gentleness (*lutf*) is equivalent to the divine Mercy (*rahmah*) and Severity (*qahr*) to divine Wrath (*ghadab*).[85] Echoing the notion of All-Possibility and the Real as Infinite, Rumi explicates the famous tradition 'I was a hidden Treasure, and I desired to be known' thus: 'I created all the world, and the object of all that was to reveal Myself, now gracious, now vengeful.' God is not the kind of king for whom one herald is sufficient. If every atom in the world should become a herald, they would be yet incapable of proclaiming His qualities adequately.[86] Rumi asserts on the basis of the Hadith*,* 'My Mercy is prior to My Wrath', that the Gentle Names of God take ontological precedence over the Severe Names. Zailan Moris quotes Rumi's view regarding the ontological precedence of divine Mercy over divine Wrath:

> …the Severe Names function merely to contrast the Gentle Names in order to enhance the divine Mercy and … the divine Mercy, ultimately annuls the divine Wrath: The fire (of Hell) in sooth is (only) an atom of God's Wrath; it is (only) a whip to threaten the base. Notwithstanding such a Wrath, which is mighty and surpassing all, observe that the coolness of His Clemency is prior to it.[87]

Rumi relies heavily on the familiar principle of contrast. Rumi asserts, "by their contrast are things made clear."[88] Everything in creation needs an opposite to manifest itself. "Behind every nothingness, the possibility of

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[85] Chittick, W. 1983. *The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983, p. 45.

[86] Rumi. 1961. *The Discourses of Rumi*, p.185.

[87] Moris, Zailan, "Rumi's view of Evil," *www.sufism.ru* (I am indebted for certain quotes from Rumi to Moris.)

[88] *The Mathnawi of Jalaluddin Rumi*, trans. by R.A. Nicholson. London: Luzac and Co, 1982, IV/ 1343

existence is concealed; in the midst of Wrath, Mercy is hidden like the priceless cornelian in the midst of dirt."[89] Without the two apparently contrasting divine aspects of Mercy and Wrath, nothing can come into existence. "This (divine) Maker is He who abaseth and exalteth/without these two (attributes) no work is accomplished."[90] In the *Mathnawi* Rumi writes: "Wrath and Mercy were wedded to one another/From these twain was born the world of good and evil."[91] "Thou do not know evil till thou knowst good/(Only) from (one) contrary is it possible to discern (the other) contrary, O' youth!"[92] Thus, evil as the contrasting manifestation of good indirectly helps in the realization of good. Rumi considers the existence of evil in creation as a demonstration of God's true greatness and power rather than a defect in His perfection. In the *Mathnawi*, Rumi compares God to a masterful painter who demonstrates His infinite creative power in both beautiful and ugly paintings. To quote him:

And if you say that evil too are from Him (that is true),

but how is it a defect in His Grace

His bestowing this evil is even His perfection.

Both kinds of pictures (beautiful pictures and pictures devoid of beauty) are evidence of His mastery

Those ugly ones are not evidence of His ugliness, they are evidence of His bounty.[93]

In Rumi's view, since the world is relative and not Absolute there exists no absolute good or evil in God's creation. God as Absolute is *coincidentia oppositorum (jam'-i azdad)*; in the absolute and infinite Being all the tension involved in the opposition of phenomena is transcended. God is Absolute Unity. He transcends all opposition as He has no opposite to make Himself clear. Ibn 'Arabi's elaborate metaphysical scheme with his distinction

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[89] Ibid., v. 1665.

[90] Ibid., v.1854.

[91] Ibid., II/ 2680.

[92] Ibid, IV/1345.

[93] Ibid., II/ 2535-42.

between *ahdiyat* and *wahidiyat*, pure Being and its determinations is an elaboration of these points.

But the question is how one can understand God as beyond good and evil, as Absolute Unity, as pure Essence. How can one smell the unity of sugar and poison? The divergent aspects of creation which arise from the dramatic interplay between the contrasting divine attributes of Mercy and Wrath, Beauty (*jamal*) and Majesty (*jalal*), naturally can't be reconciled at the rational plane by means of conceptual intellect. The problem with scholastic and philosophical approaches to theodicy is their very methodology of approaching the problem rationally or philosophically. The metaphysical meaning of *Tawhid* as oneness of Being is not realizable at the rational plane at all. God is not a thing, a phenomenon, an entity to which categorical framework, the language of propositions would apply. "He who speaks becomes silent before the Divine Essence," as al-Jili has said. The Absolute has not been defiled by human thought or language as Ramakrishna said. As the Buddha has said, "Don't dip the string of thought into the unfathomable: he who questions errs and he who answers errs." Nothing can penetrate the Mystery of God which is absolute. As Abu Bakr has said, "Glory be to Him who made the very incapacity to know Him to be the only path by which creatures may know Him." God isn't this or that; He is transcendent to all categories, to existence. He is beyond existence and non-existence. God as non-Being, as No-thing, as Emptiness, is how the tradition of negative divine describes Him. This is how Ibn 'Arabi describes the Essence.

In this context Rumi's view that reconciliation of the contrasting aspects of the Divine in creation cannot be obtained through reason or discursive thought is quite understandable. For no matter how much Reason "perpetually, night and day, is restless and in commotion, thinking and struggling and striving to comprehend God,"[94] it cannot arrive at a resolution. God is incomprehensible: "If man were able to comprehend God, that indeed is not God."[95] The hope for a higher vision which reconciles the contrasting aspects of the divine Attributes of the Acts can only be sought when man transcends himself, after he experiences *fana*. Stace has been

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[94] Rumi, *The Discourses of Rumi*, p. 47.

[95] Ibid., p.48.

quoted above to foreground the same point. Only when man achieves subsistence in God by surrendering the ego and fleeing "from this phenomenal world" will he be able to be a witness (*shahid*) to the divine Unity veiled behind the multiplicity of phenomena. In Rumi's view, the manifestation of divine Mercy and Wrath is not only necessary to reveal God's Greatness and Perfection (Divine Infinitude), but also necessary for the spiritual development of man. The role of a discipline of pain and suffering in calling man back to God is emphasized in the Qur'an as well as in many traditions of the Prophet. In fact rationalistic and naturalistic philosophies are unable to account for the presence of so much pain and suffering in the evolution of life and consciousness. In fact, as Underhill has argued in her classic *Mysticism,* only mysticism can understand the significance of pain and its role in soul-making. The greatness of mysticism lies in harnessing the fact of pain in transmutation of a beast into an angel. The presence of pain and suffering in this perspective becomes an argument or evidence for God rather than against Him. As Ghazali has said in his *Kimyae Sa'adat (Alchemy of Happiness),* suffering is God's instrument or lasso of mercy through which he calls his friends back home.[96] Greater the stature of God's friend, harder may be the kiss of suffering from the Beloved. There are numerous accounts that relate the Sufi's willful acceptance of suffering. The Sufis don't differentiate between gifts and taunts, blessings and torments as everything comes from God (God is the creator of both good and evil). In fact this is what the Unitarian perspective of Islam implies. As none exists save God or the Beloved, a Sufi can't be but utterly grateful for whatsoever he receives. The exemplary patience of the suffering Job is relived in the Sufi's life. *Tawakkul* (trust in God), as some Sufi authorities understand it, demands that the Sufis should not ask for withdrawal of suffering that afflicts them. (It does not mean what the Buddha calls suffering but only the temporary pains that body suffers and the worldly misfortunes that are our lot.) *Tawakkul* also implies that one may never question anything but celebrate whatever happens to be God's will. Ghazali has quoted Ba Yazid's explanation of *tawakkul* that it is the state wherein one sees denizens of hell in discomfort and sees heaven's denizens in bliss and doesn't feel any difference between the two in his heart. Ghazali explains that it means that

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[96] *Akseer-i-Hidayat* (Urdu translation of Ghazali's *Kimayae Saadat*) trans. M. Saeed Naqshbandi, Adbi Dunya, Delhi,1996, p.76.

one has perfect trust in the justice, wisdom and mercy of God and thus sees no point in remoulding anything according to the heart's desire or suggesting any change here and there in the scheme of things.[97]

Ibn 'Arabi provides one of the most profound analyses of the issue of evil. He is the most consistent metaphysician in Islam who has dealt with the issue of evil vis-à-vis God from a strictly nondualistic *wujudi* perspective. It anticipates important modern views that, though developed in a nontraditional atmosphere of modernity, converge with the traditional mystical-metaphysical position. Khalifa Abdul Hakim has good reasons to consider Rumi as a forerunner of Nietzsche. With greater warrant one could argue for Ibn 'Arabi in a similar vein. Ibn 'Arabi's contribution in other departments of Islamic thought and spirituality is increasingly being recognized, although his extremely important contribution to clarification of issues related to theodicy is yet to receive due attention. At the risk of oversimplification, we may sum up his understanding in the following points:

There is no such thing as evil; what we call evil is only evil from our perspective, the perspective of a finite self.

The Divine Will overrides the good/evil binary. The revealed law designates as evil something which is nevertheless approved by the more primordial Divine Will.

Everything is perfect when looked from the viewpoint of the Absolute.

Everything happens in accordance with archetypal constitution or possibilities. God doesn't determine or influence archetypal possibilities. His Goodness can't be affected by the evil in creation which is acquired by things/individuals as per there nature.

There is no such thing as going astray or ignorance and consequently hell. Everything, every creature is under the tuition and influence of divine decree. God is monitoring everything. Nothing is outside His control. Everything is perfect at every moment

Human evaluations and categories of good and evil are purely arbitrary and based on self-interest. They are projections, anthropocentric rather

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[97] Ibid., pp.893-894.

than Reality-centric or Theocentric. There is no such thing as virtue and sin (and thus moral evil) at the deepest level. Moral evil appears so from the perspective of law only. God is beyond good and evil and so is the sage. Nietzsche's idea of beyond good and evil converges with Ibn 'Arabi 's.

As nothing is outside God or Reality (as God is Reality) so nothing is against His will or His control. The realization of God/Truth implies the realization of perfection of everything. Time, history, becoming, progress, struggle and thus evil all lose their traditional importance in the absolutist perspective. The world is a play of God rather than something that involves real tragedy. Tragedy is unknown to the Eastern/mystical worldview. There is no waste, no loss, no suffering, no evil in the real sense. Problems arise when the categorical, conceptual view is imposed on a Reality that transcends all binaries, although it manifests itself to the mind or thought in terms of binaries. All questions that the mind asks, that the essentially dualistic thought asks, are misformulated or unwarranted. This is what Zen so forcefully argues. We as the questioning selves are not. Only God is. We aren't outside God though we believe otherwise as long as we identify with the separating principle of ego. In the Infinite there are no boundaries, no categories that delimit, no concepts that encompass. We need to scrutinize our right to ask questions. Religions demand submission or transcendence from the kingdom of the self that seeks justifications, that evaluates, that imposes its categories on what transcends it. A believer has no questions because he has risen above the level of the mind where questions arise. Islam as a religion of submission demands that man is nothing outside God or apart from God.

Mystery or wonder (*Hairayah*) is what the traveler on the path to Reality discovers at the last station. There is no explaining away of the mystery of Existence. It is the rational faculty that demands somehow subsuming the mystery at the heart of everything. The religious attitude is to revere the mysterious ground of existence as sacred. There is no reason for anything. God is Mystery, *al-Ghayyib* in the Qur'anic phrase. Love and contemplation of wonder and mystery are what religion demands. Love doesn't ask questions. It celebrates. Everything is from the beloved alone as God (the Beloved) has no associates. All divinities other than Allah are fictions.

Whatever comes from the Beloved for a lover is enjoyed and welcomed with gratitude. Reason fails to solve the mystery of existence. There is no answer to the question why is there anything and not nothing. Hafiz has famously advocated the attitude of gay abandon and celebration in contrast to the rationalist's or logician's approach to the riddle of existence. Men have wrongly imagined that they have untied the knot of existence, the why of existence. The gnostic is too absorbed in the contemplation of the Good, in the bliss of Beatific vision to mind at all the suffering of the world as Rabia of Basra said. The notion of God, especially the idea of a negative divine that certain theologians and most mystics have advocated, signifies the impossibility of arriving at a rational solution to the problem of existence. The Being escapes all rational appropriations. The timeless can't be captured in the net of thought that presupposes time. When the Sufi reaches the end of path, he comes to perceive the impossibility of perceiving the Holy Mystery, of penetrating the Dark Abyss of Godhead. The wings of reason are scorched as they come closer to God. The vision of essences or of Supraformal Essence is only possible when the knower ceases to be a separate entity from the known, when it is dissolved in the known or object. The knower can't be known. All these things mean that the vision (of God, The Good) is ineffable; it can only be experienced or enjoyed. Western philosophy, as Heidegger pointed out, is oblivious to the ground of being. It is not open to the sacred mystery of Being. It is not the philosopher but the poet who can show the track of the holy. Experiencing God demands annihilation of the self and all its conceptual baggage. Nothing in the known world can express the Divine Darkness. God is the Totality and nothing is outside Him so all the fragmentary views (which human views characteristically are) cannot make sense of Him or His doings. If man knew all the karmic causes he would be immediately outside the *samsaric* trappings and thus one with the Unborn, the Unconditioned. In fact there is no karma for the *jnani*, the one who truly knows, the Perfect Man. Our true self is outside all the karmic determinations; it is uncorrupted by evil. It is beyond all determinations, all binaries including the binary of good and evil. There is no unresolved problem, untied knot for the Awake, the Buddha. The Buddha, always serene, dissolves all questions in a smile. In fact religions are not primarily interested in metaphysical questions but in leading people to the other shore where these questions lose their importance. One could well argue that all religions have been oriented towards the goal of

salvation/deliverance and doctrines and beliefs are meant to make this possible and are subservient to the truth that saves/liberates. It is the attitude of wonder that all religions endorse and which makes for a properly philosophical life. Socrates, an exemplary philosopher and sage, knew he knew nothing and that was why he was the wisest man. The Highest Good isn't rationally knowable. One has to be it. All quests end in wonder. In the last analysis man knows nothing. From the structure of matter to the constitution of spirit nothing is ultimately known. All human knowledge is a progressive unveiling of the ultimate impenetrability of the veil that disguises Reality. Existence is a mystery. The questions of good and evil, freedom and determinism, time and eternity- all show the incapacity of rational/categorical/conceptual frameworks in divulging the basic metaphysical questions. The sages don't deal with abstractions and have no business with mere ratiocination. Rational metaphysics is not their obsession – the Buddha represents the typically mystical attitude in his avoidance of (rational) metaphysical questions. Ibn 'Arabi's great metaphysical system ends in advocating dissolution of the rational attempt to unveil the deepest core or ground of being, the Essence.

God is *what is*, to use Krishnamurti's phrase (that beautifully translates the Sufistic doctrine of God). To accept what is ordained by the decree of God and not to demand any explanation for anything from God is *tawakkul*. This is what the rebel in the modern man will hardly understand. The Promethean and Faustian man that humanism worships is the antithesis of the traditional pontifical man who bridges heaven and earth. Camus' rebel and the *mutawakkil* Sufi are poles apart in their approach to evil. One finds no reason, no justification for the universe or life of man and most things under the sun. That is why he calls it absurd. And the absurd is something that the intelligent rational man cannot afford to be comfortable with. He cannot accept what is or surrender to a God who is the totality of existence, both transcendent and immanent. He cannot accept life as he cannot accept its culmination in death. He cannot accept pain that the flesh is heir to because that pain has no reason to be there; that is not a kiss from the Beloved. He shows his fist to the world. Heidegger's assertion that the world is that in the face of which one experiences anxiety, Beckett's key statement in *Endgame*: "You are on earth and there is no cure for that", Sartre's characterization of life as futile passion, Camus' reference in *The Myth of Sisyphus* to "this world

to which I am opposed by my whole consciousness"– all these show this discomfort, this inability to accept what is or trust in God and His creation. The problem of evil disappears if we are somehow reconciled to the world and life and could declare that all is good. This is possible only if we designate the Existence as God and celebrate life as a God-given gift. The saint laughs like Nietzsche's Zarathustra and does not resent anything and is able to love fate and even would have no grudge against eternal recurrence. This is so unlike Kant who said that he could not accept, if given a choice, to repeat this life on any conditions whatsoever. How unlike the Sufi who is ready to die an infinite number of times for the pleasure of God as a martyr and even go to hell if it pleases Him. The Sufi thanks God for every breath. For him life is a gift for which God needs to be glorified and thanked. He humbles himself in penitent submission before God. He has no demands. His prayer is love. He prays to be made steadfast in accepting the Beloved's dispensations. He affirms life and his God signifies the Eternal Life. He has no grudges against existence; he doesn't wish to register any complaints on the day he was born or the day he would die. He, following the Prophet, doesn't vilify time because God is Time. Life is a song and death is a great and wonderful adventure, a lifting of the veil that separates him from his Beloved. He is a satisfied soul (*nafsi mutma'ina*) pleased with God, and God is pleased with him. And he enters the garden of bliss that his Friend has made for him (more precisely, God is Bliss, the vision of God a Bliss Everlasting). After experiencing God as Goodness and Bliss, no sorrow can exist. One is on the other shore. One's perception changes for good and one sees the Beloved's Face everywhere. Heaven and hell are here and a matter of perception. The Sufi after having experienced God sees the world in a different light. It appears far more beautiful. That is why such splendid nature-poetry has come from the Sufi poets. Here are just two examples which may be contrasted with the above-quoted statements of Heidegger, Sartre, Camus and Beckett. Saadi said: "I am joyous with the cosmos for the cosmos receives its joy from Him/I love the whole world, for the world belongs to Him." Yunus Emre, a Turkish Sufi folk poet who heard the invocation of God's Blessed Name in the sound of flowing streams that brought to him a recollection of paradisical realities and so he sang:

The rivers all in paradise

Flow with the word Allah, Allah

And every loving nightingale

He sings and sings Allah Allah[98]

The absurdist Man's pagan affirmation of this worldly life, a life condemned to the realm of finitude and horizontal plane and cut off from any meaningful relationship with or belief in transcendence conceals at heart the great pain of the fall from Heaven and too deep a gloom to allow for the Nietzschean joy of becoming or celebration of the dance of life. Alienated from himself, alienated from God– his ultimate concern, the Being of being, his "Centre", his is an empty revolt against Heavens and he is condemned to mourn his nightmarish existence. For him this vale of tears is not the vale of soul-making. No eternity or heaven is there to be won either here and now or in the "other world" to make life worth living. Man is condemned to endure, although not without resentment in the Beckettian world, this hell of a life which offers nothing except misery and tears and sometimes a meaningless laughter. There is no saving grace and no such thing as salvation. The modern Western man cannot be but hopelessly pessimistic after 'killing' God and being unable to install a new one in His place or take his place himself. Nietzsche's dream of the superman who can afford to contemplate eternal recurrence and love fate and laugh away all suffering has remained just a dream. The man, having abandoned super-terrestrial things, has not been able to be true to the earth as Nietzsche had wished. Rather he stands opposed to it despite his wishful thinking that he is a life-affirmer and loves the fruits of the earth. In contrast Ibn 'Arabi and Al-Jili have explicated the idea of the perfect man who is a microcosmic God's mirror and appropriates the divine attributes. He is beyond good and evil as he has overcome all categorization by transcending the dualistic mind by virtue of *Tawhid*. He is not a subject who encounters the world as the other, to which he could be in any antagonistic relationship. He sees the world as a theophany, an externalization or manifestation of the Self. The Nietzschean-existentialist pessimism is the logical dead end of the secular Faustian-Promethean humanistic ideology to which the post-Renaissance Western man is committed.

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[98] Quoted in Nasr, S. H., "Islam and the Environmental Crisis" in MAAS *Journal of Islamic Science,* Vol.6, No.2, July-Dec 1990.

The post-Nietzschean hope and vision of innocence and joy of becoming, without the background worldview of traditional metaphysics that is the common possession of traditional civilizations including the pre-modern traditional West, has not been realized. The works of Camus and Beckett depicting the absurd life of the hopeless godless man are a testimony to this assertion. Their absurdist pessimism represents the crisis of humanistic anti-traditional outlook of the modern West.

As the Sufis have killed their pleasure-seeking self, nothing matters for them; no suffering can disturb their calm and repose as they eternally rest in the lap of God. If one takes the belief in God of Mercy and Love seriously, in a God who certainly accomplishes His ends and whom nothing can defeat, there is no scope for any complaint, any anger against the heavens. The question of returning the ticket of life to God doesn't arise at all. One is joyous with the whole of existence and blesses everything including himself. That is what *durood* and much of *zikr* is all about. A Sufi puts absolutely no conditions on God; his acceptance of the divine decree is total and absolutely unconditional. Camus' Dr Rieux and Dostoevsky's Ivan cannot accept any scheme of things that necessitates putting innocent children to torture. The Sufis in contrast could accept any scheme of things because he knows beforehand (though he may not rationally understand) that God is ultimately in full control of everything and that He is Love and Mercy personified. He has experienced the goodness of God. He has seen by means of the eye of the heart that all is good as God had declared after completing the creation. All this is simple to understand if we see that consciousness is of the nature of bliss (*anand*). God is Pure Consciousness. The Spirit doesn't belong to the phenomenal world which is the realm of impermanence, change and thus suffering. In the inner space, in the depths of the Self there is no consciousness of any object, either pleasant or unpleasant. Living in God's presence (*seerum min-Allah* or traveling within God) or God-consciousness or subsisting in God (what Sufism calls *baqa*) means objectless consciousness. And there is no dominion of evil or death or any separative principle there. For God as Unmanifest Consciousness there is no evil as nothing really exists at that level. The Sufis are the people of the path; they have a method of perceiving the world and transforming the self. And those who reach the other shore find themselves delivered from all suffering though of course the suffering to which a flesh is heir to may continue. Complete deliverance from

suffering is possible only posthumously when there is nothing left that is subject to time and the Spirit is wholly itself. The Sufis have a practical method to pass beyond the dominion of suffering and experience the goodness of God. One can find for oneself if God is good or not, if heaven or eternity is realizable here and now or not. If theodicy means justifying God's wisdom and demonstrating His goodness, then Sufism approaches this issue empirically. It is open for everyone to see how far it works. We have learnt from Kant that pure reason cannot resolve metaphysical problems. In a way we could well argue that all philosophical theodicy is doomed. There can be no irrefutable theodicy at a purely and exclusively rational plane that employs only rational argumentation.

Sufism does not worry about theodicy; it has focused on making man see that God is good. It doesn't advance any rational arguments for God's goodness. It clears the perception that veils the face of the Good, the Beautiful, the Beloved. When man disappears, the whole universe appears blissful. The aching, anxious, time-imprisoned self is no longer there. There is only the face of God wherever we turn. The universe is aglow with divine splendour and the Sufi sings and dances. He is pleased with his Lord and sees the whole universe as the Garden of Eden decked by the flowers of love and gratitude. God invites him to this garden and in fact for the Gnostic, God is this garden that lies planted deep in our hearts though our passions and the ego may have made a desert of it. God's rain (remembrance of God or remembrance of our own nothingness so that the seed of pure consciousness, which is bliss, blossoms) is ever there to be revived. The Beloved is smiling all the time and the passional self is turned away from it. Everything is celebrating the great feast that God is perpetually preparing for His grateful servants. We are all invited to share and it is the gnostic, the Sufi, who pays for the ticket that costs no less than the ego. We are to realize our own goodness, our bliss and thereby we will best justify God's goodness which in the last analysis is the goodness of Life or Self.

IQBAL AND CLASSICAL MUSLIM THINKERS

Syed Nomanul Haq

ABSTRACT

Iqbal seems to be engaged in constructing his own metaphysical system; he moves all over a vast canvas of the annals of Islam's intellectual history to seek support and inspiration. His ambitions are noble, and his concerns are invaluable– but what he does philosophically is beset with all kinds of problems.

If one considers the totality of Iqbal's literary output as constituting a single integral whole, then there is hardly any important personage of Islamic intellectual and cultural history not to be found figuring in his horizons. Indeed, he cast an enormously wide net both in his imaginative world of poetry and his discursive world of metaphysical speculations, capturing so much in it that the sheer historical range and scope of his locutions are simply overwhelming. Hermann Hesse, the celebrated Swiss-German writer and Nobel-Laureate, once spoke of three spiritual realms of Iqbal (*drei Reichen des Geistes*): the world of India, the world of Islam, and the world of western thought.[99] Gerhard Böwering called Iqbal "a bridge between East and West," drawing upon enormously variegated legacies of what he considers two distinct cultural spheres.[100] Aziz Ahmad, while discussing Iqbal's thought process and thought structure in a somewhat critical vein, pointed out that Iqbal's intellectual efforts embraced a "vast range" of positions culled from a whole multiplicity of schemes of thought.[101] Elsewhere, I have myself brought into fuller focus the fact that Iqbal not only drew upon the Arabo-Persian sources, but opened many other vistas too, receiving light also from

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[99] Reproduced in *Fikr wa Fann*, 22 (1979), p. 1.

[100] G. Böwering, "Iqbal: A Bridge of Understanding between East and West," *Journal of South Asia and Middle Eastern Studies*, 1 (1977), pp. 12-21.

[101] Aziz Ahmad, "Iqbal: Speculative Neo-Modernism" in Aziz Ahmad, Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan: 2857-1964. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967, pp. 141-63.

the Indo-Persian, Greco-Arabic, Iranian, and of course Western and Indic traditions.[102]

I feel very strongly that Iqbal's fundamental identity has been shaped by his poetry, not by his discursive thought. It is in the world of poetry, not of the discipline of philosophy, that he reigns supreme; indeed, it is Iqbal the Poet, not the speculative metaphysician, who rules over the hearts of millions and who has gained the grand stature of a global literary colossus. But, then, poetry does not construct rational systems; it often distorts natural realities to render them fictions, though meaningful fictions.[103] So to discuss Iqbal and classical Muslim thinkers in the context of his poetry is to move beyond a structured discourse and to follow poetry's own rhythms and its own complex logic in which factual reality is only an instrument and not an end in itself– or as Iqbal would have said himself - not the destination but only the lamp that illuminates the path leading to the destination. And yet, the context of this discussion of mine is rational-historical, not literary-subjective, and this means that we must restrict ourselves to those works of Iqbal in which he explicitly attempts to construct a discursive scheme, a system guided by formal logic, within which he treats factual empirical data of history, science, and nature.

And this means a limitation: that is, we are to narrow our consideration to two of his prose writings, generally regarded as his "philosophical" works– namely his doctoral work submitted to Munich University in 1907, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*,[104] and of course, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, first published in London in 1934.[105] However, it is widely known that Iqbal's thought, active and animated as it was, went through its own development and evolution, and he subsequently distanced himself from many of the views he had expressed in the dissertation, reluctant to

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[102] S. Nomanul Haq, "Recovering Iqbal," *Dawn Books and Authors*, 24 August 2008, pp. 2-4.

[103] In articulating my views I have drawn upon the many writings of Shamsur Rahman Faruqi. See particularly his *How to Read Iqbal*. Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 2004.

[104] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia: A Contribution to the History of Muslim Philosophy*. Lahore: Bazm-I Iqbal, n.d.

[105] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Lahore: S. M. Ashraf, 1951.

allow the publication of an Urdu translation of the work. This leaves us largely with one work that embodies the mature phase of his rational system-building, namely his *Reconstruction*. In what follows, therefore, the focus is very largely, though not exclusively, on this latter work. It is the *Reconstruction* that serves here as the point of departure as well as the point of return.

The list of classical Muslim thinkers that make an appearance in the work is fairly large– we see some of them appearing briefly, some extensively, and some appearing only once and some repeatedly. In fact, Alessandro Bausani has compiled a complete catalogue of all of these citations and invocations in both the *Reconstruction* and the *Metaphysics*, reproducing Iqbal's text in every case. The Italian scholar has counted some twenty-three classical Muslim sources, both individuals and doctrinal communities, spoken of or directly quoted by Iqbal; furthermore, he classifies these Iqbalian sources very broadly according to their specific intellectual discipline.[106] This classificatory catalogue essentially embodies a mechanical exercise with minimal theoretical discourse or explanatory thrust. And yet, when the two bodies of Iqbal's writings are viewed not *qua* collections of fragments as Bausani seems to have done here, but in their wholeness as forming two integrated units, then it becomes possible to generate another classification– a classification not merely mechanical but explanatory, shedding much light on our poet's speculative methodology as well as the rather personal nature of his interpretive historical narrative

Thus, firstly, there are those sources invoked by Iqbal which have influenced him significantly both in the structure and substance of his thought. Quite naturally, such sources are referred to and discussed frequently and at length in his discourses. Then, secondly, there are those thinkers, philosophical groups, and traditions that are cited by Iqbal for the purpose of seeking support for his own ideas and to give these ideas a ring of traditional and established authority; or for the purpose of demonstrating a parallel between classical Islamic thought and modern Western intellectual and scientific developments, emphasizing what he sees as the historical and logical priority of the former in anticipating what was to be discovered by Europe only centuries later. And, finally, Iqbal cites many classical Muslim

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[106] A. Bausani, "Classical Muslim Philosophy in the Work of a Muslim Modernist: Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938)," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 42 (1960), pp. 272-88.

personages for the embellishment and ornamentation of his own assertions and claims. Less charitably, this last may well be called "name-dropping." These three categories, however, are not mutually exclusive. Some focused research on this taxonomy would be most fruitful, but it is not undertaken in this article.

Here, another word about the limitations of this study of mine is to be said: I have largely limited myself, firstly, to those Muslim sources which fall in the first group, and, secondly, to those sources from this group that have been cited in Iqbal's philosophical discourses, or rather, in his metaphysical constructions, leaving out those he draws upon in his disquisition on Islamic law and Sharīah.

Methodology of Metaphysical Constructs and the Iqbalian Spin

I shall begin with two important observations, one concerning Iqbal's discursive methodology, the other having to do with his reading of the sources he invokes. As for his methodology, it happens to be almost invariably speculative. What does that mean? It means that whenever a tension arises within the elements of his doctrinal scheme, he fixes it by metaphysical constructs; this is practically a poetic fix, one ought to note. So, for example, speaking ontologically about God's existence in non-serial time, he is confronted with the challenge of reconciling two assertions of the Qur'ān: One speaking about God's command as being - to say it in ordinary language– timeless; this is 54:50 which Iqbal translates as "Our command was but one, swift as the twinkling of an eye" (*ka-lamhim bi'l-basar*). And the other (25: 59) declaring that it took six days for God to create the cosmos– Iqbal renders it, "Who in six days (*fī sittati ayyāmin*) created the Heavens and the earth, and what is between them." How does one reconcile both the absence and presence of a time-period in one and the same process, twinkling of an eye on the one hand and six days on the other?

Now, typically, Iqbal's method is quite unlike that of the traditional Muslim *tafsīr*, Qur'ānic hermeneutics, which would as a normal course resolve the variation by one or more of the standard exegetic devices– historicization (the *sha'n nuzūl* approach), contextualization, philological analysis, and explication by Hadith reports. As against all this, Iqbal explains the variation by a heavy metaphysical construct: there exist two kinds of

selves, he teaches us, the appreciative self and the efficient self. A whole speculative edifice is now erected on this construct:

> The unity of 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. There is no numerical distinctness of states in the totality of the ego, the multiplicity of whose elements is, unlike that of the efficient self, wholly qualitative. There is change and movement, but this change and movement are indivisible; their elements inter-penetrate and are wholly non-serial in character. It appears that the time of the appreciative self is a single 'now' which the efficient self in its traffic with the world of space, pulverizes into a series of 'now' like pearl beads in a thread …

> If we look at the moment embodied in creation from the outside, that is to say, if we apprehend it intellectually, it is a process lasting through thousands of years; for one Divine day, in the terminology of the Quran… is equal to 1,000 years. From another point of view the process of creation, lasting through thousands of years, is a single indivisible act, 'swift as the twinkling of an eye'.[107]

This sounds unmistakably Bergsonian, distinguishing between pure duration (*durée*) and serial time with its multiplicity of moments as they come into manifestation in sequential succession.[108] Indeed, Iqbal does acknowledge that he is drawing upon or rather *appropriating* the French philosopher in this metaphysical adventure of explaining the differing Qur'ānic assertions. What Iqbal is doing embodies a highly imaginative exercise, but it is more pleasing poetically than philosophically, in the strict and technical sense of philosophy.

The reason for the philosophical weakness of the exercise is the idiosyncratic manner in which Iqbal recasts his sources and appropriates them to serve his own ends– even though these ends are, I must add, certainly noble ones. And this takes us to the second observation made above, namely his own reading of the sources that he invokes. In the

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[107] *Reconstruction*, p. 48.

[108] A detailed study of Iqbal metaphysics of time is A. Bausani, "The Concept of Time in the Religious Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal," *Die Welt des Islams*, N. S. 3 (1954), pp. 158-186.

particular case at hand, we see Bergson expounded, fundamentally readjusted, and finally mapped onto the framework of classical Muslim thinkers. Harmonizing Bergson with the *kalām* or sufi traditions, or with Greco-Arabic philosophy, is an impossible task due to the incompatible conceptual presuppositions upon which these various sets of ideas are severally grounded. Yet Iqbal tries to make this harmonizing possible by presenting to his audience a modern Bergsonian reading of classical Muslim thinkers; and in giving his own spin to both, in the end he effectively transmutes each beyond recognition.

Thus, on the hand, Iqbal introduces an Aristotelian teleology into the *élan vital* of Bergson, the primordial energy flowing in pure duration (*durée*), and on the other hand reformulates Abu'l-Hasan al-Ash'arī's (d. 937) time atomism, so that the two are brought into a compatible relationship. Iqbal then brings to bear a large number of Muslim thinkers to support this adventure of his, again reading these thinkers in his own personal manner. Here is a mixing of Bergson, Ash'arī, and (derivatively) Ghazālī:

> Pure time [*durée*] … 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 [Bergson] … It is time freed from the net of causal sequence– the diagrammatic character which the logical understanding imposes upon it [*kalām*/Ash'arī/ Ghazālī] …

> If time is real, and not a mere repetition of homogeneous moments which make conscious experience a delusion, then every moment in the life of Reality is original [*kalām*/Ash'arī/Ghazālī] … To exist in real time is not to be bound by the fetters of serial time [Bergson], but to create it from moment to moment and to be absolutely free and original in creation [*kalām*/Ash'arī/ Ghazālī].[109]

Now comes Iqbal's re-casting of Bergson. The vitalism of Bergson, he declares, "ends in an insurmountable dualism of will and thought."[110] Here enters 'Urfī, largely for ornamental support, a Persian Muslim poet imaginatively appropriated to usher Iqbal into the psychological theory that

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[109] *Reconstruction,* 49-50.

[110] Ibid., 52.

"ends and purposes … form the warp and woof of conscious experience."[111] Bergson then undergoes an Iqbalian transmutation:

> Purposes … constitute the forward push of our life [Bergson's *élan vital*], and thus in a way anticipate and influence the states that are yet to be … Thus past and future both operate in the present state of consciousness, and the future is not wholly undetermined as Bergson's analysis of our conscious experience shows… On the analogy of our conscious experience, therefore, Reality is not a blind vital impulse wholly unilluminated by idea. Its nature is through and through teleological.[112]

Iqbal is not bothered by the fact that by introducing *telos* into the *élan vital* of Bergson, he is removing the very foundational principle on which the French philosopher's whole metaphysical system stands: making the *élan vital* purposive negates the essential primordial freshness of the *durée*. If Bergson's vitalism is given a specific ontological direction or is made to move towards an end, and its wholly undetermined nature is denied, then it is no longer Bergson's *élan vital*. Again, note Iqbal's methodological tendency to resolve conceptual tensions by metaphysical constructs: teleology, he says, is not mechanistic, but a vitalistic-creative process.

The Mélange: Bergson, Ash'arī, Ibn Hazm, and Persian Thinkers

Bergson thus transmuted is then fully woven with classical Muslim thinkers. Iqbal has a corrective formula here for the famous Spanish writer, theologian, and legist Ibn Hazm. He hesitated to predicate life of God, observes Iqbal, out of his fear for conceiving Him in anthropomorphic terms. Ibn Hazm resolves this fear by proposing, our poet reports, "that God should be described as living, not because he is living in the sense of our experience of life, but only because he is so described in the Quran."[113]An Ash'arī-Bergson mélange now appears, a mélange which would be recognizable neither to Ash'arī nor to Bergson, since it maps the cosmological-metaphysical atomism of the former onto the vitalistic-

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[111] Ibid., 53.

[112] Ibid., 53.

