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PREFACE

Iqbal is one of the pre-eminent writers of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. Indeed, the attention he has received from numerous writers, translators, and critics from Western as well as Islamic countries testifies to his stature as a world literary figure. While his primary reputation is that of a poet, Iqbal has not lacked admirers for his philosophical thought. He has in fact been called "the most serious Muslim philosophical thinker of modern times." The all-important appellation of "poet-philosopher" is thus well deserved: Iqbal's poetry and philosophy do not exist in isolation from each other; they are integrally related, his poetry serving as a vehicle for his thought.

As the famous Cambridge scholar A. J. Arberry had once remarked, "Poets have played a prominent, in some instances indeed a leading part, in that most exciting drama of modem times, the revolt against internal corruption, and against external domination, intellectual as well as political." Iqbal is the best articulated Muslim response to totalizing claims of Modernity that the Islamic world has produced in the 20th century. His response to the worldview of Modernity has three dimensions:

- A creative engagement with the conceptual paradigm of modernism at a sophisticated philosophical level through his prose writings, mainly his *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* which present his basic philosophic insights
- His Urdu and Persian poetry which is the best embodiment of poetically mediated thought, squarely in the traditional continuity of Islamic literature and perhaps the finest flowering of wisdom poetry, or contemplative poetry or inspired poetry in modern times.
- As a political activist/social reformer— rising up to his social responsibility, his calling at a critical phase of history.

It is a well known biographical note that Iqbal spent three years in Europe during 1905-08. He began his graduate studies at the University of Cambridge, went on to the University of Munich to get his PhD and then returned to London to attain a Bar at Law from Lincoln's Inn. In 1905, he arrived in Cambridge, entering Trinity College as a research scholar as, in the

early part of the twentieth century, Cambridge was a renowned centre of Arabic and Persian studies. The European phase of Iqbal's life is notable for several reasons. During this period, Iqbal gave almost exclusive attention to his studies; never before or after was he to lead such an intense academic life. His devotion showed results– three degrees from three prestigious schools in three years was a remarkable feat by any standard; something that none of his contemporaries and fellow students in England– Jinnah, Gandhi, Nehru– managed to accomplish. But that was only the outward part of it. Something more profound and important than these feats of academic excellence was realized– a full awareness of the conceptual shift that the enlightenment project and modernity's worldview had brought in human thought, the damage that it had done to the academia, and the means of repairing related ills. The present Seminar tries to explore the significance of this important phase of Iqbal's intellectual career.

His stay in Europe proved to be a crucial turning point in his intellectual development. Even though he was already an accomplished poet and thinker before his departure for Europe, it was only after his return that his work began to display the universalistic characteristics that make it the perfect bridge between the East and the West. This sets Iqbal apart from acculturated liberal Muslim thinkers for whom exposure to Western ideas becomes an occasion for a wholesale critique of the Islamic tradition. At the same time Iqbal's immersion in the Western academy gave him the analytical tools and methods he would later use to subject the received Islamic tradition to critical scrutiny. This sets Iqbal apart from dogmatic zealots who see nothing problematic in the received tradition and nothing of value in the modern academy. Iqbal's constructive-critical engagement with the Islamic tradition in the aftermath of his studies in Europe is complemented by a constructive-critical engagement with modern Western thought.

In addition to a direct response to Goethe's *Divan* (in the form of *Payam-i-Mashriq*) and direct dialogue with McTaggert, Iqbal appropriated the ideas of thinkers like Bergson, Whitehead, James, Dewey (and others). He combined their insights with Muslim thinkers like Rumi, Ibn Khaldun, Ibn 'Arabi, Shatibi (and others) to offer a proposal for the "reconstruction of religious thought in Islam." If read carefully this proposal is a response to not only a

particular condition in the Islamic tradition, it also speaks to a crisis within the modern Western philosophical tradition.

Iqbal's vision seeks to go beyond the Kantian critique of pure reason, practical reason and judgment, and argues for not just the possibility of metaphysics but an affirmation of religion. In other words, while Iqbal is a Muslim from the East, he is also acutely aware of the rupture in modern Western philosophy and offers a constructive proposal for healing this rupture.

On 17th November 1931 Iqbal visited Cambridge again after a period of 23 years. A reception was given in his honour where some of his former teachers and Dr. Nicholson made their speeches and welcomed him since, by then, he had become Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, the most accomplished poet of his age, a renowned thinker and a celebrated social activist. The advice that he offered to the students and other members of the Cambridge gathering at the end of his remarks made in the reception eloquently speak of the fact that he, having realized the ills of modernity, had formulated his vision of the systems of its repair that could be drawn from Tradition.

For all of these reasons (and more) it was worth commemorating the 100th anniversary of Iqbal's completion of his studies in Europe and reflecting on not only his personal accomplishments but also on his contemporary relevance. It is for this purpose that a Seminar titled "The Contemporary Relevance of Muhammad Iqbal"— *An International Seminar in Cambridge on the Occasion of the 100th Anniversary of Iqbal's Completion of his Studies in Europe* was held at the University of Cambridge (Trinity College) on 19th–20th June, 2008. The Seminar consisted of three sessions under the themes "The Relevance of Tradition," "The Promise of Modernity," and "Religion in the 21st Century." (Details of the event are given in the following pages). Nine papers were delivered at the seminar by scholars from Canada (1), USA (2), UK (3), and Pakistan (3). The theme of the seminar was the relevance of Iqbal's insights to contemporary discussions on the relationship between religion/modernity, east/west, and tradition/progress. A number of the papers noted, either explicitly or implicitly, that Iqbal's insights can enrich inter-civilizational dialogue as well as intra-civilizational dialogue. At the conclusion of the seminar there was general consensus that the proceedings had been

extremely successful. This consensus was based on the quality of the papers that were delivered and the level of discussion that the papers generated. This Volume, which replaces Vol. 49, No. 4 (Oct., 2008) of *Iqbal Review* assembles the papers presented at the Seminar at Cambridge augmented by some of the materials drawn from the Seminar "*Iqbal as a Bridge between the East and the West,* held earlier at the University of London by Iqbal Academy (UK) on 17th June 2008, in collaboration with the Iqbal Academy Pakistan.

Following is an overview of the insights that transpired from two days of intense deliberations on the theme.

- Iqbal was a man whose thought was focused on God, intensely engaged with the life of the Spirit. His entire project, in broad terms, related to the task of restoring God to the public and the private spheres, not in the way it is visualized and enacted nowadays, but in the more subtle and time-tested manner of elucidating the essential relationship between the human and the Divine; reaching for the human heart through his wisdom poetry and, through the medium of his Urdu and English prose, removing obstacles which make it difficult or impossible for the mind to understand. Intelligence has its rights, and these have not always been upheld by the representatives of religion. The mental faculties need to be appeased and re-assured. This is what Iqbal set out to do. Through his first hand encounter with the paradigm of Modernity in the West, especially at Cambridge, he had developed deep insights into the worldviews of Modernity and the overarching perspective that governed this important conceptual shift brought about in human thought.
- He had a tremendous capability of bringing different, even conflicting, perspectives into conversation.
- He was keenly aware of the ills of Modernity and, in a sense, presaged the debates that took centre stage after the advent of Postmodernism and are even ardently pursued in the present day Academy in the context of the Human Sciences as well as their relationship to Religion and Science. A large part of his poetical and prose works is focused on the deficiencies and shortcomings of the worldview of Modernity and its radical departure from the "human collectivity" with regard to

the view of Reality of which we can speak for the entire Premodern world in the singular and may claim that a common metaphysical "spine" underlies the differences in the worldviews, the theologies of the classical languages of the human soul, the world's great religions or wisdom traditions.

- He was also sensitive to and clearly conscious of the limitations of the sources of wisdom at the disposal of the worldview of Modernity and its inadequacy to map certain regions of Reality, to register certain types/modes of knowledge and to successfully deal with and provide guidance for certain aspects of human life.
- Iqbal has something to offer to philosophy, he has something to offer to science and he has something to offer to religion; to repair the ills in their respective domains by tapping at the sources of wisdom offered by Tradition. That is what makes him relevant today and for the future.

Muhammad Suheyl Umar

Dr. Basit Bilal Koshul

(Editors)

IQBAL'S APPROACH TO THE QUR'AN

Ahmed Afzaal

The term *hierophany* was coined by Mircea Eliade (1907-1986), one of the leading historians of religion in the twentieth-century, as a descriptive label for a wide variety of religious phenomena. A hierophany may be defined as the manifestation or revelation of "the Sacred" in an otherwise mundane aspect of reality– a time, a place, an object, a movement, a gesture, a person– by virtue of which that aspect of reality is experienced as *sacred* by a particular community of believers.[1] Since whatever is experienced as sacred also symbolizes what is most real, all hierophanies are characterized by extraordinary *power*. A sacred text, whether written or oral, represents a *hierophany*; as such, it is experienced as the carrier or locus of immense power.

This essay is about Iqbal's approach to the Qur'an. It began with a reference to Mircea Eliade because his notion of hierophany can give us a conceptual handle on the phenomenon called *scripture*– which is a particular kind of sacred text– of which the Holy Qur'an is a special instance. Because sacred texts represent hierophanies, they cannot be approached in the way we routinely approach mundane or profane texts. They have to be handled with care; the readers have to exercise great respect by being mindful of the extraordinary power that can flow from these texts.

To approach a sacred text is very much like walking the proverbial bridge over hell that is said to be thinner than a hair's breadth and sharper than a sword's edge. The main function of the Qur'an is to provide guidance, but a great deal depends on the reader. Approaching the Qur'an requires a delicate balancing act whose successful execution is rewarded by the paradise of guidance, but a single wrong step can plunge the reader into the depths of misguidance. Typically, two kinds of errors are most dangerous: First, the readers may arrogate to themselves a superior, but entirely fictional, vantage point from where they would judge the sacred text and find it deficient in

[1] Mircea Eliade. 1961. *The Sacred and the Profane*. New York.

multiple ways. Second, the readers may convince themselves that their particular understanding transcends any distorting interference and is therefore identical with the one "correct" meaning permitted by the sacred text itself. In both scenarios of error, the *relationship* between the readers and the sacred text would effectively come to a dead end, mainly due to the perceived absence on the part of the readers of any possibility of fresh discoveries or meaningful encounters. On the other hand, readers who avoid these errors find themselves in a situation of perpetual tension, an obvious sign that their relationship with the sacred text is alive and well.