[113] Ibid., 59.

psychological pure duration of the latter. Iqbal reads Ibn Hazm in his own private manner and then offers a curative:

> Confining himself to the surface of our conscious experience and ignoring its deeper phases, Ibn Hazm must have taken life as a serial change, a succession of attitudes towards an obstructing environment. Serial change is obviously a mark of imperfection; and, if we confine ourselves to this view of change, the difficulty of reconciling Divine perfection with Divine life becomes insuperable. Ibn Hazm must have felt that the perfection of God can be retained only at the cost of His life. There is, however, a way out of the difficulty.

> The Absolute Ego … is the whole of Reality. He is not so situated as to take a perspective view of an alien universe; consequently, the phases of His life are wholly determined from within. Change, therefore, in the sense of movement from an imperfect to a relatively perfect state, or *vice versa*, is absolutely inapplicable to His life. But change in this sense is not the only possible form of life. A deeper insight into our conscious experience shows that beneath the appearances of serial duration there is true duration. The Ultimate Ego exists in pure duration wherein change ceases to be a succession of varying attitudes, and reveals its true character as continuous creation, 'untouched by weariness' and unsiezable 'by slumber or sleep'.[114]

A few things need to be brought into focus here. Note, first, the *speculative* reading of Ibn Hazm on the part of Iqbal, a reading that is all his own ("Ibn Hazm *must have* taken …"; "Ibn Hazm *must have* felt …"). Then we see both Ash'arī and Bergson brought to bear in the same breath, but without reference or acknowledgement. And finally, we find here Qur'ānic verses beautifully embellishing the discourse. This is typical of Iqbal the Metaphysician!

Interestingly, the weaving together of vastly distant Muslim and European thinkers– distant both in time and in terms of their fundamental doctrines– continues throughout the *Reconstruction,* and we have at one place the mixing of the sixteenth/seventeenth-century Iranian philosopher Mīr Damād, the teacher of the relatively better known Mullā Sadrā, and the nineteenth-

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[114] Ibid., 59-60.

century Bahāʾī, Mullā Bāqir. These two figures are brought together for the support of Iqbal's Bergsonian-Ashʿarite metaphysics of serial time, pure duration, and the atomism of continuous creation. "The time of the Ultimate Ego is revealed as change without succession, i.e. an organic whole which appears atomic because of the creative movement of the ego. This is what Mir Damad and Mulla Baqir mean when they say that time is born with the act of creation by which the Ultimate Ego realizes and measures, so to speak, the infinite wealth of His own undetermined creative possibilities."[115] Typically, Iqbal gives no references.

It is quite evident already that while the two Persians are invoked by Iqbal only for legitimizing his own views by a flash-back technique, he is definitely influenced profoundly by one trend in the classical intellectual history of Islam: namely, *kalām* atomism, especially as it is articulated in the Ashʿarite tradition. Indeed, Iqbal also had to be critical of this tradition since his metaphysical project needed to inject into the "objective" Ashʿarite cosmology the psychological theory of time picked up from Bergson. On the other hand, Iqbal does speak very highly of the *mutakallim*s of this mould, paying them the tribute of being "on the right path" and for anticipating some of the "more modern" forms of idealism." In fact, he often discusses them anachronistically, and does so even in the context of modern mathematics, a field in which he had no expertise. Thus, we are told, and accurately so, that the Ashʿarite did not believe in the infinite divisibility of space and time. "With them space, time and motion are made up of points and instants which cannot be further subdivided."[116] But, then, Iqbal concludes that they therefore admitted the existence of infinitesimals. This was rejected by Ibn Hazm, Iqbal reports, saying that modern mathematics had now vindicated the Spanish sage.

Ashʿarite thinkers were superior to Kant, says Iqbal. Writing in the *Metaphysics* that the German philosopher in his inquiry into human knowledge stopped at the idea of "*Ding an sich*" (thing-in-itself) but these *mutakallim*s went further and practically became the forerunners of the German logician Rudolph Lotze's (d. 1881) idealism.[117] Declaring the

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[115] Ibid., 76-7.

[116] Ibid., 35.

[117] *Metaphysics*, 57.

Ash'arite Abū Bakr Baqillanī (d. 1036) in the *Reconstruction* as the "most exact and daring thinker,"[118] Iqbal pays a resounding tribute to the *mutakallim*s: the emergence and endurance of atomism in Islam was the first important indication of an intellectual revolt against the Aristotelian idea of a fixed universe; and this formed one of the most interesting chapters in the entire history of Muslim thought.

Earlier, in the *Metaphysics*, Iqbal says something that should serve as an antidote to a misleading presumption still lurking about in some contemporary circles– that science in Islam came to a halt after Ghazālī's dismissal of causality and the assertion of his atomistic theory of continuous creation, both carried out, as they were, in an Ash'arite vein. This view of the end of science from Muslim societies is arrogantly drawn from the now discarded thesis of Ignaz Goldziher, a view that is historically absurd but highly satisfying ideologically. Here Iqbal moves in exactly the opposite direction– he recognizes Ash'arī, whom Ghazālī had followed, as having provided the very logical justification and metaphysical grounding that make experimental science philosophically respectable, thereby supplying a supporting intellectual muscle to these sciences for a renewed boost! "Such a state of thing [experimental-observational science of Ibn al-Haytham and al-Bīrūnī] could have existed, but *could not have been logically justified* before al-Ashari."[119] 277 Bausani This is a highly original observation; it is contextual and therefore non-anachronistic, opening up rich and fruitful historical questions.

Anachronisms: *Mutakallim*s, Sufis, and Poets Mapped onto Quantum Physics and Newton

But anachronism remains a part of Iqbal's attitude, since he declares both the Mu'tazilite Ibrāhīm al-Nazzām (d. 845) and the Ash'arite thinkers rather awkwardly as the precursors of the modern theories of quantum physics.[120] Giving Ash'arites a priority in intellectual history, Iqbal acknowledges that their doctrine of time is perhaps the first attempt in the history of Muslim

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[118] *Reconstruction*, 67.

[119] Bausani, 277

[120] Ibid., 69.

thought to understand it philosophically.[121] And yet, he had no choice but to be critical of them in the same breath. Their position with regard to the philosophy of time leads to absurd conclusions, he says, because they looked at the subject of their inquiry from a wholly *objective* point of view. They are censured by Iqbal for having learned no lessons from the history of Greek thought. But, note, here is a clear ambivalence: surely, Iqbal had also hailed these very *mutakallim*s as embodying a pioneering, heroic, and decisive revolt against Greek intellectual thralldom!

Again, with a messier anachronism Iqbal lumps together the Ash'arites, Isaac Newton, and modern science. Giving his pronouncement that any notion of time that deems it wholly objective is doomed to run into difficulties, Iqbal observes that Newton's view of time is equally objective and that "the verdict of modern science is exactly the same as those of the Ash'arite … [T]he constructive endeavour of the Ash'arite, as of the moderns, was wholly lacking in psychological analysis … [T]hey altogether failed to perceive the subjective aspect of time."[122] Then in support and elaboration of his own (poetic) doctrine of time, Iqbal would draw upon Muslim mystical philosophers, all the time continuing with his characteristic methodology of making metaphysical constructs to resolve logical tensions.

The two figures in this particular case are the Shirazi theologian and philosopher, Mullā Jalāluddīn Dawwānī (d. 1502) and the famous Suhrawardī sufi-poet Fakhruddīn 'Irāqī (d. 1289), who was part of the entourage of Bahā'uddīn Zakariya. It is interesting to note that both of these figures are influenced by Ibn 'Arabī, something that indicates Iqbal's own inclinations. This is what Iqbal has to say in a full-blooded metaphysical theory-construction:

> Dawani tells us that if we take time to be a span which makes possible the appearance of events as a moving procession and conceive this span to be a unity, then we cannot but describe it as an original state of Divine activity, encompassing all the succeeding states of that activity. But the Mulla takes good care to add that a deeper insight into the nature of succession reveals its relativity, so that it disappears in the case of God to

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[121] Ibid., 73.

[122] Ibid., 74.

Whom all events are present in a single act of perception. The sufi Iraqi has a similar way of looking at the matter. He conceives infinite varieties on time, relative to the varying grades of being, intervening between materiality and pure spirituality.[123]

We are not told from which text exactly Iqbal gives these citations, but it is to be noted that he is not bothered by Dawwānī's anthropomorphism: the thinker is cited as having spoken of God's "act of *perception*"! Also, it becomes more and more evident that Iqbal is engaged in cobbling together support for his own views no matter from which quarter this support comes from: from a poet or a philosopher or a *mutakallim* or a sufi, or, decisively, from the Hadith or the Qur'ān. In the process he is wont to put his own spin on these sources– accepting them selectively when they suit him, or rejecting them selectively when they are at variance from his own asserted doctrines, or freely reconstructing them as needed, and doing all of this sometimes quite arbitrarily. In the passage just quoted one also notes a whiff of Neoplatonic ontology– "degrees of being" between materiality and spirituality.

In Iqbal's metaphysics of space, we see a similar trend. Thus, two sufis are invoked for a thoroughly speculative construction of the notion of space– one of them is ʿIrāqī whom we have met above and the other is the early Naqshbandi sufi Khwāja Muhammad Pārsā (d. 1419); again, note that like ʿIrāqī, Pārsā too had affinities for Ibn ʿArabī. Iqbal speaks of the "religious psychology" of the two sufis and claims that they bring us "much nearer to our [modern] ways of looking at the problem of space and time."[124]. Now after citing the Qur'ān, Iqbal approvingly presents the speculative doctrine of ʿIrāqī: there are three kinds of space - the space of material bodies, the space of immaterial beings, and the space of God. The first space is further subdivided into three sub-spaces– space of gross bodies, space of subtle bodies, and space of light. Then, typically, the Suhrawardi sufi-poet is declared to be the precursor of modern physics! He is "really trying to reach the concept of space as a dynamic appearance. His mind seems to be vaguely struggling with the concept of space as an infinite continuum … [His ideas]

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[123] Ibid., 75.

[124] Ibid., 134-35.

suggest the modern notion of space-time."[125] Iqbal does not seem to distinguish between poetry and relativistic mechanics!

Iqbal's Positivistic View of Science and Abū Bakr Rāzī, al-Bīrūnī, and Ibn Khaldūn

A very large number of classical Muslim thinkers are also criticized by Iqbal– they include, for instance, Ash'arī, as we have seen, but also Ghazālī and Ibn Rushd. Yet there are a few who escape his censure, particularly the scientists Abū Bakr Rāzī (d. 925) and al-Bīrūnī (d.1048), and the philosopher of history Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406). It ought to be noted here that Iqbal espouses a positivistic view of scientific methodology which has long been discarded, a view that is now called the "myth of inductivism," or the "Baconian myth," given that Francis Bacon is its begetter. According to this myth, science *begins* with the observation of concrete reality, doing so often through experiments; out of these experiments and observations it discovers causal links between phenomena; and through repeated verification of these causal links universal scientific theories are then logically induced. With all good intentions, and despite the powerful rejection of causality by Ash'arī, Ghazālī, and David Hume, all of whom are known to Iqbal, he goes as far as to pronounce that "The birth of Islam… is the birth of inductive intellect"! Here is Iqbal's neat history with all its chronological awkwardness and highly suspect reading of the sources:

> Abu Bakr Razi was perhaps the first to criticize Aristotle's [logic], and in our own times his objection, conceived in a thoroughly inductive spirit has been reformulated by John Stewart Mill. Ibn Hazm, in his *Scope of Logic*, emphasizes sense perception as a source of knowledge; and Ibn Taymiyya [d. 1328], in his *Refutation of Logic*, shows that induction is the only form of reliable argument. *Thus arose the method of observation and experiment.* [!][126]

Daringly, Iqbal makes al-Bīrūnī the precursor of none other than Newton. al-Bīrūnī approached the modern mathematical idea of function, Iqbal claims, and saw the insufficiency of the Greek static view of the universe. By introducing time into the fixed cosmos of the Greeks, he rendered the

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[125] Ibid., 127.

[126] Ibid., 129. Emphasis added.

universe a becoming rather than a being, we are told. Iqbal goes too far afield now and says, "al-Bīrūnī generali[zed] Newton's formula of interpolation from trigonometric function to any function whatever"![127]In this way, Iqbal refutes Spengler's claim that the idea of mathematical function is Western. But then, what Spengler seems to have in mind is calculus, and Newton is one of its inventers, a monumental mathematical development unknown to al-Bīrūnī. So, despite his greatness as a scientist, we cannot map al-Bīrūnī onto a Newtonian system of modern physics.

Iqbal lavishes profuse praise upon Ibn Khaldūn. One might venture to speculate a kind of back-formation here: by the time Iqbal was writing, Western scholars had begun to recognize the eminence of this Muslim philosopher of history, and he came into prominence in the twentieth-century Islamic world as an echo it seems from the West, not owing to any indigenous intellectual developments. In all likelihood, it is through Western sources that Iqbal too focused on Ibn Khaldūn. Moreover, it is also likely that he has no recourse to the original text of the *Muqaddima* since his Ibn Khaldūn is sometimes his own construction, an Ibn Khaldūn freely re-shaped. Thus, Iqbal makes him the forerunner of the modern hypothesis of subliminal selves,[128]and cites an orientalist in support. In the same psychological context, Iqbal discusses Hallāj's mystical experience and his cry of "*Ana'l- Haqq*," and then invokes Ibn Khaldūn as the Muslim sage who felt the need to develop an effective scientific method to investigate experiences of these kinds.[129] This is something that modern psychology has only recently realized, Iqbal claims. Ibn Khaldūn, then, had a priority in the world of modern psychology.

But the most problematic are the observations Iqbal makes with regard to Ibn Khaldūn's view of time and the life of civilizations. Reiterating his observation that Muslim thought sees the universe in dynamic terms as a process of continuous becoming, he says that this position is reinforced by Ibn Khaldūn's view of history. A keen sense of the reality of time, and the

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[127] Ibid., 133.

[128] Ibid., 17.

[129] Ibid., 96.

concept of life as a continuous movement in time, are the teachings of the Qur'ān, Iqbal tells us. Then, he goes on to say:

> It is this conception of life and time which is the main point of interest in Ibn Khaldūn's view of history… [C]onsidering the direction in which the culture of Islam had unfolded itself, *only a Muslim could have viewed history as a continuous, collective movement*, a real inevitable development in time. The point of interest in this view of history is the way in which Ibn-i-Khaldun conceives the process of change. His conception is of infinite importance because of the implication that history, as a continuous movement in time, is a genuinely creative movement and not a movement whose path is already determined … *[Ibn Khaldūn] may well be regarded as a forerunner of Bergson.*[130]

> This reading of Ibn Khaldūn is hard to justify!

Going back to the observation made earlier, Iqbal seems to be engaged in constructing his own metaphysical system; he moves all over a vast canvas of the annals of Islam's intellectual history to seek support and inspiration. His ambitions are noble, and his concerns are invaluable– but what he does philosophically is beset with all kinds of problems. As Aziz Ahmad once said: "In the fusion of two different streams of civilization, modern Western and medieval Islamic, of two currents of thought, philosophic and mystic, and two strands of value-recognition, ethical and dynamic, what he achieved was not a synthesis but his own thought-process and thought-structure, which is an individual expression embracing a vast range of isolated positions of Western and Islamic schemes of thought."[131]

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[130] Ibid., 141. Emphasis added.

[131] Aziz Ahmad, "Speculative Neo-Modernism" repr. in M. I. Chaghatai ed., *Iqbal: New Dimensions*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2003, p. 337.

IQBAL AND THE MUSLIM RENAISSANCE IN BENGAL

Anwar Dil and Afia Dil

ABSTRACT

After the partition of India, when a group of people started saying that Rabindranath Tagore belonged only to India as he was a Hindu, the Muslim Bengal protested and did not give up Tagore as an Indian. They claimed Tagore as their own poet, as one who had sung for them in their own language, about their own joys and sorrows, beauty and power. Now they are not about to give up Iqbal to the Pakistanis. Iqbal still is their poet, their own Muslim poet, who wrote for them as well as for the whole world. Thus Iqbal and Tagore in this century are the best of the heritage of the Bengali people.

Introduction:

How did the Muslim Bengal receive the news of Iqbal's death?

On the morning of the 21st of April 1938, a great shock went through the nerve-center of the whole of the Indian subcontinent. Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, the leading poet, philosopher, and thinker of the Eastern World had breathed his last, in Lahore, in the early hours of dawn. The Muslim Bengal, in particular, was stricken with grief and newspapers carried the story of the national loss. Some newspapers, for example, the daily *Al-Hilal* (Urdu) and the *Azad* (Bengali) published special bulletins and supplements, carrying the news and its significance for the nation and the Muslim world. The heaviest coverage of this sense of loss came out in the newspapers and hundreds of public meetings and congregational prayers were held all across the province of Bengal.

If the sheer volume of writing can be taken as proof of the sorrow that a whole nation felt, then the coverage that Iqbal's death received from the newspapers of Muslim Bengal shows beyond a doubt how much they loved and treasured the thought of the great poet and leader. For instance, the editorial of the *Star of India*, the leading Muslim English daily newspaper published in Calcutta, on the day of Iqbal's death reflected the deep sorrow

felt by the whole of Muslim India, especially Muslim Bengal, which recognized in him the visionary who rekindled their faith in themselves, faith in their religion and culture, and hope for their future, which had looked so bleak for so long. The following few lines from the editorial give some idea of the feelings of the people on that day:

> We did now know that the end was so near and that our work this morning would commence under a pall of gloom … He [Iqbal} can be truly described as the greatest intellectual leader of his day, a poet whose works will never be forgotten and a philosopher who never failed to shed light in darkness … As far as Muslims were concerned it can be claimed that Iqbal was the strongest living factor between Muslims of divergent views and opinions, for Iqbal was common to them all. The late Maulana Mohammed Ali, who for a considerable time belonged to a different political clan, used to publicly acknowledge that he had learned the true nature of Islam through Iqbal. Meetings of Muslims of different political views have begun and ended with quotations from Iqbal. One need not emphasize this point, for it speaks for itself that Mohammad Iqbal was the most prominent and towering personality among the Muslims who ever looked to him for inspiration and it is for this reason that we mourn his death today as if ever his services were eeded for the good of his community, it is at this hour. [132]

(Documented in *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* (Islamabad), Vol. XIII, No. 2, pp. 1-24.)

From the 21st of April onward, for well over a month, everyday, the *Star of India* covered news and published articles on Iqbal's life and thought as viewed all over India, but especially in Bengal. Some of the articles notable for their enduring value in Iqbal studies include: "Sir Mohammad Iqbal" by "One Who Knew Him" and translation of Iqbal's *Tarana-i-Milli* ("The Muslim National Anthem") by Altaf Husain, then Principal of the Dacca Intermediate College (April 21, p. 4), Krishan Chandar's "Iqbal Who Even Tried to Better God's Universe" (May 9, p. 6), and Dr. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's "Iqbal Had a Distinct Personality of His Own". [133]

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[132] *Star of India* (Calcutta), April 21, 1938, p. 4.

[133] *Ibid.*, May 24, 1938, p. 3.

Some of the headlines in the *Star of India* during April and May of 1938, reflect the extent to which the Muslim Bengal felt the loss at that time:

Sir Muhammad Iqbal Dead

India's Great Poet Passes Away

Not Afraid of Death[134]

Calcutta Mourns Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal

Mammoth Condolence Meeting at Park Circus

"I Have Lost My Friend, Philosopher and Guide," Mr. Jinnah's Glowing Tribute[135]

The Voice That Stirred the East to its Depths

Few Easterners Had such an Appreciative Following among Discriminating Western Scholars

Breathed New Life into India & Transfigured the East of Song and Legend

Iqbal Who Ever Dreamed of a New Human Civilization

His Five Unfinished Works[136]

Iqbal a Great Poet but a Greater Philosopher

Greatest Loss Sustained by East since Death of Jamaluddin Afghani

Hindus and Muslims Unite in Honoring Poet of Islam[137]

Universal Tributes for a Universal Poet[138]

Like Flying Eagle Rises Above, Surveys World & Asks Man to be Himself

His 'Lenin Before God' has No Equal in World Poetry

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[134] *Ibid.*, April 21, front page title.

[135] *Ibid.*, April 22, 1938, p. 5.

[136] *Ibid.*, April 25, 1938, p. 5.

[137] *Ibid.*, April 26, 1938, p. 7.

[138] *Ibid.*, April 27, 1938, p. 3.

His Great Abhorrence for Capitalism[139]

"Iqbal, Ghazai and Decartes [sic]"

Artists and Philosophers in Europe Keenly Interested in Iqbal

Irreparable Loss to the World of Philosophy[140]

Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Muslims Meet on One Platform

Iqbal Gave a New Philosophy of Life to World[141]

Iqbal the Apostolic Poet Mourned in London

Arabs, Iranians, Egyptians, Turks and Afghans Honor Sage of East

The Greatest Fighter for Equality and Justice[142]

No Other Poet in History Has so Much Fire as Iqbal

His Great Originality and Universality

Essentially Cosmopolitan and International[143]

He Struck Out New Path for Himself

Unrivalled Career as a Poet[144]

Not only Muslim Bengal, but leaders of all communities across the nation expressed their sense of grief and loss. Rabindranath Tagore, the greatest poet of Bengal, issued the following statement through the Associated Press:

The death of Iqbal creates a void in our literature that, like mortal wound, would take a very long time to heal up. India, whose place today in the

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[139] *Ibid.*, May 9, 1938, p. 6.

[140] *Ibid.*, May 9, 1938, p. 6.

[141] *Ibid.*, May 6, 1938, p. 6.

[142] *Ibid.*, May 11, 1938, p. 3.

[143] *Ibid.*, May 21, 1938, p. 3.

[144] *Ibid.*, May 24, 1938, p. 3.

world is too narrow, can ill afford to miss a poet whose poetry had such universal value.[145]

Subhash Chandra Bose, the then President of the All-India Congress, regarded as one of the greatest freedom-fighters of Bengal in British India, sent this message:

The passing away of Sir Mohammad Iqbal means the disappearance of one of the brightest stars from the literary firmaments of India. Besides being a front-rank poet and literature, Sir Mohammad Iqbal was a unique personality. The loss we have suffered through his sad demise will be felt all over the country. Latterly he held [a] political view with which many of us could not find ourselves in agreement.[146] But never did anybody question his bonafides [sic] or the sincerity of his views. In this hour of silence all controversy is hushed and we bow our heads in reverence for one of the great sons of India. His memory will ever remain enshrined in the hearts of his countrymen through such songs as "Sare Jahan Se Accha Hindustan Hamara".[147]

A.K. Fazlul Huq, popularly known as *Sher-i-Bangla* ('The Tiger of Bengal'), a most highly respected Muslim political leader of Bengal, who was at the time President of the All-India Muslim League, issued the following statement to national press:

The death of Sir Mohammad Iqbal removes from the literary world one of the most towering personalities of this country.

The Muslim world is stunned by this terrible blow. It is impossible at the present moment, with our hearts lacerated by one of the keenest sorrows that can befall a nation to discuss the position in any detail. Every Muslim not merely feels the loss but prays to the Almighty for the peace of his great soul, which has gone to Heaven.

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[145] *Ibid.*, April 21, 1938, p. 1.

[146] The reference is to Iqbal's Two-Nation Theory, which led to the creation of Pakistan resulting in the partition of the Indian subcontinent into independent nation-states of India and Pakistan in 1947. (Authors)

[147] *Ibid.*

This national calamity comes to me as an intensely personal one. We were associated in many ways during the last quarter of a century and latterly at the Round Table Conference meeting in England.

I wish I were in Lahore at the present moment to present my last homage to the remains of illustrious dead."[148]

Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin, who was a member of the All-India Muslim League Working Committee, and who later became the Governor-General of Pakistan after the passing away of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, issued the following message on the occasion:

Sir Mohammad Iqbal has left us when we needed him most. In his death, India has lost one of her greatest intellectuals and Islam a son whose name will live for ever.

In the troubled Punjab today there is removed a personality who by his song and verse could kill all rancor, calm troubled minds and give a message of hope and enlightenment in his own inimitable style…[149]

Syed Azizul Huq and Habibullah, both of whom later became cabinet members in the Government of East Pakistan, issued the following statement:

A tower of strength has fallen. A poet, philosopher, a born fighter has succumbed to the cruel hands of death. Iqbal's National Songs though written in Urdu, were a source of inspiration in every Bengali home.

When Maulana Shaukat Ali announced in the Session of the All-India Muslim League that the poet-philosopher of the Punjab was ill, we could never dream that he would be removed from us so soon.

Muslim India– nay India as a whole, is distinctly the poorer today. Nobody knows how the gap created by his death will be filled…[150]

The news of Iqbal's death was received in Calcutta by the Khilafat Committee by about 11:30 a.m., and it spread all over Calcutta immediately.

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[148] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[149] *Ibid.*

[150] *Ibid.*

All the Muslim shops of the different areas of Calcutta, Colootola, Murghihatta, Chunagalee, Zakariah Street, Chitpur Road, Mechua Bazaar, Kalabagan, College Street, Chandi Chak, and other Mulsim areas of the city were closed for the day to show respect to the departed leader.

Special *namaz-i-janaza ghaibana* (funeral congregational prayer in absentia) was attended by over fifty thousand Muslims at the football ground in Park Circus, Calcutta, at 8 p.m. It was followed by a mammoth condolence meeting, presided over by Mr. M.A. Jinnah, later the leader of the Pakistan Movement. Mr. Jinnah paid tribute to Dr. Iqbal calling him his "friend, philosopher and guide":

> The sorrowful news of the death of Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal had plunged the world of Islam in gloom and mourning. Sir Iqbal was undoubtedly one of the greatest poets, philosophers and seers of humanity of all times. He took a prominent part in the politics of the country and in the intellectual and cultural reconstruction of the Islamic world. His contribution to the literature and thought of the world will live for ever.

> To me he was a friend, philosopher and guide and as such the main source of my inspiration and spiritual support. While he was ailing in his bed it was he who, as President of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League, stood single-handed as a rock in the darkest days in the Punjab by the side of the League banner, undaunted by the opposition of the whole world…

> It would have been a matter of great satisfaction for him to hear the news with great delight that the Bengal and Punjab Muslims were absolutely united on the common platform of the All-India Muslim League. In that achievement the unseen contribution of Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal was the greatest. No greater blow had struck the Muslims at this juncture. [151]

Maulana Shaukat Ali, another great Indian Muslim leader held in the highest esteem in Muslim Bengal, was visibly overwhelmed with grief as he said:

> Iqbal was the poet of hope and the philosopher and teacher of self-realization and self-culture. The dream of Iqbal was being actually realized

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[151] *Ibid.*, April 22, 1938, p. 5.

by the union of the Islamic states and peoples. Iqbal died with the satisfaction of his heart that he had seen his mission fulfilled. Iqbal was dead but he had given new life to millions of human beings and delivered a message of life and selfhood to the entire Muslim world.[152]

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, the distinguished Urdu poet, Editor of the daily *Zamindar*, and one of the most eloquent and powerful political orators of his time, paid his tribute in a poem especially composed for the occasion. The poem, as sung by Yakub Gora Bawa of Rangoon, moved the audience to tears.

Condolence meetings were held all over Bengal on the 21st of April and continued for over a month. Such meetings were by no means limited only to Bengali Muslims. For example, all the educational institutions of Visva-Bharati University at Shanti Niketan, remained closed for a day as a mark of respect to the memory of Dr. Iqbal.

Bangiya Mussalman Sahitya Samity's condolence meeting was held at the Muslim Institute, Calcutta. The general tone of the sentiments expressed at this meeting can be judged by the following extracts from the speech of S. Wajed Ali, Barrister-at-Law, Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta:

Dr. Sir Iqbal was a Muslim of outstanding character. He was no doubt one of the greatest poets of the age; but he was greater than a poet. He was a man with a mission to preach. To understand him properly and to appraise his services adequately, we must cast a glance at the age in which he started his literary activities. That was at the beginning of this century. The lamp lighted by Sir Syed Ahmad of Aligarh, had practically flickered out. Among the educated class then skepticism was the dominant note in religion and philosophy. Politics with them had degenerated into a squabble for posts and appointments. No high ideals stirred the hearts of the young men of the community. As Iqbal was also the product of the age, he reacted to it in his own individual way… his soul was groping for a secure anchorage. He searched the philosophers of the East and the West for guidance…

[152] *Ibid.*, April 21, 1938, pp. 1, 8.

Acute thinker that he was he realized that the malady his community is suffering from was threefold: 1) the lack of purposeful individuality, 2) the lack of communal cohesion, 3) the lack of a dominating idea– a will to live effectively. Iqbal like a true man of genius set out with all the energy, fire and enthusiasm he possessed to supply these wants and in doing so he dived deep into the teachers of the Qur'an and those of the Prophet; and studied the writings of Jalaluddin Rumi whom he acknowledged as his guide. In his *Asrar-I-Khudi* he deals with the problem of self, how to strengthen it, how to intensify it and how to make it a worthy tool in hands of the Almighty.

Wajed Ali continued his analysis of Iqbal's thought as follows:

Islam according to Iqbal is not a static religion and the Qur'an is not a book that has ceased to be a living force. In every age the true believer will find new message in the Holy Qur'an suited to the requirement of the age and that message he must affirm and announce to his generation There will be new 'Ijtehad' from age to age. That is the substance of the message of the great poet.

Speaking about the political upheaval of the country at the time and predicting the course of future events in the Sub-Continent, Wajed Ali observed:

The fight that is going on between the Congress and the League will in near future develop into a fight between two rival cultures in this country and in that fight the party that values its culture most will win. The greatest tribute that we can pay to the soul of the greatest poet is to carry his message far and wide to every Muslim house in India. So far as Bengal is concerned the study of and the working out of his message is absolutely necessary. Though the Muslims form the majority of the population in Bengal yet they have little of that life-giving force and of that mad passion for service which Iqbal has preached with unrivalled fire and eloquence…[153]

Considering the fact that women of Bengal, especially the Muslim women, in 1938, were neither as educated nor as vocal in public life as they are today,

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[153] *Ibid.*, May 2, 1938, p. 7.

their participation in special public meetings on Iqbal, is quite significant. For example, Mrs. Husnara Begum, Honorary Secretary of the All-India Muslim Ladies Conference (Bengal Provincial Branch), announced a condolence meeting for Sunday, the 24th of April.

Mrs. M. Rahman, Secretary of the Anjuman-i-Khawatin-i-Islam, Bangla, sent out the following press statement:

> The Anjuman-i-Khawatin-i-Islam, Bangla ("All Bengal Muslim Ladies Association") has learned, with profound sorrow, of the death of Sir Mohammad Iqbal, who was undoubtedly one of the noblest sons of Islam and one of the greatest poets, philosophers, patriots and politicians of India… Though gone into the Great Beyond, Sir Iqbal will surely live in the memory of his grateful countrymen and women through the enthralling message of patriotic love and universal brotherhood of mankind, as expounded in his songs, poems and writings…[154]

Historical Perspective:

Why did the Muslim Bengal respond to Iqbal's thought the way it did?

In order to understand the impact of Iqbal's thought on the Bengali mind, it is necessary to become aware of the socio-political situation of Bengal at the time.

The history of the Muslims of Bengal under the British rule is not basically different from the history of any other colonized people except in the fact that in most of the colonized countries there were more or less homogenous communities living under the colonial powers, whereas in India, especially in Bengal, there were two distinct communities living side by side, and the colonial rulers found it expedient to play one against the other as part of the Divide-and-Rule policy. Since it was from the hands of the Muslims rulers that the British merchants and soldiers had snatched away the power, it stands to reason that it was the Muslims who suffered the worst consequences of the British occupation in comparison to the Hindus for whom it was essentially a change of rulers. The history of Muslim Bengal, while under British rule since their defeat in the Battle of Plassey in 1757, is a story of great suffering, humiliation, and deprivation for the Muslims.

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[154] *Ibid.*, April 22, 1939, p. 5.

The Muslims of Bengal in mid-eighteenth century can be divided into two general classes: 1) the upper classes consisting of rulers, administrators, zamindars, merchants, holders of rent-free land, scholars and men of letters who received grants from the state, and 2) lower classes compromising farmers, weavers, day-laborers, petty service holders of the civil and military government, and domestic servants. The lower classes looked up to the upper classes for leadership and patronage and in turn, the upper classes felt that they were entrusted with the welfare of the lower classes. The British takeover succeeded in crushing this structure within a very short period of time– a part of history yet to be written from the perspective of the oppressed party. Within sixty years of the Battle of Plassey, the British had completely destroyed the Muslims politically, economically and psychologically. As the administration was snatched away from the Muslims, they were not entrusted with any jobs in the new regime. As a consequence, thousands of Muslim civil and military employees found themselves without jobs and with no prospects for employment

The Permanent Settlement Act implemented in 1793 by Lord Cornwallis, reduced the Muslim zamindars to paupers and recognized their Hindu managers and tax-collectors as the new zamindars. This effected a complete turnover in the life of the Bengali Mulsims; overnight the Hindus became their lords. From that time onwards the zamindars in Bengal were all Hindu *Banias* (traders) of Calcutta, who under the favor of the ruling British, became helpers to the British in their monopoly of trade and industry. The worst hit were the traders of salt, who were denied all rights to deal in the salt business. Secondly, the forced cultivation of indigo imposed by the British rulers on the peasantry of Bengal ruined the economic prosperity of hundreds of thousands of Muslim peasants.

Another Act, known as the Resumption Regulation Act (1819), went further against Muslim interests as there could no longer be any holders of rent-free land. Thus it reduced to destitutes, by one declaration, all the erstwhile holders of rent-free land. As a consequence, scholars and artists who were traditionally dependent on such holders of land for their patronage also found themselves divested of their means of livelihood. The replacement of the Muslim zamindars by the Hindus also meant that the sources of income that supported a large network of madrasahs (traditional educational institutions) mainly teaching Arabic, Persian and Islamic Studies

to Muslims, dried up, thus resulting in most of the madrasahs being gradually forced out of existence. Describing the plight of the upper class Muslims of this period, W.W. Hunter, a British humanist, writes in his book *The Indian Mussalmans* (1871):

> A hundred and seventy years ago, it was almost impossible for a well-born Mussalman in Bengal to become poor; at present it is almost impossible for him to continue rich…[155]

Hunter also describes the effect of the two Acts mentioned above:

> Hundreds of ancient families were ruined, and the educational system of the Mussalmans, which was almost entirely maintained by rent-free grants, received its death-blow. The scholastic classes of the Muhammadans emerged from the eighteen years of harrying, absolutely ruined. [156]

The farmers of Bengal were crushed by other well-planned maneuvers. Warren Hastings, the British Viceroy (1772-1793), started a policy of leasing farming revenues to the highest bidders. The speculators for this bidding were mostly Hindus, because in the new setting, they were the ones who had ready cash. This led to the vicious circle of the underlings paying more and more revenue to meet the growing demands of the ambitious bidders who became the financial pipeline for the greater glory of the British Empire. The new zamindars, in reward for this role, were given the powers to fix the rent and as can be expected they went on giving their land to contractors who offered them the largest profit. The end result was that all profit was extorted from the unfortunate cultivators. Forced cultivation of indigo was imposed on the cultivators and the agents of the planters subjected them to indescribable oppression. The weavers suffered no less. The weaving industry was deliberately destroyed to make room for the import of British cloth from Manchester. There were numerous cases of the cutting of thumbs of weavers so that they could no longer weave the celebrated Bengal *malmal* (muslin), a speciality of Muslim craftsmen.

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[155] W.W. Hunter, *The Indian Mussalmans*, reprinted from the 3rd edition by Indological Book House Delhi, India, 1969 edition, p. 150.

[156] *Ibid.*, p. 177.

Another great blow was the change of the official language from Persian to English in 1837. Overnight the educated Muslims became illiterate and unable to demonstrate their knowledge, and were thereby unqualified for government jobs. To make matters worse, Muslims did not adapt themselves to the changing times and boycotted the learning of English, because the ulema of the time gave the *fatwa* (edict): 'Do not learn English, the language of the *Kafirs* (infidels).' Thus, robbed of land, money, education, and self-respect, Muslims of Bengal found themselves in a most wretched position in a country where they had lived as rulers for ten centuries. W.W. Hunter, quoted earlier, described the situation, 'in fact, there is now scarcely a Government office in Calcutta in which a Muhammedan can hope for any post above the rank of the porter, messenger, filler of ink-pots or menders of pens.'[157]

Stated succinctly, the position of the Muslims of Bengal at the time was such that it did not matter what you were before the turn of the tide– a ruler, an administrator, a zamindar, a scholar, a farmer, a weaver, an artist, a soldier– as so long as you were a Muslim, you could not win in the new set-up. It must be said in fairness, that whatever was left undone by the British rulers and the Hindu landlords, was completed by the edicts of the ignorant among the Muslim mullas and ulema.

The Bengali Muslims were at their lowest point in history and many of them blamed this on their deviance form the path of Islam. Within this frame of reference, two movements for Islamic revivalism gained ground mainly in the rural areas of Bengal. First of all, the Faraidi Movement led by Haji Shariat Ullah at the turn of the 19th century (around 1818) in Eastern Bengal, and secondly, the Tariqa-i-Muhammadi Movement (around 1827) which was initiated by Syed Ahmad Shahid and popularized in West Bengal by Mir Nisar Ali, known as Titu Mir. Both of these movements were aimed at rousing the rural Bengali peasants against the suppressions and oppressions they were subjected to. It is almost unbelievable today to think that the followers of Titu Mir, who were all required to grow beards, as a mark of their religious solidarity, were forced by the British rulers to pay tax on their beards. This beard tax was at the rate of two and a half rupees per head at a time when rice was selling at twenty-four maunds a rupee, i.e., when one

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[157] *Ibid.*, p. 162.

rupee could buy about 200 lbs. of rice.[158] This gives an idea of the extent of oppression and humiliation that the Muslims peasants were subjected to. Naturally, both Titu Mir and Dudhu Mia (the son and successor of Haji Shariat Ullah) came in direct confrontation with the exploiters– the Hindu zamindars and the European planters, who were startled by the uprise of peasantry, and joining hands with the British Government, they did their best to crush these mass movements. Both the leaders, along with many followers, were killed in the struggle, but the accumulated discontent of the exploited peasantry continued to gather momentum, i.e. the masses started to become all the more aware of the need for socio-religious reform and the urgent need for the revival of Islam. The polarization of the Hindu and Muslim communities in Bengal during the British period became a serious problem.

While these movements for Islamic revivalism were going on in Bengal, they formed a part of the overall struggle that was going through the whole of India at the time– a struggle for independence on the part of the Muslims as well as by certain factions of Hindus. It took the shape of the first War of Independence in 1857– called by the British the "Delhi Mutiny". The facts are that war broke out in all the major cities of India, first among the soldiers and then among the populace; but the unorganized Indian soldiers and the common people stood no chance and the effort was lost. The Muslims, who were leaders of this uprising, paid especially dearly in the post-1857 years. Sir Alfred Lyall, a prominent English officer at the time (1884), described the situation in the following words:

> The consequence was, as all who were in Northern India in 1857 can recall, that the English turned fiercely on the Mohammedans as upon their real enemies and most dangerous rivals, so that the failure of the revolt was much more disastrous to them than to the Hindus.[159]

It was a tragic and ruinous defeat. For full fifty years after that and more, the Muslims were stunned by the blow. However, one positive development

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[158] Muinuddin Ahmad Kahm, 'Muslim Struggle for Freedom in Bengal (AD 1757-1947)', *East Pakistan, A Profile*, ed. S.S. Husain (Dacca: Orient Longmans, 1962), p. 66.

[159] Alfred Lyall, *Asiatic Studies, Religious and Social*, pp. 239-40, quoted in Muinuddin Ahmad Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

did emerge in that the two Indian communities were to an extent brought closer together through their common quest for release from foreign bondage. Another relatively positive result of the disaster was that the Muslims were awakened to the unequivocal fact that only religious revivalist movements were not enough. They had to begin to seek for other foundations for their survival and their ultimate comeback to the mainstream of life. A small but growing number of enlightened Muslims came to realize that in order to make a comeback, the younger generation of Muslims must be given proper modern education, and that meant not only revised and upgraded education in Arabic and Persian, but also in the English language, which could constitute the essential foundation for progress in contemporary society.

The two names in Muslim India that are most well-known in this connection are those of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan of the United Provinces and Nawab Abdul Latif of Bengal. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was the first among the Muslims to realize that they could never progress without Western education. He founded the first Anglo-Muhammedan college for the Muslims of India which became in time the famous Muslim University of Aligarh. Nawab Abdul Latif of Bengal, in his turn, established a Muslim Literary Society in Calcutta, which served as a foremost center for the regeneration of Muslims of Bengal.

Both these leaders, in their superior understanding and wisdom, had realized that the Muslims of India must try to take part in the government in a constitutional manner, and by working together with the Hindus, ultimately achieve independence and establish for themselves a parliamentary democracy in India. This realization led the Muslims to join hands with the Hindus on a national platform for the final goal of freedom from British rule.

However, for various reasons the Muslims' desire for cooperation met with indifference from the Hindus. In a country where the Muslims constituted only one-fourth of the total population, they were a minority community, and in the changed political circumstances, the Hindus could afford to neglect the Muslims– at least that was the reasoning on the part of the more assertive elements in Hindu India. Speaking about the sentiments of the Hindus at this time towards the Muslims, the eminent Hindu Bengali writer, Nirad C. Chaudhuri, writes in his *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian:*

Of Islamic culture we know nothing, although it was the spiritual and intellectual heritage of nearly half the population of Bengal and we in East Bengal came into intimate and daily contact with Muslims. I do not know of one great Bengali writer, religious reformer or political leader… who had any first-hand knowledge of Islam as a whole or any of its aspects … We ignored the Muslims completely.[160]

Nirad C. Chaudhuri further discusses this problem and shows rare insight and impartiality when he analyzes the sentiments of the Hindus towards the Muslims:

We presented four distinct aspects in our attitude towards them as it was shaped by tradition. In the first place, we felt a retrospective hostility towards the Muslims for their one-time domination of us, the Hindus; secondly, on the plane of thought we were utterly indifferent to the Muslims as an element in contemporary society; thirdly, we had friendliness for the Muslims of our own economic and social status with whom we came into personal contact; our fourth feeling was mixed concern and contempt for the Muslim peasant, whom we saw in the same light as we saw our low-caste Hindu tenants, or, in other words, as our livestock.[161]

In 1867, the Hindus demanded that the Urdu language, which was historically a common language of both Hindus and Muslims, should be Indianized or Hinduized. This they wanted to do by changing the name of the language from Urdu to Hindi and also by changing the script of the language. The script of Urdu is an adapted form of Persio-Arabic script. The extremist Hindu revivalists campaigned among the common Hindu populace to reject it as a symbol of Islamic rule in India. In course of time the name of the lingua franca was changed to Hindustani or Hindi, and the Devanagri script accepted for it by a section of the Hindus. Borrowing heavily from Sanskrit, discarding words of Perso-Arabic origin and trying to give the language a sudden change of the Urdu script to the Devanagari script created

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[160] Nirad C. Chaudhuri, *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, Berkeley, California, 1951/1968, quoted in Mohsin Ali, *The Bengali Muslim* (Karachi: Department of Films and Publications, Government of Pakistan, 1971), pp. 10-11.

[161] Nirad C. Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

for the less-educated Muslims a handicap even in their own language. In wider political terms, it became evident that the more militant elements among the Hindus argued quite frequently from open public forums that they were in a clear majority and did not need the help of the Muslims in their struggle for Indian independence. They could do it all on their own and establish a Hindu India for the revival of the ancient Hindu glory. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan could see this coming and in his lectures especially those that he gave at Lucknow and Meerut, entitled ''The Present State of Indian Politics'', he spoke about the objectives of the Indian National Congress as being untenable for a country which was inhabited by two 'nations':

> Now, if all the Englishmen were to leave India, who would be the rulers of this country? Is it possible that under the circumstances two *qawm*s, the Muslims and the Hindus, could sit on the same throne and remain equal in power? Most certainly not. One of them surely would subjugate the other and thrust it down. To hope that both could remain equal is to desire the impossible and the inconceivable.[162]

At that moment in history perhaps it was not possible to think of a geographical division of the subcontinent. But in order to safeguard the interests of the Muslims, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan came forward with another solution. He made a call that modern education was the only remedy if the Muslims were at some stage to fight for their legitimate rights. They had to deserve them, and in the changed circumstances that was possible only through Westernized education. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's Muslim University at Aligarh was instituted as an initial pioneering effort.

In the meantime, Hunter's expose in 1981 of the plight of the Muslims and other similar humanitarian treatises had opened the eyes of at least some of the British officers, although this greater measure of awareness did not bring any immediate tangible change. In 1905, Bengal was partitioned into two provinces, for the ostensive purpose of facilitating administration. At that time, East Bengal was joined with Assam, it thereby becoming a distinct Muslim majority province. The headquarters of the new province were established at Dacca. This created high hopes among the Bengali Muslims,

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[162] Quoted in Muinuddin Ahmad Kahn, *op. cit.*, p. 225

who had been comparatively less educated than their Hindu neighbors of Bengal, since they no longer could be required to compete with them.

As was to be expected, this partition proved totally unacceptable to the Hindus. They perceived it as threatening in terms of its long-term consequences. An All-India movement for the annulment of the partition of Bengal was the result. The agitation throughout West Bengal, with support from Hindus all over India, was so strong that it brought home, as nothing had until then, a realization to the Muslims that they had to have their own distinct and separate political leadership if they were to have any better prospects for the future.

It was out of this background that Nawab Sir Salimullah of Dacca convened a meeting of the Muslim leaders at Ahsan Manzil, Dacca, in the December of 1906. It was at this meeting that the All-India Muslim League was founded. The Muslim League, which was to become, in time, the vanguard in winning freedom, was formed 'to protect and advance the political rights of the Muslims of the subcontinent and to represent their needs [sic] and aspirations to the Government.'[163]

The Hindus eventually succeeded in pressuring the British Government into annulling the partition. In 1911, King George V, at the close of the Delhi Darbar, yielded to the Hindu pressure and setting aside the interests of the Muslims, proclaimed the annulment of the partition of Bengal. This was the final betrayal of the Bengali Muslims who were left to look for a different strategy for their survival. They began to regard both the British and the Hindus as opponents in their struggle for self-preservation, and saw that progress would be possible only if they could organize themselves well enough to demand their rights from a position of strength.

A Contemporary Comment:

What is the impact of Iqbal's thought on Muslim Bengal?

It was at this time, when the whole of India was afire with determination to acquire independence, and the Muslims were required to fight for their own rights, that the call of Iqbal roused their national consciousness. Suddenly his voice came, from the depth of his self, surging with power.

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[163] *Ibid*, p. 82.

Reading or hearing his poetry, even in translation, felt like being carried in a raging current of a stream that gathers force as it rushes you onward. The unhappy, despondent Muslims were startled at first, but only to be uplifted in hope and determination, and finally to become exuberant at the possibilities of new life that shone before their eyes with every call of the poet.

Iqbal's *Asrar-i-Khudi* ('The Secrets of the Self') came out in 1915, when the first World War was on. The powerful poetry of *Asrar-i-Khud I* inspired the Indians in general, and the Indian Muslims in particular, bringing home to them the wonderful realization that the individual had the potential to mould his own destiny, that the potential of an individual is immeasurable and that there is no limit beyond which a human being cannot rise. To quote from Nicholson's translation:

Tho' I am but a mote, the radiant sun is mine:

Within my bosom are a hundred dawns.

My dust is brighter than Jamshid's cup,

It knows things that are yet unborn in the world…

I am born in the world as a new sun,

I have not learned the ways and fashions of the sky:

Not yet have the stars fled before my splendor,…

I have no need of the ear of Today,

I am the voice of the poet of Tomorrow.[164]

It is no exaggeration to say that Iqbal's voice electrified the consciousness of the nation. The use of images of Muslim culture and tradition added a new dimension to the Bengali Muslim mind. It gave him a sense of historicity by which he became the spokesman for a great cultural tradition; the Muslim heroes of Islam's glorious past were thus made part of his inspiring and symbolic self. This feeling is nearly indescribable, but nevertheless it was real for his readers and admirers. The fact that Qazi Nazrul Islam, the beloved Bengali poet, was also writing his inspiring poems along the same lines for

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[164] Sir Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self (Asar-i-Khudi)*, tr. Reynold A. Nicholson (Lahore: Muhammad Ashraf, 1915-1944, pp. 23.

invigorating the unconquerable spirit of the Muslims further deepened the powerful role of Iqbal in the Bengali Muslim renaissance.

From then on, Iqbal kept on supplying the despondent, weary nation (as a result of nearly two hundred years of humiliation in bondage) with new energy and hope for the future with every new work. Each of his poems and essays was published and republished literally in thousands of papers and journals throughout India. His poems were recited by millions of people in public and in private. The public meetings were opened with Iqbal's songs and it was Iqbal's songs or poems that concluded meetings with a message of hope for the Muslims of the world. Thousands of speakers at political platforms, in religious celebrations, in events of recreation, in social and cultural programs, in short, in every aspect of life, went on relaying Iqbal's thought and giving the people his message of determined action capable of changing their destiny.

Iqbal was born in the Punjab and had perfect mastery of his first language, Punjabi; but he wrote his poetry in Urdu and Persian as he wanted to reach a larger audience. He knew Arabic quite well also. He also wrote in English, which was then (as it is now) the official language of the country. Iqbal had learned German very well when he was in Germany and had studied Goethe and other great German writers in the original.

In Urdu, Iqbal is regarded as undoubtedly the greatest poet of the century, an equal of Ghalib of the nineteenth century. For his philosophical writings he made use of Persian, which had been taught, learned and admired throughout India for centuries of Muslim rule. Bengali Muslims had continued their learning of Persian as a cultural heritage, and Urdu was respected and loved as the language of Muslims.[165] Thus Iqbal's original writings in Urdu, Persian and English were read and admired in Muslim Bengal. These works were received with great enthusiasm by the Bengalis and several of his works were translated into Bengali to bring them to a larger number of Bengali readers and listeners. It is certain that the translations must have taken off some of the beauty and power of this

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[165] It must be noted that until the inception of Pakistan, Urdu was regarded by the Bengalis as a special language. It was only when they felt threatened with the loss of their own language that they realized that however much they respected and treasured Urdu, the official language of East Pakistan must be Bengali. (Authors)

poetry, but enough was retained to make the Bengalis give Iqbal a special place in their hearts, as a great poet, philosopher and thinker of the East.

Rabindranath Tagore, the greatest Bengali poet of all time, had very high regard for Iqbal's poetry. In a letter dated February 7, 1933, addressed to Mr. Abbas Ali Khan Lamha of Hyderabad, Deccan, from Shanti Niketan, Tagore expressed his great pleasure that his correspondent had found a special relationship between his poems and those of the great poet Iqbal. He expressed his sense of loss that because of his unfamiliarity with the languages in which Iqbal composed his poems, it was impossible for him to understand and appreciate the real excellence and depth of Iqbal's thought. But he said that he was sure that Iqbal's thought had the excellence of immortal literature. He also said that he was often hurt that a certain group of critics had spread misunderstandings by placing his work in opposition to Iqbal's. This viewpoint does great injustice to that universal dimension of the human heart and mind which links together all writers and artists of all countries and languages into one family. Tagore said that he believed that Iqbal and he were two friends dedicated to the cause of truth and beauty in literature and that they were one and together where the human mind offers its best gift to the Universal Man.[166]

We have cited this letter to show how Iqbal, of the Muslim community, and Tagore, of the Indian Hindu community - one ushering in a renaissance in the world of Islam, and the other extending the great Hindu tradition of philosophic and literary excellence - were in essence friends and colleagues in enriching human life. They were together dedicated to offering their best to universal humanity where all such efforts finally strengthen one another for the overall benefit of the human species. But the recipients of the great thoughts of Iqbal and Tagore, as outlined earlier, were in the midst of command turmoil and confrontation. That is what Tagore referred to in his letter, i.e. there were Hindus as well as Muslim communalists and extremists who distorted the messages of both Iqbal and Tagore. It is hard to imagine today that there were scholars and commentators engaged in expositions to prove Tagore superior to Iqbal or vice versa and thus either heaped

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[166] Rabindranath Tagore's letter to Abbas Ali Khan Lamha of Hyderabad, Deccan, dated February 3, 1933, Vishva Bharati, Shanti Niketan, Bengal, Urdu translation in Rahim Bakhsh Shah in (comp.), *Auraq-i-Gumgashta* (Lahore, Islamic Publications, 1975, pp. 440-41).

exaggerated praise or outright condemnation on one or the other. This was to be expected in the political conditions of the time and was merely a foreshadowing of the more serious confrontation that the two communities were headed towards.

There was a growing awareness, even among objective observers, that the Indian Muslims and the Indian Hindus could not coexist as one nation. Thus the Two-Nation Theory, presented by Iqbal in 1930 in his presidential address at the All-India Muslim League Session at Allahbad, was offered as a practical and far-reaching solution to the growing political division and unrest in the country. As A.T.M. Mustafa, an eminent lawyer and political leader of Dacca, who was Pakistan's Minister for Education at the time, observed in his presidential address at the Iqbal Day meeting in Lahore in 1964, from Iqbal's perspective that the overall goal of Islamic ideology was the highest possible fulfillment of human potential, and a nation-state is only a human organization necessary for facilitating the realization of human destiny. Iqbal's demand for a separate homeland for the Indian Muslims must be viewed as part of his aspiration that Muslims should freely shape their lives in accordance with the life-enhancing principles of Islamic culture and civilization.[167] His purpose was to enable the Muslims of the area to thereby become a more worthwhile community which in turn could contribute its share to the common good and overall development of humankind. Muslim renaissance in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent should, therefore, be viewed as a welcome movement in the world today. It must be understood in this context that Iqbal was not a separatist. He did not envisage the Hindu majority nation (India) and the Muslim majority nation (later to be named Pakistan) without minority communities within their borders or as theocratic states. The plan was to safeguard the political, economic, and cultural rights of his own people as well as of other communities in the Subcontinent.

In speaking about the impact of Iqbal on Bengali poetry, Syed Ali Ahsan, a leading Bengali poet and literary critics, and a former Minister for Education in the Government of Bangladesh, points out that Iqbal's influence on the Bengali poetic tradition was not in the form of poetry, but

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[167] A.T.M. Mustafa, 'Islam ka Falsafi Shair' (Urdu) ['The Philosopher Poet of Islam', in *Iqbal Payambar-i-Inqilab*, ed. Agha Shorish Kashmiri (Lahore: Ferozesons, 1964/1968) pp. 72-73.

in the form of poetic thought. His influence was on the mind of the people. It was not the poems as such, but the message they contained that captured the imagination of the Bengali people. "The initial popularity of Iqbal in Bengal," Syed Ali Ahsan observes, "was due to an apparent parallelism of his ideas with Nazrul Islam. Iqbal brought to the people of Bengal a sense of restlessness and questioning." Iqbal and Nazrul Islam's poetry essentially dealt with life-enchancing experiences. At the time when Nazrul Islam was inspiring the Bengali Muslims with his revolutionary ideas, put forth in powerful poetry, Ashraf Ali Khan had translated Iqbal's great poem *Shikwah* ("The Complaint") into Bengali. The call for revolt by Iqbal, for a renaissance of the Muslim people was to the Bengali public a resonant reinforcement of the revolutionary fervor of Nazrul Islam and it roused them and touched their hearts as nothing before in their entire history. Their own Bengali poet, Nazrul Islam, and their own distant Urdu and Persian poet, Iqbal, from Lahore, together became their inspiration and guidance.

Secondly, Ali Ahsan notes that it was the 'religiosity, piety and philosophic magnificence' of Iqbal that moved several Bengali writers to translate and interpret Iqbal, to introduce him to the Bengali people. The Bengali Muslims are generally God-fearing and devout people and Iqbal's exposition of Islam, his great faith in the Prophet and the future of Islam was able to rouse the religious fervor of the Bengali Muslims to the level of a climax.

But the most important reason for Iqbal's popularity in Bengal was political. "We gave him spiritual and political leadership," observes Ali Ahsan in the same article, "when he clearly stated that Indian Muslims were different from the Hindus ethnologically, culturally and above all from the point of view of aspirations."[168] It was Iqbal's vision that offered a solution to the political deadlock in India. In his presidential address to the All-India Muslim League in 1930, Iqbal's call for a separate homeland for the Muslims of India ultimately led to the Pakistan Movement, which culminated in the creation of Pakistan in 1947.

Syed Ali Ahsan's understanding of Iqbal is profound. He realizes that while in the nineteenth century Bengal, many poets and writers like Mir

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[168] Syed A. Ahsan, 'Influence of Iqbal on Modern Bengali Poetry' in *Essays on Bengali Literature*, Karachi: Department of Bengali, University of Karachi, 1960, p.43.

Musharraf Hussain, Muzammel Huq, Kaikobad, Ismail Hussain Shirazi, and others had used Islamic history as the background of their writings, it was left to Nazrul Islam in the twentieth century to demonstrate to the Bengali Muslims that Islam, Islamic history and Muslim heroes could be used not merely as a backdrop, but as a perennial reservoir from which all living values of the Muslim society should spring, and from which a better life could come into being. Iqbal was able to supply all that and also what was missing in Nazrul Islam. In Syed Ali Ahsan's words:

> In Nazrul Islam's poetry, there was something which appeared to be missing, and that was 'Towhid' and reflections of Islamic beauty and conviction. There is a vivid picture of agony born of misery and there are fiery notes of revolt, but for want of self-analysis there has not been determined an antidote for the sense of wretchedness and frustration. Iqbal has painted the picture of lethargy and disappointment of the Muslims in a very able manner, and for this state of downfall and stagnation, his feelings are very profound. The indication of the route that we find in *Jawab-i-Shikwah* gives the proof of his deep appreciation of eternal struggle of Islamic values. He has asked every Muslim to hold fast to the eternal truth of Islam and to the never-failing life-giving sayings of the Holy Qur'an. Thus he said in one place: 'In times of crises in their History, it is not Muslims that saved Islam, on the contrary, it is Islam that saved Muslims.'[169]

Iqbal's poetry has been widely translated in Bengal, especially since his death in 1938. It appears as if his *Shikwah* ('The Complaint') and *Jawab-i-Shikwah* ('The Reply to the Complaint') are the favorite ones among his Bengali readers. Of the half a dozen or so translations of *Shikwah* Ashraf Ali Khan's version has been appreciated most by Syed Ali Ahsan and others. Mizanur Rahman translated both *Shikwah* and *Jawab-i-Shikwah* in 1943. Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah translated them in 1954, Sultan Muhammad in 1959 and Kavi Ghulam Mustafa in 1960. Ghulam Mustata translated several other poems of Iqbal and can be said to have brought Iqbal closer to Bengali Muslims, especially during the East Pakistan period.

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[169] *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

Kabir Chowdhury, a distinguished Bengali literary critic, and a former Professor and Head of the Department of English, University of Dacca, shows a deep understanding of the poetry of Iqbal, whom he calls 'a poet of renaissance, a poet of re-awakening'. Chowdhury pays homage to Iqbal for revitalizing 'a decaying people with his inspiring messages conveyed through the medium of powerful poetry'.[170] He observes that while Iqbal should be celebrated for bringing a message of hope, courage and brighter future for the people of India, and the Indian Muslims in particular; he has a message for the whole of humanity. In his *Asrar-i-Khudi*, when Iqbal speaks of the self and expounds the doctrine of personality and the 'perfect man', his message that the potentiality of the human self is boundless, is certainly for the whole of humanity. Kabir Chowdhury brings out the difference between the philosophy of Iqbal and that of Nietzsche, in that, while for the German philosopher power is its own reward, for Iqbal it is only a means to do good for people:

> In Nietzsche's philosophy, there was no place for a higher moral order operating, there was no check by way of a noble, all-pervading influence exercised by comprehension of [the] religious and hence his philosophy of the superman could easily degenerate into a monstrous doctrine where power was not a means to something great but an end in itself. Iqbal's concept of the fully developed personality did not provide for the Neitzsehean [sic] superman but for what may be called the *Mard-i-Mu'min* (the true Muslim), the viceregent of God on earth, who always owes his allegiance to Allah but whose soul, through prayers and good deeds, has reached a stage where even apparently impossible achievements are possible of accomplishment.[171]

In Iqbal's philosophy, the religious is looked upon as a force that is all-pervading and ever-existent. Iqbal's unique human individual wants to be strong and powerful not with a desire to destroy the worlds, but to be able to do the most good by most effectively serving God through serving humankind. And this, in Iqbal's view, can be achieved only through *love*.

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[170] *Kabir Chowdhury.*, p. 48.

Kabir Chowdhury [171], 'Iqbal and Appreciation', *Matters of Moment* (Dacca: The Bureau of National Reconstruction, 1962), p. 27.

Kabir Chowdhury also sees the difference between the great Persian philosopher Omar Khayyam and Iqbal. Both of them were dillusioned by the state of the existing social order in the world and both of them desired to have it reconstructed, but while Khayyam thinks of man as a plaything in the hand of Fate and proposes to conspire with Fate to bring about the desired change in the social order, for Iqbal it is man himself who can bring about such a change by changing himself. Man, for him, is the master of his own destiny, and the creator of his own fate.

Begum Sufia Kamal, the most distinguished female poet of Muslim Bengal, has expressed her admiration and love for Iqbal in a beautiful and inspiring poem on Iqbal in which she calls him *Kavi mrittunjoy* ('the poet who has conquered death'). She calls Iqbal 'the good fortune of the nation'– a word play on his name *Iqbal* which means good fortune and excellence.

You are the good fortune of your nation, poet Iqbal

You name it yourself with your Name,

Leader unafraid,

You sang the noble song of independence

While Time looked on.

You asked God

Why is Muslim so degraded today?

Where did he fault?

You received the answer in your soul

And accepted the challenge.

The nation was asleep, bewildered,

You had the power to wake it up with your song.

You pledged your life to a struggle, unending.

You had the dream of Truth…

You dreamed of a free land for your people

Your message was for everyone:

He who has faith in his self and

He who serves in selflessness

For him is fulfillment…[172]

This poem was written by Begum Sufia Kama in the sixties, when Bangladesh was East Pakistan. During the East Pakistan period the 21st of April was celebrated all over the country as the Iqbal Day. Bengalis looked upon Iqbal as the herald of a new dawn and the occasion marked the expression of this sentiment. For instance, Justice Moudud of the East Pakistan High Court in his inaugural speech at the Iqbal day symposium organized by the Nazrul Academy, Dacca, in April 1971 called him 'A Luther in the world of Islam'. He expressed his admiration for Iqbal as one who had raised his voice in protest against the inequities and injustices of a capitalistic society, and said that in his view, Iqbal was an ardent pilgrim in search of a faith based on reason, who had tried with rare success to reinterpret essential aspects of Islamic thought as a historic phase of world thought. For this, Iqbal is part of the Muslim Bengali struggle toward a better future. Iqbal is the visionary whose dream of independence for Muslim India came true in 1947.

We were in Bangladesh some time ago and as part of our research for writing this paper we talked to some opinion leaders and found that the Bengali people are as religious, as devout, and as God-fearing as ever. In fact, they say that Iqbal is now not only the Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan, but the great Muslim poet who belongs to Bangladesh in a very special way. After the partition of India, when a group of people started saying that Rabindranath Tagore belonged only to India as he was a Hindu, the Muslim Bengal protested and did not give up Tagore as an Indian. They claimed Tagore as their own poet, as one who had sung for them in their own language, about their own joys and sorrows, beauty and power. Now they are not about to give up Iqbal to the Pakistanis. Iqbal still is their poet, their own Muslim poet, who wrote for them as well as for the whole world. Thus Iqbal and Tagore in this century are the best of the heritage of the Bengali people. Iqbal is forever for Muslim Bengal.

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[172] Begum Sufia Kamal, 'Kobi Mrittunjoy', *Prososti-o-Prarthona* (Dacca: Shahadat Hussain, Mirpur Bazar, 1968), p. 55

We agree with Syed Ali Ahsan when he says that it is difficult to 'achieve an intimacy with the experiencing self of Iqbal', but that this will change and 'a time will come when there will be, not a mere comprehension, but a full realization of Iqbal's experience.'[173] We will add to this that we hope that Iqbal's thought will increasingly influence the shape of things to come across the world. He has a great deal to offer to the emerging world order.

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[173] Syed Ali Ahsan, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

SOME IGNORED FACTS ABOUT THE ALLAHABAD SESSION OF ALL-INDIA MUSLIM LEAGUE AND IQBAL

Muhammad Haneef Shahid

ABSTRACT

The Allahabad session of the all-India Muslim League was dominated by the presidential address of Allama Iqbal, the far-reaching implications of which over-shadowed the rest of the proceedings. What else happened during the session? This paper is an attempt to answer the question and also to highlight some other similarly seldom documented aspects of the freedom movement of which Iqbal was a part.

Since the Iqbal centenary celebrations (2-8 December, 1977) and the Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah centenary celebrations (1976), a lot of valuable material has been unearthed for the benefit of the admirers of these two 'Founding Fathers of Pakistan'.

As far as the Allahabad Address of Allama Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal is concerned, he delivered it at the 21st Session of the All India Muslim League held from 29-30 December, 1930, in which he declared:

"I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sindh and Baluschistan amalgamated into a single state. Self-government within the British Empire, or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim state appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims, at least of North West India".[174]

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[174] Presidential Address of Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal delivered at the Annual Session of the All India Muslim League at Allahabad on the 29 December, 1930, printed by Guran Ditta Kapur at Kapur Printing Works, Lahore, 1930, p. 7; (an original copy is owned by the author). See also *Speeches, Writing and Statements of Iqbal*, compiled & edited by Latif Ahmed Sherwani, p. 10. Allama Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal repeated the same idea of a Free Muslim State of States in a letter which he sent to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on 28th May, 1937, writing thus: "After a long and careful study of Islamic Law I have come to the conclusion that if this System of Law is properly understood and applied, at least the right to subsistence is secured to every body. But the enforcement and development of the 'shariat'

This presidential address of Allama Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal has been reproduced time and again by different scholars in full as well as in excerpts, and is easily available. Luckily, we happen to possess an original copy of the address. Its title page reads:

All India Muslim League Allahabad session December 1930 Presidential Address Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal Barrister-at-Law Lahore[175]

We have had a comparative study of this 22-page presidential address with the one published in the *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal* compiled and edited by Latif Ahmed Sherwani.[176] There is no difference except that the latter comprises 23 pages.

In brief, the point that we want to stress and make known to the lovers of Allama Iqbal is that it was the practice of the All India Muslim League that in every session, before the presidential address, a brief introduction of the session in question was given along with the number and names of visitors and delegates. Afterwards, the chairman of the Reception Committee used to give his welcome address, requesting the president to deliver his address. At the conclusion of the presidential address, a number of resolutions were moved and passed by the house. If we presume the presidential address to be the 'soul' of a session, the "Introduction" and the "Resolutions" may be considered its 'body'. Hence we cannot and should not ignore the 'body' for the 'soul'. They are part and parcel of each other. In other words, we cannot

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of Islam is impossible in this country without a 'Free Muslim State or States'. (*Letters of Iqbal*, compiled & edited by Bashir Ahmad Dar, p. 254.)

[175] Presidential Address of Allama Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, printed by Guran Ditta Kapur at the Kapur Art Printing Works, Lahore, 1930.

[176] *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, compiled & edited by Latif Ahmed Sherwani, Lahore, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1977, pp. 10-43.

It will not be out of place to mention that some scholars and historians do not care for authenticity while quoting the date and year when the above-mentioned presidential address was delivered; for example, Mr. Muhammad Hamza Farooqi in *Safarnama-e-Iqbal* (Urdu) on p. 10, has written that 'Iqbal delivered his presidential address on 31st December, 1930'. It is of utmost imperative that care should be taken while giving such quotations of historical importance.

separate the "Introduction" and "Resolutions" from the presidential address.[177]

Keeping in view the usefulness and importance of the "Introduction" and "Resolutions" and assuming them to be the part and parcel of the presidential address, we feel pleasure in describing the same.

Proceedings of the Twenty-First Session of the All India Muslim League, held at Allahabad, December 29-30-1930.

The Twenty-First Session of the All India Muslim League opened at Allahabad on the 29th December, 1930, under the Presidentship of Sir Muhammad Iqbal. It was not possible to obtain the number of delegates who had arrived at Allahabad from other parts of the country. Among those present at the morning's sitting of the League, it was said, there were a few from Karachi, one from Bihar, some from the Punjab, one from Hyderabad (Sind) and several from the United Provinces. Among the audience of about 600 persons, a large majority was formed by local people. Besides, several honorary magistrates of Allahabad and several Government officials were also present.

Among the delegates, who were reported to have arrived from outstation, may be mentioned Seth Abdullah Haroon, M.L.A., (Karachi), Mr. Abdul Majid (Hyderabad Sind) Nawab Ismail Khan (Meerut), Maulvi Alauddin (Meerut), Maulana S. Sadiq (Punjab), Maulana Abdul Khair (Ghazipur), Khan Bahadur Barakatullah (Ghazipur), Shad Nazir Hawen, M.L.C (Bihar), Maulvi Abdul Kafi (Cawnpore), Maulvi Adus Samed (Bedaun), Mr. Azhar Ali, M.L.A., (Lucknow), Syed Hussain Imam (Patna), Maulana Abdul Majid

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[177] Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada in *Foundation of Pakistan - All-India Muslim League Documents: 1906-1947*, published by the National Publishing House Ltd, Karachi, 1969, has given full proceedings of all the sessions of All-India Muslim League, but on the contrary, Mr. G. Allana in *Pakistan Movement: Historic Documents* has quoted excerpts from the presidential address and two resolutions only; see pp. 86-88.

Mirza Akhtar Hasan, author of 'History of the Muslim League' (Urdu) published by Maktaba-e-League Delhi, has adopted the same pattern and style as that of Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada about which we have already discussed, i.e. firstly, he has given an introduction of the session, secondly, the address of welcome by chairman of the Reception Committee, thirdly, text of the presidential address and lastly, the detail of the resolution passed; see pp. 382-393.

(Badaun), Syed Zakir Ali (Lucknow), Syed Habib (Lahore), and Maulvi Abdul Qadir (Lahore).

The proceedings commenced at about 11.a.m. Mr. Muhammad Hussain, chairman of the Reception Committee, welcomed the delegates. In the course of his speech, he said that the Muslims had left no stone unturned in trying to arrive at some settlement with the Hindus, but the latter had failed to respond. He repudiated the charge that the Muslims, due to their communalism, were an obstacle in the progress of the country. If the mentality of the Hindus would change and the Muslims were assured that their traditions, religion, education and language would not be annihilated, and that they would be treated like other sons of India, the Muslims would cease to bring up the question of the protection of their rights. But their experience in the local boards, in every department of the administration, and even in trade, had been to the contrary.

Mr. Muhammad Hussain expressed his appreciation for the attitude of the Muslim delegates to the Round Table Conference. He warned the Government that if no solution to the difficulties was affected at the Round Table Conference, the Muslim would not hesitate to make any sacrifice in order to secure fulfilment of their demands.

Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal next delivered his presidential address, at the conclusion of which Mr. Muhammad Yakub, General Secretary of the Muslim League, explained the substance of the address in Urdu for the benefit of those who did not have sufficient knowledge of English.

Second Meeting

The session which was scheduled for three days, terminated on the second day, after passing seven resolutions. It took only about three hours to consider the resolutions which had been passed by the Subject Committee the previous afternoon at a meeting attended by about 25 members.

Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, president of the League, had to leave the meeting at about 11.00 a.m., after presiding for about an hour, while the most important resolution of the Session was under discussion. On his departure, Nawab Muhammad Ismail Khan of Meerut was voted to the chair.

The audience at the meeting was smaller than on the previous day, and it was apparent that the number of League members present was below the

requisite quorum. When the chairman proceeded to take votes on the resolution to which Dr. M.U.S. Jung had moved an amendment, Dr. Jung said that according to the rules of the League, the quorum at a meeting should be of 75 members, and he accordingly raised a point of order that there was no quorum at the meeting. Dr. Jung's objection was, however, overruled by Nawab Muhammad Ismail Khan, the chairman, by saying that the objection of a lack of quorum should have been raised at the first day's meeting, this day's meeting being an adjourned meeting needed no quorum. The following resolutions were adopted:

Condolence

The All-India Muslim League places on record its deep sense of sorrow and loss on the sad deaths of Maulvi Mazhar ul-Haq, Sahibzada Aftab Ahmad Khan, Mirza Ali Muhammad Khan, Sir Ibrahim Haroon and Syed Jalil, old and prominent members of the League, and conveys its condolence to the members of the bereaved families.