We explore Iqbal's approach to the Qur'an in this essay because it can serve as a model for how to avoid the above errors and how to develop and maintain a living relationship with the Qur'an. It can also help us appreciate the delicate balancing act that Iqbal himself performed with respect to the Qur'an.

A perusal of Iqbal's biography makes it clear that he had virtually grown up with the Qur'an. The practice of starting children's education by teaching them how to read and recite the Qur'an has now become an endangered remnant of the Islamic past, but it was fully alive in nineteenth-century India. Iqbal began his formal education in a local mosque at the wonderful age of four years and four months by learning to recognize and repeat the words and sounds of the Holy Qur'an. In subsequent decades, the Qur'an would remain a central part of his intellectual and devotional life, shaping his thinking patterns and opening up new vistas for his philosophical and poetic explorations. Until his death in 1938, Iqbal did not abandon the daily practice of reciting the Qur'an both in and outside of the liturgical prayer, particularly in the meditative solitude of his early morning vigils. All accounts agree that the relationship between the man and the scripture became increasingly intimate and emotional in his mature years.

Iqbal's approach to the Qur'an is thoroughly experiential– firmly grounded in his life-long practice of reciting the Qur'an and pondering upon its meanings. In this living relationship, Iqbal posed questions to the Qur'an and received answers that not only challenged him but also shaped and directed the yearnings of his soul. In traditional Islamic terms, Iqbal's approach to the Qur'an was based on personal realization and insight (*tahqiq*)

as opposed to conformity to authoritative teachings or interpretations (*taqlid*). The roots of this experiential approach are to be found, most significantly, in his childhood. They seem to have originated in a shift of perspective that was suggested to him by his pious and mystically inclined father, Shaykh Nur Muhammad. The shift of perspective is apparently a simple one, but it seems to have had a profound and long-lasting influence on how Iqbal would relate to the Qur'an and how its teachings would come to shape his own thinking patterns.

Having witnessed his young son's habit of reciting the Qur'an after the pre-dawn prayer, Shaykh Nur Muhammad once said: "Son! Whenever you recite the Qur'an, do so as if it is being revealed to you. By reading the Qur'an like this, it will soon permeate your very being."[2]

This incident was verbally recounted by Iqbal only a few months before his death; the timing itself seems to indicate that he had, in fact, taken his father's advice to heart.[3] Iqbal had already expressed in an Urdu couplet this notion of reading the scripture with an attitude of maximum receptivity, with a mind that is open and willing to be shaped by whatever it happens to receive, as a necessary condition for untangling the knotty problems and questions both of scriptural interpretation and of human existence itself.[4]

ترے ضمیر پہ جب تک نہ ہو نزول کتاب
گرہ کشا ہے نہ رازی نہ صاحب کشاف

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[2] Quoted in Sayyid Nazir Niyazi, 1971. *Iqbal kay Huzur*, pp. 60 and 61. Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan. Translation from the original Urdu is my own.

[3] According to above citation, Iqbal recounted this event on January 10, 1938.

[4] Muhammad Iqbal, 1990. *Kulliyat-i Iqbal* (Urdu), p. 402. Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan.

Iqbal had quoted his father anonymously in prose as well, when he wrote that "no understanding of the Holy Book is possible until it is actually revealed to the believer just as it was revealed to the Prophet."[5]

Why is personal experience such a crucial element for understanding the Holy Qur'an? Written texts, especially sacred and authoritative ones, have a tendency to appear static and fixed in a way that seems to allow only a single set of "correct" meanings. This apparent rigidity of written texts and their seemingly monolithic message stem not from the texts themselves but from the unique configuration of situations, perceptions, and needs that shape the "horizon" of particular interpretive communities. It is only when the readers pay constant attention to the flux of their own experiences in relation to their encounters with the sacred text that they come to appreciate the dynamic character not only of their experiences but also, and more importantly, of the text itself. As they learn to pay attention, moment by moment, to what the text says and how it makes them feel and react depending on their unique state in that moment, they come to see the kaleidoscopic character of their interactions with the text. The insistence on a single "correct" understanding then becomes impossible to maintain, and it is increasingly replaced by a joyful anticipation of fresh meanings as the sacred text begins to reveal some of its infinite possibilities.

To approach the Qur'an with an attitude of maximum receptivity and openness allows it to be "revealed" to the reader's heart in a way that is roughly analogous to the way it was "revealed" to the heart of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The main effort required on the part of the reader is really a non-effort; the reader has to stop trying to force the sacred text to say what makes sense within the reader's existing "horizon" shaped by the reader's perspectives and expectations. While the latter always plays an important role in how the sacred text is received, it is of greater importance to allow the infinite "horizon" of the text to take the lead, as much as possible. The entire process succeeds or fails depending upon the readers' ability to remain "present" in the experience, attentive to all the details and nuances of their interactions with the sacred text. When they

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[5] *Reconstruction*, p. 143.

allow the Qur'an to be "revealed" to their hearts while they maintain an attitude of maximum receptivity, they minimize the interference of their potentially distorting prejudices, their ego-based desires, and their expectations of what the Qur'an "should" be saying. The readers are then ready to receive, willing to be surprised and influenced and shaped, open to a genuine encounter with a living reality that is experienced as a "thou."

Another reason why sacred texts may appear fixed and monolithic is because particular interpretive communities sometimes rely too heavily on the rational aspects of language and disregard or minimize its emotional and non-discursive aspects. When traditional Muslims maintain that the Qur'an cannot be translated, they often do so because of their deep appreciation for the non-rational qualities of the Islamic scripture– qualities that may occasionally be experienced through the sound of recitation, for example, but that cannot be satisfactorily expressed in ordinary language. What is actually experienced in body sensations is surely of a more vibrant character and has a far larger range of variation than what can be subsequently captured through the relatively rigid categories of discursive thought. Iqbal's preferred medium of communication– poetry– is obviously a better avenue for the expression of sensuous, embodied, emotional, and intuitive experiences than is ordinary language. Indeed, the apparent conflict or opposition between reason and intuition was one of Iqbal's favourite themes; in fact, he recounted the incident about his father's advice while trying to illustrate that "the Qur'an can enter consciousness through the heart as well as through the mind,"[6] that is, through both rational and non-rational channels. Several years earlier, Iqbal had suggested something similar to a friend who had experienced the presence of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in one of his dreams. In a letter dated 1922, Iqbal wrote that one should regularly recite the Qur'an in order that one may establish a close relationship with the Prophet. He suggested that the point of such recitation was not intellectual edification but spiritual and emotional connection with the Prophet, the original recipient of the Qur'anic revelation. In Iqbal's own words, "For generating the Muhammadan relationship it is not necessarily

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[6] *Iqbal kay Huzur*, p. 57.

implied that the meaning of the Qur'an should be perfectly clear. It is sufficient to read it with pure devotion and sincerity of the heart."[7]

One may object that the above statements of Iqbal are merely theoretical observations made from an objective distance, but a closer acquaintance with his life and personality would quickly dispel that impression. It is much more likely that Iqbal's own experience of the Qur'an was in fact mediated both "through the heart" and "through the mind," and that he himself had approached the Qur'an with such a receptive attitude that can only be captured in the word "revelation."

Iqbal's experiential approach to the Islamic scripture is not unrelated to the fact that his interpretations of the Qur'an tend to be highly imaginative and original, but without being contrived. While benefitting from classical commentaries, Iqbal was comfortable enough in his deep familiarity with the Qur'an to be able to argue for fresh and traditionally unprecedented meanings; he was able to do so with a significant amount of confidence that, however, never came close to dogmatism.

Given the central place of the Qur'an in Muslim societies, there is nothing unusual in scholars or laypeople appealing to the Islamic scripture in order to support various theological, ethical, and even scientific positions; frequently, however, such appeals are based on eccentric readings of de-contextualized verses. In contrast, Iqbal's interpretations tended to be remarkably grounded in his understanding of the broader intentions behind specific Qur'anic verses. One gets the distinct impression that Iqbal was not quoting the Qur'an in order to strengthen his own position, but that his position had resulted from a personal encounter with the scripture.[8] Borrowing William

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[7] Sheikh Ataullah (Ed.), 2005. *Iqbal Nama: Majmu'ah Makatib-i Iqbal*, p. 582. Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan. English translation is by Annemarie Schimmel, 1989. *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal*, p. 222. Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan. (First published in 1963 by Brill)

[8] According to Mustansir Mir, "a reader of the *Reconstruction* cannot but be struck by the centrality of the Qur'an to Iqbal's thought. All Muslim thinkers– whether theologians, legists, philosophers, or others– appeal to the Qur'an as the ultimate sanction for their thought,

James' terminology, it seems as if Iqbal's understanding of the Qur'an was not merely "knowledge about," but that his close personal relationship with the Qur'an over several decades had generated a more direct "acquaintance knowledge" for him. This is a non-discursive awareness of the *spirit* of the Qur'an, a unified vision of the Qur'anic purpose taken as a whole, that allowed him on several occasions to assert with great confidence whether a particular notion or belief was Qur'anic or not.

To say that Iqbal's approach to the Qur'an was essentially experiential does not imply that his understanding of the Islamic scripture developed in the self-referential privacy of his own subjective universe. On the contrary, it developed in and through an ongoing conversation with some of the greatest intellects and noblest souls, both from the distant past and the contemporary present, representing a variety of religious and cultural traditions. Iqbal had a very active and vibrant inner life, but his social life was no less dynamic. Iqbal's active involvement in civic affairs, his meetings and correspondence with students, scholars and leaders, and his keen habits of voracious reading on a variety of subjects– all of these ensured that his encounters with the Qur'an were constantly nourished by a dialogic relationship with the objective world. He had a strong faith in the truth of the Qur'an, but that faith never amounted to an exclusivist claim to supersession or a rejection of everything "other." Iqbal believed the Qur'an to be "the ultimate repository of truths, including those that have already entered human consciousness and those that have yet to do so." Yet, this belief did not lead him to adopt an obstinate, I-am-right-you-are-wrong type of closed-mindedness, for he also said that "irrespective of whether these truths are expressed by [Sayyid Muhammad] Sanussi or by [Vladimir] Lenin, truths are truths" and that "the point is to understand and accept them" irrespective of how they are reached and from whose tongue they are heard. For Iqbal, all truths, regardless of their immediate origin, were Qur'anic truths.[9] For a faithful Muslim, truths

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even though they may differ in their approach to and interpretation of the Qur'an. …Unlike some of the other Muslim philosophers, who use Qur'anic verses as pegs on which to hang ideas that have little or nothing to do with the letter or spirit of the Qur'an, Iqbal draws his fundamental inspiration from the Qur'an." Mustansir Mir, 2006. *Iqbal*, pp. 112-113. Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan.