On the motion of Mr. Hussain Imam, seconded by Dr. M.U.S Jung, the League adopted the following resolution:

Constitutional Reforms

Resolved that as the Government of India's Despatch on constitutional reforms fails to lead the country towards responsible government, the recommendations contained in the Despatch would not satisfy Indian aspirations in general and Muslim demands in particular.

Another resolution, which gave rise to a prolonged debate and some opposition was moved by Syed Habib Shah and ran as follows:

Round Table Conference

The All- India Muslim League, while appreciating the united efforts of the Muslim members to the Round-Table Conference in giving faithful expression to Muslim opinion, strongly supports the resolution passed by the All-India Muslim Conference at Delhi on January 1, 1929, under the president ship of His Highness the Aga Khan, and hopes that the Muslim members will combine to abide by that resolution.

Moving the resolution, Syed Habib Shah remarked that it was a matter of gratification that the Muslim delegates to the Round-Table Conference,

though they were not chosen by the Muslim of the country, were still supporting Muslim demands. He declared that whatever was the decision at the Round-Table Conference about the future constitution, the question of its acceptance or non-acceptance was a matter which concerned the Muslims in India, and he asserted that they would not be prepared to abide by a decision which did not safeguard Muslim rights.

Dr. M.U.S Jung next moved the following amendment to the resolution:

Resolved that although Mr. M. A Jinnah's 14 points constitute the minimum Muslim demands having in view the larger interests of the country and also the complicated nature of the problem to be solved, and considering the difficulties which they may have to face at the spur of the moment, the All-India Muslim League considers it advisable not to restrict the full power of the Muslim members to negotiate a satisfactory settlement.

Dr. Jung, pressing his amendment, referred to the circumstances which led a party of Muslims to hold a Muslim Conference at Delhi, and asserted that it would be against the prestige of the League, which was an older political body than the Muslim Conference under reference, if the League adopted a resolution recorded by the Muslim Conference. Dr. Jung held that the resolution of Delhi Muslim Conference was based on a narrower view than the 14 points of Mr. Jinnah. For instance, he said, Resolution No.7 of the Delhi Muslim Conference relating to protection of the rights of a minority, had confused the issue by demanding majority representation in provinces where Muslims were in a majority and weightage where Muslims were in a minority. Concluding, Dr. Jung emphasized that they should stick to Mr. Jinnah's 14 points. The political exigencies demanded that the delegates should be allowed sufficient latitude in exercising their discretion in negotiating a satisfactory solution to the difficulties at the London Conference.

Most of the speakers who followed, vigorously opposed the amendment. Seth Abdullah Haroon of Karachi, opposing the amendment and supporting the original resolution, asserted that he could not give any power to the delegates to the Round-Table Conference. They were not elected by the Muslims, he said, nor were before them; and if they wanted to carry on any

negotiations, they might do so. But the terms of any settlement would have to be considered by the Muslims in India before they could be accepted.

Mr. Hafizur Rehman took serious objection to Mr. Jung's attack on the representative character of the Delhi Muslim Conference.

It was at this stage that Sir Muhammad Iqbal left the meeting and Nawab Muhammad Ismial Khan took the chair.

On the discussion being resumed, Moulvi Muhammad Yakub regretted that the debate on the resolution had led to an unpleasant discussion due to some misunderstanding. The question before them, he said, was not whether the resolution of the Muslim Conference or Mr. Jinnah's 14 points represented the majority view. In Moulvi Yakib's opinion there was really no difference between Mr. Jinnah's 14 points and the points adopted by the Muslim Conference. The only point for consideration, he said, was whether the League could give some discretion to the Muslim delegates to the Round Table Conference in effecting a compromise.

Moulvi Muhammad Yakub did not appreciate the statements made by some speakers that the Muslim delegates to the Round Table Conference should not be regarded as the Muslims' representatives, as such a declaration would not only lower the prestige of the Muslim leaders in London, but would also lead their opponents, and even the Government, to tell the Muslim delegates, on the latter's pressing the Muslim demands, that their view did not represent the views of the Muslims of India.

Mr. Muhammad Hussain remarked that the Government would not have the face to tell the Muslim delegates that they were not representatives of Muslims, as these delegates were selected by the Viceroy himself. And if the Government thought that they were not representatives, why then were the real representatives not invited to the Conference?

Mr. Muhammad Azim also opposed Dr. Jung's amendment; and Syed Habib Shah, mover of the resolution, replying to the debate, asked if the Muslim delegates should be given any authority to make any settlement!

Dr. Jung's objection about the want of a quorum having been ruled out, votes were taken with the result that the amendment of Dr. Jung was rejected, and the resolution of Syed Habib Shah was declared carried.

Moulvi Muhammad Yakub next moved the follwing resolution:

North-West Frontier Province

The All-India Muslim League, while fully realizing the particular conditions of the North-West Province, and recognizing the necessity of taking special measures for the safeguarding of the Frontier, is strongly of opinion that the continued political dissatisfaction in the province cannot be removed, nor can the local aspirations be satisfied with any scheme of administration which gives an inferior place to the scheme of administration which gives an inferior place to province in comparison with other provinces in the country.

The mover regretted that neither the Simon Commission, nor the report of the Central Simon Committee, nor the Government of India's Despatch affected a satisfactory solution of the problem of North-West Frontier Province; nor did the Government take any action on repeated resolutions of the Legislative Assembly on the Subject.

The resolution, seconded by Maulana Abdul Majid, was passed.

The League next considered the following resolution moved by Maulana Abdul Majid of Bombay:

New Constitution

The All- India Muslim League is emphatically of opinion that the Musalmans of India will not be satisfied with any Constitution that does not guarantee (a) full Muslim representation on population basis in the legislatures of the Punjab and Bengal, (b) the constitution of Sind into a separate province forthwith and without any condition, and (c) the conferment of full power on the North-West Frontier Province and British Baluchistan.

The League declares that the Muslim insistence on the adoption of a Federal Constitution of India is contingent upon the clear understanding that the above-mentioned units shall, in the matter of Provincial autonomy, be treated on the same footing as the other components of the Federation.

In the course of his speech, the mover remarked that an attempt was being made on behalf of the Hindus, and also the British Government, that Muslims should not be in power in any province. The resolution was passed.

The only other resolution which aroused opposition was the motion of Mr. Hussain Imam:

Muslim Representation

The All- India Muslim League considers it essential and imperative that statutory provisions should be made for the adequate representation of Musalmans in the cabinets as well as in the public service of the country

Dr. Jung, opposing the motion, asserted that they would be committing suicide by passing that resolution; for the resolution which the League had just passed would give Muslims power in five provinces, and that would enable them to have only Muslims in a cabinets and in public services in their provinces in their provinces, but in case they imposed any restrictions about Muslim representation, those restrictions would also be imposed in the provinces in which they would be in power, and they would consequently have to accept non-Muslim representation in their provinces also.

Syed Habib Shah opposed the amendment of Dr. Jung, as he felt that the administration of any province could not be carried out by one community without the cooperation of others. The amendment was rejected, and the resolution was passed.

Finally, the League, on the motion of Mr. Zakir Ali, appointed a committee consisting of Nawab Muhammad Ismail Khan, Kazi Masud Hasan and Moulvi Muhammad Yakub to revise and amend the Constitution of the All-India Muslim League.

The proceedings of the Session terminated after expression of the League's feeling of gratitude to the President and to the persons responsible for making arrangement for the session, by Moulvi Muhammad Yakub and Mr. Zahur Ahmad.

Moulvi Muhammad Yakub remarked that it was true that the present Session of the League was not as representative as its previous Session, but this, he said, was due to numerous Muslim leaders being out of India. Such would be the case, he added, with any conference held at this juncture; and it

was due to the absence of its leaders that the Indian National Congress had not held its Session at the end of the year.[178]

<center>THE ALL INDIA MUSLIM CONFERENCE</center>

<center>Lahore, March 21, 1932</center>

This session of the All-India Muslim Conference opened at Lahore on the 21st March, 1932 under the presidency of Sir Muhammad Iqbal and in the presence of about 1,000 visitors, delegates, distinguished persons and leaders including Mr. A.H. Ghuznavi. Dr Shafaat Ahmed Khan, Mr. Muhammad Hasan, Saiyed Murtuza Sahib, Mr. Hasan Jan, Mr. Abdus Samad, Dr. Ziauddin, Mr. Saiyed Hussain Imana, Mr. Saiyed Abdul Hafiz, Maulana Muhammad Sahfi Daudi, Mr. Masud Ahmed, Nawab Saifullah Khan, Capt. Raja Sheir Muhammad Khan, K.B. Malik Muhammad Amin, Mr. Malik Feroze Khan Noon, the Hon. Nawab Saiyed Meharshah and Haji Abdullah Haroon.

The Welcome Speech

Haji Rahim Baksh, chairman of the Reception Committee, said that the Muslim intelligentsia were divided into three groups. Firstly, there was the pro-Congress group whose number was not large, but who were whole-heartedly supporting the Congress and condemning terrorism. Secondly, there were those who had lost faith both in the Congress and the British Government, and who urged us to stand on our own legs and work out our salvation. This idea was gradually gaining ground with Muslims. Some of these also were extremists and behaved with civil disobedience and direct action against the opinion of the majority. Thirdly, there were the moderates who, disappointed by Congress, were extending the hand of friendship to the British and would welcome an Anglo-Indian alliance. But, the speaker asked: "Will the Government take this hand and do anything to ensure Muslims' cooperation in India? Muslims are at the cross- roads. The Congress has frittered away the opportunity to form an alliance with Muslims. They do not even now realize the usefulness of this link. At the same time the prospects

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[178] *Evolution of Muslim Political Thought in India - The Communal Award* (Volume Four), compiled and edited by A.M. Zaidi under the auspices of the Indian Institute of Applied Political Research, New Delhi, S. Chand & Company, 1978, pp. 59-60 and 83-89.

of Muslim demands being accepted by the British in their entirety are not very bright. Which line of action are you going to adopt?"

Exchange of Lathi Blows and Brickbats

Scenes of rowdyism marked the concluding session of the Conference today. The proceedings began two hours late and just as Sir Muhammad Iqbal entered the *pandal* a large number of Ahrarees also tried to enter but were kept back. A tug-of-war resulted at the gate between the Ahrarees and the volunteers of the conference resulting in an exchange of Lathi blows, brickbats and force. The police later intervened and dispersed the crowd, but just as it retired rowdyism continued and the proceedings of the conference took the form of moving resolutions. Without speeches or with very brief speeches and without discussions, all resolutions were hurried through during the time when the crowd outside was attempting to enter the *pandal* from one side or the other amidst various kinds of slogans.

RESOLUTIONS

The most important resolutions passed were:

Muslim Demands

Whereas the Muslim community is profoundly dissatisfied with the result of the last two conferences inasmuch as the Muslim demands formulated on January 1, 1929, and July 5, 1931 have not been conceded and whereas the conference is generally of the opinion that its policy of cooperation has not yet yielded satisfactory results, it holds that it is not longer possible for the Muslims to continue to cooperate with the Round-Table Conference and its sub-committees which are preparing a constitution in the absence of a decision the full Muslim demands will be embodied therein. But in view of the undertaking given by the British Government to announce its decision on the communal question without delay this conference urges upon the Government to announce its decision at the earliest possible opportunity so that the Muslim community may clearly understand its position in the constitution. If the decision is not announced before the end of June the next meeting of the executive board of the conference should be held on July 3 this year at the latest to launce a programme of direct action.

Emergency Preparations

This conference is further of opinion that in the meantime the community should be organized in the following manner to be prepared for any emergency which may arise: (a) to establish more branches of the Muslim Conference in all parts of the country to bring about coordination of work among the Muslim organization in the country with a view to political emancipation and the economic betterment and solidarity of the community, (b) to enrol volunteers under the branches of the conference with a declaration from them that they will be prepared for all possible sacrifices for the enforcement of the demands of the Muslim Conference, (c) to collect funds for the above purposes.

Direct Action

The Conference further authorises the working committees to prepare a programme of direct action and place the same before the executive board by the end of June 1932 for necessary action.

Provincial Autonomy

Whereas the scheme of federation propounded by the Round Table Conference is bound to involve considerable delay in the working of details and whereas the provinces of British India have been demanding complete provincial autonomy ever since the inauguration of the Government of India Act, 191, this conference demands the immediate introduction of provincial autonomy in all provinces in British India simultaneously while the details of the federation scheme are being explored and worked out.[179]

THE ALL INDIA MUSLIM CONFERENCE

New Delhi, August 7, 1932

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[179] Ibid., pp. 520-521 and 532-534.

Mr. Latif Ahmed Sherwani has given only the presidential address of Allama Iqbal which he delivered at the Annual Session of the All India Muslim Conference, held at Lahore on 21st March, 1932, in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, pp. 26-43). Likewise, he has reproduced the presidential address of Allama Iqbal only which he delivered at the annual session of the All-India Muslim League, 29th December, 1930, pp. 3-26)

A meeting of the working Committee of the All-India Muslim Conference was held at New Delhi, on the 7th August, 1932 with Sir Muhammad Iqbal in the chair. Those present included Malik Feroz Khan Noon, Maulana Mazharuddin, Syed Habiab-Shah, Syed Zakir Ali, Maulana Shafi Daudi, the Hon'ble Syed Hussain Imam, and Mufti Muhammad Sadique. The following resolutions were adopted:

The Alwar Agitation

Whereas the attitude of the Alwar Durbar towards its Muslims subjects and their many grievance which they have, for a long time, been most respectfully and constitutionally laying before the Durbar, have been one of extreme indifference and even of hostility; whereas the recent policy of the Alwar Durbar have been characterized by ruthless repression, so much so that about ten thousand Muslims, men and women, of all ages and stations in life, have been driven to migrate from the Alwar city to Jaipur, Ajmeer, Rewari, Ferozepore, Jherka, Gurgaon, Hissar, Agra, Bharatpur, Delhi and other places; whereas the Alwar Durbar has not allowed the deputation appointed by the All-India Muslim Conference in its session, in Lahore, to wait upon the Maharaja of Alwar to make a representation about the grievances of the Alwar Muslim and whereas the Alwar Durbar has failed to appoint an independent Commission to investiage the predisposing cause of the deplorable incidents of the 29th May, 1932 when State troops fired on Muslims, as demanded by the working Committee of the Conference on the 6th June, 1932 it is hereby resolved that,

(a)   A deputation should wait on the viceroy in order to place the whole case before His Excellency and request him to appoint an independent Commission of Enquiry for the purpose of investigating all the grievances of the Alwar Muslims.

(b)   Telegrams be sent to the Secretary of State for India, the Viceroy and the A.G.G. Rajputana States drawing their attention to the situation in Alwar, and the ruin it is causing to innocent men and women, and its probable consequences in British India.

The Committee calls upon Muslim India to render immediate financial aid to the Alwar refugees.

The Working Committee further calls upon the Press in India to take up the just cause of the Alwar refugees.

Ahrar Prisoners

In view of the general feelings of Muslmans throughout the country, that the Ahrar prisoners who were sent to jail in connection with the Kashmere agitation should be immediately released by the Government the desirability of the immediate release of Ahrar prisoners.

In view of the fact that the sword is exempt from the operation of the Arms Act in some districts of the Punjab, while licence is necessary in others, the working Committee is strongly of the opinion that the sword be exempted from the operation of the Arms Act throughout the Punjab. The Working Committee further calls upon the Muslim members of the Punjab Legislative Council to take necessary steps for the same.

Communal Award

The Working Committee while appreciating the desire of the Sikhs to join the Minorities Pact and while welcoming their conversations with certain Muslims at Simla, is strongly of the opinion that such conversation may be used for bringing about postponement of the announcement by the British Government of their decision on the Communal question, and therefore calls upon the Muslims at Simla taking part in those conversations, to postpone the same till the decision is announced by the Government.

The Working Committee is emphatically of the opinion that, in view of the acuteness of the present situation and the possibilities of further complications, it is the duty of the British Government to announce their decision on the communal question without further delay.

Syed Zakir Ali's resolution regarding the further programme of the Conference in case the Government do not concede the minimum demands of the Muslim Conference, was placed before the Working Committee. Some of the suggestions made therein, were discussed by the members at great length. It was, however, finally decided to form a sub-committee to discuss and formulate a fuller and stronger programme to be placed before the next meeting of the Executive Board or before the special session of the All-India Muslim Conference. The Sub-committee

wold consist among others of Sir Muhammad Iqbal (Chairman), Maulana Mazhruddin, Hasrat Mohani, Syed Habib Shah, Ghulam Rasul, and Syed Zakir Ali.

It was resolved that the next meeting of the Executive Board be held in Delhi after the announcement by the Government of the decision on the Communal problem, giving ten days clear notice to the members of the Board.[180]

THE ALL INDIA MUSLIM CONFERENCE

Delhi, August 20, 1932

The working Committee of the All-India Muslim Conference met again at Delhi on the 20th August, 1932 and discussed the communal decision of the Government. After a heated debate, a committee consisting among others of Syed Zakir Ali and Mr. Masood Ahmed, was constituted for drafting the main resolution on the Communal decision. The draft resolution was presented to the Working Committee and with a few amendments was adopted for presentation to the Board.

Next day, the 21st August, the Executive Board met under the Chairmanship of Sir Muhammad Iqbal. The draft resolution was proposed by Mr. Abdul Majid and was seconded by Syed Muhammad Hussain. Forty-one members attended the meeting, the chief among them being Dr. Shafaat Ahmed Khan, Nawab Jamshed Ali Khan, Maulana Shaif Daudi, Hafiz Hidayat Hussain, Muhammad yamin Khan, Haji Wajehuddin, Nawab Muhammad Yousaf, Kunwar Ismail Ali Khan, Haji Rahimbuksh, the Hon'ble Mr. Hussain Imam. Ghulam Shaikh Narang, the Hon'ble Mr. Muhammad Padsha, Dr. Iqbal, Malik Feroze Khan Noon, Nawab Ismail Khan and Dr. Ziauddin. The following were the resolutions adopted by the Executive Board.

Muslim Representation

In the opinion of the Board, the Decision of His Majesty's Government about the measure of Muslim representation in the Provincial Legislatures is disappointing, as it falls very much short of the Muslim demands

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[180] *Evolution of Muslim Political Thought in India - The Communal Award* (Volume Four), compiled and edited by A. M. Zaidi, pp. 572-574.

embodied in their resolution of the All-India Muslim Conference, and as it (a) denies the right of statutory majority by separate electorates to the Musalmans in the Punjab and Bengal, (b) reduces the weightage now enjoyed by the Musalmans in the United Provinces, Bihar and Orissa and Madras Legislative Councilss, (c) gives weightage to non-Muslim minorities in the North-west Frontier Province equivalent to three times their population, which is much in excess of the weigtage given to Muslims in their minority provinces, (d) omits British Baluchistan from the general scheme of reforms, (e) leaves the question of separation of Sind as a province as before.

Muslim Demands I

The Board, while appreciating the efforts of His Majesty's Government to meet the demands of all concerned and recognizing that their decision does meet a portion of the Muslim demands, is strongly of the opinion that no constitution would be acceptable to the Muslim India, unless it embodied in it all the other Muslim demands set forth in their resolution of January 1929 and further explained and confirmed in their resolution of April 1932.

Federal States

The Board most emphatically adds that the Muslims of India will not accept any constitution unless it creates completely autonomous Federal States of equal status, and accepts the principle that the transfer of power shall be from the Parliament to the Provinces and not from the Parliament to the Central Government.

Future Constitution

The Board further requests His Majesty's Government to make an immediate announcement that the future constitution will be based on the Principles stated in the preceding paragraphs.

Muslims of Bengal

The Executive Board is emphatically of the opinion that a great injustice has been done to the Muslims of Bengal, as His Majesty's Government have, in their decision, departed from the well recognized principle that no majority shall be reduced to a minority or an equality.

Separation of Sind

Separation of Sind being one of the most vital demands of the Muslim India, this meeting of the Board demands that Sind be separated from the Bombay Presidency without any further delay.

Muslim Demands II

In view of the change in the political atmosphere caused by the announcement of the decision made by His Majesty's Government, the Board urges upon the Muslmans of India to continue to cultivate friendly relations with the sister communities, and remain prepared for all eventualities in order to protect their rights and secure, by all constitutional means, the remaining demands which they consider more vital than the mere allotment of seats.[181]

THE ALL INDIA MUSLIM CONFERENCE

New Delhi, March 5, 1933

A meeting of the Executive Board of the All-India Muslim Conference was held in the Western Hostel, New Delhi on the 5th March, 1933 under the presidentship of Sir Muhammad Iqbal. About 50 members attended the meeting including Messrs. Syed Abdul Azeez, S.M.Padsh, Hussain Imam and Muhammad Suhrawardy, members of the Council of State; Messrs. Masood Ahmed, Ismail Ali Khan, Captain Sher Muhammad Khan, Muhammad Yamin Khan, Muhammad Uazzan Sahib, Haji Wajihuddin, Sir Muhammad Yakub, Haji Abdullah Haroon, Muhammad Sadique, K. Uppi Saheb Bahadur, Dr. Ziauddin, Muhammad Ibrahim Ali Khan, A.H. Ghuznavi, Muhammad Anwarul Azeem and Shafi Daudi, members of the Legislative Assembly; Nawab Sir Muhammad Yusaf Mali, Sir Feroze Khan Noon, Dr. Shafaat Ahmed Khan, Hafiz Hidayat Hussain, Abdus Samad, Syed Zakir Ali, S.M. Habib, Maulana Mazharuddin, Zahur Ahmed, Abdul Jabbar, M.L.C., Ghuzanfarullah M.L.C., Mufti Muhammad Sadiq (Qadian), Major Sir Hissamuddin Khan and the Raja Saheb of Salempore.

The question of the amalgamation of the All-India Muslim League with the Muslim Conference was discussed.

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[181] Ibid., pp. 575-577.

It was understood that Sir Muhammad Yakub and Mr. Shafi Daudi expressed their willingness to resign secretaryships of the respective organizations for the object of effecting unification.

Syed Habib Shah (Lahore) opposed amalgamation on the ground that the existence of both the organizations was necessary for the welfare and political advancement of the country.

Excitement and confusion marked the proceedings of the Council of the Muslim League. The President, Mr. Abdul Aziz, Barrister, admitted the Press to the proceedings before launch which the Associated Press representative attended. There were some protests against the Press being admitted, but the general sense of the House prevailed in favour of the Chairman's ruling

After lunch when the Council reassembled and the Free Press reporter joined the Press table, Sir Muhammad Yakub raised the point whether the Press should be allowed to continue to report the proceedings. The President said that his ruling had been already given. Thereupon, confusion and uproar occurred, and a number of members staged a walk-out. The meeting ended amid confusion.[182]

<center>THE ALL INDIA MUSLIM CONFERENCE</center>

<center>New Delhi, March 26, 1933</center>

A meeting of the Executive Board of the All-India Muslim Conference was held in Western Hostel, New Delhi, on the 26th March, 1933 under the presidency of Sir M. Iqbal. About forty members were present, including Dr. Shaffat Ahmed, Mr. S.M. Padshah, Mr. Muhammad Moazzam Sahib, Mr. Rahimtoola M. Chinly, Nawab Ibrahim Ali Khan, Kunwar Ismail Ali Khan, Mr. Hussain Imam, Mr. Muhammad Suhrawardy, Mr. Yamin Khan, Mian Shah Nawaz, Mr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Haji Abdullah Harron, Mr. A.H.Ghuznavi, Haji Rashid Ahmed, Captain Sher Muhammad Khan and K.B. Haji Rahimbuksh. The agenda included consideration of the White Paper and the election of the President for the next session of the conference.

Resolution on White Paper

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[182] Ibid., pp. 588-589.

A series of resolutions were passed. The following is the text of the main resolution:

This meeting of the Executive Board of the All-India Muslim Conference expresses its profound disappointment with the scheme of Reforms outlined in the White Paper. In the opinion of the Board the said scheme fails to meet the demand of the Muslim community as embodied in the various resolutions of the All-India Muslim Conference. In view of the extreme dissatisfaction of the Muslim community with the proposals of His Majesty's Government, the Board demand radical changes on the following:

(a) The Provinces should be granted the larger measure of fiscal administrative and legislative autonomy;

(b) The Governor's powers are excessive and should be severely curtailed;

(c) Ministers should be fully responsible to the legislature, and should hold office only as long as they enjoy the confidence of the House;

(d) Provincial Governments should have effective control over the Imperial services and complete control over the provincial and other services;

(e) The power of the Governor-General should be curtailed;

(f) "High Courts" should be an exclusively provincial subject. The appointments of the High Court Judges should be made by His Majesty on the recommendation of the Provincial Governors. The Provincial Legislatures, and not the Federal Legislature should regulate the power of superintendence exercised by the High Court over subordinate court in the province.

(g) No weightage or other privileges should be given to the state;

(h) Fundamental safeguards for the protection of the personal law, education and culture of the Muslims should be incorporated in the constitution;

(i) Provision should be made for effective representation of Muslims in the public service and the army, and immediate steps should be taken to Indianize the army;

(j) As Muslims claim one-third representation in the Upper Chamber of the Federal Legislature and have been definitely promised one-third of the Births Indian share of the seats and cannot see any effective way of securing a sufficient number of seats among the representatives of the state to make up their proportion to one-third of the whole House, it is their considered opinion that a slightly increased proportion over one-third of the British Indian share is essential. Muslims further disapprove of the principle of joint electorates in the election to the Upper House of the Federal Legislature, and are for separate electorates with direct elections;

(k) A substantial measure of reform should be immediately introduced in Baluchistan;

(l) One seat allotted to Delhi in the Upper Chamber should go to Muslims and non-Muslims by rotation;

(m) The population of Delhi and Ajmer being equal, Ajmer should have the same measure of representation in both the Houses of the Federal Legislature as Delhi, such representation to be regulated by the same principle as in Delhi, and when represented by a Muslim the other should be represented by a non-Muslim in the Upper Chamber and *vice versa*;

(n) Inasmuch as his Majesty's Government's decision promised to give the Muslims of Bihar and Orissa 42 seats out of 175, i.e., 24 per cent of the whole House, by separate electorate, the proportion thus fixed should on no account be changed, and states be so allotted to Muslims in the province in both the provincial legislatures that the total proportion of 24 per cent be undisturbed.

(o) The representation accorded to Commerce should include the Muslim Chamber of Commerce in Bengal and Bihar as electoral units in their respective province;

(p) The electoral qualifications of the landholder's constituency should be reduced in Bengal, Bihar and single-seated constituencies be changed into multi-seated ones in each province by the single transferable vote.

Another resolution passed eulogized the services rendered by the Aga Khan to the Muslim community at the Round Table Conference, and

thanked Mr. Hussain Imam for the invitation to hold the next session of the conference in Bihar.

It was understood that Sir M. Iqbal and Dr. Shafaat Ahmed Khan were rival candidates in the field for the presidentship. A compromise was reached and the meeting unanimously elected Dr. Shafaat Ahmed as the President of the forthcoming session, which was postponed until after the Joint Parliamentary Committee meetings. Meanwhile, Sir M. Iqbal would continue to act as the president.[183]

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[183] Ibid., pp. 590-592.

ESOTERIC HERMENEUTIC OF IBN 'AJIBA

Faris Casewit

ABSTRACT

In the *Tafsīr* (of Ibn Ajiba), an interesting parallel is drawn between the incredulous attitude of the *kuffar* in the Quran and that of the exoteric towards some of the doctrinal tenets of Sufism.

Kufr[184] It is one of those notions that in the Muslim conscience, encompasses much of what is odious in the character and conduct of a human being. And of all the "negative" ethico-religious values in the Qur'ān, it is the most pivotal. This paper will explore the hermeneutical reading of a 18th-19th century Moroccan Sufi into this key notion. Ahmad Ibn 'Ajiba[185] (1746-1809) is the author of *al-Baḥr al-Madīd fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Majīd*, an exegesis of the Qur'ān (tafsīr) that combines commentary on the scripture's literal, exoteric meaning as well as on its symbolic, esoteric significance. Ibn 'Ajība's exoteric treatment of *kufr* stays within the bounds of the "moderate" Ash'arite framework. The object of the present inquiry is to assess the exegete's esoteric interpretation of the critical notion that is *kufr*. When handling the latter concept, antecedent Sufi exegetes often moved to the level of the soul, stressing the correspondences between the unbelievers in the larger universe and the demons lurking within the inner world of the human soul. However, Ibn 'Ajība often departs from this approach, taking the Qur'ānic context as an opportunity to exhort Sufi values to a larger mainstream audience, and leverages the moral weight of the notion to remonstrate against the iniquities of anti-Sufi jurists. In Ibn 'Ajība's hermeneutic of *kufr*, less emphasis is placed on articulating principles of Sufi psychology and more on advancing

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[184] Usually translated as 'disbelief' or 'unbelief', in the Qur'ān it refers to the people who reject the message of the Prophets, including Muhammad. At the most elemental level, the root KFR (ك ف ر) is tied to the idea of 'covering', 'covering up', or 'stifling'. Anathema to all that is upright. On a popular level, a *kafir* (unbeliever) has come to stand for the religious "other".

[185] His full name: Abā al-'Abbās Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn 'Ajība al-Hasani.

social, reformist objectives and consolidating Sufism's socio-cultural stature in the Islamic community.

Ibn 'Ajiba's is not a well-studied figure in Western scholarship,[186] still less has his *Tafsīr* [187] received the attention it deserves. Among his Sufi counterparts in the Maghreb, he is one of the few to have bequeathed a large body of writings. His numerous metaphysical treatises, commentaries and his exegesis are crucial for gaining insight into North African Sufism in light of the laconic nature of the literature in this area[188]. His *Tafsīr* in particular is regarded, by the few scholars who have studied it in depth, to be a highly independent, original work[189] and not merely a collage of the past eleven centuries of hermeneutic heritage. Even if Ibn 'Ajība does draw upon numerous sources[190] for both the exoteric and the esoteric side of his

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[186] Michon's work (*Mi'raj*) is the only comprehensive study in European language devoted to Ibn 'Ajība. It covers Ibn 'Ajība's *Mi'rāj* and includes a brief survey of some of his other works. See Jean-Louis Michon, *Le Soufi Marocain Ahmad Ibn 'Ajība et son Mi'rāj*, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin., Paris, 1990.

[187] Fitzgerald is coming out with a translation of (esoteric section) of Ibn 'Ajība's commentary on Sura ar-Rahman, al-Waqi'ah and al-Hadid. In Arabic, a thorough overview of *al-Bahr al-Madīd* has recently been published. See *Ash-Shaykh Ahmad Ibn 'Ajiba wa Manhajuh fi at-Tafsīr*, ed. Hassan 'Azzouzi, Wizarat al-'Awqāf wa ash-Shu'ūn al-Islāmiyah, Morocco, 2001.

[188] Some of Ibn 'Ajība's most famous works include:

Al-Bahr al-Madī fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Majīd (The Immense Ocean: Exegesis of the Glorious Qur'ān).

Sharh al-Fātiha, an extended commentary on the opening chapter of the Qur'ān.

Īqāz al-himam fī sharh al-Hikam, a commentary on the aphorisms of Ibn 'Atā' Allah al-Iskandarī.

Mi'rāj at-Tashāwwuf ilā Haqā'iq at-Tasawwuf, a lexicon of Sufic terminology. Translated into French with extensive footnotes by Jean-Louis Michon, *Le Soufi Marocain Ahmad Ibn 'Ajība et son Mi'rāj*.

[189] See 'Azzouzi, *Ash-Shaykh Ahmad Ibn 'Ajiba wa Manhajuh fi at-Tafsīr*, p. 435, vol. 2.

[190] His sources include the Qur'ānic commentaries of at-Tustari, at-Tabari, ath-Tha'labi, al-Qushayri, az-Zamakhshari, Ibn 'Atiyyah, al-Baydāwi, Ibn Jazi and al-Fāsi. In the esoteric commentary Ibn 'Ajība also draws heavily upon the tafsīr of al-Qusharyri and al-Baqli. The latter is mysteriously refereed to by Ibn 'Ajība as al-Wartajabi, and only recently has Alan

commentary, he does not hesitate to challenge even the most esteemed of figures of Qur'ānic exegesis[191].

Structurally speaking, Ibn 'Ajība's multivolume exegesis is a running commentary comprising the exoteric and the esoteric in equal amounts. Typically, a group of consecutive verses will be selected based on a context and a theme which the author deems is their common denominator. Ibn 'Ajība will then comment on this cluster of verses from the point of view of the exoteric sciences. This is then followed up by the spiritual allusion– called *ishāra* (pl. *ishārāt*), which is Ibn 'Ajība commentary on the esoteric significance of the verse(s) in question.[192] It is these *ishārāt* which can be mined for Ibn 'Ajība's esoteric hermeneutic of *kufr*. In the Qur'ān, the word *kufr*– especially in its passive participle form as *kāfir* (unbeliever, pl. *kāfirūn*)–obviously occurs within specific contexts. For example, the root word is seldom found in verses dealing with God's Essence and His Attributes– verses which often constitute the springboard for Ibn 'Ajība's deeper metaphysical articulations/discussions. Where *kufr* can be found in abundance, however, is in the verses that deal with reckoning, reward and punishment, or the narrative-historical verses of past unbelievers, or verses which juxtapose the inner condition of the believers with those of the deviants. In trying to understand why Ibn 'Ajība consistently returns to the themes which he does, it is important to realize the extent to which the textual basis, or the raw material that is the Qur'ān, prompts him to do so. The particular esoteric exegesis that will emerge in this study is no doubt directly linked with the cardinal status the *kufr* occupies in the realm of Islamic ethics, and also with the heavy moral undertones which are an inevitable feature of most of the verses wherein *kufr* is couched.

Spiritual Wandering, Proselytizing, and the New Sufi Movement

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Godlas discovered that passages in al-Bahr attributed to "al-Wartajabi" are in reality drawn from "Arā'is al-Bayān…", al-Baqli's esoteric commentary on the Qur'ān .

[191] Esoteric: Ibn Arabi? Exoteric: Baydaoui

[192] The style of Ibn 'Ajība's Tafsīr, especially the spiritual allusions, is known is *saj'*, an ornate prose that is rhymed and unmetered. In the Arab-Islamic world, this style is often used orally to deliver sermons as during the Friday prayer.

Ibn 'Ajība's esoteric commentary on the concept of *kufr* can be fruitfully related to the exegete's life. Ibn 'Ajība's initiation into Sufism occurred at a relatively late age of forty-six, at the hands of Sheikh al-Būzīdi and Sheikh ad-Darqāwi. At that point, Ibn 'Ajība was already an eminent scholar of the exoteric sciences,[193] having spent decades of his life studying and teaching in the field. The Shadhiliyya-Darqāwiyya order which he joined practiced "moderate" Sufism, modeled on its founder Sheikh ash-Shādhili and the Junayd school; and like many manifestations of Sufism in the Maghreb region, the order had an openly proselytizing agenda and sought to propagate the basic principles of Sufism to as wide an audience as possible. Ibn 'Ajība's Sheikh was enthusiastic about the range of audiences that Ibn 'Ajība could potentially reach given his credentials as a religious scholar.[194] Although there weren't any political ambitions involved, the Shādhili-Darqāwi phenomenon was certainly, in part, a socio-religious movement aimed at bringing about moral reform in society, and a renewed vigor in the intellectual and religious domain[195].

Early in his career as a Sufi, Ibn 'Ajība set off on proselytizing forays into the countryside of the Rif mountains in the North of Morocco. "Once I entered upon the way of the Sufis" says Ibn 'Ajība, "and as soon as the shaykh [al-Būzīdī] authorized me to preach the remembrance of God to men, I began to circulate among them in the hamlets and the tribes, teaching religion to them and showing them the way to God."[196] By the 18th century, these people to whom Ibn 'Ajība was preaching, had been Muslim for the good part of a millennium. Evidently, Ibn 'Ajība perceived a profound lacuna in his countrymen's practice and understanding of the Islamic religion. In his

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[193] Because of similar career paths, Ibn 'Ajība is often likened to al-Ghazāli.

[194] Ibn 'Ajība says in his autobiography: "Among the favors that God has bestowed upon us is that of having brought together in us exoteric and esoteric knowledge. For, praised may He be!, I am someone who takes from both sides…like the horseman who has the choice of becoming a pedestrian." See Jean-Louis Michon *The Autobiography (Fahrasa) of a Moroccan Soufi: Ahmad Ibn 'Ajība (1747-1809)*, p. 124, Fons Vitae. Louisville, KY, 1999.

[195] For an interpretation of the Shadhili-Darqāwi movement as led by Ibn 'Ajība and Muhammad al-Harrāq see 'Abd al-Majīd as-Saghīr's *Ishkāliyyat Islāh al-Fikr as-Sūfī fi al-Qarnayn 18/19*, 2nd ed. Dār al-'Āfāq al-Jadīda. Morocco, 1994.

[196] Ibid, p. 125.

autobiography, Ibn ʿAjība relates how, during his travels,[197] whole villages would sometimes take initiation. Ibn ʿAjība expresses enthusiasm when his spiritual campaigns met with success: "The people came to God's religion in mass[198]…The entire crowd was metamorphosed by the remembrance of God: the townspeople were putting rosaries around their necks…Religion was brought to life through divine permission; God's name– praise be to Him!– was repeated everywhere."[199] Ibn ʿAjība looks back on his career with the hope that he was "…among those who, through God, renewed religion in this century."[200]

The initial alacrity with which Ibn ʿAjība set about "renewing God's religion" is mirrored by the moralizing, inward-looking character of many passages of his *Tafsīr*. This is true even when the Qur'ān counsels the people of the other Abrahamic faiths:

> Say: "O followers of the Bible! You have no valid ground for your beliefs unless you [truly] observe the Torah and the Gospel, and all that has been bestowed from on high upon you by your Sustainer!" [5:68]

Ibn ʿAjība turns the principles of this argument back towards the Islamic community, saying in the corresponding *ishārah*: "That which has been said to the people of the Book is also said, by way of allusion, to this Mohammedan community". Ibn ʿAjība takes every opportunity to urge self-examination. Even "…the best community that has been brought forth for [the good of] humankind…"[201] is, evidently, susceptible to the entropic

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[197] The purpose of which was also to strengthen the spiritual health of a new disciple (*faqīr*) on the path. See *Autobiography*, p. 84.

[198] Ibn ʿAjība's triumphant joy when his efforts were met with success mirrors the spirit of Sūra al-Fath (110) in the Qur'ān: When God's succour comes, and victory and thou seest people enter God's religion in hosts, extol thy Sustainer's limitless glory, and praise Him, and seek His forgiveness: for behold, He is ever an acceptor of repentance. (110:1-3, Asad's online translation)

[199] See *Autobiography*, p. 85.

[200] See *Autobiography*, p. 124. In this connection, the Prophet Muhammad once said: "Verily God will send to this community at the head of every hundred years a person who will renew for it its religion." Sunan Abī Dāwūd, hadith #4291, p. 106-107, Vol. 4. Dār al-Hadīth. Cairo, 1988.

[201] Qur'ān 3:110. Muhammad Asad trans.

principle. And there is no doubt that he considered himself to be at the vanguard of a reformist, revivalist movement aiming at treating the myriad psycho-spiritual ills that Muslims were perceived as having succumbed to. The antidote, according to Ibn 'Ajība, is to be found in the balance between outward application of religious directives (*sharī'ah*) and inward realization of the Truth (*haqīqa*). And this medicine is only administered by the doctors of the inward, who are the spiritual heirs of the Prophet and are licensed to impart spiritual education that is as effective as it would be were it received directly from Muhammad.[202]

Breathing New Life into the Understanding of Islam

Ibn 'Ajība takes the opening verses of Sura Ibrāhim as an opportunity to provide an expanded reformulation of Islam and what it means to be an adherent of the religion brought by Muhammad:

Alif. Lām. Rā. A DIVINE WRIT [is this – a revelation] which We have bestowed upon thee from on high in order that thou might bring forth all mankind, by their Sustainer's leave, out of the depths of darkness into the light: onto the way that leads to the Almighty, the One to whom all praise is due [14:2] to God, unto whom all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth, belongs. But woe unto those who deny the truth: for suffering severe [14:3] awaits those who choose the life of this world as the sole object of their love, preferring it to [all thought of] the life to come, and who turn others away from the path of God and try to make it appear crooked. Such as these have indeed gone far astray![203]

The "spiritual allusion" corresponding to these verses is dedicated to bringing out what Ibn 'Ajība deems are the full implications of the Islamic message, step by step, to their ultimate conclusion:

The Prophet, in fact, has brought his community out of multiple [deep] darknesses' into numerous 'lights'; first: [from] the deep darkness of unbelief (*kufr*) and idolatry (*shirk*) to the light of faith (*imān*) and

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[202] See for example Tafsīr, p. 153-154, vol. 5, where Ibn 'Ajība articulates these ideals. He also makes overt mention of the "Shādhili" *tarīqa*– a rare occurrence in the Tafsīr– as a desirable option for aspirants.

[203] Qur;ān 14:1-3.

submission (*islām*), then from the deep darkness of ignorance (*jahl*) and [blind] imitation (*taqlīd*) to the light of knowledge (*'ilm*) and ascertainment (*tahqīq*), then from the deep darkness of [many a] sin (*dhunūb*) and transgression (*ma'āsī*) to the light of repentance (*tawbah*) and uprightness (*istiqāmah*), then from the deep darkness of forgetfulness (*ghaflah*) and spiritual inertia (*bitālah*) in to the light of vigilance (al-*yaqaza*) and the exertion of effort (al-*mujāhadah*), then from the deep darkness of [preoccupation with] worldly desires (*huzuz*) and carnal pleasures (*shahawāt*) to the light of asceticism (*zuhd*) and purity (*'iffah*), then from the deep darkness of perceiving [only] the secondary causes (*ru'yat al-'asbāb*) and sticking with [the soul's baser] habits (*wuqūf ma'a al-'awā'id*) to the light of witnessing the Originator (*shuhūd al-musabbib*) and the breaking of [the soul's baser] habits (*kharq al-'awa'id*), then from the deep darkness of sticking with the [bestowed] charisms (*karāmāt*) and the sweetness of [performing] acts of obedience (*halāwat at-tā'āt*) to the light of [the direct] witnessing [of the] the Worshipped (*shuhūd al-ma'būd*), and from the deep darkness of sticking with perception of the corporeal world (*his al-akwān az-zahirah*) to the witnessing of the secret, esoteric meanings (*asrār al-m'ānī al-bātinah*)…"[204]

Ibn 'Ajība's graduated continuum represents the levels of the Sufi spiritual path and the concomitant pitfalls that must be avoided at each step. The passage might even be described as a double-helix spiral as it were: one "strand" is a rising echelon of virtues or spiritual stations, which becomes progressively lofty; and running parallel to it, is a "graduated" sequence of sins, ranging from the "great" sins of *kufr* (disbelief) and *shirk* (polytheism) to more "inward", subtler forms of sin. But Ibn 'Ajība presents the spiritual path as part and parcel of Islam as a whole– the entire echelon which he describes is none other than the exegete's re-definition of the "light" which the Prophet's Islamic Message is supposed to lead to. Most of the virtues listed by Ibn 'Ajība in the above passage encapsulate the Sufi doctrine as well as, *grosso modo*, *Ihsān*, the third and the highest degree of the Islamic religion.[205] Thus at least in one aspect, the objective of Ibn 'Ajība's *ishāra* is to stress the

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[204] Tafsīr p. 354, vol. 3.

[205] See the opening hadīth of Muslim's *Sahīh* where the Prophet defines *ihsān* as "worshipping God as if you saw Him, for if you do not see Him, He sees you!".

need for excellence and sincerity in one's religious faith. *Iḥsān*, which captures the spirit of Sufi practice, is inculcated, not as a luxury, but as the necessary capstone to any faith that aspires to be truly whole.

In the above passage the significance of the Qur'ānic *al-kāfirūn* (the unbelievers) is left implicit. The disbelievers who are warned in the Qur'ānic text are those who "…deny the truth." So although Ibn 'Ajība never comments upon the term *kāfirūn* directly[206] in the *ishārah*, the notion is implicitly brought to bear by the exegete's interpretation of what it is that must not be denied– namely the Prophet's message. Thus, by redefining Islam in terms of Sufic doctrine, Ibn 'Ajība actually allows the Qur'ān to articulate his own understanding of the implications of *kufr*. *Kufr* implicitly connotes the condition of stagnating in, or else completely denying the existence of, the path that leads out of the deep darkness(es) into the light(s). Seen from this angle, Ibn 'Ajība's redefining of Islam in terms of a spiritual continuum has the power to disabuse the self-assured Muslim of the notion that adherence to the religion of Islam is fulfilled merely through the testament of faith and one's outward compliance with religious law; Islam and Imān might represent light compared with the darkness of unbelief and idolatry, but the inner forgetfulness and stagnation of an even outwardly conforming Muslim can also be seen as darkness if compared with the light of spiritual vigilance and the virtue of self-domination. Thus, while the passage can be construed as a recapitulation for those already travelling the spiritual path, the words of Ibn 'Ajība are clearly also addressed, in an urgent but non-condemnatory manner, to a larger mainstream audience that is perceived to be stuck on the lower rungs of the ladder.

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[206] In the spiritual allusions of his Tafsīr, Ibn 'Ajība does not provide a word-by-word esoteric commentary on the Qur'ānic verses– even if this is the methodology in the attendant exoteric treatment of the verse(s). Thus, not every mention of the root *kufr* in the Qur'ān will necessarily elicit a direct esoteric interpretation on the exegete's part. Ibn 'Ajība's method in the *ishārah* is bringing what he perceives as the general esoteric theme of the verse(s) to the surface. Therefore, the task at hand is to examine the spectrum of esoteric themes elaborated upon by Ibn 'Ajība on the basis of Qur'ānic verses wherein the notion of *kufr* is one of the pivotal concepts.

Jean-Louis Michon, the author of one of the few scholarly works on Ibn ʿAjība, explains that whereas the writings of such mystics as Ibn al-ʿArīf[207] can be addressed exclusively to those who have already reached the supreme station of union, Ibn ʿAjība is keen to cater to a wider audience, namely those that are seen as stuck on the lower rungs of the spiritual echelon. This is especially true for his *tafsīr*, where even the "spiritual allusions" are charitable to the uninitiated. Presenting intuitive ideas couched in relatively non-cryptic language, Ibn ʿAjība reaches out not only to the beginner on the path but also to the aspirant (*murīd*) who has yet to formally embark on the mystical journey[208]. This stands in contradistinction to the "apophatic" view of Ibn ʿArīf which holds that, save for the individual's complete annihilation in the Divine, virtues such as 'repentance' or 'vigilance'– since they involve effort, sentiment and will– are incompatible with true union. Ibn ʿAjība's doctrine also incorporates the principles of such a purely transcendental view, especially in relation to the latter stages of the mystical path. In general, however, Ibn ʿAjība "…abstains from underlining how one's participation in the lower degrees can amount to a deficiency. Ibn ʿAjība is content with presenting [such degrees] as one stage of an overall process, leaving it to the reader to surmise what he would be lacking were he to stop midway. His point of view is truly 'initiatic': it is that of a master-educator who is habituated with receiving souls at the beginning of the path and leading them towards that which they are capable of attaining, without forcing their [natural] capacities."[209]

Kufr as Denial of the Sufic Field of Knowledge

According to Ibn ʿAjība's definition of Sufism[210] in his *Miʿrāj*: "Its beginning is science/knowledge (*ʿilm*), its middle is action (*aʿmāl*) and its end

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[207] In the prolegomena to his translation of Ibn ʿAjība's *Miʿrāj*, Michon compares Ibn ʿAjība's method to that of Ibn al-ʿArīf in his *Maḥāsin al-Majālis*, p.147

[208] The editor of al-Baḥr al-Madīd's 1955-1956 Cairo edition declared Ibn ʿAjība's work to be characterized by "…clarity of expression, a facility in the way it allows itself to be understood…[Ibn ʿAjība] was given [by God] the ability to express Sufi wisdom and allusions through such a form that the comprehension of it is rendered difficult for no one…" cited in Jean-Louis Michon, *Le Soufi Marocain Ibn ʿAjība et son Miʿrāj*, p. 275.

[209] *Le Soufi Marocain Ahmad Ibn ʿAjība et son Miʿrāj*, p. 147.

[210] Ibid. p. 179.

is divine gift (*mawhiba*)." This explains why "knowledge" and "ascertainment" appear so early in Ibn 'Ajība's continuum. In the *Tafsīr*, an interesting parallel is drawn between the incredulous attitude of the *kuffār* in the Qur'ān and that of exoterists towards some of the doctrinal tenets of Sufism. Such comparisons are based on what Ibn 'Ajība deems is their common denominator: rational scepticism– and this is one of the main semantic facets that is connected with the Qur'ānic notion of *kufr*.[211]

> Why [how could we be resurrected] after we have died and become mere dust? Such a return seems far-fetched indeed! [50:3]

> After putting these words in the mouths of *kuffār*, the Qur'ān replies:

> How can you refuse to acknowledge God, seeing that you were lifeless and He gave you life, and that He will cause you to die and then will bring you again to life, whereupon unto Him you will be brought back? [2:28].

In the spiritual allusion corresponding to these verses, Ibn 'Ajība simply paraphrases the words of the scripture, such that the disbelief of the *kuffār* of the cosmic resurrection is transposed onto the disbelief of exoteric-minded Muslims regarding the resurrection of the soul:

> How can you deny (*tankurūn*)[212] the manifestation of the light of the Truth in the cosmos, [how can you, furthermore] distance yourselves from the Presence of direct vision and gnosis, [especially since] you were dead– [in a state of] forgetfulness and woefully veiled [from Him], whereby He revived you into [a state] of wakefulness and [the momentum] of return [to Him], then He causes you to die to yourselves [such that] you came to see nothing but Him, then He resurrects you to [a state whereby you] witness His [immanent signs]…[213]

According to Ibn 'Ajība's logic, to claim that mystical illumination is a myth is to deny the doctrine of God's Immanence, His self-proclaimed

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[211] For a full discussion of the various semantic shades of *kufr*, see Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'ān*, McGill-Queen's University Press. 2002, Montreal, Chap. VII, 'The Inner Structure of the Concept of *Kufr*'.

[212] Instead of using the Qur'ānic expression *kaifa takfurūn*, Ibn 'Ajība uses the term *kaifa tankurūn*.

[213] *Tafsīr*, pp. 70-71, Vol. 1.

quality as 'the Outward' (*az-zāhir*).[214] The parallel that is drawn here– between the unbelievers' disavowal of the doctrine of resurrection, and the misgivings of some Muslims with respect to the Sufi theory of spiritual awakening– is itself suggestive of the forceful manner by which Ibn 'Ajība sets about defending the teachings of Sufism. What Ibn 'Ajība also finds reprehensible, for instance, is the conceit that is at the origin of some people's incredulous denial of sainthood. He argues that the existence of people who deem improbable the existence of sainthood is akin to the incredulousness of Satan at Adam's superiority as a being made from clay,[215] or the incredulousness of the unbelievers at the possibility of Prophecy emanating from humankind.[216]

According to Ibn 'Ajība, denying the wondrous station of gnosis can also stem from simple fear and ignorance:

> If the folk of [spiritual distinction] were to appear in the midst of the masses, exhibiting mysterious states and bearing knowledge [of inspirational origin], possessing Divine secrets and illuminating mantras, [the masses] would stand stupefied and perplexed of their case, fearing for their security; and if [from the mouths of saints] they were to hear mystical knowledge (*'ulūm laduniyya*) and Divine secrets (*asrār rabbāniyya*) they would run away, putting their fingers in their ears…[217]

Elsewhere Ibn 'Ajība also leverages the connotation of the 'unbeliever' (*kāfir*) as he who denies or disavows the signs of God:

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[214] Ibn 'Ajība concludes his *ishāra* with a famous Sufi aphorism which asserts God's Absolute Transcendence and implies, ipso facto, His Immanence: "[In the beginning] there was God and there was naught besides Him, and He is now just as He was then." See *al-Bahr al-Madīd*, p.71 vol. 1. God's Absoluteness necessitates that the world itself be a manifestation of His Being. Although Ibn 'Ajība does not set out to explicitly promulgate Ibn 'Arabi's doctrine, the latter subtly undergirds the metaphysical discussions in the Tafsīr. See Michel Chodkiewicz, *Un Ocean Sans Rivage*, Editions du Seuil, 1992 Evreu., p. 31.

[215] Ibn 'Ajība uses the expression *al-khusūsiyya* which literally translates as 'particularity'. The term denotes 'sainthood' and 'the condition of being spiritually distinguished, eminent and elite'.

[216] See for example *Tafsīr* p. 183-184 vol. 7.

[217] *Tafsīr*, p. 64, vol. 1.

If the folk [who are] ignorant and veiled (*ahl al-ghaflah wa al-hijāb*) were to see a sign– indicating that the sun of gnosis (*shams al-'iyān*) has risen in the [soul of] the special beloved servant (*al-'abd al-makhsūs*)– they would turn away in denial.[218]

Ibn 'Ajība makes good use of the sense of *kufr* as 'the act of covering up', saying that those who deny or reject sainthood are effectively "covering up the truth with creation" (*satarū al-haq bi al-khalq*);[219] in other words they perceive only the material manifestation of what is a reality of a higher order. "They are veiled– by the [corporeality of] the created realm– from witnessing the [spiritual reality] of the truth."[220] (*uhtujibū bi al-khalq 'an shuhūd al-haq*) In such contexts, Ibn 'Ajība makes use of the notion of *kufr*[221] in its aspect of 'denial', 'covering up', 'refusing to acknowledge'[222] the truth of Sufi gnosis, or simply the inability to see or know reality.[223]

Combating Spiritual Inertia

Ibn 'Ajība's esoteric deployment of *kufr* does not always address people who harbour intellectual objections to Sufi doctrine. The problem, according to the exegete, is often related to the 'will' and a lack of 'action', rather than to 'intelligence' or lack of 'knowledge'. This principle of "action", let it be recalled, corresponds to the "middle" of Sufism according to Ibn 'Ajība's definition. As a result, the exegete's *ishārat* often evince a concern with spiritual under-achievement, the under-utilization of one's capacities. This was a major theme in the Ibn 'Ajība's commentary on Sūra Ibrāhim, quoted above (spiritual vigilance and exertion of effort). Similarly, it is further developed in the esoteric interpretation of the following verses from Sūra Yā-Sīn which also feature stark doctrinal contrasts:

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[218] *Tafsīr*, p. 253, vol. 7.

[219] *Tafsīr*, p. 58-59, vol. 8.

[220] Ibid.

[221] For a full discussion of the various semantic shades of *kufr*, see Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'ān*, McGill-Queen's University Press. 2002, Montreal, Chap. VII 'The Inner Structure of the Concept of *Kufr*'.

[222] See also *Tafsīr*, p. 259, vol. 7.

[223] See for example *Tafsīr*, p. 57, vol. 8.

Did I not enjoin on you, O you children of Adam, that you should not worship Satan– since, verily, he is your open foe–and that you should worship Me [alone]? This would have been a straight way! And [as for Satan–] he had already led astray a great many of you: could you not, then, use your reason? This, then, is the hell of which you were warned again and again: endure it today as an outcome of your persistent denial of the truth! (36:60-64)[224]

These verses prompt Ibn ʿAjība to urge spiritual struggle in even bolder terms: "Whosoever" warns Ibn ʿAjība "inclines towards worldly desires (حظوظه) and carnal pleasures (مناه *munāh*), unable to wage war against his caprice (*mujāhadat hawāh*)– such that he is veiled from God at the moment of his death– [such a person] shall eventually be subject to a similar reprimand."[225] Previously, in his commentary on Sūra Ibrāhīm, Ibn ʿAjība had brought out the not-so-black-and-white subtleties that are involved in the "light" of Islam. In this instance, the exegete re-examines another seemingly obvious principle: Satan-worship. Ibn ʿAjība resurrects the notion to practical relevance by casting it in the context of spiritual struggle. In other words, the basic practices of Sufi spirituality are rendered mandatory. They are vital to the religious life to the degree that Satan-worship is contrary to it. In this instance, it is again clear that Ibn ʿAjība is speaking to a wider audience: The term "whosoever" (*kullu man*) certainly includes more than just initiated disciples. Ibn ʿAjība is arguably addressing a particular audience who, while standing outside of the fold of Sufism, is "searching" and is inherently receptive to the message of "moderate" Sufism. Surely Ibn ʿAjība is trying to reach those who are able to intuit the value of inner struggle against the *nafs*, those who realize the dangerous attraction of certain worldly pleasures, which, even if not bearing the official seal of prohibition, can foster the attachment of the heart and are thus inherently unfavourable to closeness to God. It must be primarily for the benefit of this audience that Ibn ʿAjība holds out the salvific alternative by delineating the "straight way" (الصراط المستقيم) as "the path of spiritual education (طريق التربية), which leads to the

[224] Qurʾān 36:60-64 trans. Muhammad Asad.

[225] *Tafsīr*, p.156-157 vol. 6.

Divine Presence, [that path] that the friends of God and the gnostics have set about charting."[226]

In the same *ishāra*, Ibn ʿAjība's continues paraphrasing the words of the scripture:

It shall be said [to these people] this is the fire of separation (نار القطيعة) of which you were warned, if you remain the slaves of your worldly pleasures and your quest for power (رئاستكم), endure it today for your denial (*bi kufrikum*) of the path of spiritual education (طريق التربية)…"[227]

The passage certainly has the power to shock consciences– even if the notion of hellfire is mitigated in that it is more of a spiritual state and not a physical inferno. Ibn ʿAjība's deployment of kufr is forceful yet delicate, especially when it comes to the consequences of *kufr*. These types of verses in the Qurʾān– dealing with issus of judgment at the moment of man's final encounter with God– are occasions for Ibn ʿAjība to drive home Sufism's basic directive: Die before you die, shed the heavy vestiges of your ego.

What is also significant in the above passage is that the underlying sin, or the root malady, which Ibn ʿAjība identifies is the *inability* to wage war against caprice, or the inability, as he says, "…to dedicate [oneself] to the remembrance of God."[228]. This is connected with the general "spiritual inertia" that w as mentioned earlier– the deep darkness of forgetfulness (*ghaflah*) and spiritual inertia (*bitālah*) from Sūra Ibrahīm. It encompasses a whole variety of psycho-spiritual obstacles such as lukewarmness, torpor, hesitancy. The pattern reveals a hermeneutic modality where *kufr* becomes an allusion to passivity or disinclination towards Sufism that is borne of indolence. Further on, in the same *ishārah*, and continuing the style of esoteric paraphrasing of the Qurʾān, Ibn ʿAjība says that the physical organs of these people shall bear witness against them "regarding their wont of curtailing" (*bi-mā kānū yaksibūn min at-taqsīr*).[229] *Taqsīr* can arguably be

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[226] *Tafsīr*, p. 157, vol. 6.

[227] *Tafsīr*, p. 157, vol. 6.

[228] *Tafsīr*, p. 157, vol. 6.

[229] Ibid.

translated as curtailing, the tendency to take shortcuts, or a retrenchment of sorts. Thus, Ibn 'Ajība ends up linking the idea of *kufr* directly with a weakness of will. This esoteric hermeneutic of *kufr* is not strongly supported by even the multi-dimensional semantic root. *Kufr* is, to be sure, associated with a whole host of negative ethical values but is not known, however, to be related in any specific way to apathy per se. Perhaps Ibn 'Ajība is implying that, due to one's weakness of will– perhaps trepidation– a person can "cover up" or "stifle" one's own highest spiritual aspirations.[230] At any rate, Ibn 'Ajība's main point would seem to be that avoiding the rigors of spiritual travail, failing to struggle against the caprice of the lower self, amounts to exiling oneself from the Presence of God.

Defending the Socio-Cultural Space of Sufism

Presently, we come to a bolder hermeneutic of *kufr* which aims at defending and standing one's ground against the opponents of Sufism and the persecutors of Sufi orders. If the above examples from Ibn 'Ajība's *Tafsīr* were aimed at instilling Sufi principles in a "passive" non-Sufi audience, the following hermeneutic of *kufr* aims at defending Sufism from active hostility. The turn of the 19th century saw rising tensions between the jurists (*fuqahā'*) and the Sufis, or what could be abstracted as the exoteric and the esoteric poles of Islam[231]. The Darqāwi order, and in particular the up-and-coming Tetuan[232] wing which Ibn 'Ajība represented, drew the ire of the religious authorities. As its numbers grew, Ibn 'Ajība's group was aggressively persecuted by an alliance of *fuqahā'* and men of political power[233] that saw in

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[230] This is reminiscent of 'Attar's *The Conference of the Birds* where he describes in poetic verse some of the psycho-spiritual barriers that typically bar the way for beginners on the path.

[231] For a detailed account of how this tension affected Ibn 'Ajība in particular see 'Azzouzi pp. 36-47 and Saghīr pp. 55-95.

[232] A town in the North of Morocco, which at the time was growing into a major intellectual and cultural center. Ibn 'Ajība spent his life in and around Tetuan.

[233] Some of the pressure put on Ibn 'Ajība and the Darqāwi *tarīqah* came from another Sūfi order, namely, the Raissūni order based in the town of Chefchāouen. This order enjoyed an elite social status and wielded significant political clout. It placed a great deal of emphasis on biological descent from Prophet Muhammad. See for instance *Tafsīr* p. 208, vol. 2, where Ibn 'Ajība asserts that the fiercest antagonists of Sufi *fuqarā'* are those who hail from prestigious families whose lineages include either prominent scholars or *shurafā'*– descendents of the Prophet.

the growing movement a threat to its authority. Propaganda disseminated in the urban areas was aimed at turning the public against the order. A number of them, including Ibn 'Ajība himself, were arrested and tried[234] on charges of excessive intermixing of genders. Known members of the Tetuan branch, including Ibn 'Ajība himself, were imprisoned, albeit only for a few days. They were freed after having been forced to abjure their Sufism in theory and to desist, in practice, from its rituals. In a departure from Hallāj-type heroics, Ibn 'Ajība evinced a high degree of pragmatism when he and his followers outwardly agreed to renounce Sufism but continued their practices in secret. By retreating to the countryside and adopting a low profile in the following years until the air had settled, Ibn 'Ajība lived to fight another day.

Years later, when writing his *Tafsīr*, Ibn 'Ajība would return to this issue and reassert the righteousness of the Sufi worldview. Evidently, Ibn 'Ajība's handling of the trial episode was out of pragmatism and not defeatism.[235] Considered in the light of the many pressures put on Ibn 'Ajība as a result of his Sufi convictions, especially the incident of his imprisonment and trial, his commentary on Sūra al-Kāfirūn can be understood as exegesis:

If the masses were to ask the *murid* to [renounce his ways] and revert to worldly preoccupations, let him say: O you who disbelieve in the path of divestiture (*tarīq at-tajrīd*), which brings about [the realization] of Unity (*at-tawhīd*) and Oneness (*at-tafrīd*)[236], I do not worship that which you worship in the way of the world and its pleasures…nor do you worship that which I worship in the way of making the truth one (*ifrād al-haq*) through love and worship…unto you your religion, based as it is on oft-failing secondary causes (*ta'ab al-'asbāb*), and unto me my religion based on the attachment to the Causer of causes (*musabbib al-'asbāb*), or unto you your

[234] Saghir makes a comparison with the trial of Aristotle on charges of corrupting the youth. The main charges brought against Ibn 'Ajība and his *tariqah* included the unorthodoxy of the practice of wearing ragged clothes, the hanging of large rosaries around their necks, the inclusion of women in their spiritual gatherings.

[235] The cellmates of Ibn 'Ajība and his followers reportedly asked for initiation; spiritual sessions were held in the prison.

[236] In a regular class lecture at George Washington University, S.H. Nasr identified the French word "esseulement" (lit. 'to make alone') as the closest counterpart of the term *tafrīd* in a European Language.

religion, plagued by the whisperings [of the devil] (*al-wasāwis*), perils (*al-khawātir*), and illusions (*awhām*), and unto me my religion– pure, perspicuous– informed by certitude (*al-yaqīn*), or: unto you your religion, based on deductive [logic] (*al-istidlāl*), and unto me my religion, based on direct vision (*al-'iyān*)…[237]

The *ishārah* expresses in a decisive way the idea that there a huge chasm separates the Sufi understanding and practice of Islam from that of the 'commoners'. This is achieved by transposing the Sufi worldview onto the fundamental dichotomy *mu'minīn/kāfirūn* (believers/disbelievers). In Sūra al-Kāfirūn, this moral dichotomy is at its most unequivocal: just as there could have been no question of the Prophet reverting to the polytheism of the Meccans, it is out of the question that the *murīd* should ever forsake his superior religious orientation for the "hallowed" practice of Islam of the *a'wām* that considers only the outward aspect of things. The passage reveals a deep concern about disciples who are young on the path, being intimidated, discouraged from, or talked out of their mystical quest for perfection. It is also part of Ibn 'Ajība's attempt at nurturing a renewed confidence-assurance in the Sufi community and consolidating the socio-cultural space that it occupies within the Islamic 'Ummah.

The method of transposing the plight of the prophets upon that of Sufi masters is frequently used by Ibn 'Ajība. This is to be expected since, for Ibn 'Ajība: "The masters of [spiritual] education (*mashayīkh at-tarbiyah*) are the vicegerents of the Messenger (*khulafā' ar-Rasūl*)."[238] In the following spiritual allusion, for instance, the exegete draws a direct parallel between the naysayers of the Prophet and the sceptics and persecutors of Sufi saints:

That which has been said regarding the deniers of the [specificity?] of Prophethood, has also been said with respect to the deniers of the [specificity] of sainthood if they set about harming them, meaning: that those who gave the lie to the saints of times past– what befell them has befell them, be it outward abasement, or inward banishment. And you, O deniers of [the saints] of your age are [no different]."[239]

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[237] *Tafsīr*, p. 364, vol. 8.

[238] *Tafsīr*, p. 143, vol. 7.

[239] *Tafsīr*, p. 263, vol. 7.

The above passage is part of Ibn 'Ajība's esoteric commentary on the latter verses of al-Qamar, a chapter almost entirely consisting of a series of concise recapitulations of the stories of the past unbelieving communities– the people of Noah, the tribe of 'Ād, the tribe of Thamūd, the people of Lot and the Pharaoh. The narrative passages give an account of the coming of prophets bearing messages of reform from heaven in the face of moral degeneration. The denouement of these stories is always the same, the communities involved typically fail to heed the warning of the messengers (*kathabat*)– the latter often becoming the subject of physical persecution– and finally comes the Divine punishment. Sūra al-Qamar is said to have been revealed in order to provide comfort to the Prophet Muhammad during some of the worst times of persecution; and the cyclical pattern of degeneration and destruction is fundamental to the Islamic view of human history. Throughout the esoteric part of his commentary on al-Qamar, Ibn 'Ajība consistently relates the *kuffār* of the literal text with those who persecute Sufi saints, thus integrating the plight of Sufis within the Islamic cosmology of history.

In the end, the persecutors of saints and the antagonists of Sufism shall be defeated:

…in the sorry state of exile you shall remain, for if the unbelievers (الكفار) have been denied entry into the paradise of sensory pleasures (جنة الزخراف ; lit. the paradise of golden ornaments), you shall be barred from the paradise of gnosis (جنة المعارف), with [the concomitant] chagrin of the veil (غم الحجاب) and the abased state of exile (ذل البعد) from the Holy Presence (الحضرة القدسية), verily the criminals– that is, the folk [who engage in] defamation and censure– are in a state of ignorance regarding the way that leads to God, they are [engulfed] by the flames of separation, [and on] the day when, in this life, they are be dragged on their faces, they shall be abandoned [to a state of mindless preoccupation] with the ever-changing fortunes and pleasures [of the world]. Then in the next life [they shall be abandoned] in the flames of distance and separation…[240]

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[240] *Tafsīr*, p. 263, vol. 7.

In this spiritual allusion Ibn 'Ajība quite explicitly traces the shift from the literal notion of *kufr* to the esoteric one. And many of the elements that make up the semantic structure of *kufr* survive this transition without losing too much of their recognizable face value. In other words, the classic negative qualities of the *kāfir*– rebelliousness, insolence, conceitedness and contentiousness– are easily, and without stretching the allegory too far, applied to those who reject and persecute Sufis.[241]

Evidently, the punishment that awaits the persecutors of Sufis, according to Ibn 'Ajība's hermeneutic, is similar to that which awaits the "passive" disbelievers. In fact, Ibn 'Ajība seldom differentiates explicitly between those who actively harass Sufis and those who are merely lukewarm to Sufism due to spiritual passivity or ignorance.[242] However, it is clear that in the spiritual allusions such as the one above, the elements of conceit and contentiousness are dominant in the Ibn 'Ajība's hermeneutic of *kufr*– whereas in other cases it is a matter of "*taqṣīr*", indifference, or ignorance. We are thus closer to the classic semantic realm of the term *kufr*, and many of the semantic shades of the literal term *kufr* are evident in Ibn 'Ajība's esoteric rendition. The aspect of conceit, contentiousness and sheer spite dovetail nicely with the array of semantic shades of *kufr* that Izutsu has delineated in his work on the "ethico-religious concepts" in the Qur'ān .[243] What Ibn 'Ajība does, therefore, is to make the negativity of the *kufr* notion serve the cause of pressured Sufis like himself, turning the most reprehensible attitudes of the Qur'ān's *kuffār* against the persecutors of Sufism in a sort of moralizing manner.[244]

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[241] See also *Tafsīr*, p. 58, vol. 8.

[242] The distinct hermeneutic of *kufr* pertaining to these two groups is often merged as one, even if they have been isolated from each other for the sake of clarity in this paper. The two are nevertheless closely related since "passive" unbelief against, or ignorance of, Sufism by the masses can– and in Ibn 'Ajība's time often was–stirred up, by the *fuqaha'*, into more "active" aggression. Conversely, the *fuqaha*'s "active" persecution of Sufis can stem from arrogance or from a fear of losing their authority and influence, and thus, essentially, from a "passive" sort of *ghaflah* and preoccupation with worldly desires.

[243] See Izutsu 142, 154.

[244] See also Ibn 'Ajība's commentary on verses 11, 12 of Sūra al-Baqarah, Vol.1, p. 58-60, where he writes about those who "…set about obstructing the Way of God and giving the lie to the friends of God…[who] spoil the hearts of [God's] believers, turning them back from the way of love, baring them from God's Presence, and preventing them from

Although it is beyond the scope of this paper, it would be interesting to assess where Ibn ʿAjība stands on that "moderate-esoteric" scale by which certain Sufi exegetes have been judged.[245] For on the one hand, his *tafsīr* is by and large a "moderate" exposition of Junayd-style Sufism– it is even critical of the excesses of certain Sufi trends and the degeneration in the rituals of certain Sufi orders– on the other hand, it is highly reprimanding of the arrogance, narrowness and literalism of the exoteric jurists. What is certain is that, while Ibn Ajība's stance vis-à-vis the tyranny of the exoteric authorities is forceful and unapologetic, it is not gratuitous vitriol. Rather, it stems from a pragmatic, if urgent, need to defend the 'space' of Sufism and uphold the right of its practitioners to pursue the spiritual life. Nor does Ibn ʿAjība denigrate the important role played by legal scholars in the economy of religious life of the Muslim. Let it be recalled that Ibn ʿAjība was an accomplished jurist in his own right. In his *Tafsīr,* when Ibn ʿAjība mentions the 'doctors of the outward' and the 'doctors of the inward' side by side, it is not always with a view towards proclaiming the righteousness of one over the other, but sometimes to emphasize the complimentary roles which the two play in the service of the Muslim community.[246]

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beholding [God's] Essence and His Qualities, closing the door in the face of [God's] confidants, and dashing their hopes that there exists such a thing as spiritual education…"

It would be beyond the scope of this paper to investigate the extent to which Ibn ʿAjība was successful in ameliorating the condition of Sufis as a result of such moral/ethical arguments. In all likelihood, such passages were more successful in providing a measure of comfort (*tasliya*) to *fuqarāʾ*– perhaps drawing the sympathy of a neutral jury of onlookers from among the masses– rather than being realistic attempts to alter the behavior of the most intransigent, anti-Sufi *fuqahāʾ*.

[245] For example, al-Baqli's tafsīr, *ʿArāʾis al-Bayān*, is considered to be 'esoteric' due to the bold and unapologetic manner in which it articulates Sufi teachings. Al-Qushayri's tafsīr is deemed 'moderate' because of the apologetic agenda it pursues, and the dearth of "ecstatic", mystical passages that cross the line of orthodoxy. Ibn ʿAjība's tafsīr also stays within the bounds of mainstream, Junayd-style Sufism, but can he rightly be said to lack "audacity", or can his Tafsir be called "apologetic", when he reprobates the religious powers to be with such aplomb? However, since he is not seeking to denigrate the jurist's role and its essence, and given that his overriding objective is to bring about a balanced realignment between exoteric and esoteric influence, could his ardent calls to a middle ground qualify him as an "extreme centrist"?