[9] *Iqbal kay Huzur*, p. 58.

established by science, for example, ought to have as much value as truths expressed by the prophetic revelation. If religion is to be a call toward absolute Truth, then accepting some truths while rejecting others would be the ultimate hypocrisy.

Iqbal avoided the trap of a rigid closed-mindedness by approaching the Qur'an as a *living* scripture– one that revealed its infinite possibilities according to the capacities of the reading community and its willingness to change and grow. Nor did he sympathize with the reductionist claim that the world had progressed too far ahead for an old religious text to be of any further use. Iqbal was insistent in his judgment that the Qur'an remained unsurpassed as a source of guidance; he was convinced that the more human knowledge and understanding would advance, the more generously the Qur'an would reveal its hidden treasures, particularly to those most in tune with its spirit.

Iqbal was very conscious of the extent to which his own thought was indebted to the Qur'an. Without being condescending, he was able to express with candour that his message was nothing other than the articulation of the Qur'an.

مرده بود از آب حیوان گفتمش — سری از اسرار قرآن گفتمش
سبز کشت نابسامانم مکن — بهره گیر از ابر نیسانم مکن
گفت بر ما بندد افسون فرنگ — هست غوغایش ز قانون فرنگ
خشک گردان باده در انگور من — زهر ریز اندر مے کافور من
گر دلم آئینهٔ بی جوہر است — ور بحرفم غیر قرآن مضمر است
روز محشر خوار و رسوا کن مرا — بی نصیب از بوسهٔ پا کن مرا
پردهٔ ناموس فکرم چاک کن — این خیابان را ز خارم پاک کن
گر در اسرار قرآن سفته ام — با مسلمانان اگر حق گفته ام
تنگ کن رخت حیات اندر برم — اہل ملت را نگہدار از شرم
عرض کن پیش خدای عزوجل — عشق من گردد هم آغوش عمل

Iqbal was sure that he spoke to his Muslim audience nothing but the secrets of the Qur'an, though his critics were claiming that he was offering them the poisonous spells of Europe. In poetic imagination, Iqbal took his case to the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, pleading: If indeed the mirror of my heart is without lustre, and if indeed there is anything in my words other than the Qur'an, then, O Prophet, rend the fabric of my thoughts, sweep clean the world of my offending thorn, choke in my breast the breath of life, remove my wicked mischief from the community of your followers, do not nurture the life of my seed, do not provide me any portion from spring's fecund showers, disgrace me on the day of reckoning, and do not allow me the honour of kissing your feet. On the other hand, if I have threaded in my poems the pearls of the sweet mysteries of the Qur'an, and if what I have said to my fellow Muslims is true, then do supplicate that God may bestow on my loving passion the wealth of virtuous action.[10]

The reader has to take seriously the fact that Iqbal uttered the above words as he imagined himself in the presence of his beloved prophet. He wouldn't make such claims if he wasn't absolutely sure of the source of his teachings and message. Indeed, there are no poetic exaggerations or rhetorical trappings in these verses; Iqbal was being very literal.

Arguing against all divisive forms of ethnic or territorial nationalism, Iqbal insisted on the need to re-organize the community of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on its original foundations, i.e., the love of a transcendent ideal. He maintained that individual Muslims will not be able to organize themselves into that ideal community without their firm adherence to the Qur'an.

هستی مسلم ز آئین است و بس　　باطن دین نبی این است و بس

رهزنان از حفظ او رهبر شدند　　از کتابی صاحب دفتر شدند

تو همی دانی که آئین تو چیست؟　　زیر گردون سر تمکین تو چیست؟

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[10] Muhammad Iqbal, 1990. *Kulliyat-i Iqbal* (Farsi), pp. 173-174. Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan.

دشت پیمایان ز تاب یک چراغ صد تجلی از علوم اندر دماغ
آن کتاب زنده قرآن حکیم حکمت او لایزال است و قدیم
بنگر آن سرمایه ی آمال ما گنجد اندر سینه ی اطفال ما
نسخه ی اسرار تکوین حیات بی ثبات از قوتش گیرد ثبات
ای گرفتار رسوم ایمان تو شیوه های کافری زندان تو
حرف او را ریب نی تبدیل نی آیه اش شرمنده ی تأویل نی
گر تو میخواهی مسلمان زیستن نیست ممکن جز بقرآن زیستن
پخته تر سودای خام از زور او در فتد با سنگ ، جام از زور او
از تلاوت بر تو حق دارد کتاب تو ازو کامی که میخواهی بیاب

نوع انسان را پیام آخرین
حامل او رحمة للعالمین

Identifying the Qur'an as the integrating and unifying constitution of the Muslim community, Iqbal expressed his conviction that the wisdom of the Qur'an offered the secrets of fashioning life. The Qur'an, he said, was a living text whose wisdom was eternal and everlasting, whose power could help the weak and feeble to establish themselves firmly and the worthless to attain authentic worth; its words were beyond doubt and change; its verses needed no forced or convoluted interpretation; raw desire could attain maturity through its strength; it was the final divine message to humanity, and its bearer, Muhammad, a mercy to the worlds. The message of the Qur'an transformed human hearts; it had turned highwaymen into guides of humankind, and rude desert-dwellers into pioneers of new sciences; this Qur'an, the source of our hopes and aspirations, resides in our children's hearts. Addressing his Muslim audience, Iqbal minced no words in pointing out that they were enslaved in empty ritualism, imprisoned by the charms of disbelief. He told them in clear terms: Know that if you wish to live the life of a Muslim, then you have no

choice but to live in accordance with the Qur'an. It is your duty to recite the Book and find in it the purpose that you are seeking.[11]

As the above paraphrase shows, the ideal relationship that Iqbal envisioned between a Muslim and the Holy Qur'an– no doubt a reflection of his own encounters with the Islamic scripture– was a vibrant and challenging one. What lessons can we draw from these verses? The Qur'an has an extraordinary power to transform its readers and to help them realize their full potential, but the readers must take the initiative by aligning themselves as much as possible with the demands and imperatives of the Qur'an. The Qur'an is not an ancient manuscript that sits passively on the table as the reader excavates its meaning with the help of a dictionary and a magnifying glass; instead, one must establish a vital relationship with the Qur'an, a mutual connection that should be pulsating with energy and possibilities. The Qur'an shares its infinite treasures of wisdom and transformative power only to the extent that the readers are ready to rise to its challenges. Iqbal compared the Qur'an to a mirror and to a scale through which individuals could evaluate their own character and judge their own performance. [12]

ز قـــرآ ن پـــیش خـــود آئینـــه آویـــز
دگرگـــون گشـــته ئـــی از خـــویش بگریـــز
تـــــرازوئے بنـــــه کـــــردار خـــــود را
قیامتهـــــای پیشـــــین را برانگیـــــز

Iqbal was convinced that the condition of the Muslim ummah did not reflect negatively on the Qur'an. While some were quick to blame the "backwardness" of the Muslims on their adherence to the "outdated" teachings of the Qur'an, Iqbal asserted that the Qur'an had not exhausted even a tiny fraction of its limitless possibilities. For him, there still existed in

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[11] *Kulliyat-i Iqbal* (Persian), pp. 131-135.

[12] *Kulliyat-i Iqbal* (Persian), p. 816.

the Qur'an the possibilities for creating a hundred new worlds; to realize some of these possibilities, he said, one must learn to "burn" in its verses.[13]

صد جهان باقی است در قرآن هنوز
اندر آیاتش یکی خود را بسوز

Inspired by the transformative experience of having his own thought set ablaze by the Qur'an, Iqbal became convinced that whenever old ways stop producing desired results it becomes a religious duty to explore new ones. In times of decline and stagnation, it is no longer advisable to keep affirming the legitimacy of traditionally established authorities; when such authorities become incapable of providing new inspirations, one must turn to the wisdom of the Qur'an in order to seek fresh sources of vitality. [14]

به بند صوفی و ملا اسیری
حیات از حکمت قرآن نگیری

From his own experience, Iqbal knew that the Qur'an contained innumerable sources for the continuous renewal of life. The meanings of the Qur'an that most of the traditionally established authorities were offering, Iqbal contended, were so far removed from the Qur'anic spirit that even God and Muhammad and Gabriel would be astounded to hear them.[15]

ز من بر صوفی و ملا سلامی
که پیغام خدا گفتند ما را
ولی تأویل شان در حیرت انداخت

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[13] *Kulliyat-i Iqbal* (Persian), p. 748.

[14] *Kulliyat-i Iqbal* (Persian), p. 816.

[15] Ibid.

خدا و جبرئیل و مصطفی را

Unable or unwilling to let go of their inertia, these authorities would not respond to the open challenge that the Qur'an throws at them– the challenge to actively transform their souls and to radically alter their world. Instead of changing themselves and taking up the hard work of changing the world, they would rather take the easier route of changing the Qur'an; they would interpret the Qur'an in a way that justifies their own inertia while maintaining their authority.[16]

خود بدلتے نہیں، قرآں کو بدل دیتے ہیں
ہوئے کس درجہ فقیہان حرم بے توفیق

Any child of the Enlightenment would denounce the uncritical continuation of the past. When Iqbal took that stand, however, he argued from an explicitly Qur'anic perspective.[17]

طرفگی ہا در نہاد کائنات
نیست از تقلید، تقویم حیات

زندہ دل خلاق اعصار و دہور
جانش از تقلید گردد بی حضور
چون مسلمانان اگر داری جگر
در ضمیر خویش و در قرآن نگر
صد جہان تازہ در آیات اوست

[16] *Kulliyat-i Iqbal* (Urdu), p. 534.

[17] *Kulliyat-i Iqbal* (Persian), p. 539.

عصرہا پیچیدہ در آنات اوست
یک جہانش عصر حاضر را بس است
گیر اگر در سینہ دل معنی رس است

Muslim sages had long recognized that there was no repetition in God's self-disclosure; every moment was absolutely original because it represented an entirely fresh configuration of the infinite divine possibilities, otherwise known as the "Hidden Treasure." Iqbal too asserted that the essential nature of reality was change, and originality was at the root of all creation. From this theological insight he drew important implications for history and society. A living heart constantly brings forth new worlds, and the spirit cannot be nourished by blind imitation. If you posses the courage of a true Muslim, Iqbal said, take a closer look at your own soul and at the Qur'an, for a hundred new worlds are waiting in its verses and entire centuries are hidden in its moments. One such world will suffice for repairing all the ills of the present age; so seize that world if you possess a meaning-grasping heart!