[246] See *Tafsīr,* p. 159, Vol. 1.

Concluding Remarks

Thus far, an examination of Ibn 'Ajība's hermeneutic of *kufr*, along with the contexts which surround the notion in the Qur'ān, reveals the exegete's attempt at reaching out to an audience that stands outside the fold of Sufism looking in. Large sections of spiritual allusions, including the ones surveyed here, exhibit a largely intelligible language and express relatively intuitive ideas, which make them all the more accessible to such an audience. They contain an exhortative quality in line with Michon's characterization of Ibn 'Ajība's doctrine as "initiatic". However, since these same "spiritual allusions" also cater to more advanced and established audiences, the multilayered spectrum of audiences that Ibn 'Ajība targets stands at odds with some of the exegete's own statements. Consider the following instruction that is included in the introduction to the grand *Tafsīr*:

> Know that the Qur'an has an exoteric sense for the exoterists as well as an esoteric sense for the esoterists. The exegesis of the esoterists can only be appreciated by esoterists: only they can grasp the esoteric meaning and only them can appreciate its taste." (Michon 108, re-translated)

Similarly, one might wonder how Ibn 'Ajība's "mass-initiations" during the years of "spiritual travel" (*siyāha*) can be reconciled with the famous Sufi ternary– masses (*'awām*) – elect (*khawās*) – elect of the elect (*khawās al-khawās*)– a hierarchical view of human beings' spiritual abilities which Ibn 'Ajība frequently invokes in his *ishārāt*[247] This also seems contradictory to Ibn 'Ajība's initiatic methods. However, if Ibn 'Ajība believed that differences in spiritual aptitude among human beings were real, and rather "in the nature of things", he must have also envisaged the possibility for some degree of mobility between the spiritual "castes".[248] We know that the Shādhili-Darqāwi Sufi order believed in the need for a deep spiritual awakening and a deep moral reform in society.[249] But concomitant to this there also needs to be the conviction that an unacceptably large number of

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[247] See for example Vol. 7, p. 69.

[248] For on the one hand, there is always the possibility of the advanced Sufi losing his way. On the other, and more relevantly to the present argument, even the members of the "vulgar masses" (*a'wām*) could potentially be the seat of the Divine.

[249] See Saghir's Islāh, pp. 11-53.

people from amongst the masses (*'awām*) were living below their spiritual potential, that their spiritual potentiality in society had not been actualized either because of lukewarm attitudes, ignorance or simply the lack of a viable Sufi order through which to make their spirituality operative. This would explain the urgency of Shadhili-Darqawi proselytizing, and, in Ibn Ajība's exegesis, why every opportunity is seized to reach out and exhort action from this "under-achieving" demographic of potential aspirants.[250]

There is another point that needs to be considered in the light of Ibn 'Ajība's hermeneutic of *kufr*. Like many earlier Sufis, in particular al-Ghazāli, Ibn 'Ajība conceived the Qur'ān as a descent of the Divine reality in the corporeal world wherein it is grasped by the human intellect, first in its outward (*az-Zāhir*) form, then in its profound, inner nature (*al-Bātin*). Esoteric Qur'ānic commentary, also known as *ta'wīl*, is the art of following the outward meaning of the "word" of God to its subtle, immaterial reality. Since, however, the esoteric plane of reality is itself commonly divided into the domain of the "soul" and that of the "spirit", Sufi *ta'wīl* often operates on three planes.[251] Taking the case of *kufr*, for instance, a good number of early Sufi commentators have tended to deploy the notion in the context of macrocosmic-microcosmic correspondences. *Kuffār*, for instance, is projected inward onto the human soul such that it becomes the personification of that element in man which "commands [him] to evil" (*an-nafs al-'ammāra bi as-sū*).[252] Utilizing the cosmic images in the Qur'ān to set up such an allegory helps shed light on the psychic topography, rendering the perils and the challenges of the spiritual journey more immediate, and elucidating the dynamics of spiritual metamorphosis.

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[250] The aforementioned passage from Ibn 'Ajība's introduction therefore seems to be intended primarily for the eyes of the literalists and the fundamentalist exoterists as a pre-emptive defence against any hostile reactions that his esoteric commentary might incite. That potential aspirants might be discouraged seems to be an unwanted but unavoidable consequence, which is, at any rate, amply compensated for by the intelligibility and intuitiveness of the *tafsīr*'s "spiritual allusions".

[251] In theory, *ta'wīl* can operate on as many levels as one distinguishes levels of Reality, or degrees of universal manifestation.

[252] Ibn 'Arabi even stretches the literal meaning so far that *kuffār* becomes the allegory of the saints who have achieved complete annihilation in God.

With Ibn 'Ajība, the notion of *kufr* is handled in a far more 'concrete' manner. For instance, when he appropriates the moral dimension of the notion in order to reproach the persecutors of Sufism, there is no real shift from the material world– and the literal meaning of the Qur'ānic text– to the subtler realm of the soul; the ongoing vendetta between jurists and Sufis has little to do with the cosmology of the soul according to Sufi mysticism. And yet such criticisms of the *fuqahā'* by Ibn 'Ajība occur in sections which the exegete himself has labelled as "spiritual allusion" (*ishāra*). So the question is, can such *ishārāt*– where, for instance, the prophet-unbeliever dichotomy is transposed onto that of the *faqīr-faqīh*– be considered a true esoteric *ta'wīl*? Or is it a case of exegesis, where the exegete is harnessing the agency of the Qur'ān as an aid for a struggle that is of a socio-cultural character?

Considering that Ibn 'Ajība does indeed delve into very subtle and metaphysical symbolism very frequently elsewhere in his exegesis, there can be no question of Ibn 'Ajība being simply ignorant of, or unskilled in, such a hermeneutical method. Even with respect to the notion of *kufr* itself, Ibn 'Ajība will occasionally interpret the notion along the lines of the macro-microcosmic consonances scheme.[253] One telling clue to the question of why Ibn 'Ajība lays as much emphasis as he does on the more "concrete" hermeneutic can be found in his commentary on the verses of Sūra al-Qamar, a portion of which was discussed above. Just as the Qur'ān describes the *kuffār* who disobeyed their respective prophets, Ibn 'Ajība consistently likens the *kuffar*'s wickedness with that of the literalists who adopt a hostile stance against Sufism. However, and in the very same *ishāra*, Ibn 'Ajība will sometimes append a quote from Al-Qushayri– whose exegesis *Latā'if al-Ishārāt* is the source that is most widely referenced in the esoteric sections of *al-Bahr*. Ibn 'Ajība will allow al-Qushayri to flesh out the allegory based on the macro-microcosmic correspondences.[254] The fact that Ibn 'Ajība himself

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[253] See for example *Tafsīr*, p. 146, Vol. 7.

[254] See for example *Tafsīr* p. 256, Vol. 7. In the *ishāra* pertaining to the Qur'ānic précis of the story of Noah (54:9-17) and how his community was punished as a result of their *kufr*, Ibn 'Ajība says: "[these verses] contain a measure of comfort to those friends of God who have been harmed, [they epitomize the manner in which] supplications against the tyrant are answered…but al-Qushayri has exposed [another] allusion that has to do with the heart [in its war against] the legions of the [carnal] soul, [namely] caprice, [attachment to] the world, and all manner of vices…".

often favours the more socio-cultural interpretation over the psycho-spiritual can be best understood, once again, in light of his life and his particular method. The hermeneutic modality that has been studied in this paper represents a deliberate attempt on Ibn ʻAjība's part to take full advantage of certain Qurʼānic verses that have a strong moralizing character. For it is these types of verses which, finally, have the greatest potential to serve Ibn ʻAjība's larger objectives and visions for society.

In conclusion, the examination of Ibn ʻAjība's esoteric treatment of Qurʼānic verses which include the root *k-f-r* (ك ف ر) reveals the exegete's attempt to combat a spiritual inertia as part of his larger efforts to exhort and reach out to an audience deemed to be falling short of its spiritual potential. Ibn ʻAjība also harnesses the power of the notion of *kufr* to buttress the doctrinal tenets of Sufism. Finally, the moral and ethical components of *kufr* are also leveraged by Ibn ʻAjība so as to remonstrate more forcefully against the deniers and harassers of Sufis. Of course, Ibn ʻAjība is entitled to an individual style that emphasizes some points over others. Evidently, he emphasizes issues which he deems are more immediate or urgently required given the social and political conditions around him, even if this is done at the expense of passing up an opportunity to delve into a deeper metaphysical level. Taken as a whole, however, his *Tafsīr* touches upon a wide range of topics in depth and also reaches out to a wide range of audience. And while the particular angles of exegesis which have emerged in this study are useful for understanding either the nature of Moroccan Sufism in the 18th-19th century, or the trends in Qurʼānic esoteric exegesis during the latter stages of its evolution, or the relationship between the esoteric and exoteric poles of Islam, they can by no means account for the total content and the objectives of the veritable "ocean" that is Ibn ʻAjība's *Al-Bahr al-Madīd fī Tafsīr al-Qurʼān al-Majīd*.

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MUHAMMAD ASAD– THE FIRST CITIZEN OF PAKISTAN

M. Ikram Chaghatai

ABSTRACT

As deputy secretary in charge of the middle east division of foreign ministry, asad prepared a memorandum for creation of something like a league of muslim nations, and having discussed it with prime minister liaquat ali khan, he officially toured saudi arabia, egypt and syria. Liaquat's assassination, however, put an end to his plans for uniting the muslim nations. On his return, he submitted a report on his middle east tour to foreign minister sir zafarullah khan, who read it through and put it aside.

Leopold Weiss alias Muhammad Asad's (1900-1992) reputed autobiographical travelogue, entitled *The Road to Mecca*, covers only a third of his long life and ends as he enters his home after his conversion (1926), first in Berlin and then in Cairo, with his German wife. Afterwards, he spent about fifteen years in India where he met Iqbal (1934) who advised him to abandon his plans of further traveling and "to remain in India to help elucidate the intellectual premises of the future Islamic State." As a humble young follower, his whole Weltanschauung (world outlook) was changed by Iqbal, who set him out on a path that ultimately led him "to a revival of all the dormant hopes of Islam, the creation of a political entity of the people bound together not by common descent but by their common adherence to an ideology." In view of Asad's intellectual capabilities, scholarly accomplishments, marvelous exposition of Islamic concepts and personal experiences of the contemporary Muslim world, Iqbal tried to appoint him as the chairman of the department of Islamic Studies in one of the local colleges, but for certain reasons Asad could not accept it. Whenever Asad came to Lahore he visited Iqbal, and they spent many an hour talking about the prospect of Pakistan. They discussed in detail the forms in which the future Islamic State of Pakistan should be organized and the ways and means to persuade the Muslim political leaders to stand up boldly for their common ideal. Following Iqbal's advice, Asad wrote a series of articles about why Pakistan had to be established and had them published in various European newspapers and periodicals; some of those articles appeared also in an Urdu

translation in a leading newspaper of Lahore. In addition, Asad delivered some lectures on the same subject in Lahore and Delhi. As stated by Asad himself, it had been Iqbal who was the first to formulate, in clear-cut political terms, the idea of an Islamic State in North India and who thus gave it body and life. In fact, Asad devoted all his efforts to bring into reality Iqbal's dream of an ideological Islamic state.

During the Second World War, Asad's Austrian citizenship put him in imprisonment by the Indian government and the six years he spent in an internment camp made him more conscious about the significance of freedom for all human beings. No doubt, this incident intensified his aspirations for a separate homeland for the Indian Muslims.

Soon he started a monthly periodical named *Arafat* that was primarily a vehicle for Asad's ideas, aiming at a fundamental reconstruction of our approach to the problem of Shariah. This journalistic monologue of Asad was to be a clarion-call at the critical time of Pakistan Movement. Three months before Pakistan came into being, he wrote an article under the title "What do we mean by Pakistan?" in which he emphasized the real purpose underlying the future establishment of Pakistan: that purpose did not consist in merely providing more economic opportunities or posts to Muslims but, rather, in enabling them to live effectively as Muslims and to realize the spirit of Islam in their political forms, in their laws and social institutions. In another issue, published less than a month before the Independence Day, Asad penned a lengthy essay entitled "Towards an Islamic Constitution" and it was the first attempt ever made to outline the principles which must be incorporated in the constitution of any state that claims to be 'Islamic'. Asad's thoughtful studies were destined to become the first step in the development of our modern political thought and for this reason he can be rightly called as one of the intellectual founders of Pakistan.

After going through the harrowing experiences of Partition (1947), Asad reached Lahore and settled here. Two months after Pakistan appeared on the map of the world, Nawab of Mamdot, the first Chief Minister of West Punjab, contacted Asad for establishing a special department to work out the ideological premises on which Pakistan should rest. Asad accepted this proposal and within a few days the scheme was set forth in a formal Memorandum, the budget estimate discussed and approved in conjunction with the Head of the Finance Department, and an official notification issued.

The Department of Islamic Reconstruction– the first government institution with which the word 'Islamic' appeared– came into existence. Explaining the aims and objectives of this newly created Department in a radio talk on 18th October 1947, Asad proposed to make it a sort of "clearing-house" of ideas and endeavours aiming at religious and social uplift of the Muslim Ummah. Though it was his 'baby', he had to leave it under the pressure of Liaquat Ali Khan, the Prime Minister, and join the Foreign Service as Deputy Secretary in charge of the Middle East Division.

This Division comprised the whole Arab world, including North Africa, as well as Iran. Asad had very definite ideas as to the policies which Pakistan ought to pursue in that part of the world. Soon he prepared a long, explicit memorandum for the Foreign Minister, Sir Zafrullah Khan, outlining his policy proposals in some detail. On completion, this memorandum contained some outspoken criticism of the policies pursued by the Government until then. In this confidential document, Asad emphatically recommended immediate cooperation with the Arab States for creation of something like a League of Muslim Nations and having discussed it with the Prime Minister, he officially toured Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria with the very first passport marked "citizen of Pakistan". At the end of this diplomatic mission, he received the news of Liaquat Ali Khan's assassination (1951), which proved a full stop to his plans for uniting Muslim nations. On his return, he submitted a report on his Middle East tour to the Foreign Minister, Sir Zafrullah Khan, who read it through carefully and then put it aside. Thus, Asad's enthusiasm for Muslim unity became a file in the archives of the Foreign Ministry.

In 1951, Asad's work at the Middle East Division came to an end and he was appointed as the second-in-command to the Pakistan's Ambassador to the United Nations, Patras Bukhari, with the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary. Asad and his boss did not know one another personally and they never tried to be friendly. In consequence, their mutual relations were always strained and they never had the feeling that they were members of one and the same 'team' working towards common ends.

By chance, at a reception Asad met Pola, an American of Polish origin who was destined to become his third wife (d. 2007). She was a young, beautiful and intelligent woman. He fell in love with her and when he came to know that she had already embraced Islam he decided to marry her, despite the difference of age and temperament. But under the rules of the

Foreign Office, he was bound to get prior permission to marry a non-Pakistani national. He applied through proper channel but the Governor-General rejected his application. So, he submitted his resignation from the Foreign Service, divorced his Arabian wife (Munira, d. 1978) and in the inspiring company of his new wife, he sat down and wrote his extraordinary book entitled *The Road to Mecca.*

After a lapse of few years, Asad, while living in Beirut, received an invitation from the Vice-Chancellor of the Punjab University, Mian Afzal Husain (1869-1970), to organize an International Islamic Colloquium in Lahore. As he had for some time been considering return to Pakistan, he decided to accept the invitation. Apparently, this Colloquium seems to have been the continuation of an International Islamic Conference which was held in Princeton in 1954 under the aegis of the Princeton University and the American Congress. Several eminent Western and Eastern scholars participated in it and emphasized the need for rapid growth of social, commercial and political relationship between Muslims and those others of the Graeco-Roman heritage. They also felt that in the context of an insidious threat of Communism and the hideous distress it caused all around, there could indeed be some enduring value in genuine co-operation with the moral-intellectual force of Islam. Sayyid Amjad Ali, Ambassador of Pakistan in America, was deeply impressed by its scholarly presentations and started thinking about holding such an awe-inspiring assemblage of savants in Pakistan. Afterwards, as a Finance Minister, he allocated an amount of seven lakh rupees for this purpose and a Colloquium Committee, comprising representatives of the six Pakistan universities, relevant Departments of the Government, and distinguished independent scholars, was organized to select subjects for discussion in this Colloquium and decide matters of policy concerning its organization and management.

In March 1957, this Colloquium Committee, with the approval of the Government, appointed Asad at a salary of fifteen hundred rupees per month to make suitable arrangements for holding the Conference and edit/publish the papers submitted on this occasion. In his first meeting with the Vice-Chancellor of the Punjab University, basically an agriculturist, Asad had the impression that Mr. Husain disliked him and was perhaps unhappy at his choice as organizer of the Colloquium. But Asad, with his profound knowledge of Islam, his complete command of the Arabic language and his

acquaintance with many of the personalities who were to participate in the Conference, was the logical choice for organizing it.

Gradually, the differences between Asad and the Vice-Chancellor became more intense. Although Asad was supposed to have a free hand in the choice of scholars to be invited to the Colloquium, Afzal Husain kept interfering and questioning the right of this or that person to be invited, and suggesting some definitely inappropriate ones. It had been decided upon the outset that there would have to be more or less 'official' delegations from all the Muslim countries, which was a somewhat delicate issue because of the obtrusive presence of Jamal Abdul Nasir in and outside Egypt, but Asad believed that it would be possible to accommodate both pro-Nasir and anti-Nasir elements, since this was presumably to be a scholarly conference. Another conflicting issue of translating the presentations from English to Arabic and vice versa worsened the situation. Finally, Asad decided to hand over the work to the Vice-Chancellor himself and to step aside. From the beginning, his wife, Pola, was assisting him as his private secretary without having any 'position' or salary, so in the first week of December 1957, about three weeks before the inauguration of the Colloquium, she personally met the Vice-Chancellor and gave him all the typed English and Arabic letters and other relevant documents. At that time, everything had already been accomplished and even the air tickets had been issued, and it did not much matter to Asad that he would not even be a participant in the Colloquium. After two years (1960), when its proceedings came out, one could not even find his name there. What revenge a Vice-Chancellor had taken on a scholar like Asad who had a high standing both in Pakistan and in the entire Muslim world!

Full of disgust, Asad returned to Europe via Karachi where his old friend Mumtaz Masan, Finance Secretary, came up with a proposal which would perhaps change his mind. Asad was offered the co-directorship of a soon-to-be established Institute of Islamic Research. But it was too late, and in any case he had rightly tried resigning from– or being pushed out of Government posts– and he realized all too well that a co-directorship could never work, even with the best of will on both sides.

Again, during his stay in Switzerland, Asad received a letter from the President of Pakistan, General Ayub Khan, who was a great admirer of his book named *The Principles of State and Government in Islam* (1961). In a subsequent exchange of letters, he proposed to Asad to come to Pakistan

and have the membership of a seven-man group of Muslim scholars– who both supposedly knew the world and were experts on Islam– to advise him with regard to everyday matters as well as the drawing up of a new Islamic constitution for the country. At that time, Asad was immersed in his cherished work on the Qur'an, and so he regretfully declined.

After many years, Asad was again invited by another President of Pakistan, General Zia ul-Haq, in 1983 and that was his last visit to this country. When he arrived at Islamabad, which he had not yet seen, he was received at the plane with great honour and escorted to the Presidency. During his sojourn in Islamabad, there was a series of meetings with members of the Ansari Commission in order to prepare a kind of programme for the President for the future. Asad agreed with some, and as usual disagreed with others, which he found retrograde. On one point he was firm and insistent that Muslim women should have exactly the same rights in the political sphere as had men, to the extent of becoming Prime Minister.

Asad also spared some time to meet with his surviving friends in Lahore and Islamabad and at the request of the President made several radio and television appearances, as always spontaneous. On his return to Portugal, he was besieged by letters from literally hundreds of admirers in Pakistan, offering him land, a house, everything but he refused politely, as his concept of Pakistan was beyond all these worldly trivialities.

Asad loved Pakistan, his conception of Pakistan, even when it turned its back on him, and he never felt resentment at the treatment he had received from it. He remained a citizen– the first citizen of Pakistan– until the end, although he had been strongly tempted to accept the generous, spontaneous gestures of many heads of Islamic States to have their citizenship and passport, which would have made his life so much easier.

Asad contributed so much to Pakistan's early political and cultural life but was unfortunately shunted from the corridors of power. He served this country as the head of the Directorate of Islamic Reconstruction, Joint Secretary of the Middle East Division in Foreign Office, Minister Plenipotentiary to the United Nations and organizer of the International Islamic Colloquium. If we delve into the archival material of these government departments, the role played by Asad for his beloved Pakistan

can be dealt with in detail. But here an important question arises: where are the relevant official documents housed? Nobody knows.

In his youth Asad heard a voice of an old man in Kurdistan: "If water stands motionless in pools, it becomes stale, muddy and foul; only when it moves and flows does it remain clear." Absolutely true. Physically, Asad is no more, but he is and will always be a part of our memory. According to a mystical dictum, "he who lives in your memory never dies."

MUJADDID'S FINAL ONTOLOGY

Irshad Alam

ABSTRACT

"To me, nothing [of the Necessary domain] is related to entification or entified things (*taʿayyuni va mutaʿayyuni*). What entification is there that makes the nonentified thing (*la-taʿayyuni*) [that is God] into an entified thing (*mutaʿayyuni*) [a created thing]? Such talk comes from the "taste" (*dhawq*) of Ibn al-"Arabi and his followers [who were having intoxicated sufi mystic experiences] (may Allah sanctify their secrets). If such a talk has occurred in my writings then it should also be considered as a saying [that has come from an intoxicated sufi experience]."

The final ontology of the Great Mujaddid Ahmad Sirhindi is based on the Mujaddid's final *maktub* or epistle on the nature of existence that he wrote in the very last days of his life. It describes a science of existence that may be called the "seven-descent system" that is compared and contrasted with Ibn 'Arabi's five-descent or *tanazzulat-i khamsa* system.

All the other articles and books that I have reviewed so far describe sciences that the Mujaddid repudiated later on. At first, the Mujaddid experienced the same knowledge that Ibn 'Arabi had experienced– the-five descent system of *wahdatu 'l-wujud*. Then he ascended to higher stations and experienced a science where the creation is a shadow of God. This *shadowism* or *zilliyat* is what people usually consider to be the Mujaddid's final proposition. However, the Mujaddid progressed still further in his sufi journey and experienced a new science that is radically different than *zilliyat* but at the same time draws much closer to the Ibn 'Arabi system while still being quite different from it. I have named it the "seven-descent system".

On its surface, this seven-descent system differs from Ibn 'Arabi's on three points. First, the additional two descents occur initially– before the five descents of Ibn 'Arabi. Second, the Mujaddid proposes that God created existence in His second descent whereas Ibn 'Arabi has proposed that God is existence Himself. Third, the Mujaddid proposes that all the descents are contingent, created and newly originated whereas Ibn 'Arabi proposes that the first two descents take place in the mind of God and are thus on the level of God and eternal. Someone may call these differences minor. However, in

its implication, the Mujaddid's system is radically different from Ibn 'Arabi's; the Ibn 'Arabi system proposes *ittihad* or unificationism while the Mujaddidi system proposes dualism. In the Ibn 'Arabi system, the essences or realities of contingent things are divine as they exist in the mind of God. In contrast, all descents take place at the contingent level in the Mujaddidi system and the essences are contingent. Secondly, Ibn 'Arabi proposes that God is identical to existence and so the existence of contingent things is divine. In contrast, the Mujaddid proposes that God exists by His person (*dhat*) and all existence of the contingent things is created and contingent. Therefore, the contingent things are divine in the Ibn 'Arabi system with respect to both their existence and essence while in the Mujaddidi system, they are all contingent.

Many people may ask here, "Didn't the Mujaddid propose *wahdatu 'l-shuhud* in opposition to Ibn 'Arabi's *wahdatu 'l-wujud*?" The answer it that the context of the theory of *wahdatu 'l-shuhud* is different– it is not at all a theory of ontology; instead it is a theory of sufi aspirants' subjective unveiling (*kashf*). What are being described in this article are the Mujaddid's theories of ontology.

Now let's go through the *maktub*, analyze it and learn from this great master. This is an annotated translation of *maktub* no. 3.122 i.e. *Maktubat-i Imam-i Rabbani*, Volume III, *maktub* 122, written to Mawlana Hasan Dihlawi on the Muhammadan reality, Ibn 'Arabi and the nature of existence, edited by Nur Ahmad Amritsari (pp.127-134):

The Muhammadan Reality

In the name of Allah the All-Merciful and the Compassionate. All praise is for Allah and peace towards His chosen servants. *BismiLlahi 'l-Rahmani 'l-Rahim! AlhamduliLlahi wa salamu 'ala 'ibadihi 'llazina 'stafa!*

The Muhammadan reality is the most exalted of the creation.

The Muhammadan reality (*haqiqat-i Muhammadi*) (may the most excellent salutation and the most complete peace be on it– *'alaihi min al-salawatu afdalha wa min al-taslimatu akmalha*) is the first manifestation (*zuhur*). It is the reality of all realities (*haqiqat al-haqa'iq*)– all other realities are like its shadows (*kal-zilal*), be it the reality of the honorable prophets or be it the reality of the magnificent angels (salam). It is the prototype of all realities (*asl-i haqa'iq*). The Prophet (salam) said, *In the beginning, what Allah created*

was my light! Awwalu ma khalaqa 'Llahu nuri! [Hadith: Suyuti]. He (salam) also said, *Allah created me from His light and the believers from my light. Khuliqtu min nuri 'Llahi wa 'l-mu'minuna min nuri.* [Hadith: Abdul Haqq Dihlawi, quoted in *Madarij al-Nubuwa*]. Therefore, necessarily, that [Muhammadan] reality is the intermediate (*wast*) in-between all other realities and *Haqq*.

And none may find what he seeks without the intermediation of [the Muhammadan reality (salam)]. Because he [Prophet Muhammad] is the prophet of the prophets and his arrival was a mercy to the worlds (salam). It is for this reason that the major (*ulu 'l-'azam*) prophets– although they were prophets themselves (*ba-wujud-i asalat*)– desired to become his followers and hoped to be included in his community (salam), as the Prophet (salam) has narrated it [in the Hadith].

The word *haqiqat* has been consistently translated as "reality". Now *haqiqat* may have several meanings according to the context. However, in this maktub, *haqiqat* usually refers to the 'essence' or 'quiddity' of a thing. In the context of God, *haqiqat* means the true nature or true identity of God, which the Great Mujaddid is teaching us.

The Exclusive Possession of the Muhammadan Community

Only the members of the Muhammadan community may realize the exalted perfection of reaching the Muhammadan reality and unifying with it.

Question: What perfection is there that depends on being his [Prophet Muhammad's] follower? And what [perfection is that,] which the prophets could not attain although they possessed the treasure of prophethood?

Answer: That perfection is "arrival" and unification (*wusul va ittihad*) with that reality of the realities, [which is the Muhammadan reality]. And [you may reach it and unify with it] only if you are [Prophet Muhammad's] follower and heir (*tab'iyyat va wirathat*). Actually, [reaching and unifying with it] depends on divine bounty (*fadl*). And [possessing] that [divine bounty] is the lot of those members of his [the Muhammadan] community who are the "elite of the elite" (*akhs-i khwass*). And until one becomes a member of his [Muhammadan] community, one cannot attain that treasure [of reaching and unifying with the Muhammadan reality]. And the veil of intermediation [between the gnostic and the Muhammadan reality] will remain– that [veil may be eliminated only] by

unifiying (*ittihad*) [with the Muhammadan reality and to accomplish that, the gnostic must be a member of the Muhammadan community]. It is due to this reason that God has said [addressing to the Muslims], *You are the best of all religious communities! Kuntum khayra ummatin!* (3:110)

He [Prophet Muhammad] is superior (*afdal*) to each one of the other honorable prophets and each one of the magnificent angels. Likewise, he is also superior to all of them added together. It is just as the prototype is superior than every one of its shadows even if that shadow [is a super-shadow] which contains thousands of shadows [super-imposed on one another]. Whatever energy (*fayd*) that shadow attains from God is through the intermediation (*bi-tuwasti va tufail-i*) of that [prototype, which is the Muhammadan reality]. I have explained in my own writings that the point above (*nuqta-i fawqa*) is superior to (*fadl*) all the points below (*bar nuqtaha-i tahta*) that are like the shadows of [the point above.] The point above is like the prototype [itself] and all the points below are like the shadows [of that prototype]. And for the gnostic, if he crosses that point above, it would be a far more triumphant achievement than if he would cross all the points below.

Are the Elite Followers of Prophet Muhammad Superior to the Prophets?

The prophets are still superior to the elite of the elite of the Muhammadan community, even those who have reached and unified with the Muhammadan reality.

Question: Does this clarification prove that the elite (*khwass*) of this [Muhammadan] community [who have realized "arrival" and conjunction (*wusul va ittisal*), with the Muhammadan reality] are superior (*fadl*) to the prophets?

Answer: Nothing of the sort is established. It is only established that the elite (*khwass*) of this community has a share in that treasure, [which is "arrival" and conjunction with the Muhammadan reality] while the [other] prophets do not [have that share. Still, the other prophets are indeed superior as they] are adorned and made superior (*ikhtisas*) by numerous other perfections [apart from the "arrival" and conjunction with the Muhammadan reality]. [It is an accepted Muslim belief that] even for the elite of the elite of this [Muhammadan] community who attains the

maximum progress, his head does not reach the feet of the lowliest prophet. So where is the possibility of equality or superiority [of the elect of the Muhammadan community to or over the other prophets]?

God has said, *Verily Our word has placed our servants the prophets before [others];* (*wa laqad sabaqat kalimatuna li-ʿibadina ʾl-mursalin*) (37:171). And if an individual among the followers (*ummat*???), as an "uninvited servant" and as a follower accompanying his own prophet (*tufail va tabʿiyat*), reaches a station above a prophet then he reaches there as a servant and a follower. Everyone knows that a servant will have no other relationship with the peers of his master except servanthood. All the time, the servant will be a *tufayli*, an uninvited servant accompanying his master who is the honored guest.

The Muhammadan Reality is Love

The Mujaddid's final unveiling was that the Muhammadan reality is love.

After traveling through the levels of the shadows (*ti maratib-i zilal*), what was unveiled to me finally is this: The Muhammadan reality that is the reality of all realities is the entification and the manifestation of "love" (*taʿayyun va zuhur-i hubbi*). [That love] is the origin of the manifestations and the source of the act of creation of created things (*mabdaʾI zuhurat va mansha'I khalq-i makhluqat*). A well-known "sacred Hadith" [a Hadith where God speaks in the first person] says, *I was a hidden treasure. Then I desired "knowing (uʿrafa)". So I created the creation for "knowing". Kuntu kanzam makhfiyan. Fa-ahbabtu an uʿrafa. Fa-khalaqtu ʾl-khalqa li-uʿrafa* [Hadith: origin unknown]. [This Hadith proves that] the first thing that appeared from that hidden place is 'love' (*hubb*). It [that divine love] is the cause of the creation of created things (*khalq-i khala'iq*). If this 'love' were not there, [the created things] would not have been brought into existence (*ijad*). Instead, the cosmos would have been firmly fixed and entrenched (*rasikh va mustaqarr*) within nonexistence. The mystery of the 'sacred Hadith', *without you, I would not have created the heavens (Law laka lama khalaqtu ʾl-aflak)* [Hadith: origin unknown], indeed lies here. And the reality of the 'sacred Hadith', *Without you, I would not have manifested my lordliness. Law laka lama azhartu ʾl-rububiyyata* [Hadith: origin unknown] should be sought here.

The First Entification: Love

The Mujaddid's final inspired knowledge is that the first entification is the "entification into love" (*taʿayyun-i hubbi*), which is the Muhammadan reality and this idea differs with the idea of Ibn 'Arabi, for whom the first entification is the entification into undifferentiated ideas. Even the Mujaddid had a different unveiling before. At that time, he used to believe that the first entification was the "entification into existence" (*taʿayyun-i wujudi*). However, as the Mujaddid progressed in his path towards God-realization, he realized truer knowledge.

Question: Ibn al-"Arabi, the author of the *Futuhat-i Makkiya*, has said that the first entification (*taʿayyun-i awwal*), which is the Muhammadan reality, is the entification into undifferentiated ideas (lit., *hadrat-i ijmal-i ʿilm*). [In contrast, previously] in your own writings, you had said that the first entification is the "entification into existence" (*taʿayyun-i wujudi*). And you had decided that its center, which is its part that is the most noble and the first in time (*ashraf va asbaq*) is the Muhammadan reality. And you had pointed at the entification into undifferentiated ideas (lit., *taʿayyun-i hadrat-i ijmal*) as the shadow of this entification into existence (*taʿayyun-i wujudi*). [Now, you have reversed yourself and] you have written here that the first entification is the entification into love and that is the Muhammadan reality. Could you please rationalize these mutually contradictory claims?

Note: These terms all mean the entification into undifferentiated ideas and have been translated as such. They are: *hadrat-i ijmal-i ʿilm* and *taʿayyun-i hadrat-i ijmal*.

The Descents: A Comparison		
Ibn 'Arabi: Five Descents	Mujaddid's earlier view: Six Descents	Mujaddid's final view: Seven Descents
The first entification: entification into undifferentiated ideas (*taʿayyun-i ʿilm-i*	The first entification: entification into existence (*taʿayyun-i wujudi*). Muhammadan reality: It is the center of the first entification which is its part	The first entification: entification into love (*taʿayyun-i hubbi*) and that is the Muhammadan reality. The second

jumali). The second entification: entification into differentiated ideas and that is the Muhammadan reality.	that is the most noble and the first in time (*ashraf va asbaq*). The second entification: entification into undifferentiated ideas (*ta'ayyun-i 'ilm-i jumali*).	entification: entification into existence (*ta'ayyun-i wujudi*). The third entification: entification into undifferentiated ideas (*ta'ayyun-i 'ilm-i jumali*).

Answer: Many times, the shadow of a thing shows itself as the prototype of that thing and attracts the wayfarer to it. Therefore, those two entifications are the first entifications which appear to the gnostic during the time of ascent as the prototype entification (*ba-asl-i ta'ayyun*), which [truly] is the entification into love (*ta'ayyun-i hubbi*).

Those "two entifications" refer to what Ibn 'Arabi and the Mujaddid had mistakenly identified as the first entification.

Firstly, Ibn 'Arabi identified the entification into undifferentiated ideas as the first entification. And the Mujaddid initially concurred with him.

Secondly, the Mujaddid, after he had a measure of spiritual ascent, reached a level higher than Ibn 'Arabi and there he saw that the first entification is the entification into existence (*ta'ayyun-i wujudi*). And its center, which is its part that is the most noble and the first in time (*ashraf va asbaq*), is the Muhammadan reality. And what Ibn 'Arabi had identified as entification into undifferentiated ideas (lit., *ta'ayyun-i hadrat-i ijmal*) is the shadow of this entification into existence (*ta'ayyun-i wujudi*).

The last unveiling of the Mujaddid revealed that both he and Ibn 'Arabi had been wrong both times. That entification into undifferentiated ideas was actually the shadow which presented itself as the prototype entification. And the true prototype entification or the very first entification is the entification into love, *ta'ayyun-i hubbi*.

The Second Entification: Existence

The Mujaddid clarifies that the entification into existence is the second entification.

Question: How can you say that the entification into existence (*taʿayyun-i wujudi*) is the shadow of the entification into love (*taʿayyun-i hubbi*)? When existence comes before love and love is a branch of existence?

Answer: I have proven in my own writings that *Haqq* exists by His own person [i.e. He exists by Himself], not [that He exists] by [His attribute of] existence. Likewise, the "eight [essential] attributes" exist by the person of the Necessary, not by [His attribute of] existence. It is because both *wujud*, existence, and *wujub,* necessity, do not at all have an opportunity (*gunja'ish*) [to exist] there on that level [of non-entification] as they both are merely "crossings-over" (*i'tibarat*).