بندۂ مومن ز آیات خداست
ہر جہان اندر بر او چون قباست
چون کہن گردد جہانے در برش
می دہد قرآن جہانی دیگرش

For Iqbal, the transformative power of the Qur'an started with the individual and his/her community but was capable of extending its influence over entire epochs. He contended that a true believer was a sign among God's countless signs. A believer wears the world as a garment; when one world grows old and shredded, the Qur'an bestows upon the believer a fresh new world to wear.

The above discussion of Iqbal's experiential approach to the Qur'an brings into focus an important element of his personality: Iqbal had a *mystical* temperament. This temperament was so pervasive in his life and thought that it must be taken seriously in any critical evaluation of his work. To say that

Iqbal was primarily a poet is as inadequate an approach to his work as to say that he was primarily a philosopher; even "poet-philosopher" will not do. Instead, students of Iqbal should recognize that Iqbal was first and foremost a mystic, because this is exactly how he had described himself in both prose and poetry.[18] If we are to take Iqbal seriously, we are required to recognize him primarily in terms which he had repeatedly employed to describe his own personality. These terms indicate that Iqbal saw himself as a mystic in the first place and only instrumentally as a poet or a philosopher. Being a mystic by temperament, Iqbal's basic vision was the result of intuitive insights rooted in personal experiences of one kind or another– including mystical experiences– and his poetry and philosophy were merely the means through which he attempted to understand, articulate, and communicate his vision both to himself and to others. If we accept that Iqbal was a mystic before he was anything else, not only the role of personal experience in Iqbal's thought will receive the attention that it deserves, but many of the shallow critiques that have judged his work at ordinary standards of philosophy or poetry will become redundant as well.

To say that Iqbal was essentially a mystic is not intended to introduce any supernatural or mysterious element in the discussion. Notwithstanding the many stereotypes attached to this word, it is being used here strictly in accordance with Iqbal's own usage. It is important to note that Iqbal had insisted on the *continuity* of mystic consciousness with ordinary rational consciousness; for him, the only difference between the two was the minimal role of rational analysis in the mystic state which leads to the quality of "wholeness" in such experience as opposed to the more commonly encountered "piecemeal" quality in ordinary experience.[19] In accordance with Iqbal's usage of this word, to be in a mystic state simply means to experience the underlying *unity* of reality in some sense, the latter being an inherent quality of objective reality and not merely an impression created by the

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[18] Muhammad Rafiuddin, "Iqbal's Idea of the Self" in M. Saeed Sheikh (ed.) 1972. *Studies in Iqbal's Thought and Art*, p. 76. Lahore: Bazm-i-Iqbal. (First published in the January 1963 issue of the quarterly *Iqbal*)

[19] *Reconstruction*, pp. 14-15.

mystic's transient subjective state. For Iqbal, the reality which is encountered as pieces and fragments in ordinary experience is the same reality which is encountered as unified and whole in mystic experience. As such, experiencing an altered or unusual state of mind is not a necessary condition for the actualization of mystic consciousness; the ability to perceive wholeness and unity does not require a cessation of thought, for such ability is already immanent in thought. To identify someone as a mystic simply indicates that the person is prone to use this natural ability more frequently and/or more profoundly than the vast majority of his or her peers. In fact, all creative acts depend on the ability to acquire a sense of the unified wholeness of things, and this is as true of great philosophers and scientists as it is true of religious and artistic geniuses.

To have a mystical temperament indicates that one's primary and preferred method of achieving certainty is personal experience, as opposed to philosophical reasoning or acceptance of authoritative pronouncements. Iqbal's mystical orientation can be clearly observed in how he addressed philosophical issues surrounding the nature of the Qur'anic revelation, as discussed in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Iqbal accepted the Qur'an as divine speech that had appeared in history as the product of the religious experiences of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, lasting for some twenty-three years in the early seventh century. But what exactly was revealed to the Arabian prophet? Regarding the "old theological controversy about verbal revelation" in classical Islam, Iqbal contended that "idea and word both simultaneously emerge out of the womb of feeling," and that it was only "logical understanding" that treated them as "mutually isolated" and hence created the riddle in the first place. He suggested, in other words, that instead of applying logical understanding to the question of verbal revelation, we should use another procedure or approach that would avoid such a dichotomy. Arguing for the epistemological value of "intuition," Iqbal sought to bridge another dichotomy, this one separating intuition from thought/intellect. Iqbal contended that intuition was nothing other than thought "in its deeper movement"[20] or, quoting Henri Bergson, "only a higher form of intellect."[21]

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[20] *Reconstruction*, p. 5.

Twenty years earlier, Iqbal had already noted in his doctoral dissertation that, in the Sufi perspective, the transformation of feeling was more fundamental than the transformation of the will or of understanding, for "will and understanding are only specialized forms" of feeling.[22] What we call "understanding" and "willing," in other words, are to be treated as modalities of what must be a more basic level of experience, i.e., "feeling." We recognize particular ideas only because of the distinctive feelings with which they have become associated in our experiences.

For Iqbal, then, feeling and idea are two "aspects of the same unit of inner experience."[23] All knowledge and understanding, in other words, is ultimately grounded in experience, an insight that makes the feeling/idea distinction appear artificial. In an informal discussion with a European sceptic, Iqbal is reported to have said that his own acceptance of the verbal revelation of the Qur'an was a matter of personal experience rather than religious dogma, adding that he himself "has composed his poems under the spells of poetic inspiration" and that "surely, Prophetic revelations are far more exalted."[24]

In comparing his own experience of poetic inspiration with Prophet Muhammad's experience of receiving divine revelation, Iqbal was positing both similarity and difference. The two experiences are similar enough for one to be the basis for accepting the possibility and reality of the other; at the same time, the experience of poetic inspiration is obviously at a much lower rung of the hierarchical ladder whose absolute zenith is represented by true prophetic revelation. Still, it would not be wrong to say that the two kinds of

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[21] *Reconstruction*, p. 2.

[22] Muhammad Iqbal, 2004. *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, p. 95. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications. (First published by Luzac & Co., London, in 1908)

[23] *Reconstruction*, p. 17.

[24] Quoted by M. Saeed Sheikh, *Reconstruction*, p. 161.

experiences– one of them fairly common while the other exceedingly rare– occupy the same continuum of knowledge-yielding inner experiences.

It is reasonable to speculate that many of Iqbal's own ideas had originated as feelings that emerged from the rich and restless matrix of his inner life. To say that Iqbal was essentially a mystic is to emphasize this feature of his temperament, nothing more.

Yet, Iqbal was no ordinary mystic, for he was also concerned with the objective verification of the data of personal mystical experience. Even if one feels maximum certainty regarding the knowledge one has gained through such an experience, that knowledge ought to be approached with a healthy attitude of scepticism. If "the elimination of the satanic from the Divine" is a religious imperative, then the exercise of scientific suspicion is an unavoidable religious need.[25] A mystical experience may provide a reliable foundation for action to the mystic in question, but it does no such service to anyone else due to the innumerable possibilities of misrecognition and illusion that are inherent in such experiences as well as in their interpretations. A privately apprehended truth is no truth at all, unless it is shared within a broader community, subjected to critical examination on the basis of agreed-upon criteria, and is either publically verified or at least fails repeated attempts at falsification. For Iqbal, there were two agreed-upon criteria for such critical examination, which he called "the intellectual test and the pragmatic test." Just as no claim of a scientific nature is accepted by the scientific community without proper testing, the religious community must also be critically inclined in the same way with respect to claims of a religious nature. In fact, because religious truths– unlike scientific truths– have direct and immediate implications for human action, the religious community ought to be even more rigorous and vigilant in its critical examination than the scientific community.

For Iqbal, the Qur'an was a product of a special type of inner experience, the nature of which may be distinguished from that of unitary experience as such, not so much in terms of phenomenology but, rather, in terms of

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[25] *Reconstruction*, p. 19.

historical consequences.[26] By definition, the prophetic experiences of Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are inaccessible to us, just as they were inaccessible to the men and women of his own time and place. Yet, these experiences were not mere subjective states. For Iqbal, every feeling is characterized by a "cognitive element" that tends to express itself in "the form of idea."[27] Such self-expression is not a phenomenon that can be deliberately imposed upon a feeling, as it were, from the outside; on the contrary, it is in the very nature of a feeling that it "seeks to fulfil its destiny in idea."[28] The cognitive element of a prophetic experience, by definition, must manifest itself in this way; the idea associated with the feeling "fulfils its destiny" by developing "out of itself its own visible garment," i.e., a specific verbal form most suitable for its self-expression. Insofar as feeling is inseparable from idea, and idea emerges from feeling already dressed in a particular verbal garment, Iqbal was able to say that "in a sense the word is also revealed."[29]

In the case of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the totality of feelings-ideas-words that emerged from his religious experiences over a period of twenty-three years are now available to us in the form of the Qur'anic text. From both a religious and a scientific viewpoint, the critical question is this: How do we know that the Qur'an really is what it claims to be? As a matter of principle and methodology, Iqbal insisted that no religious experience could be taken as self-evident or self-authenticating, just as no sense experience would yield truth without proper interpretation and verification. "The facts of religious experience," according to Iqbal," are facts among other facts of human experience and, in the capacity of yielding knowledge by interpretation, one fact is as good as another."[30] By agreeing to treat the data of

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[26] *Reconstruction*, p. 100.

[27] *Reconstruction*, p. 17.

[28] *Reconstruction*, p. 18.

[29] *Reconstruction*, p. 18.

[30] *Reconstruction*, p. 13.

the prophetic experience of revelation on the same level as that of the everyday sensory experience, Iqbal made a bold but powerful move; in effect, he exposed the Qur'an to the criticism of the scientific method.

To say that in terms of their knowledge-yielding potential one fact is as good as another is to treat prophetic revelation as any other natural phenomenon. For Iqbal, this was more than a matter of principle or methodology only; he had seen that the sharp distinction that theology posited between the natural and the supernatural domains of reality was of very limited value. According to Iqbal, the distinction between these two domains of reality was not so much ontological as it was pragmatic; it emerged gradually over the course of human evolution because it offered a survival advantage. "To the primitive man," Iqbal wrote, "all experience was supernatural." The pragmatic need to interpret one's experience in other ways resulted from the pressure of the "immediate necessities of life," and it was this process of interpretation that led to the gradual emergence in human consciousness of what is now called "nature."[31] As a pragmatic tool that helps in the organization of life, the distinction between the natural and the supernatural was never without value. In fact, the human faculty of "logical understanding," a product of our ordinary rational consciousness, inevitably produces this view. As an indication of the emergence of logical or rational consciousness, the human "discovery" of the distinction between the natural and the supernatural has been rightly seen as one of the decisive events leading to the birth of civilization.[32]

Relying solely upon ordinary rational consciousness, then, the appearance of prophetic revelation in history tends to be taken as a supernatural

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[31] *Reconstruction*, p. 13.

[32] Eric Voegelin contends that the "cosmological worldview" is a primordial and trans-cultural phenomenon found in the early stages of all civilizations. Living within this worldview, human beings experience themselves as participating in a single reality that is inside them as well as embraces them from the outside. In this outlook, everything is quasi-magical; what is today thought of as natural forces appear to have will and feelings. Eric Voegelin, 1956. *Order and History: Israel and Revelation*, pp. 3-5, and *passim*. Colombia, MO: University of Missouri Press.

intervention into the usual workings of the natural world; it is seen as an alien phenomenon that may evoke amazement but must remain incomprehensible in principle. But what if there are genuine modes of consciousness besides the one that creates our logical understanding? Having affirmed the reality of mystic consciousness and its insight into the organic wholeness of reality, Iqbal argued that there was another, more productive, way of looking at prophetic revelation. A perspective informed by mystic consciousness acknowledges the essential *continuity* between the natural and the supernatural realms; furthermore, it shows us that there is only one reality. It also recognizes a similar continuity between inner or mystical experience and outer or sensory experience, in addition to maintaining that it is the same reality that is manifested in both kinds of experiences. Once the gulf between the natural and the supernatural has been so bridged, the claim that prophetic revelation is either self-authenticating or that it requires a method of evaluation unique to itself becomes untenable. Similarly, the claim that the supernatural domain of reality is completely inaccessible to the vast majority of human beings also becomes indefensible. At this point, Iqbal posited that the scientific method was as relevant to the evaluation of the data of inner experience as it was to the data of outer experience. In other words, "the intellectual test and the pragmatic test" were the only tools we could legitimately use for the critical evaluation of the knowledge-yielding potential of empirical data– irrespective of whether that data originated in sensory or mystical experiences, and whether they pertained to natural or supernatural domains of reality.[33]

For Iqbal, prophetic revelation was a "natural" phenomenon, not only because it had to have happened within the confines of time and space and because it had to have involved embodied individuals who were embedded within their specific socio-cultural contexts; but also– and much more importantly– because revelation spoke not so much from the above and beyond as "from the inmost depths of life."[34] Insofar as the dichotomy between the natural and the supernatural has been transcended, to say that

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[33] *Reconstruction*, p. 21.

[34] *Reconstruction*, p. 142.

such revelation is a part of nature is to view it as a vital and inherent constituent of reality– as opposed to something alien that is imposed upon our reality from the outside and possibly in opposition to its inherent tendencies. The ontological status of prophetic revelation is not enhanced by viewing it as a supernatural intervention from the outside; since the Qur'anic revelation is an act of divine guidance, it is best viewed as a natural expression of the inherent disposition of reality.

Iqbal pointed out that the Qur'an used the word revelation (or inspiration) with a variety of connotations, but that its essence was *divine guidance*. As a rule, guidance is needed by all creatures at every step of their existential journeys, from inanimate matter to plant to animal to human.[35] According to the Qur'an, each and every creature, no matter how small or big, does receive the precise guidance that it requires at every step of the way; the guidance is fine-tuned to each creature's particular needs, but it is also in accordance with God's overall cosmic plans. Since "The Guide" is one of the "most beautiful" divine names, to say that God provides guidance to all creatures is another way of saying that guidance is inscribed in the very fabric of reality.

Based on his reading of the Qur'an, Iqbal saw guidance as both natural and comprehensive. He viewed the phenomenon of divine guidance as a *continuum* in which the same essential reality would manifest in different levels and forms. Guidance, then, would include the physical and chemical properties of inanimate matter; the instinctive behaviour of living organisms, as encoded in their respective genomes; as well as the knowledge acquiring faculties that are more or less unique to humans, such as advanced symbolic language and the related capacity for abstract reasoning. Prophetic revelation, then, would be a relatively rare manifestation of an otherwise universal and ubiquitous phenomenon, and not a supernatural intrusion into our world that would have to be accepted on blind faith. This is another way of saying that for Iqbal, prophetic revelation was as much a result of the inherent disposition of nature/reality as the low reactivity of the noble gases, the tendency of water to flow downhill, the urge of an oak tree to produce

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[35] *Reconstruction*, p. 100.

acorns, or the desire of a bee to manufacture honey. In a short poem entitled "Revelation," Iqbal suggested the same notion as follows: [36]

عقل بے مایہ امامت کی سزاوار نہیں
راہبر ہو ظن و تخمیں تو زبوں کار حیات
فکر بے نور ترا، جذب عمل بے بنیاد
سخت مشکل ہے کہ روشن ہو شب تار حیات
خوب و ناخوب عمل کی ہو گرہ وا کیونکر
گر حیات آپ نہ ہو شارح اسرار حیات

For Iqbal, rationality alone was unworthy of leading humans for it could not solve the complex problems of life. How, he asked, could human beings ever hope to resolve the problem of distinguishing between good and evil, between right and wrong? The speculation and guesswork involved in the exercise of reason meant that rationality, on its own, could not illuminate the dark night of humanity or provide a solid and reliable foundation for behaviour. Yet, Iqbal contended that the inadequacy of human reason was no cause for despair, for it was in the nature of life itself that it would not leave its mysteries unexplained. It is the title of the poem that clarifies Iqbal's intent. The phenomenon of prophetic revelation is a manifestation of the inherent disposition of life– a synonym for nature/reality– to overcome any and all obstacles that it may encounter in its path.

Unlike theories of religious experience that draw their inspiration from Marx, Durkheim, or Freud, there is no reductionism involved in Iqbal's view of prophetic revelation. In his approach, the data of religious experience is given full respect as knowledge-yielding facts that ought to be taken seriously because they emerge from the very heart of reality– exactly at par with the facts encountered in any other domain of human experience. To treat these

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[36] *Kulliyat-i Iqbal* (Urdu), p. 551.

experiences as "natural" is not to reduce their significance or truth-value in any way; it is to give them their rightful place as epistemologically valid sources. To say that the data of religious experience must be critically examined is not to reject them as false; it is to approach them in the only possible way that holds the promise of transforming privately apprehended truths into publicly recognizable ones.

If Iqbal's preference for inner experience makes him a mystic, it can be argued that his insistence on critical examination makes him a scientist as well. How would such a person approach a sacred text like the Qur'an? The above discussion partially addresses this question, though a complete picture of Iqbal's delicate balancing act must await further inquiry.

IQBAL AND ECUMENISM: THE INESCAPABILITY OF LOVE

Reza Shah-Kazemi

Issues concerning interfaith dialogue have become, in our times, both politically charged and global in scope. This intensifies the spiritual sensitivity which has always characterised interfaith relations. What, if anything, can we learn from the poet-philosopher of the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent, Muhammad Iqbal, as regards these issues of burning contemporary relevance? Although there is no particular essay or poem or treatise in the works of Iqbal addressed specifically to the theme of interfaith dialogue, ecumenism or the religious Other, it is nonetheless possible to discern in Iqbal's scattered writings certain trajectories which, if followed, can be of considerable value to those engaged in interfaith dialogue. One of these trajectories, which we might call that of "communal realism", or "exoteric solidarity", can assist proponents of dialogue who are struggling to reconcile a spiritual vision with a concrete exigency: a vision of the unity of religions on the level of ultimate principles with the practical requirements of dialogue in the actual world of competing and often conflicting religious communities.

The second principal trajectory which Iqbal's corpus opens us to is that deriving from a metaphysical or ontological conception of love. Released from its entanglement with emotion and the self, from race, nation and even religion, the principle of love in Iqbal's vision generates a disinterested attitude embracing all– Muslims and non-Muslims, believers and non-believers alike. The criterion for evaluating an individual is shorn of all superficial features of outward labels, affiliations, and is instead rigorously centred on the very being of that individual, and one *is*, according to Iqbal, in the measure that one loves that which is. Since the ultimate reality of God is beauty, the whole of creation which streams forth from the beautiful Creator is beautiful, hence lovable: "He who made beautiful everything which He created" (Qur'an 32:7). Man, being the most perfect of all creatures, becomes lovable by virtue of his *fitra*, his original nature, which bears the traces of the supreme archetype of his own beauty, that of *al-Fātir*, the

Creator/Originator. The spirit of Iqbal's ecumenism thus comes to embrace all human beings in a form of Islamic "humanism" which, in contrast to its western caricature,[37] sees through each and every human being to the divinity in whose image that being was created. This is a spiritual humanism which loves the human in function of one's love of God, and in proportion to one's attunement to that love.

To begin with, we should define our terms, and distinguish between the two senses of the word "ecumenism": the first relates to a spirit of universality or unity within one's religion; the second, to a spirit of universality or unity that brings together all religions. Iqbal has something important to say regarding both types of ecumenism; and one can argue that his success in upholding a spirit of ecumenism in relation to the non-Muslim 'Other' derives in large part from his keen awareness of the need to be as ecumenical or inclusive as possible in relation to his own fellow Muslims. In other words, to be truly "inclusive" means to include not just the Other in your vision of unity, but also those within your own community who uphold exclusivist attitudes– that is, the overwhelming majority of believers. To exclude exclusivists is to fall into exclusivism oneself.[38]

This is closely connected to one of the most evident causes of the limited success of interfaith dialogue in our times: those who most need to be engaged in dialogue– conservative upholders of the normative Tradition– are

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[37] George Makdisi argues forcefully that the rise of humanism in the West was in large part forged under the influence of Islamic conceptions of the human being. In support of this argument he cites such founding humanist texts as*The Dignity of Man* by Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), a document regarded as the very epitome of the Renaissance outlook: 'I have read, revered fathers, in the works of the Arabs, that when Abdala the Saracen was asked what he regarded as most to be wondered at one the world's stage… he answered that there is nothing to be seen more wonderful than man.' Makdisi asserts that the reference must be to 'Abd Allāh Qutayba (d.889) from whose book, *Khalq al-Insān* (The Creation of Man) the quotation in question comes; this book was widely published in both East and West. See Makdisi,*The Rise of Humanism in Classical Islam and the Christian West* (Edinburgh University Press: 1990), p.301 ff.