 Note: The "crossings-over" (*i'tibarat*) are fine ideas in the mind of God crossing over from nonexistence to existence. And those crossings-over, *i'tibarat*, emerged later during the first entification, *taʿayyun-i awwal*. The Mujaddid explained elsewhere in the *Maktubat* and also in his monograph *Maʿarif-i Ladunniya* that the first ideas that were entified were the crossings-over or *i'tibarat*. The modes (*shan*, pl. *shu'un*) were entified on the next level. And the attributes, which have actual external existence, appeared on the next level of entification after that.

The Mujaddid expounds that the crossing-over of love is the first creation. And the second is the crossing-over of existence. And these two first creations led to the creation of the cosmos.

To bring the cosmos into existence (*ijad*), the crossing-over that has been made first is love (*i'tibar-i hubb*). [What has been made] the next is the crossing-over of existence (*i'tibar-i wujud*), which is the preamble to bringing [the cosmos] into existence.

Refuting Ibn ʿArabi, the Mujaddid proposes that God does not need to create the cosmos.

Without these two crossing-overs, the crossing-over of love and the crossing-over of wujud, the Person does not need (*istighna'*) the cosmos or to bring the cosmos into existence. As the Koran says, *Verily Allah does not need the cosmos. Inna 'Llaha laghaniyyun ʿani 'l-ʿalamiyana.* (2:96)

Ibn ʿArabi proposed that God needs to create the cosmos to actualize Himself. The Mujaddid refutes him. God first created the crossing-overs of

love and existence. That led Him to create the creation. God does not at all need to create the cosmos.

The Rest of the Entifications: Same as Ibn 'Arabi

The Mujaddid proposes that the third entification is the entification into undifferentiated ideas. According to Ibn 'Arabi, this was the first entification. However, the Mujaddid final unveilings show that undifferentiated ideas come after love and existence.

> You may not observe any attribute there [on those levels i.e. the levels of entifications into love, existence and undifferentiated ideas] as the attributes have not yet been entified [on those levels. The attributes are entified only at the next level that is the level of entification into differentiated ideas.]

> [Even then] this "entification into undifferentiated ideas (*ta'ayyun-i 'ilm-i jumali*)"– you may call it the "shadow" of those two [previous] entifications [that are the entification into love and the entification into existence]– if you:

> 1. Consider those two entifications as "crossings-over" (*i'tibar*) of the person of God.

> 2. And consider this entification [i.e. the entification into undifferentiated ideas, *ta'ayyun-i 'ilmi jumali*] as an attribute. [And we know that an attribute] is a shadow (*zill*) of the person of God.

The Mujaddid has always accepted the Ibn 'Arabi entification scheme– from the entification into undifferentiated ideas upto the entification into bodies. So they follow.

Descents: Ibn 'Arabi versus the Mujaddid

The first difference between the Ibn Arab scheme and the Mujaddidi scheme on the descents (*tanazzulat*) or entifications (*ta'ayyunat*) is that the Mujaddid adds two more entifications to the top. They are love and existence.

The Entifications: Ibn 'Arabi versus the Mujaddid	
Ibn 'Arabi's Five Descents	Mujaddid's Seven Descents

Sequence	Entifications	Sequence	Entifications
		1	Love (*hubb*)
		2	Existence (*wujud*)
1	Undifferentiated ideas	3	Undifferentiated ideas (*'ilm-i jumali*)
2	Differentiated ideas	4	Differentiated ideas (*'ilm-i tafsili*)
3	Spirits	5	Spirits (*ruh*)
4	Images	6	Images (*mithal*)
5	Bodies	7	Bodies (*jasad*)

The second difference is on the nature of existence. According to Ibn 'Arabi, God is existence Himself. In contrast, the Mujaddid says that existence is a creation of God. And the crossing-over of existence is the second creation, right after the crossing-over of love.

The third difference is on the nature of the two entifications into ideas. According to Ibn 'Arabi, these two entifications– the entification into undifferentiated ideas and the entification into differentiated ideas– take place in the mind of God and so those ideas are divine. In contrast, according to the Mujaddid, those two entifications are created, contingent and newly originated.

The Descents: Ibn 'Arabi versus the Mujaddid			
		Ibn 'Arabi	the Mujaddid
1	The number of descents (*tanazzulat*)	Five descents	Seven descents, with two descents added on top– "love" is the first descent and "existence" is

			the second; the five Ibn 'Arabi descents follow.
2	God versus existence	God is existence Himself.	Existence is God's creation and He created it in the second descent.
3	The level with respect to Necessity and contingency	The first two descents (undifferentiated ideas and differentiated ideas) take place in the mind of God and so are on the level of the Necessary and eternal (*wujubi va qadim*), and the other three are contingent and newly originated (*mumkin va hadith*).	All descents are contingent, created and newly originated (*mumkin, makhluq va qadim*).

Prophet Muhammad and Prophet Abraham: Their Intimate Inter-relationship

The Mujaddid now teaches us on the intimate inter-relationship between the Prophet Abraham and Prophet Muhammad.

You should know that when you "keenly"(*be-daqqat*) observe the first entification or the entification into love, by divine grace, you may learn that the center (*markaz*) of that [first] entification is love or the Muhammadan reality.

And the circumference of that entification is like a circle in the form of an image (*surat-i mithal*). And that circumference is like the shadow of that very center, and it is called friendship (*khullat*) or the Abrahamic reality. Therefore, love is the prototype. And friendship is indeed [love's] reflection.

This center and this circumference together form a circle, and it is the first entification. The part [of the circle] which is the most noble and the first in time (*ashraf va asbaq*) is the center and it is love.

In the gaze of unveiling (*nazar-i kashfi*), it [the center of that circle] appears to be the entification into love. Through reasoning, [you may reach the same conclusion because] that part [center of the circle] is the prototype and that part predominates.

[With respect to the circumference, we know] that the circumference of that circle is like the shadow of its center and the [circumference] grows out of that center. [With respect to the center, we also know] that the center is [the circle's] prototype and its source (*mansha'*). [Therefore, we may conclude that] the circumference may be considered the second entification [in some way].

However, the gaze of unveiling (*nazar-i kashfi*) does not show two entifications. Instead, it is one single entification that comprises love and friendship (*hubb va khullat*). And [that single all-including entification] is the center and the circumference of a single circle. In the gaze of unveiling, the second entification is the entification into existence (*ta'ayyun-i wujudi*) and that is like the shadow of the first entification as it has been described earlier. So the center is the prototype of the circumference (*asl-i muhit*). Then to attain the objective [of reaching the prototype], the circumference must employ the intermediation of the center. The [center] is the prototype and the undifferentiation (*asl va ijmal*) of the circle. Therefore, one may reach the destination (*wusul be-matlub*) only by the path that is via the center (*az rah-i markaz*).

This should clarify that the beloved of Allah [Prophet Muhammad] and the friend of Allah [Prophet Abraham], they are both inter-related and unified (*munasabat va ittihad*). Here the shadow employs the prototype as the intermediary to reach its destination (*wusul-i zill-i matlub*). Then it follows that Hazrat the friend of Allah [Prophet Abraham] would request the intermediation of Hazrat the beloved of Allah [Prophet Muhammad] and would desire to enter his community– as it has been narrated in the Hadith.

Prophet Muhammad and the Abrahamic Community

We know that Prophet Muhammad is ranked higher than Prophet Abraham. However, according to the *salawat* that we recite in *salat*-prayers, God has asked our prophet to follow Prophet Abraham. And in that *salawat* that God taught him, our prophet has been seeking blessings from God "according to the measure that God has blessed Abraham." Why?

Question: When their inter-relationship is like this [that Prophet Muhammad is in a far more exalted rank than Prophet Abraham] then why was the beloved of Allah [Prophet Muhammad] instructed to follow the Abrahamic community? What is its meaning? And in *salawat* [during Prayer] the Prophet had been supplicating, "according to the measure that you have given peace and blessings to Abraham". Why?

Answer: The reality of a thing [here the Muhammadan reality], the more exalted it is and closer it is to God who is incomparable, the grosser is the locus of manifestation of that reality in the world of the elements [here the human form of the Prophet Muhammad. And that reality, here the Muhammadan reality] is also more enwrapped (*mutalabbis*) in the qualities of human nature (*bashariyat*). Therefore, it is difficult for this locus of manifestation [Prophet Muhammad when he lives in his physical form] to ascend (*'uruj*) to that [Muhammadan] reality.

In the initial segment of our journey, first we make ascent (*'uruj*) upwards. For the Muhammadan seeker of God, he ascends upwards to the Muhammadan reality at first. The Muhammadan reality is the closest to God and the most exalted after Him. Since we know that more exalted is the reality, grosser is its worldly form. And since the Muhammadan reality is the most exalted, the human form of the Prophet is the form that is most enwrapped in human nature. Consequently, the distance between his reality and his human form is the greatest– greater than any other prophet. And consequently, it is most difficult for him to ascend to his own reality.

The Abrahamic community is a wide boulevard (*shah-i rah*) for "arriving" on the Abrahamic reality. And that [Abrahamic reality] lies next to the Muhammadan reality, as it has been said before. And Hazrat Abraham has already reached there [that Abrahamic reality, travelling] through that [Abrahamic] path. Therefore, [Hazrat Muhammad] has been instructed to

reach the reality of the realities [the Muhammadan reality], by following that [Abrahamic] community [or by travelling on that Abrahmic path].

Therefore, to make his ascent easier, Allah instructed Prophet Muhammad to follow the Abrahamic community. Since that way, he could easily reach the Abrahamic reality first and then could move over to the Muhammadan reality, which lies next to it.

Why has the Prophet asked us to recite the Abrahamic benediction (*salawat-i ibrahimi*) in our prayers (*salat*).

In *salawat* during salat-prayer, that master (*sarwar*) [Hazrat Muhammad] has suggested to us to pray for divine blessings in accordance to the measure that God has blessed Abraham but [he instructed us to do so] only after he had attained the treasure of "arriving" on the [Muhammadan] reality (*husul-i dawlat-i wusul-i haqiqat*).

Prophet Muhammad had suggested us to pray that way so that we can also traverse on the Abrahamic path, reach the Abrahamic reality and then move over easily to the Muhammadan reality. It is so because if we try to reach the Muhammadan reality directly, it would be harder than us employing the intermediation of the Abrahamic reality.

Also, Prophet Muhammad following Prophet Abraham– that does not have to mean that our prophet is inferior to Prophet Abraham.

On the other hand, we can also say that if a superior person is instructed to follow an inferior person, then in this instruction to follow, he does not have to have a shortcoming. Just as Allah has instructed the Prophet (salam) [referring to the companions], *Consult with them in matters. Wa shawirhum fi 'l-amri* (3:159) Along with the order to consult with the companions comes the order to follow them. Or else what is the benefit of consultation?

The Reality of Abu Bakr and the Reality of Israphel

The Mujaddid explains the realities of Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Israphel.

The reality of Hazrat [Abu Bakr] the champion of truth is the divine name that is his lord (*rabb*). That is his origin of entification (*mabda'-i ta'ayyun*).

And that is directly (*bi-tawassut*) the shadow of the Muhammadan reality (*zill-i haqiqat-i Muhammadi*) with nothing else in between.

[The reality of Hazrat Abu Bakr is the direct shadow. And as such, it is the direct] follower and heir of [the Muhammadan reality with nothing else in between. As a result,] whatever that is there in that [Muhammadan] reality, all of it is in that [direct] shadow [which is the reality of Hazrat Abu Bakr].

It is for this reason that [Abu Bakr] is the most perfect (*akmal*) and most excellent (*afdal*) heir (*warith*) in this [Muhammadan] community. The Prophet (salam) said, *Whatever Allah had poured into my breast, I poured that all into the breast of Abu Bakr. Ma sabba 'Llahu shay'an fi sadri illa wa qad sayabtuhu fi sadri Abi Bakr-in.* [Hadith: origin unknown]

Also it has been revealed that the reality of Israphel is that same Muhammadan reality. However, they do not have a prototype-shadow inter-relationship as [in the case of the inter-relationship between the reality of Hazrat Abu Bakr and the Muhammadan reality]. There the reality of Hazrat [Abu Bakr] the champion of truth is the shadow of that [Muhammadan] reality. In contrast, in this case, both [the Muhammadan reality and the reality of Israphel] are prototypes and none of them is the other's shadow. However, there are differences between their universals and particulars (*kulliyat va juz'iyat*).

That master [Prophet Muhammad] is the absolute leader (*kull*). That is why that reality [which is the leader] has been named in his name [as the Muhammadan reality]. The realities of all the other angels have grown out of that reality of Israphel.

Gnostic's Progression Above his Own Reality

The Mujaddid discusses if a gnostic may progress above his own reality.

Question: The gnostic's own essence or reality is the divine name that is the lord of that gnostic. [Having ascended there in his ascent,] may the gnostic then progress above it?

Answer: The journey towards Allah (*sayr ila 'Llah*) is completed (*tamami*) when [the gnostic] "arrives on" (*wusul*) [his own] reality after travelling

(*tayy*) through the levels of wayfaring (*suluk*). [And it is completed] in two manners.

First Manner

The first manner is "arrival" (*wusul*) [not onto the actual divine name or reality, but instead] onto a shadow among the shadows of that name while that shadow is [falsely] displaying itself as the reality. [And that reality is] displaying itself as the [actual] reality in [the gnostic's] own locus of manifestation in the divine [names] (*dar mazahir-i wujubiya-i khod*). [As a result,] it [falsely] appears that it [that "shadow" of that divine name] is the reality itself.

Such confusion appears in many places on this road– it is a treacherous valley for the wayfarer (*salik*). Only by the sheer grace of God, the wayfarer may be rescued from this valley. [Still, it is certain that] one may progress above this shadow that looks like reality (*zill-i haqiqat noma*)– actually it does happen.

Second Manner

[The second manner is] if he "arrives on" (*wusul*) [that reality which is not merely a shadow but prototypically is] his own reality. In that case, he may not progress beyond it without the intermediation and emulation (*bi-tufail va tab'iyat*) of someone else [whose reality is on a higher level] since that reality is the highest point (*nihayat*) [to which] his own preparedness (*isti'dad*) [would allow him to go]. However, if through someone else's intermediation, he is brought to someone else's reality (that is above his own reality) then he may progress [above his own reality to that higher reality].

It is said that this journey is a "journey by force" (*sayr-i qasri*) where one [progresses not by his own power but by employing someone else's power. And he] progresses to a point that is beyond what is natural for him or for which he is prepared (*tab'i va isti'dadi*).

(A small part from this has already been narrated in the preceding section, in the clarification of arriving on the Muhammadan reality.)

Progress above the Muhammadan Reality

Now the Mujaddid confirms that none may progress above the Muhammadan reality, which is the apogee of perfection.

Question: The Muhammadan reality is the reality of realities (*ḥaqiqat al-ḥaqa>iq*). No reality from the realities of contingent things (*ḥaqiqat-i mumkinat*) is above the Muhammadan reality. Then how can one progress above it? However, you have written in your writings that, "progress above the Muhammadan reality has been attained." What do you mean by that?

Answer: No! None may [progress above the Muhammadan reality] because the level of *la-taʿayyun*, non-entification lies above it. No entified thing (*mutaʿayyan*) may "arrive" [on that level of non-entification] and be annexed to it (*wusul va ilhaqq*).

[Now some people like Ibn ʿArabi do claim that the gnostic may indeed progress above the Muhammadan reality and reach the level of non-entification, and they rationalize it by] saying that their "arrival" and annexation (*wusul va ilhaqq*) [to the level of non-entification] are "without how" (*bi-takayyuf*). [However, speaking that way is] not speaking correctly (*mujarrad-i tafawwuh*) [as it is meaningless talk]. They find peace from [such meaningless talk] because they are yet to realize a correct understanding of that inter-relationship [between the Necessary who is non-entified and the contingent things which are entified]. However, when Ibn ʿArabi and his followers would understand it correctly, they would realize that they definitely cannot "arrive on" or annex [to that level of non-entification, *la-taʿayyun*].

Some people, possibly including Ibn ʿArabi and his school, claimed that a gnostic may indeed progress above the Muhammadan reality. And he may reach and annex to the level of non-entification. However, they rationalize it by saying that the nature of such "arrival" and annexation is "without how". The Mujaddid comments that those people are misguided and talk nonsense.

When I had written, "progress above the Muhammadan reality has been attained," what I meant by that reality was [actually] the shadow of that reality." [What I should have said is that progress above the shadow of Muhammadan reality has been attained.] And it [what I meant by the term

"Muhammadan reality" there, at the lower level of my sufi enlightenment, actually] meant the entification into undifferentiated ideas [lit., *ijmal-i hadrat-i ʿilm*] or oneness-crossing-over (*wahdat*), [which in the Mujaddidi scheme is the third entification while the Muhammadan reality is the first entification.] At that time, I confused the shadow [of the Muhammadan reality, which in this case was the entification into undifferentiated ideas] with the prototype. When I was freed from all the shadows by sheer divine grace [and reached a higher level of knowledge], I learned that one may not progress above the "reality of the realities" (*haqiqatu 'l-haqa'iq*). Even that, it is absolutely impossible because if one raises his feet and steps out, he leaves the contingent domain and drives his feet into the Necessary domain, and that is impossible both by the intellect and by the laws of nature. (*ʿaqli va sharʿi*)

Question: This verification demonstrates that [Hazrat Muhammad] the "seal of the messengers" did not progress above the Muhammadan reality. Is it true?

Answer: That Hazrat [Prophet Muhammad] had a highly exalted and glorified rank. Still he was always a contingent thing. And he would never leave the contingent domain or would realize union (*paywast*) with the Necessary– that would have meant that he would transform himself into God (*uluhiyat*). However, Allah Almighty is beyond having a peer and a partner.

What the Christians say of their prophet

Do not say that [of my prophet!]

(Daʿ ma addaʿat-hu 'l-nasarafi nabihim).

Realization of the Muhammadan Reality: the Difference between the Prophet and his Elite Followers

This section refers to what happens when a Muslim Sufi traverses the loftiest stations in his ascent (*ʿuruj*). In his journey, the Sufi advances to higher and higher stations. A few of these Sufis ascend to the highest station and reach and unify with the Muhammadan reality, which is reserved for the followers of Prophet Muhammad. Even the prophets may not reach that Muhammadan reality as they are not members of the Muhammadan

community. Does that mean that those God-realized Muslims are higher than even the prophets?

Question: From the preceding verification, it is clear that other [Muslims] (as accompanied servants and heirs of their master Muhammad) may also reach the reality of the realities. And may establish some kind of annexation and unification (*ilhaqii va ittihadii*) with that [Muhammadan reality] and then share its elite perfections. And [the elite of the elite in the Muhammadan community annex and unify with] it [the Muhammadan reality] so well that the veil [between them and the Muhammadan reality] is lifted and the inter-mediation is eliminated and [instead they receive the good directly from the Muhammadan reality. And as a result] they reach the highest level of perfection.

If it is so then what is the difference between the [elite] followers [of Prophet Muhammad, who reach that ultimate level of perfection] and the leader [who is their master Muhammad himself], or between the honored guest (*asli*) and the accompanied servant (*tufayli*) in this perfection? And what is the superiority of the leader and the honored guest over the follower and accompanied servant?

Answer: Others who reach and annex to (*wusul va ilhaqq*) that [Muhammadan] reality do so in the manner that a servant joins his master or the accompanied servant reaches the honored guest. Even if he who reaches is the elite of the elite– those are few– or he is a prophet (salam), even then he is still an accompanied servant (*tufayli*) who eats [the master's] leftovers. How can he be equal to the master? And before the master, what grandeur and greatness can he have?

Note: The Prophets may not reach the Muhammadan reality as they are not followers of the Prophet Muhammad. Here, the Mujaddid brought the example of the prophets only to illustrate his reasoning.

An "accompanied servant" sits with the master– who is the guest– and eats with the master, still he is an "accompanied servant." If that servant arrives at magnificent mansions along with the master, eats the left-overs of sumptuous meals made for the master or receives respect; still then he receives them due to the greatness of the master and the exaltedness of following him. It is said that the master obtains more respect because the

servants accompany him, although he already has respect accorded to him.

Leader and Follower Being Peers

[Question:] Listen! The Prophet said, He who establishes a good tradition (Sunna), he will receive its wage and the wages of all who will practice that, *Man sanna sunnatan hasanatan fa-lahu ajruha wa ajru man 'amila-biha* [Hadith: Muslim]. Therefore, more followers does the leader have on the beautiful path that he has instituted, more compensation does he receive. So how can the leader and the follower be peers? What equality can you think for them?

[Answer:] Listen! Listen! A group of people may be on a single station and they may share the same treasure. Still, they will be treated differently but none will know about the other. In paradise, the pious wives of the Prophet will live with him in the same location. They will eat the same food and drink the same drinks. However, they will not be treated the same way as the Prophet. Nor would they have the same enjoyment (*iltidhadhi*) and mastery that he has (salam). Although they will share everything with the Prophet, the bounties (*afdaliyat*) that they will receive will not be the same as the bounties that the Prophet will receive.

If they would share everything with the Prophet then they would also be superior to everyone else, like the Prophet is. Here the term "superiority" (*afdaliyat*) refers to the amount of rewards before Allah.

All Entifications are Contingent

The Mujaddid explains that all these entifications, including this entification into love, are contingent. His opinion contradicts Ibn 'Arabi, who had proposed that the first and the second entifications are on the level of the Necessary.

Question: This entification into love– i.e. the first entification or the Muhammadan reality (salam)– is it contingent or is it Necessary (*mumkin ya wajib*)? Is it newly originated or is it eternal (*hadith ya qadim*)? Ibn al-'Arabi, who wrote the *Fusus*, called the first entification [by both these additional names] Muhammadan reality and oneness-crossing-over, *wahdat*. Likewise, he called the second entification one-and-allness, *wahidiyyat*. He established the fixed entities (*a'yan-i thabita*)— or the

essences or realities of the contingent things (*haqa'iq-i mumkinat*)— on that level [of one-and-allness]. He called both of these entifications "entifications of the Necessary (*ta'ayyun-i wujubi*)" and considers them to be eternal (*qadim*). And he considers the three other descents or entifications– the spiritual (*ruhi*), the imaginal (*mithali*) and the bodily (*jasadi*)– to be contingent entifications (*ta'ayyun-i imkani*). What are your comments on this matter?

Ibn 'Arabi: Nature of Entifications	
Level of descent or entification	Nature of entification
wahdat, wahidiyat	Entifications of the Necessary (*ta'ayyun-i wujubi*), eternal (*qadim*)
Entifications into spirits, entification into images, entification into bodies	Contingent entifications (*ta'ayyun-i imkani*), created, newly originated

Answer: To me, nothing [of the Necessary domain] is related to entification or entified things (*ta'ayyuni va muta'ayyuni*). What entification is there that makes the nonentified thing (*la-ta'ayyuni*) [that is God] into an entified thing (*muta'ayyuni*) [a created thing]? Such talk comes from the "taste" (*dhawq*) of Ibn al-"Arabi and his followers [who were having intoxicated sufi mystic experiences] (may Allah sanctify their secrets). If such a talk has occurred in my writings then it should also be considered as a saying [that has come from an intoxicated sufi experience].

The Mujaddid now comments on the first two entifications of the Ibn 'Arabi system. Ibn 'Arabi calls them entifications of the Necessary, *ta'ayyun-i wujubi*. They are *wahdat*, oneness-crossing-over, which is the first entification and *wahidiyyat*, one-and-allness, which is the second entification. While Ibn 'Arabi considers them entifications of the Necessary and eternal, the Mujaddid considers them to be contingent entifications which are created and newly-originated.

At all times, we should know that that those [two] entifications are [actually] contingent entifications (*ta'ayyun-i imkani*). And they are created and newly originated (*makhluq va hadith*). The Prophet said, *In the beginning, what Allah created was my light. Awwalu ma khalaqa 'Llahu nuri!* [Hadith:

Suyuti]. In other Hadith reports, the time of the creation of that light is also given e.g. *Two thousand years before the creation of the heavens. Qabla khalqa 'l-samawati b'alfi 'am!* [Hadith: origin unknown]. And all that is created and was previously within nonexistence is contingent and newly originated. The [Muhammadan] reality is the reality which is in the forefront of all the realities. When that is created and contingent (*makhluq va mumkin*) then all other realities are also created, contingent and newly originated (*makhluq, mumkin, hadith*).

The Mujaddid now contrasts his idea with Ibn 'Arabi who believes that the Muhammadan reality is in the mind of God (i.e. on the Necessary level) and eternal.

The Muhammadan reality (also called the realities of the contingent things or the fixed entities): how does the Shaykh (may his secrets be sanctified) rule it to be the Necessary and consider it to be eternal (*wujub, qadim*)? It goes against the saying of the Prophet (salam). Every subdivision of a contingent thing is contingent. Both in its form and in its essence (*sura, haqiqa*), it is contingent. How will the entification of the Necessary (*ta'ayyun-i wujubi*) become the essence of the contingent thing (*haqiqat-i mumkin*)? The essence of the contingent things should also be contingent. Contingent things do not have any mutuality or relationship (*ishtaraki va intisabi*) with the Necessary, except that the contingent things are a creation of the Necessary and the Necessary is their creator.

Entifications with their Levels: Ibn 'Arabi versus the Mujaddid					
Ibn 'Arabi			Mujaddid		
Seque-nce	Name	Level	Seque-nce	Name	Level

| | | | 1 | Love, *hubb,* the center is Muhammadan reality and the circumference of that reality is friendship, *khulla.*

Love is entified when the crossing-over of love crosses over from non-entification into entification. | Contingent |
| | | | 2 | Existence; and existence is entified when the crossing-over of existence crosses over from non-entification into entification. | Contingent |

| 1 | Undifferen-tiated ideas, Muhammad-an reality, oneness-crossing-over or *wahdat*, all the crossing-overs (*i'tibarat*) are entified on this level, crossing over from non-entification into entification. | Necessary, because they are contents in the mind of God, an inseparable part of His attribute of knowledge. And to Ibn 'Arabi, all divine attributes (including the real attributes that include knowledge) have no existence apart from the person of God. So these ideas are inseparable parts of God. | 3 | Undifferentiated ideas, the rest of the crossings-over (*i'tibarat*) are the entified crossing over from non-entification into entification. | Contingent |

2	Differentia-ted ideas, one-and-allness or *wahidiyat*.	Necessary	4	Differentiated ideas	Contingent
3	Spirits	Contingent	5	Spirits	Contingent Contingent
4	Images	Contingent	6	Images	Contingent Contingent
5	Bodies	Contingent	7	Bodies	Contingent Contingent

Levels of the Five Entifications: Ibn 'Arabi versus the Mujaddid			
Level of Entification	Name of the Entification	Ibn 'Arabi	Mujaddid
1	Entification into undifferentiated ideas (*ta'ayyun-i 'ilm-i jumali*) or oneness-crossing-over (*wahdat*)	Necessary level, *wujubi*	Contingent level, *imkani*
2	Entification into differentiated ideas (*ta'ayyun-i tafsil-i 'ilm*) or one-and-allness (*wahidiyat*)		
3	Entification into spirits (*ta'ayyun-i ruhi*)	Contingent level, *imkani*	

| 4 | Entification into images (*ta'ayyun-i mithali*) | | |
| 5 | Entification into bodies (*ta'ayyun-i jasadi*) | | |

Ibn 'Arabi's Error in Confusing the Necessary and the Contingent

The Mujaddid politely rebukes Ibn 'Arabi for confusing the Necessary and the contingent things.

The Shaykh [Ibn 'Arabi] has not made any distinction between the Necessary and the contingent things, and he himself has said that there is no distinction between them. [Now if he continues in that same line of reasoning and] if he says that the Necessary is contingent and the contingent things are Necessary then he should have no fear. If God excuses him then it is His extreme generosity and forgiveness!

Our Lord! Do not condemn us if we forget or err! *Rabbana! La-tu'akhizna in nasina aw akhta'na!* (2:286).

Mujaddid's Final Ontology: Dualism as *'abdiyat*

Now the Great Mujaddid comments on his final ontological theory which is *'abdiyat*. Now this maktub was written right at the end of his life and so it denotes his final views. These ontological theories were derived not from his study of the Koran and Hadith but instead from his experiential Sufi knowledge. Initially, he had the same experience as Ibn 'Arabi and was a follower of the *wahdatu 'l-wujud* doctrine. However, his experiential knowledge evolved further and then he proposed a new doctrine called *zilliyat*, which says the cosmos is the "shadow" (*zill*) of God. It should be noted that this *zilliyat* or shadowism is not the final "inspired science" of the Mujaddid as he did not remain confined to this station.

Instead the Mujaddid even progressed further in his wayfaring, finally reaching the sublime station of *'abdiyat* or slavism, which no sufi before him had reached. There he realized that *zilliyat* is not the final station, there is another station beyond. He found there that nothing is worthy enough to be the shadow of the Creator. Instead, everything is the "slave" of God. And

finally, he realized that God is beyond all that can be imagined. And man is only an insignificant slave of God. This is *ʿabdiyat*, or "slavism".

Now a disciple of the Mujaddid asked him to clarify his stance on *zilliyat*.

Question: In your own writings [that you wrote before explaining your ontology of shadowism or *zilliyat*,] you [the Mujaddid] had established a prototype-shadow inter-relationship between the Necessary and the contingent things. And you had said that contingent things are the shadow (*zill*) of the Necessary. And you had also written that the Necessary, since it is the prototype [of the shadow that is their essence] (*bi-ʿitibar-i asalat*), is the essence or reality (*haqiqat*) of contingent things. And contingent things are His shadow. And you had revealed an entire science (*maʿrifat*) [called *zilliyat*] based on that premise. If the Shaykh [Ibn ʿArabi] said that the Necessary is the reality of contingent things in this line, why can't he [say so?] Why should he still be censured?

Note: Previously, at an earlier level of enlightenment, the Mujaddid had proposed the ontological doctrine of *zilliyat*. There he had proposed that the contingent things are shadows of the Necessary. With respect to existence, the contingent things had shadow existence. And with respect to quiddities, their quiddities were a nonexistence onto which a ray from the divine attributes has fallen. Therefore, both with respect to their existence and their quiddities, contingent things were shadows of God.[255] When people talk about the buzzword *wahdatu l-shuhud*, it is often *zilliyat* to which they refer.

In answer, the Mujaddid says that all the sufi sciences that say the creation is the shadow of God or in some other way related to God are false sciences originating from intoxication, *sukr*. Those false sciences include even *zilliyat*, which the Mujaddid had experienced and propagated before.

Answer: This kind of science that establishes an inter-relationship between the Necessary and the contingent things has no proof in the Sharia. All that science is a science originating from intoxication (*sukriya*). It [the proposition of Ibn ʿArabi that the Necessary is the reality of the contingent things or the earlier proposition of the Mujaddid that the contingent things are the shadows of the Necessary, *zilliyat*] is from their

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[255] These ideas are described in detail in *maktub* 2.1

inability [inability of Ibn 'Arabi and his followers, and even the Mujaddid in both of his earlier states of *wahdatu 'l-wujud* and *zilliyat*] to reach the reality of that inter-relationship [between the Necessary and contingent things].

What powers do contingent things possess?

That they could be shadows of the Necessary?

Mumkin cheh bud

Ke zill-i wajib ba shod

The Mujaddid explains why God may not have a shadow. It's because He is truly incomparable, far above having the attribute of "possessing a shadow." He argues: "When Prophet Muhammad did not have a shadow, how can his God have a shadow?"

Why will the Necessary have a shadow? When a shadow is the false (*mawhum*) engendering (*tuliyad*) of things similar [to the original, in this case the original being God.] Also it [the shadow] brings the news that there is a defect— the prototype lacks perfect subtleness. When Muhammad the prophet of Allah did not have a shadow due to the subtleness of his body, how can the God of Muhammad have a shadow?

(Note: According to some traditions, Prophet Muhammad, upon whom may there be peace, did not have a shadow.)

The Mujaddid describes the ultimate reality of God vis-à-vis the creation. And that is transcendence, incomp'Arability or beyondness. God and His eight real attributes are what really exist from eternity. Everything else came into being later on:

The person of God exists in the outside by His person (*bi 'l-dhat*) with independence (*istiqlal*) and with the eight [real] attributes— that is the reality (*haqiqat*) of God. Except for that, all that [exists] there has come to existence [later in created time, and] He brought them into existence (*ijad*). And [therefore, all that God brought into existence later] are contingent things, created things and newly originated things (*mumkin, makhluq va hadith*).

Previously, in his verification of *zilliyat*, the Mujaddid proposed that all the attributes exist in the outside with shadow existence. Now the Sunni creed says that all the divine attributes are inseparable part of the Person as they are "neither He nor other than He, *la hua wa la ghayruhu",* and so it seems that the Mujaddid's opinion contradicts the Sunni creed. However, there is really no such contradiction. The Mujaddid argues, "How can you separate the prototype from its shadow?" And since you can't, the shadow of God is indeed "neither He nor other than He."

However, it seems that he is radically changing his ideas and proposing that only the eight real attributes have external existence and are eternal (*qadim*), and the rest of the attributes have an existence that has no relationship with divine existence, and they are created by God in time i.e. newly-originated (*hadith*). This may be considered a modification of the Ibn 'Arabi idea that no attribute exists externally and instead all are merely relationships that God has with the cosmos. However, I can say that with certainty only after further study, after I have analyzed his other *maktub*s on the nature of the attributes.

The Mujaddid now repudiates *zilliyat*, shadowism that he experienced and taught earlier:

> The shadow of the Creator (*khaliq*) Himself is not in any created thing. And except for the relationship of being created by God (*makhluqiyyat*), nothing has any other relationship with its Creator. However, there are such relationships as described in the Shariah [e.g. slavehood, needyness etc.].

So why did God give the Mujaddid the experience of *zilliyat*, when it was not the experience of the ultimate truth? Was there a benefit in it? The Mujaddid feels that perhaps there was a benefit– it led him step-by-step to the ultimate truth.

> Knowing the cosmos as a shadow helps the wayfarer (*salik*) on this road in many ways. It drags him to the prototype [that is God].

Finally, the Mujaddid experiences the knowledge of the highest level– *ʿabdiyat* where he realizes that God is truly transcendent:

> And when through the perfection (*kamal*) in divine grace (*ʿinayat*), he travels through waystations that take him through the shadows (*manazil-i*

zilal) and finally he arrives at the prototype (*asl*) [at what seems to be God], then through sheer divine bounty (*fadl*), he realizes that even this prototype [what seems to be God] has the same property (*hukm*) of the shadow and is not worthy (*shayan*) of being the "object that is being sought" (*matlub*) [which is God] as it is branded (*muttasim*) by the mark (*dagh*) of contingency

Yes! There is no final knowledge about God because He's beyond the range of human cognition. He is unknowable.

And the "object that is being sought" (*matlub*) [God] is beyond the range of perception, "arrival" and conjunction. (*idrak va wasl va ittisal*).

Our Lord! Give us mercy (*rahma*) from You and dispose of our affair for us in the right way! *Rabbana! Atina milladunka rahmatan wa hayyu'lana min amrina rashadan* (18:10).

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ARABIC TRANSLATIONS OF ALLAMA IQBAL'S URDU POETRY

Dr. Muhammad Sarfraz Khalid

ABSTRACT

ALLAMA MUHAMMAD IQBAL WAS A PHILOSOPHER POET WHO COMPOSED BEAUTIFUL POETRY IN URDU AND PERSIAN. HIS POETRY CARRIES THE MESSAGE FOR THE WHOLE UMMAH. BEING THE MESSAGE OF UNIVERSAL IMPORTANCE, IT HAS BEEN TRANSLATED INTO VARIOUS LANGUAGES. AS ARABIC IS AN IMPORTANT LANGUAGE OF THE MUSLIM UMMAH, THEREFORE IQBAL'S POETRY HAS ALSO BEEN RENDERED INTO ARABIC. IN THIS ARTICLE, AN ATTEMPT HAS BEEN MADE TO INTRODUCE ARABIC TRANSLATIONS OF HIS URDU POETRY WHICH IS INCLUDED IN THE *BANG-I-DARA* (CALL OF THE MARCHING BELL), *BAL-I-JIBRIL* (WINGS OF JIBRIL), *ZERB-I-KALIM* (THE ROD OF MOSES), *ARMAGHAN-I-HIJAZ* (GIFT OF THE HIJAZ). SOME SPECIMENS FROM ARABIC TRANSLATIONS OF IQBAL'S POETRY HAVE ALSO BEEN GIVEN.