[38] See our *The Other in the Light of the One– The Universality of the Qur'an and Interfaith Dialogue* (Cambridge, ITS: 2006), for extensive discussion of this principle.

precisely those who are excluded from the conference halls and debating chambers of dialogue; while those who really do not need to engage in dialogue– the liberal minority– are the ones who fill those halls and chambers. There is, thus, plenty of dialogue taking place, but it largely takes the form of preaching to the converted. Majoritarian attitudes are left to become increasingly rigid and mutually exclusive, while the liberals– and perhaps the mystics– of the different religious traditions come ever closer together in harmonious agreement. Bridges are indeed being built, but between individuals of different faiths whose impact upon their respective faith-communities is limited, largely because they are not seen as fully representative of their communities, at best, and as having betrayed their communities, at worst.

Iqbal cannot be categorised either as a conservative or as a liberal; this is because he can be described as both. Herein lies one of the potentially fruitful paradoxes of his work: he opens up ossified conservative thought by expounding liberal ideas, and opposes the corrosive effects of extreme liberalism– *qua* ideology– by administering a dose of what he calls in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, "healthy conservative criticism". On the one hand:

> We heartily welcome the liberal movement in modern Islam; but it must also be admitted that the appearance of liberal ideas in Islam constitutes also the most critical moment in the history of Islam. Liberalism has the tendency to act as a force of disintegration, and the race-idea which appears to be working in modern Islam with greater force than ever, may ultimately wipe off the broad human outlook which Muslim people have imbibed from their religion. Further, our religious and political reformers in their zeal for liberalism may overstep the proper limits of reform in the absence of a check on their youthful fervour. [39]

On the other:

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[39] *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1981), p. 162.

If we cannot make any original contribution to the general thought of Islam, we may, by healthy conservative criticism, serve at least as a check on the rapid movement of liberalism in the world of Islam."[40]

He wants the Muslim world to wake up from its slumber and embrace the present, but the embrace must be inspired by love of the Islamic tradition; the mutable world of forms must be fashioned by the immutable sources of the faith: the Qur'ān and the Sunna. Here also, he defies categorisation: he cannot easily be slotted into the terms of the "modernist/traditionalist" dichotomy, for his aim was clearly to act as a check on unbridled modernist imitation of the West, and as a catalyst for the revival of traditional thought in Islam. It is for this reason that one finds him criticised by reformers for being too traditional and by traditionalists for being too modern. For example one historian of modern India, Ikram, writes that Iqbal began by being a true "reformer" supporting all needed innovations and changes to Islamic institutions, but ends up disappointed at Iqbal's "energetic advocacy of unreformed orthodoxy".[41]

What Ikram refers to as "unreformed orthodoxy" is the quintessential– and thus immutable, hence, by definition, "unreformable"– sources of the

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[40] Ibid, p. 153.

[41] Ikram, *Modern Muslim India*, p. 182. Iqbal might be viewed as a quasi-traditional, quasi-modern thinker, whose very ambiguity contributed to the effectiveness of his effort to act as a check on excessive modernisation and westernisation in the name of a revival of the spirit of Islam. In a world strained by the tension between modernising trends undermining the Islamic ethos, and defensive traditionalist reflexes betraying that ethos, his work had to partake of both domains of thought, modern and traditional, if it was to have any real impact on a community which was being pulled in both directions at once. What Frithjof Schuon says in regard to Vivekananda and modern Hinduism can be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to Iqbal and modern Islam: 'In "modernizing" Hinduism, Vivekananda did at the same time "Hinduize" modernism, if one may so put it, and by that means some of its destructive impetus was neutralized... No doubt some will object that any modernization, whether "Hinduizing" or not, will by its very nature always end in a loss of spiritual values. This is true, but an influence which for any reason retards this process has nonetheless its usefulness. It is clearly impossible to liken a Vivekananda and a Gandhi to the creator of the "New Turkey" or any other protagonists of extreme modernism'. F. Schuon, *Language of the Self* (Madras: Ganesh, 1959), p.43.

Islamic revelation, the Qur'ān and the Sunna. It is undeniable that Iqbal's attachment to these two spiritual realities is deep and his advocacy of them is "energetic"; indeed, the beauty and profundity with which he poetically manifests his love of the Qur'ān and the Prophet constitute one of the hallmarks of his life's work. One should add that it was precisely this evident love of these quintessential sources of Islam which galvanized and continues to galvanize Muslims of the subcontinent wishing to remain faithful to Islam in the face of the unavoidable challenges of modernity. If Iqbal deemed modernisation to be inexorable, he nonetheless insisted that the spiritual fundamentals of the Islamic tradition were indispensable. For many modernising Muslims this synthesis was effective: he made a significant contribution to the process by which a measure of traditional piety was maintained by Muslim elites, a piety which often attenuated or calibrated their modernistic tendencies.

It is also Iqbal's fidelity to these two dimensions of the Islamic revelation which defines his basic attitude both to the religious Other, and to the religious Self – or to its communitarian expression, the Umma. For within the Qur'ān and Sunna, one can discern two distinct but related elements: an eloquent articulation of the *universal* spirit of ecumenism, on the one hand; and a hard-headed reminder of the indispensability of the *particular* spirit needed to fashion a specific community, on the other. There are the prerogatives of mystical, inward or esoteric truths, accessible to a minority, on the one hand; and the rights of theological, formal or exoteric principles, essential for the community as a whole, on the other.

In addressing each level, the universal and the particular, in the light of the other, Iqbal manages to overcome one of the main obstacles confronting dialogue: reaching out to the Other without alienating the Self. It is relatively easy to argue in favour of a common core of characteristics uniting all religions; one might also benefit from a spiritual vision of the inner unity of all religions. But then, one has to face a more subtle and challenging task: that of acquitting oneself of the charge of having sacrificed the specific, irreducible, unique aspects of one's own religion at the altar of the putative spiritual quintessence of all religions. This is the charge effectively levelled at those who follow the school of thought associated with John Hick, the influential proponent of one form of 'religious pluralism'. Hick, quite

admirably, would like to see all believers coming together in mutual tolerance and harmony, but this harmony comes with a high price: a discarding of the most distinctive aspects of one's beliefs, if these beliefs imply that one's religion is unique, thus normative and binding on all. For Christians, the idea of Christ being God incarnate must be shed, for example; because: 'If Jesus was God incarnate, the Christian religion is unique in having been founded by God in person.'[42] Among Muslim pluralists, Hasan Askari, discloses the logical consequence of conforming to this model of pluralism. He argues that 'Islam', understood as the principle of 'primordial and universal submission' *abolishes* 'the particular and the historical Islam'.[43] It is against just this kind of degradation of the particular for the sake of the universal that Iqbal fought an, as it were, preventative war: he would insist on upholding and respecting– not abolishing– the particular and historical realities of the Islamic tradition, even while affirming and celebrating the universal principle of 'Islam' which encompasses all religions in its loving embrace.

Askari and other Muslim pluralists would be accused of having gone so far in their acceptance of the Other that they have undermined their own credibility as representatives of Islam– they represent only themselves, not any normative Islamic tradition, so it would be argued. The conservative upholders of the Islamic faith would insist on fidelity to the community of Muslims based on this faith articulated within a clearly defined identity. In this connection, what Iqbal says about 'communalism' acquires particular relevance to the question of ecumenism.

In his famous Allahabad address of 1930 Iqbal refers to two types of communalism, the lower and the higher. The lower is defined in negative

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[42] See John Hick, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate– Christology in a Pluralistic World* (London: SCM Press, 1993, p.287). See our *The Other in the Light of the One*, section entitled 'Nasr's Universalism vs Hick's Pluralism'. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, following Frithjof Scuon et al, insists on the uniqueness of each religion, even while upholding the 'transcendent unity' of all religions: there is unity as regards the transcendent essence, but not uniformity as regards the non-transcendent forms: each is distinctive and unique.

[43] Hasan Askari, 'Within and Beyond the Experience of Religious Diversity', in *The Experience of Religious Diversity,* eds. J. Hick, H. Askari (Aldershot: Gower Press, 1985), p. 199.

terms, it is "inspired by a feeling of ill-will towards other communities"; such an attitude he says is "low and ignoble". In contrast to this kind of communalism, he asserts: "I entertain the highest respect for the customs, laws, religious and social institutions of other communities. Nay, it is my duty, according to the teachings of the Qur'ān, even to defend their places of worship if need be." Although he does not refer to the verse directly, he seems to be clearly alluding here to those verses which are considered by several commentators of the Qur'ān to have been the first to be revealed in relation to the permissibility of warfare, verses of the Sūrat al-Hajj (22: 38-39). In these verses, it is stated that if God had not repelled some people by means of others, then: "cloisters, churches, synagogues and mosques– places where God's Name is much invoked– would have been destroyed."

Iqbal is thus clearly invoking the spirit of truth common to all the revealed religions as a means of expressing the negation of ignoble communalism, and affirming by contrast a noble communalism, a spirit of solidarity that unites all believers. However, this higher, universal type of communalism has a God-given right to its specific, or exclusive character: "The principle that each group is entitled to free development on its own lines is not inspired by any feeling of narrow communalism. Yet I love the communal group which is the source of my life and behaviour, and which has formed me into what I am by giving me its religion, its literature, its thought, its culture, and thereby recreating its whole past as a living operative factor in my present consciousness."[44]

If defending the places of worship, and thus respecting the religions of the Other derives clearly from a Qur'ānic proof-text, so too does its apparent opposite: love for and devotion to a specific, thus exclusive, revealed tradition. This derives from, among many other verses that could be cited in this regard, the verse of the Sūrat al-Mā'ida (5:48), part of which reads as follows: "For each of you We have established a Law and a Path; and had God willed, He could have made you one community, but He willed it thus, in order to test you by means of that which He gave you. So compete with

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[44] Latif Ahmad Sherwani, (Ed.) *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, rept. 2009), p. 3.

one another in goodness, unto God is your return, and He will tell you about those things over which you differed."

Each Law and Path is unique and irreducible; both the diversity of paths and the irreducibility of each is affirmed here. Those who would dilute the specificity of revealed forms violate the divine intention which informs the particularity of each revealed form. Yes, the source of religious diversity and the summit of the diverse paths is One, but the paths must remain distinct, and to say distinct is to say exclusive. It is this combination between essential universality and formal exclusivity which characterises Iqbal's writings in relation to the religious Other, and which accounts for the fact that such widely divergent accounts are given of his position on this theme in secondary sources.

For example, on the one hand we have this criticism by Dickinson: "While Mr Iqbal's philosophy is universal, his application of it is particular and exclusive. Only Muslims are worthy of the Kingdom. The rest of the world is either to be absorbed or excluded."[45]

The opposite opinion is given by Haywood: "The last way to think of Iqbal is as a Pakistani poet. Rather does he speak for Islam universally and for the common ground between Islam and the other major world religions."[46] He further argues: "… a large proportion of the verses in his work is truly gnomic poetry– *hikmah*, wisdom in the highest sense of the word. Moreover, they are not wisdom only to Muslims or to Orientals, but to men of every creed and race. This is one of Iqbal's great achievements, that he bridged the common ground in the great religious and philosophical systems of the world."

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[45] Cited by Rajmohan Gandhi, *Eight Lives*, p.64, citing Riffat Hassan in Malik, ed, *Iqbal*, p.150.

[46] John Haywood, 'The Wisdom of Muhammad Iqbal—Some Considerations of Form and Content' in *The Sword and the Sceptre* ed. Riffat Hassan (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1977), p.162. Cited by Muhammad Suheyl Umar, *That I may See and Tell": The Significance of Iqbal's Wisdom Poetry (*Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 2002), p.11.

Both opinions can be buttressed with supportive evidence. We shall look at some of the universal aspects of Iqbal's wisdom shortly, but first, turning to Dickinson's criticism, it is not difficult to see how he arrived at his conclusion; for Iqbal's works, in particular his poems, are sprinkled with a kind of Muslim triumphalism, the heroic feats of the Muslims often being extolled at the expense of Hindus, Christians and idolaters. Iqbal's reply to Dickinson, however, should be carefully noted: "The humanitarian ideal is always universal in poetry and philosophy, but if you work it out in actual life, you must start with a society exclusive in the sense of having a creed and well-defined outline, but ever enlarging its limits by example and persuasion. Such a society in my belief is Islam."[47]

Now Dickinson might well retort that Iqbal's admission that he wishes Islam to ever enlarge its limits proves the point that he, Dickinson, is making. It is Islam that must prevail ultimately, even if the means engaged be peaceful persuasion. In Iqbal's defence, one might put forward the following argument: it is only on the basis of manifesting solidarity with this basic premise of the conservative bedrock of the Islamic faith that one can seriously pose as a representative of that faith in dialogue with the Other; it is only by upholding the belief, so central to the majoritarian, conservative community, that one must propagate Islam, bearing witness to it to all peoples, that one can meaningfully open up that conservative community to such values as respect and tolerance for the religious Other, appreciation of the truth, the wisdom, and the holiness residing in the religions of the Other. Someone who does not believe that his faith is worth sharing with others is someone who cannot be taken seriously as a representative of that faith. One has to start from within a faith, Iqbal seems to be saying, and then to open up the universal dimensions latent therein; following those universal trajectories, one comes to embrace all human beings by means of the unconditional love which flows throughout the veins of the universe, for love is what sustains the universe, according to the poetic vision of Islam enjoyed by Iqbal. This love is not just real, it is also realizable: it is not just one with the nature of ultimate reality, it is also rendered accessible and assimilable by the very faith of Islam, practised in depth, and taken utterly seriously in all its particularities, in all its irreducible uniqueness.

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[47] R. Gandhi, op. cit., p.65. citing Riffat Hassan, in Malik, ed., Iqbal, p.150.

This would appear to be the inner spiritual message of Iqbal's claim that to "work it out in actual life, you must start with a society exclusive in the sense of having a creed and well-defined outline, but ever enlarging its limits by example and persuasion."

The extent to which Iqbal was sensitive to this duty of performing *da'wa* for Islam is clear in many places in his poetry. For example, in his *Rumūz-i Bīkhudī* (The Mysteries of Selflessness):

I tremble for thy shame, when on the Day

Of Reckoning that Glory of all time

Shall question thee: "Thou tookest from my lips

The word of Truth, and wherefore hast thou failed

To pass my message on to other men?"[48]

And again:

Allahu Akbar! This the secret holds

Of thy existence; wherefore let it be

Thy purpose to preserve and propagate

No other God. If thou a Muslim art,

Till all the world proclaims the Name of God

Thou canst not rest one moment.

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[48] *The Mysteries of Selflessness (Rumūz-i Bīkhudī*), tr. A.J. Arberry (London: John Murray, 1953), p.56.

Knowest thou not

The verse in Holy Scripture, calling thee

To be a people just, God's witnesses?[49]

Iqbal is thus manifesting solidarity with the basic belief that one must bear witness to Islam as the normative tradition. Without manifesting this solidarity, there is the danger that one will be excluded by the exclusivists; if one does not manifest a degree of exclusivism, one's open-ended inclusivism would itself be excluded by those who most need to be won over to the cause of inclusivism. Iqbal reveals his sensitivity to this aspect of his "dialogical" situation. For example, in a letter written on April 12th, 1925, he said:

> I had written an English essay on Ijtihad, which was read in a meeting here… but some people called me a Kafir… In these days in India, one must move with very great circumspection.[50]

As regards the relationship between Iqbal's awareness of the sensitivities of the community, on the one hand, and his expression of ecumenical attitudes on the other, we have this telling statement. Note carefully what he says here about tolerance of the Other in relation to what he calls "dogma", that is, the formal theological tenets upheld by the majority of his fellow-Muslims:

> The attitude of toleration… without belief in dogma is probably the most incomprehensible thing to the vulgar mind. If such is your attitude, keep quiet and never try to defend your position.[51]

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[49] Ibid., p.54. The words in italics are from the Qur'an, 4: 135.

[50] Gandhi, p.68, Ikram, *Modern Muslim India,* p.183, letter of April 12, 1925 to Akbar Najibabadi.

In other words, act on this principle in your private life, by all means, but do not formally propose and espouse tolerance in the public domain of religio-political dialogue unless you undergird it strongly with Islamic dogma. This is clearly what Iqbal did, as he says, regarding his own private life. He wrote the following in a letter on 28 March, 1909:

> I have myself been of the view that religious differences should disappear from this country, and even now act on this principle in my private life. But now I think that the preservation of their separate national entities is desirable for both the Hindus and the Muslims. The vision of a common nationhood for India is a beautiful ideal and has a poetic appeal… but appears incapable of fulfilment.[52]

It may well be that one of the reasons why Iqbal ceased to believe in the practicability of his "vision of a common nationhood for India" was his grim evaluation of what he calls "the modern Hindu":

> It seems that the ideal of political freedom which is an absolutely new experience to him has seized his entire soul ... He will be transformed into an absolutely new people–new in the sense that he will no longer find himself dominated by the ethical ideals of his ancestors whose sublime fancies have been a source of perpetual consolation to many a distressed mind.[53]

This change in the mentality governing Hindus, Iqbal would argue, constitutes a shift from the higher to the lower form of communalism, one in which the noble "ethical ideals" of the tradition are submerged by fanaticism, in the strict sense of the term. Adherence to the ethical ideals of one's tradition is a source of tolerance, according to Iqbal, but then comes a

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[51] *Stray Reflections– The Private Notebook of Muhammad Iqbal*, eds. Javid Iqbal and Khurram Shafique (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 2006), p.117, no.99 'Conformity Without Dogma'.

[52] Gandhi, p.54, Citing Iqbal, in Ikram, *Modern Muslim India*, p.170. Letter of March 28, 1909

[53] *Stray Reflections* op. cit., p.39, no.23 'The Modern Hindu'.

somewhat paradoxical nuance: these ideals do need to be conditioned by a form of communalism– the positive or noble aspect of communalism, which he refers to in terms of '*asabiyya*. This principle is of particular sociological significance and is given its deepest application by the great Muslim historian and philosopher, Ibn Khaldūn. This key term in his corpus ought to be translated "solidarity" rather than "fanaticism", this latter being Iqbal's rather extreme translation. "Fanaticism" is more properly the translation of the Arabic *ta'assub*:

> All nations accuse us of fanaticism. I admit the charge– I go further and say that we are justified in our fanaticism. Translated in the language of biology, fanaticism is nothing but the principle of individuation working in the case of the group. In this sense all forms of life are more or less fanatical, and ought to be so, if they care for their collective life. And as a matter of fact all nations are fanatical… Fanaticism is patriotism for religion; patriotism is fanaticism for country.[54]

Iqbal's "*asabiyya*"– group solidarity" rather than "fanaticism"– is in accord with the spirit of 5:48– for each community, there is a specific, thus, an exclusive way, a way which must perforce exclude other ways, as regards outward forms, including formal beliefs, and not just rites and rituals. But alongside this formal exclusivism there is an essential or mystical inclusivism. This combination of two apparently opposed elements reflects the Qur'ān itself: many verses can be cited in support of both aspects, and each is, therefore, to be seen as complementing and not contradicting the other.

It should be noted at this point that Iqbal's effort to include exclusivism is in accord with many of the great representatives of the Sufi tradition. In particular, one thinks of the metaphysical principle enunciated by Ibn 'Arabī: part of the completeness of being is the existence of incompleteness within it, failing which the completeness of being would be incomplete by virtue of the absence of incompleteness within it. This principle implies that a true

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[54] *Stray Reflections*, p.33 no. 18 'Fanaticism'. Khurram Shafique, one of the editors of this volume notes that this reflection was incorporated into journal, *The Muslim Community*, in 1910. The word *'asabiyya* is given as the translation of 'fanaticism'.

universality is expressed, and not contradicted, by the particular; in terms of hermeneutics, it comes to mean that the inclusivist "reading" of verses of scripture must allow for the relative validity of exclusivist interpretations of the same.[55] Iqbal's solidarity with the Muslim community, his empathy with its '*asabiyya*, his bearing witness to his faith, and his sincere effort to engage in traditional *da'wa*, are not therefore to be seen simply as concessions to exoteric orthodoxy– still less as a simplistic "advocacy of unreformed orthodoxy" as Ikram put it; rather, these "religious" attitudes are but the formal expressions of inner spiritual dispositions which have reverberations that transcend the horizontal boundaries of exoteric Muslim orthodoxy, as will be clear shortly. What needs to be stressed here is that it is precisely his solidarity with orthodoxy that makes it more conceivable for orthodox Muslims to countenance, and possibly participate in, the universal vision of the poet. The universality of his vision can enter more effectively into the worldview of the orthodox precisely because it is an inclusivism which does not mount an abrasive challenge to their exclusivism, but is on the contrary deftly woven into the texture of an exclusivism with which they can identify in a primary way. On the basis of this initial identification with the poet's vision of "exclusivist" Islam, the exclusivist Muslim is more likely to find his exclusivism refined and calibrated by the poet's inclusivism. Appreciation of this point should help reveal the extent to which Ikram's accusation against Iqbal is unjust; conversely, it helps also to show the extent to which an inclusivism indifferent to the sensitivities of exclusivism will be severely handicapped if not vitiated by its own implicit exclusivism: it becomes a form of apparent inclusivism which is in reality an exlusivism, precisely in the measure that it excludes exclusivism.