Allama Muhammad Iqbal was great philosopher-poet. In his poetry and prose he addressed humanity, especially the Muslim community. His message was warmly welcomed not only in Indian sub-continent but throughout the world.[256]

Arabic world was also influenced by Allama Iqbal's thought. He had visited Egypt only once in 1905 in the reign of Abbas II Al-Khudayvi during his journey to Europe for higher education when he was 28 years old.[257] His proper interaction with Arabs was made when he visited Egypt for five days, from 1-5 December, 1913 returning from the Second Round Table

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[256] Professor Rafi-al-Din Hashmi published a detail of languages in which the works of Allama Iqbal was translated i.e. Arabic, Indonesian, Bengali, Gujrati, Persian, Pashtu, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Turkish, Sindhi, Urdu, English, Italian, German, Chec, China, Swedish, French and Hindi. See, Rafi al-Din Hashmi, *Kitabiyat-i-Iqbal*, Lahore Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1977, pp. 53.

[257] Dr. Hazim published his five days schedule including proceeding of his meetings. See, Hazim Muhammad Ahmad Mahfooz, *Allama Iqbal fi-Misir al-Azhar*, Cairo: Dar al- Thikafat li-Nashar 1998, pp. 33.

Conference in London. During his stay he visited historical places and participated in various welcome ceremonies in which he met eminent Arab scholars, political figures, journalists and other significant personalities of Egypt. This was a golden opportunity for them to acquaint themselves with the insights of Allama Iqbal.[258] Almost all of his works have been translated into Arabic. Sh. Sawi Ali Sha'lan translated the famous poems of *Shikwah* and *Jawab-i-Shikwa*, Iqbal's poetry became popular when 28 verses from both these pomes were selected and sang by "the singer of the East" Umm-i-Kulthum under the title of "Hadith-i-Ruh" in a musical party on 4th May, 1967. It was warmly welcomed and its ten thousand copies were made and distributed in Egypt. The translation by Sh. Sawi was so perfect and attractive that people assumed that Allama Iqbal was an Arabic poet. The Government of Pakistan awarded her *Tamgha Imtiaz* on her wonderful performance. Moreover Iqbal's poem Tarana i Milli translated by the same author was declared as its special song by World Islamic League. Damascus Radio composed this anthem in a attractive beautiful composition.[259] The first five verses of this poem reads:

الصين لنا و العرب لنا   و الهند لنا و الكل لنا

اَضـــحى الاســـلام لنــا دينــا   و جميع الكون لنا وطنا

توحيد الله لنا نور   اَغددنا الروح له سكنا

الكون يزول ولا تمحى   فى الدهر صحائف سؤددنا

بنيت فى الارض معابدها   والبيت الاول كعبتنا[260]

China and Arabia are ours, India is also ours

We are Muslim, whole worlds is homeland of ours

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[258] *Ibid*, pp. 46-181.

[259] Iqbal, Dr. Muhammad *Kuliyat-i-Iqbal* (Lahore Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1995), pp. 186.

[260] Ghori, Syed Abdul Majid, *Dewan Muhammad Iqbal*, (Damascus: Dar Iban Kasir, 2003), pp. 91 (part-I)

The trust of Divine Unity is the breasts of ours

It is not easy to destroy the identity of ours

Among the world's temples that first House of God

We are its sentinels, it is the sentinel of ours[261]

Greater interest was generated when Mawlana Abu al-Hasan Ali Nadvi (India) published his book *Rawai' Iqbal* comprising of Arabic translation of various poems of Iqbal. For this purpose he was urged by the famous Arab writer S. Ali Tantawi through an open letter published in the magazine *Al-Muslimun*.[262] Because some available translation by Arab natives were not proper interpretation of the ideas of Allama Iqbal. He continuously wrote articles on the ideas and poetry of Allama Iqbal not only in the magazine *Al-Muslimun* but also in other reputed magazines of the Arabic world. The book *Rawai' Iqbal* was an anthology of those articles. Fortunately he was allowed to translate the poetry of Allama Iqbal himself. On 22nd November 1937 he met Allama Iqbal. Abu al-Hasan Ali Nadvi has expressed the fact as under:

> I distinctly remember that when I asked his permission to translate some of hi poems into Arabic, he expressed his pleasure and readily acceded to my request. I read to him some of Arabic renderings of verses from *Zarb i Kalim*. He told me that Dr. Abdul Wahab 'Azzam (of Egypt) was also thinking of translating some of his work.[263]

The book *Rawai' Iqbal* became a valued piece of literature among the young generation of Arab countries. It has represented the life and poetry of Allama Iqbal in a proper way. So many scholars quote Allama Iqbal's poetry in their speeches and writings.[264]

Importance of Arabic language in Iqbal's view

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[261] Khalil, Dr. M. A. K, *Call of the marching Bell*, (Canda: St. John's New foundland, 1977), p. 243.

[262] Nadvi, Mawlana Abul al-Hasan, *Rawai' Iqbal* (Majlis Nashriyat-i-Islam, 1983), p. 15.

[263] Kidwai, Muhammad Asif, *Glory of Iqbal*, (Lahore: Progressive Books, 1977) p. 16.

[264] The book *Rawai' Iqbal* was also translated into English under the title of *Glory of Iqbal* by Muhammad Asif Kidwai and published in 1977 by Progressive Books Lahore.

Arabic has great importance all over the world. It is not only the national language of the Arabian countries but is spoken, read and written in all Muslim countries. United Nations considers it on of its official languages. European and American Universities have directed their students to learn another language as a second language, consequently, Arabic has been adopted by majority of the students.

Allama Iqbal belonged to an orthodox Muslim family and acquired religious education and learned Arabic in his childhood. His excellence in Arabic was such that "upon his graduation (in 1897), he was awarded two gold medals for his proficiency in Arabic and English".[265] During his stay in Europe "he was appointed professor of Arabic at the University of London for six months.[266] On his departure to London in 1931 to participate the Second Round Table Conference, he gave an interview to the representative of *The Bombay Chronicle*. Answering the question of the representative, he said:

> I have great faith in the Arabic Language which is in my opinion the only Eastern Language which has a future as a living language, I look upon it as a great band of Union among the Arabian Nations next to their faith.[267]

Almost all of his poetry and prose has been translated into Arabic and his thought had been appreciated in the Arabic world. In this article some of the important Arabic translations of Iqbal's Urdu poetry have been discussed and their significance highlighted.

BANG-I-DARA (Call of the Marching Bell)

This is the first collection of Urdu poetry composed by Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal. Its three parts have been arranged chronologically. The first part comprises of 49 poems and 13 odes written upto the year of 1905, Second part consists of 24 poems and 7 odes from the year 1905 to 1908 and the third and last part of *Bang-i-Dara* comprises of 70 poems and 8 odes from

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265 Maitre, Luce-Claude, *Introduction to the Thought of Iqbal* (Karachi: Ferozson Publishers D.N) p 2.

266 May, Dr. Lini S., *Iqbal his Life and Time* (Lahore: Sh Muhammad Ashraf Publishers, 1974), p. 54.

267 Dar, B.A., *Letter and Writings of Iqbal*, p. 60

the year 1908 onwards. This part also has 29 humorous poems. The *Bang-i-Dara* was first published on 3rd September, 1924.[268]

Sh. Al-Sawi Ali Sha'lan was one of the renowned Arab scholars who had translated Allama Iqbal's Urdu poetry into Arabic. He was blind and a professor at Al-Azhar University, Cairo (Egypt). Muhammad Hasan A'zami, a Pakistani national proceeded to Al-Azhar University for higher education who worked as a professor at the same institution after graduating from al-Azhar. He assisted Sh. Al-Sawi Ali Sha'lan in translation of Iqbal's poetry into Arabic prose and read out to sh. al-Sawi Ali Sha'lan who versified the same into Arabic. Because of fantastic and classical versified translation, Government of Pakistan gave him an opportunity to become official guest for the period of one year. During his stay in Pakistan, Government of Pakistan deputed Dr. Mahmood Ahmad Ghazi for his assistance. Specimen of his versified Arabic translation of Iqbal's famous poems *Shikwa* (complaint) and *Jawab-i-Shikwa* (Answer) are discussed here.

رحماك رب هل بغير جباهنا   عرف السجود بيتك المعمور

كانت شغاف قلوبنا لك مصحفا   يَحْوِى جلال كتابك المسطور

إن لم يكن هذا وفاء صادقا   فالخلق فى الدنيا بغير شعور

سلأ الشعوب جناتها و عصاتها   من ملحد عات و من مغرور

فاذا السحاب جرى سقاهم غيثه   واختصنا بصواعق التدمير

***

قد هبت الاصنام من بعد البلى   واسيقظت من قبل نفخ الصور

والكعبة العليا توارى اٰهلها   فكاۡنهم موتى لغير نشور

و قوافل الصحراءِ ضل حداتها   و غدت منازلها ظلال قبور

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[268] Hashmi, Rafi al-din, *Tasanif Iqbal*, p. 21

أَنَا مَا حسدت الكافرين وقـد فى انعم و مواكب و قصور

غـــــــــــــــــــــــــــدوا

بـل محنتـى أَلا أُرى فى أُمتـى عملا تقدمه صداق الحور[269]

Infidelity is mocking, hast thou some feeling or not?

Dost Thou have any regard for Thy own Tawhid or not?

We do not complain that their treasures are full

Who are not in possession of even basic social graces

Outrageous that infidels are rewarded with Houris and palaces

And the Poor Muslims are placated with only promise of Houris

We have been deprived of the former graces and favors

What is the matter, we are deprived of the former honors

Why is the material wealth rare among Muslims?

Thy omnipotence is boundless and inestimable.[270]

In the poem Jawab-i-Shikwa, Allama Iqbal replied to the Muslim on behalf of God that they were not actually Muslims and were living like non believers. If they proved themselves true Muslims, they could be rewarded with all these blessing and luxuries. They should be united rather separated.[271] The Arab poet renders Iqbal's thought into his own language in a beautiful style. Two stanzas are quoted here as an example:

أَتشكو أَن ترى الأَقوام فازوا بمجد لا يراه النائمونا

مشــــوا يهـــديى اوائلكــم وجـــدوا و ضيعتم تراث الأَولينا

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[269] Ghori, Syed Abdul Majid, *Diwan Muhammad Iqbal*, pp 96-97.

[270] Khalil, Dr., M.A.K., *Call of the Marching Bell*, p. 252.

[271] Iqbal, Dr. Muhammad, *Kuliyat-i-Iqbal*, p. 230

اَيحــــــرم عامـــــل ورد المعـــــالى و يسعد بالرق الخاملونا

اَلـــيس مـــن العدالـــة اَن اَرضــى يكون حصادها للزارعينا

تجلــى النــور فــوق الطــور بــاق فهل بقيى الكليم بطور سينا

اَلم يبعث لاَمتكم نبيّ يوحدكم على نهج الوئام

و مصـــــحفكم و قبلـــتكم جميعـــا منار للاَخوة والسلام

و فـــــوق الكـــل رحمـــن رحــــيم اله واحد رب الاَنام

فمـــــا نـــار اَلفـــتكم تـــولّى و اَمسيتم حيارى فى الظلام

و حســـن اللولـــو المكنـــون رهـــن بصوغ العقد فى حسن النظام[272]

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What did you say? "For the Muslim is only the promise of *houri*

Even if the Remonstrance be unreasonable decorum is necessary

Justice is the Creator of Existence, custom since eternity

When the infidel adopts Muslim ways he receives *houris* and palaces

Not a single one among you is longing for *houris*

The Effulgence of *Tur* exists but there is no Musa

The gain of this nation is one, also the loss is one

Only one is the prophet of all, *din* is one, *iman* is one

The Holy Haram is one, God is one, *Qur'an* is one

Would it have been very difficult for Muslims to be one

272 Ghori Syed Abdul Majid, *Dewan Muhammad Iqbal*, pp. 104-105.

Sects abound somewhere and somewhere are castes!

Are these the ways to progress in the world?[273]

Jalal Saeed al- Hafnawi, Professor of Oriental Languages, Department of Literature University of Cair (Egypt) had also translated the *Bang-i-Dara*. This is also a fantastic literal translation that was highly appreciated in the Arabic world. Here translation of a stanza from the poem *Bilad-i-Islamia* (The Muslim world)[274] is presented in which Iqbal praised the city of Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) Madinah an impressive manner:

- فيها مقام مصطفى، و زيارة مسجدها يعادل زيارة الكعبة

- فكأنها مثل الحج الاكبر بالنسبة لى

- انّك تتلألَيْنَ مثل الفص فى خاتم الوجود، وكان ارضك

- هى موضع ولادة عظمتك

- لقد التمس ملك الملوك العظيم الراحة فيك، ووجدت اُسم العالم

- الاُمان فيي كنفك

- وصار من يذكر اسمه من ملوك العالم خلقا للقيصر وريثا لعرش جمشيد[275]

But you are that land, O the resting place of Mustafa

Even to the Ka'bah whose sight is better than Hajj-i-Akbar

In the world's ring you are shining like a gem

Your land was the birth place of our grandeur

That magnificent Emperor got rest in your midst

[273] Khalil, Dr., M.A.K., *Call of the Marching Bell*, p. 285.

[274] Iqbal, Dr. Muhammad, *Kuliyat-i-Iqbal*, p. 172

[275] Hafnawi, Jalal Saeed, *Dewan Salslat al- Jaras* (Cairo: al-Majlis al-Ala al- Thaqafa, 2003), p. 173.

Under whose protection in the world nations got security

Whose successors became rulers of worlds' empires

Became successors of Caesar, inheritors of Jam's throne.[276]

The poem *Bachche-ki-Du'a* (Child's Supplication)[277] has a universal popularity which is an anthology of the wishes of an ideal Muslim child to serve the human beings as a religious obligation. Its beautiful and attractive translation by Jalal Saeed al-Hafnawi is quoted here.

- تتردد امنيتى على شفتى، دعاء و تضرعا الى الله ان يجعل حياتى سراجا منيرا

- و اكون سبباً فى ازالة الظلام الحالك الذى يسود العالم، و يضيء نورى فى كل مكان

- وليكن وجودى زينة لوطنى، مثلما يزدان البستان بالورود الازاهير

- ولتكن حياتى يا رب كالفراشة، ولاحب يا رب نور العلم

- وليكن جل همى حماية الفقراء، و حب المساكين والضعفاء

- اللهم نجنى من كل شر، واهدنى سواء الصراط[278]

My longing comes to my lips as supplication of mine

O God! May like the candle be the life of mine!

May the world's darkness disappear through the life of mine!

May every place light up with the sparkling light of mine!

May my homeland through me attain elegance

As the garden through flowers attain elegance

May my life like that of moth be, O Lord!

May I love the lamp of knowledge, O Lord!

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[276] Khalil, Dr., M.A.K., *Call of the Marching Bell*, p. 226.

[277] Iqbal, Dr. Muhammad, *Kuliyat-i-Iqbal*, p. 65

[278] Hafnawi, Jalal Saeed, *Dewan Salslat al-Jaras* p. 37

May supportive of the poor my life's way be

May loving the old, the suffering my way be

O God! Protect me from the evil ways

Show me the path leading to the good ways.[279]

BAL-I-JIBRIL (Wings of Jibril)

The *Bal-i-Jibril* is second collection of Allama Iqbal's poetry which comprises of two portions of odes, first portion contains sixteen poems whereas the second contains sixty one. Moreover forty one quatrains, four stanzas and fifty nine poems are included. *Bal-i-Jibril* was published in January 1935 for the first time.[280]

It was translated into Arabic by Prof. Abdul Moeen al-Maloohi and versified by Prof. Zuhayr Zaza, it was based on French translation by Mirza Said uz Zafar Chaghtai and Suzanne Bussac. It is included in the *Dewan Muhammad Iqbal* (part-1) complied by Abdul Majid Ghori. It is an explanatory versification of Iqbal's poetry. For example, in the poem *Duai-i-Tariq* (in the Battlefield of Andalusia)[281] Iqbal praised the Muslim soldiers and martyrs. Al-Maloohi translates it into Arabic as fellows:

هذىی الكماة عبادك الاۡخيار   حملوا عناء العالمين و ساروا

اۡصــحاب ســرک والسـياده و طـبعهم   والنور فى نظراتهم والنار

فعلـت كموسـى فى البحـار عصـيهم   و تراجعت لخطاهم الاۡنهار

البحـر حبـة خـر دل فى كفهـم   والعشق فى اۡرواحهم إعصار

عزفـوا عـن الـدارين إلا اۡنهـم   علم على الدارين لا ينهار

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[279] Khalil, Dr., M.A.K., *Call of the Marching Bell*, pp. 80-81.

[280] Hashmi, Rafi al-din, *Tasanif Iqbal*, p. 28

[281] Iqbal, Dr. Muhammad, *Kuliyat-i-Iqbal*, p. 432

نيـــل الشـــهادة للموحـــد مطمـــح   و   اذا   تقحم   فالجراح   غبار

لا سـبى غانيـة و سـلب خزانـة   و   مطامح   الهمم   الكبار   كبار

كـل العبـاد علـى اخـتلاف عـروقهم   ترجو   رجاء   شقائق   النعمان

ترجـو مـن العـربى لـون دمائـه   و   تضج   ليل   نهار   فى   البستان[282]

These warriors, victorious/ These worshippers of Time,

Whom Thou hast granted the will/ To win power in Thy name;

Who cleave rivers and woods in twain/ Whose terror turns mountains into dust;

The care not for the world;/ They care not for its pleasures;

In their passion, in their zeal,/ In their love for thee, O Lord,

They aim at martyrdom, /Not the rule of the earth[283]

Another translation and versification of *Bal-i-Jibril* by Prof. Abdul Moeen al-Maloohi himself was also published by *Dar Tallas* Demoscus, which is a literal and more effective translation. For example translation of Iqbal's famous poem *Mullah aur Bahist* (The Cleric in Paradise)[284] is quoted here:

انا ايضاً كنت هناك، ولست اٮٔستطيع السكوت،

عند ما بشر الله الملاّ بالفردوس،

تقدمت فقلت: "يا رب عفوک

ولكن الملاّ لا ترضيه الحور ولا الخمور ولا النزهات على ضنفة النهر

ليس الفردوس داراً لاٮٔصحاب الجدل الجامدين.

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[282] Ghori Syed Abdul Majid, *Dewan Muhammad Iqbal*, p 498.

[283] Saddiqui, Naeem, Bal-i-Jibril (USA: Calefornia, Alhamara Publications, 1996), p 105.

[284] Iqbal, Dr. Muhammad, *Kuliyat-i-Iqbal*, p. 445.

المناقشات والخصومات جزء من طبيعة هذا المخلوق

مشاغله قائمة على الاضرار بالقوميات الشعوب:

والواقع ان ليس فى الفردوس مسجد ولا كنيسة ولا معبد"[285]

When in a vision I saw

A mullah ordered to paradise,

Unable to hold my tongue,

I said something in this wise:

Pardon me, O Lord,

For these bold words of mine,

But he will not be pleased

With the houris and the wine.

He loves to dispute and fight,

And furiously wrangle,

But paradise is no place

For this kind of jangle.

His task is to disunite

And leave people in the lurch,

But paradise has no temple,

No mosque and no church.[286]

Prof. Zuhayr Zaza also translated and versified the famous book of *Bal-i-Jibril* which is in the same style a literal translation. The poem *Aik Nojwan*

[285] Maluhi, Abdul Moeen, *Jinnah-i-Jibril* (Demascuss: Dar Tallas, 1987), p. 188.

[286] Saddiqui, Naeem, Bal-i-Jibril USA: p. 113.

Kaya Naam (to a young man)[287], may be presented in which Iqbal criticized the laziness and indolence of Muslim youth. Prof. Zaza's translation reads:

سجادك العجمى هذا والاثاث الانكليزى

ما ذا يفيدك يا عزيزى

ما ذا تفيدك ثروة حصلتها

فى مثل لبّهة الملوك بذلتها

لبكى لاجلك يا عزيزى

هل ذقت يوما غبط الايمان

لو بأس حيدر لو رضىٰ سلمان

ارحم شبابك يا عزيزى

سلع الحضاره لا تقاس بذاتك

اتظنّها ثمناً لكل حياتك

لخطات جدا يا عزيزى[288]

Thy sofas are from Europe, they carpets from Iran:

This slothful opulence evokes my sigh of pity

In vain if thou possesseth Kosroe's imperial pomp,

If thou dost not possess prowess or contentment

Seek not thy joy or greatness in the glitter of Western life,

For in the contentment lies a Muslim's joy and greatness.[289]

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287 Iqbal, Dr. Muhammad, *Kuliyat-i-Iqbal*, p. 447.

288 Zaza, Zahee, *Jmahi-i-Jibril* (Dar Iqbal litaba'at wa Nashar). P. 264.

The *Bal-i-Jibril* has also been translated into Arabic by Dr. Hazim Mahfooz and versified by Dr. Hussain Mujeeb al-Misri. For instance, the poem *Firshtoon ka Geet* (song of the Angels)[290] could be observed. In this poem, Iqbal pointed out the shortcomings and immaturities of the human beings. They forget the fundamental objective or purpose of their creation. The Arabic translation of this poem reads:

<div dir="rtl">

نشيد الملائكة

لجام لعقل، مقام لعشق   فاين الذى منهما المتبقى

و شرب لخمر و شيخ اجتهاد   تربصهم   انما   للعباد

و نشوة مال و نشوة حال   و عبد ولكن عظيم الجلال

و علم وفن فداء الطمع   سجال لعشق فاۤى سمع

و جوهر عشق ولكن بذات   ولم يحظ يوما لنا بالتفات[291]

</div>

Reason is unbridled yet,

Love is still a dream;

Thy work remains unfinished still

O Craftsman of Eternity!

They days and nights revolve,

Unfolding evils new;

The rulers of body and soul,

[289] Saddiqui, Naeem, Bali-i-Jibril USA: p. 115.

[290] Iqbal, Dr. Muhammad, *Kuliyat-i-Iqbal*, p. 432.

[291] Mahfooz, Dr. Hazim Muhammad Ahmad/Misri, Dr. Hussain Majeeb، *Badaiy-al- Allama Iqbal*, (Cairo: 2002), p. 257.

Are ruthless tyrants all.

The rich are drunk with wealth;

The pious are drunk with piety;

The homeless wander in the streets,

The lords of palaces are Olympian.

Learning, religion, arts and science,

Are all slaves of greed:

The love that solves all riddles,

Has yet to shower its blessings.[292]

Jalal Saeed al-Hafnawi also translated and versified the *Bal-i-Jibril* into Arabic which is a literal translation for general public. For example *Du'a* (A prayer, written in the Mosque of Cordova)[293] may be seen, wherein Iqbal remembered the glory of the Mosque and prayed to God for elevation and exaltation of his ideas. Jalal Saeed translating Iqbal's thought says:

هذا هو وضوئى من اَجل صلاتى

و دعاء قلبى فى تضرعى

ان صبحة اَهل الصفاء نور و حضور و سرور

والشقائق على شاطىء النهر منتشية و متاَلمة

مَن من الرفاق على طريق المحبـة،

و اُمنيتى تبقى معى *294*

This is my prayer,

And this is my ablution:

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292 Saddiqui, Naeem, *Bali-i-Jibril* USA: p. 115.

293 Iqbal, Dr. Muhammad, *Kuliyat-i-Iqbal*, p. 419.

294 Hafnawi, Jalal Saeed, *Jinah-i-Jibril*, Cairo: p. 119.

I sing a hymn to God,

Suffused with my life-blood.

The souls of the pious who prayed

In these holy precincts,

Are companions of my passion,

And friends of my ecstasy.

But the path of love

Is lonely, remote, unknown;

All I have with me,

Is my desire, my yearning.[295]

Mawlana Abu al-Hassan Nadvi was a great scholar and had command over Arabic language. Although his book on Dr. Iqbal is in prose but has the rhythm like poetry. Here we present translation of Iqbal's famous poem *Masjid-i-Qurtba* (Mosque of Cordova)[296] from his book *Rawai' Iqbal* which is considered a fantastic translation. This book was translated into English and Urdu. An extract from Nadvi's translation is quoted below:

<div dir="rtl">

ان بینی و بینک اٗیها المسجد العظیم! نسباً فی الایمان و الحنان،

و تحریک العاطفة و اثارة الاحزان، اِن الانسان فی تکوینه و حلقه

قبضة من طین لا تخرج من هذا العالم، و لکن له صدراً

لا یقل عن العرش کرامة و سمواً، فقد اٗشرق بنور ربه و حمل

امانة الله، ان الملائکة تمتاز بالسجود الدائم، و لکن من اٗین

لهم تلک اللوعة واللذة التیی امتاز بها سجود الانسان؟!**[297]**

</div>

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[295] Saddiqui, Naeem, *Bali-i-Jibril* USA: p. 95.

[296] Iqbal, Dr. Muhammad, *Kuliyat-i-Iqbal*, p. 419.

[297] Nadvi, Mawlana Abu al-Hasan, *Rawai Iqbal*, pp. 124-125.

The English rendering of above quoted extract by Kidwai is as under: "O magnificent Mosque! In love and eagerness we both are alike. There is a mystical affinity between you and me. Man, in his creation, is a handful of dust but his heart is the envy of the ninth heaven. The human heart is also lit up with the luster of Divinity and the joy of Presence. Angels, indeed, are famous for unending prostration but the warmth and delighted of human prostration has not been granted to them".[298]

<p style="text-align:center">*ZARB-I-KALIM* (The Rod of Moses)</p>

Allama Iqbal's third Urdu collection is *Zarb-i-Kalim* (The Rod of Moses), an anthology of Iqbal's creative and revolutionary thoughts. The *Zarb-i-Kalim* was translated into Arabic by a renowned Arabic scholar Dr. Abdul Wahab 'Azzam, which has been included in *Diwan Muhammad Iqbal* complied by Sayyed Abdul Majid Ghori. For example, the poem *Muslimanoon ka Zawal*[299] (The Decline of Muslims) is presented. In the translation of the Arab poet translated Iqbal ideas as follows:

إن كان ذا الذهب الذى يقضى الحوائج فى الدنى

فــــالفقر صـــــاح ميســـــر ما لا يسره الغنى

شبان قومى لو تحلوا بالشجاعه ديدنا

لم تلف صعلكتى اُقل من الملوك تصونا

الامر ليس كما زعمت و قد وصفت المومنا

فزعمت اُن طماحه من قلة المال انثنى

ان كان فى الدنيا بدا لى جوهر فيه سنا

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[298] Kidwai, Muhammad Asif, *Glory of Iqbal*, p. 140

[299] Iqbal, Dr. Muhammad, *Kuliyat-i-Iqbal*, p. 532.

<div dir="rtl">

فمن التصعلک قد بدا لا بالخزائن و القنی[300]

</div>

Though wealth and gold provide

The worldly needs of man:

But what *Faqr* can bestow

Now wealth or gold e'er can.

If youth of nation mine

Were jealous of their creed,

My *Qalandar's* state won't mind

Alexander's might indeed.

With ease you can divine

To some thing else is due:

Penury can not cause

Decline of Moslems True.

Wealth has played no part

To bring my worth to light:

May *Faqr* this spell as cast,

The share of wealth is slight.[301]

Similarly, Dr. Hussain Mujeeb Misri's compilation of Allama Iqbal's Urdu poetry has also been considered a beautiful translation. In the translation of the Iqbal's poem *Shukar-wa-Shikayat* (Thanks cum Complaint)[302], Dr. Misir Says:

<div dir="rtl">

اَنا عبد رق جهول جهول اَنا ملهم و بهذا اَقول

</div>

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[300] Ghori, Syed Abdul Majid, Dewan Muhammad Iqbal, p. 26 (Part II)

[301] Shah, Syed Akbar Ali, *The Rod of Moses*, (Lahore Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1983), p. 5.

[302] Iqbal, Dr. Muhammad, *Kuliyat-i-Iqbal*, pp. 534-535.

منحــت الحماســة كــل الــورى   باًمرى اًنا كل فرد درى

ولى نفس فى خريف ظهر   فسرت سرورا طيور السحر

ولكن خلقت بهذا الوطن حياة لعبد اليها ركن[303]

Though unwise, thanks to God I must express

For bonds with celestial world that I possess.

My songs fresh zeal to hearts of men impart,

Their charm extends to lands that lie apart.

In Autumn my breath makes birds that chirp in morn,

Imbibe much joy and feel no more forlorn.

O God, to such a land I have been sent,

Where men in abject bondage feel content.[304]

Mawlana Abu-al-Hassan Nadvi, an Indian national, has a great respect and reputation in Arabic countries due to his scholarly writings. The translation of Iqbal's poem into Arabic prose has influence the Arab world and has spread Iqbal's thought in Arabic speaking people. The famous poem of Iqbal *Aye Ruh-i-Muhammad* (O Soul/Spirit of Muhammad)[305] has been translated by Nadvi in a beautiful style as follows:

لقد تشتت شمل اًمتك يا محمد، يا رسول الله: فالى

اًين يلجا المسلم الحزين و الى من ياًوى؟ لقد سكن بحر العرب

المضطرب المائج، و فقدت الاًمة العربية ذلك اللوع و ذلك

---

[303] Mahfooz, Dr. Hazim Muhammad Ahmad/Misri, Dr. Hussain Majeeb, *Badaiy-al-Allama Iqbal*, p. 257.

[304] Shah, Syed Akbar Ali, *The Rod of Moses*, p. 7.

[305] Iqbal, Dr. Muhammad, *Kuliyat-i-Iqbal*, p. 561.

القلق الذی عرفت به، فالی من اشکو اُلمی، و اُین اُجد من
یساعدنی علئ اُلامی و اُحزانی؟ وما ذا یفعل حادی اُمتک،
وکیف یقطع الطریق الشاسع، و یطوی السفر البعید، فی هذه
الجبال و المهامه، و قد ضل سبیله، و فقد زاده، و انقطع عن
الرکب. بالله! قل لی ما ذا یصنع حامل دعوتک، المومن
برسالتک، و اُین یجد زملاء ه و رفقته؟**306**

The *Millat* is shambles, into disorder it has been thrown

Tell us yourself, O Prophet, which way should your faithful turn?

Now no more the Arabian Sea with love of tumult foams,

Which way should the tempest concealed within me turn?

Though there is no caravan left, no camel, no provision here

From this rocky desert which way shall those singing the camel song turn?

Now at last, Oh spirit of Muhammad, Unravel this knot.[307]

ARMAGHAN-I-HIJAZ (Gift of the Hijaz)

The last and fourth Urdu collection is called *Armaghan-i-Hijaz* which was published in November 1938 for the first time.[308] It consists of 7 poems 13 Stanzas and 12 odes. The most popular translation of the *Armaghan-i-Hijaz* is of Dr. Sameer Abdul Hameed Ibrahim which was published by al-Majlis al-Ala li-Thaqafat. Explanations were also added to it in footnotes. Specimen from the translations of Iqbal's famous poem *Awaz-i-Ghalib* (A mysterious voice)[309] has been submitted here. In this poem Iqbal inquired and

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306 Nadvi, Mawlana Abu al-Hasan, *Rawai' Iqbal*, p. 119.

307 Kidwai, Muhammad Asif, Glori of Iqbal, p. 135

308 Hashmi, Rafi al-Din, *Tasanif Iqbal*, p. 37.

309 Iqbal, Dr. Muhammad, *Kuliyat-i-Iqbal*, p. 726.

questioned the Muslim why they suffered from anxieties due to disregard of valuable Islamic ideology.

يأتى صوت من العرش الاعلى ذات صباح، يهتف:

"كيف ضاع جوهر ادراكك؟"

كيف اصبح مشرط التحقيق لديك كالا؟

لماذا لا تستطيع ان تمزق اكباد النجوم!

لقد كنت جدير بخلافة الظاهر و الباطن

هل تكون الشعلة اسيرة للاعشاب الجافة؟

لما ذا لا تخضع لك الشمس والقمر؟

لما ذا لا ترتجف الافلاك من انظارك؟

مع أن الدم يجرى فى عروقك

لكنك لا تملك حمية الافكار، ولا الفكر الجرى

العين التيى تخلو من النظر الظاهر

تكون مضيئة لكنها لا ترى العالم

لم يبق فيى احضانك صفاء مرآة ضميرك

يا قتل السلطنة والملا والتمشيخ *310*

At dawn thus echoes a voice beyond sky,

How you lost the essence of ken and pry.

The knife of they hunt how you made blunt,

---

310 Ibrahim, Dr. Sameer Abdul Hameed, *Armghan-i-Hijaz*, (Cairo: Majlis al- Ala li Thiqafat, 2002, p. 215.

The shining stars why you could ne'er hunt.

To thy heritage, goes the caliphate,

Can flame be tied to tuft and hays fate.

The stars, sun and moon thy slavers are not why,

From thee shivers not, why not the whole sky.

That blood still runs in the veins though,

No heat of thoughts nor a smashing dash so.

A lucent eye though, but lacks seeing sense,

The eye which lacks a holy guide's glance.

No longer looks now thy crystal conscience,

O prey of king's and mullah, and Pir's guidance.[311]

An other translation by the same author has also been published by Iqbal Academy Pakistan and is an excellent interpretation of Allama Iqbal's thought in simple words. For instance translation of a quatrain[312] is quoted below.

<div dir="rtl">

انا محسود الغنى فى حالة الفقر

لان فقرى ذو غيرة

الحذر من ذلک الفقر و تلک الحاجة

فالتصوف قد علم المسلمين الذل[313]

</div>

I, m envied by rich in a poor state too,

As envy for honour is my view

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[311] Kabir, Q.A. *Armghan-i-Hijaz,* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1983), p. 144.

[312] Iqbal, Dr. Muhammad, *Kuliyat-i-Iqbal*, p. 731.

[313] Ibrahim, Dr. Sameer Abdul Hameed, *Iqbal Dewan Amrghan-i-Hijaz,* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2004), p. 211

Shun the faqr's from which may ever lead,

A Muslim to bow in want and need.[314]

Similarly, translation of Dr. Hussain Mujeeb al-Misri was welcomed by the Arabic world. It is a good translation with elaborations and explanations in footnotes. *Iblees Ki Majlis-i-Shora* (Parliament of Satan)[315] is a magnificent poem in which Iqbal brought into the public views regarding the meeting of Satan with his disciples and advisors. In this poem he Satan discussed with them their performance to mislead the human beings and guided them to improver their struggle to achieve the goal. Here second address of Satan has been selected from the translation of Dr. Hussain Mujeeb al-Msiri:

فاين اتعاظ بما فى الكتاب   فللمال كل شيوع اجتلاب

و فى ليلــة الشـــرق كـــان الظـــلام   بياض يد اٌين من كان رام

اٌخاف و فى يومنا لا اٌريد   ظهور رسول بشرع جديد

فمن مثله اننى اٌحذر   نساء اٌراه دواما نضر

و قتلا يريد لمن قد ملک   من العبد يخلو طريقا سلک

و تطهير مال له ما يشاء   امين على ثروة ذو ثراء

و ذى ثورة انما نمتلک   هى الاٌرض لله لا للملک

و ياليت هذا ناٌى عن عيون   و للمومنين فاٌين اليقين

بحكمته هذا فليشتغل   بقراٌنه ذاک فليحتفل[316]

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[314] Kabir, Q.A. *Armghan-i-Hijaz*, p. 145.

[315] Iqbal, Dr. Muhammad, *Kuliyat-i-Iqbal*, pp. 709-711.

[316] Mahfooz, Dr. Hazim Muhammad Ahmad/Misri, Dr. Hussain Majeeb, *Badaiy-al-Allama Iqbal*, p. 380.

I know this nation to Quran holds not,

The old craze for wealth is the Momin's thought

In dark nights of East this point I behold,

The sleeves of Harem Sheikhs no white hand hold.

I am but afraid that modern age needs,

May not force this age to know Prophet's creed.

Beware! Hundred times from the Prophet's Act,

It guards women honour, makes man perfect.

A death knell to those who made the man slave,

I ruled out kingship, no beggary it gave.

It cleaned the man's wealth from every stain,

I made the rich trustees of wealth's wrong drain.

O bigger change could be of deeds and thoughts,

This earth owns to Allah, to a king not.

His Law be kept hidden from whole world's eye,

To my solace Momin lacks a faith high.

Let him be fastened in metaphysics lone,

In his own meanings of the Koran's tone.[317]

Iqbal's Urdu poetry has been translated into Arabic by famous Arabic scholars. Iqbal's thought has also been rendered into Arabic prose and poetry. Such translations helped spread Iqbal's message throughout the Arab world. the effects of these works can be observed in any part of Arabic speaking countries as Iqbal is acknowledged as the philosopher-poet there.

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[317] Kabir, Q. A., *Armghan-i-Hijaz*, pp. 133-34-.