For some this will appear contradictory and not simply paradoxical, as it does for the mullah in Iqbal's autobiographical poem, "Piety and Antinomianism (*Zuhd aur Rindi*)". In this poem, the mullah is baffled by the contradictions in Iqbal: he never misses a prayer, and yet listens to music; he refuses to call the Hindus disbelievers, and yet his Muslim orthodoxy is beyond question; he is clearly a member of the Sunni community, but has

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[55] See our *The Other in the Light of the One* for elaboration on the interfaith implications of this ontological principle.

Shi'i sympathies. Iqbal, far from resolving the contradictions, revels in them, and playfully asks the mullah to let him know if he can find the real Iqbal:

The mullah complains:

He thinks a Hindu not a heathen [kāfir], I'm told,

A most casuistical notion to hold

In the morning devotions [tilāwat, i.e., recitation of the Qur'ān], at evening the fiddle [gānā, i.e., singing],

I have never been able to fathom this riddle …"

Then Iqbal replies:

"I too long to know the Iqbal of reality,

And often shed tears at this wall of duality

To Iqbal of Iqbal little knowledge is given;

I say this not in jesting– not jesting, by Heaven!"[56]

Such are the paradoxes which are unavoidable, if one wishes to make a serious attempt to open up the minds of orthodox conservatives to broader horizons of thought, on the one hand, without provoking violent defensive reflexes from them by proposing too "unorthodox" a position, on the other.

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Let us now turn our attention to some concrete examples of Iqbal's universal vision. One should say immediately that many pages of his major

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[56] *Poems from Iqbal*, tr. V.G. Kiernan (Karachi: Iqbal Academy/Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.8-9.

philosophical work, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, can be read as an ecumenical text insofar as what is being defended, promoted and expounded is religious thought as such and not just Islamic religious thought. This is most clearly evident in his final chapter, number 7, entitled "Is Religion Possible". The whole of this chapter is a refutation of one of the most serious critiques to which religion– all religion– has been subjected in the modern period, that of Immanuel Kant. The essence of his argument against Kant is summed up in this sentence:

> The evidence of religious experts in all ages and countries is that there are potential types of consciousness lying close to our normal consciousness. If these types of consciousness open up possibilities of life-giving and knowledge-yielding experience, the question of the possibility of religion as a form of higher experience is a perfectly legitimate one, and demands our serious attention.[57]

What Iqbal means by "religious experts" is clearly the mystics of the different religions, to which he refers as providers of the most important type of evidence which can refute Kant. Here we see a clear sign of his ecumenism, his recognition of the equivalence of the mystics of all faiths, united in their affirmation of a unique, absolute, Reality, accessible not through reason unaided, but through spiritual intuition and mystical disclosure.

Thus, mystical consciousness is central to Iqbal's ecumenism, and it is this which enables him to refer reverentially to such figures as the Buddha, Guru Nanak, Jesus, and many other figures from diverse religions: they all point to one and the same reality. This reality is most often referred to by Iqbal in terms of love, and not simply knowledge. Or rather, the basic theme that seems to fashion his receptivity to the religious Other is the wisdom which flows from love: it is this interplay between wisdom and love that generates a deep appreciation or mystical attunement to the spiritual values animating traditions other than Islam.

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[57] *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1986), p.146.

As regards wisdom, we have this couplet from Iqbal's *Jāvīd-Nāma*, considered by many to be his masterpiece. The first line is a paraphrase of a Qur'ānic verse regarding wisdom or *hikma* (2:269), and the second is a paraphrase of a famous saying of the Prophet regarding the same ("wisdom is the lost camel of the believer; he has a right to it wherever he may find it"):

God has declared wisdom is a great good

wherever you may see this good, seize it.[58]

Iqbal's poetry is replete with examples of his grasp and application of wisdom from diverse spiritual traditions. One particularly striking example of his grasp of Advaita is given in his poem, *Naya Shivala* or "New Temple". This is from the Urdu collection, *Bāng-e Darā*. He berates the Brahmin for worshipping idols, but then adds: [59]

In each graven image you fancied God: I see

In each speck of dust of this land, divinity [trans. modified]

This is a remarkable couplet for one sees here a mirror-image of the Hindu and the Muslim conception of God: what the Hindu sees through the idol is *khudā*, whereas what Iqbal the Muslim sees in each speck of dust is a *devatā*.[60] So he is implicitly affirming the metaphysical validity of the Hindu

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[58] *Jāvīd-Nāma* tr. A.J. Arberry (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1966), p.64.

[59] *Poems from Iqbal*, tr. V.G. Kiernan (Karachi: Iqbal Academy/Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 18: New Altar [*Naya Shivala*].

[60] Iqbal added the following note in the margin of the poem when it first appeared in the monthly magazine *Makhzan*, in 1902, explaining the expression "born of light", which referred to the angels:

> i.e. *devatā*. The word *devatā* means born of light in the Sanskrit language. It denotes a being made of light. This gives us to understand that the ancient Hindus regarded the *devatās* as created like all other creation and did not think of them as eternal

conception of God, that is, seeing through the created form to the uncreated Essence, seeing the *devatā* as an icon, not as an idol, transparent to the universal Essence above and beyond all forms; but he universalises this perception, thus implicitly saying to the Brahmin: see God in and through all forms, without exception, rather than enclosing Him within one or other particular form.[61] Thus, the aspect of divine immanence which justifies the Hindu conception of the *devatā* as a manifestation of divinity is coupled with a stress on the universality of this immanence; and it is this universality which opens up the dimension of divine immanence to its complementary pole, the dimension of divine transcendence: it is the one and only divine reality which is both immanent in all things and transcends all things. If immanence is restricted to some forms as opposed to others, then the dimension of transcendence is sacrificed: God's boundless reality is restricted within determinate relativities, and one commits the sin of *shirk*, polytheism, the worship of forms cut off from their divine source, forms which, thus, become idols.

The poem finishes with an affirmation of salvation for all in the new temple, and the terms he uses here are significant: [62]

Power and Peace [shakti and shanti] shall blend in the hymns the votary sings

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> beings. It meant for them, probably, the same that we denote by the word angel because angels, though having a luminous nature, are nevertheless created beings. Therefore, according to my lights, it would not be correct to accuse Hinduism guilty of polytheism. (Iqbal)

[61] This reminds us of Ibn al-'Arabī's way of interpreting the Qur'anic accusation of *kufr* in relation to Christians who say that 'truly God is Jesus, Son of Mary' (5:17). He points to the literal meaning of the word *kufr*, that is, 'covering up' or 'concealing', and writes that the Christians are called *kāfir*s in that they conceal God in the form of Jesus: the divine reality is 'covered over' by the human manifestation. He writes: 'The real error and unbelief in the full sense of the word is not in their saying "He is God", or "the son of Mary", but in their having turned aside from God by enclosing [God within one particular human form].' This is from Ibn al-'Arabī's *Fuṣūs al-ḥikam*; see R. Austin's translation, *Bezels of Wisdom* (New York, Paulist Press, 1980), p. 177, which we have modified here.

[62] *Poems from Iqbal,* op. cit., p.20.

For from love comes salvation [mukti] to all earth's living things [trans. modified].

Shakti, shanti and mukti: all are Hindu concepts deemed by the poet perfectly appropriate for the expression of the universal principles of divine power (for which he could have used *qudra* instead of *shakti*) sacred peace (for which he could have used *sakīna* instead of *shanti*) and salvation (*najāt* instead of *mukti*). The fact that he sees these terms as interchangeable shows clearly his implicit belief that the referents of these terms– those principles to which the words refer– are of universal scope; the names will differ from tradition to tradition, but the objects named are one and the same. The universal realities alluded to are objectively identical, it is human language– and with it, culture and even religion– which outwardly and formally differentiates those self-same spiritual realities.

Returning to the *Jāvīd-Nāma*, Iqbal has no problem about expressing divine wisdom through Jahān-Dost,[63] that is, Vishwa-mitra, author/revealer of the *Gayatri-mantra* in the *Rig Veda*, considered the holiest verse of the Vedas, second only to the mantra *Om*; and author of the whole of the third *mandala* of the *Rig Veda* which includes the *Gayatri-mantra*.[64]

He asked, 'The commons' religion?' I said, 'Just hearsay.'
He asked, 'The gnostics' religion?' I said, 'True seeing.'

گفت دین عامیاں؟ گفتم شنید
گفت دین عارفاں؟ گفتم که دید

My words brought much pleasure to his soul,
and he disclosed to me delightful subtleties.

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[63] *Jāvīd-Nāma*, op.cit., pp.40-43.

[64] Iqbal added a note in the margin of the poem when it first appeared in the monthly magazine *Makhẓan*, in 1902, introducing this ancient and famous supplication from the Reg Veda explaining the symbolism of light in the poem through its corresponding ideas in Sufism at the Qur'anic terminology.

Iqbal proceeds with 9 sayings from this *'ārif-i hindī'*, or Hindu sage, among which the following is to be carefully noted:

The infidel with a wakeful heart praying to an idol

is better than a religious man asleep in the sanctuary.[65]

کافر بیدار دل پیش صنم
به ز دیندارے که خفت اندر حرم!

Let us now turn to love, and to the way in which Iqbal's universal vision of love brings together not just believers of different faiths, but extends even to disbelievers, who remain, despite their lack of faith, images of being; and being, for Iqbal, is love:

Noble sir, do you know what it is, to be?

It is to take one's share of the beauty of God's Essence.

چیست بودن دانی اے مرد نجیب؟
از جمال ذات حق بردن نصیب!

Creating? It is to search for a beloved,

To display oneself to another being.[66]

These lines evoke the words of the "holy utterance" oft-repeated in Sufi metaphysics. God says: "I was a hidden treasure, and I loved to be known so I

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[65] Ibid., p.42.

[66] Ibid., p.138.

created."[67] Authentic being is nothing other than participation in the beauty of that "hidden treasure", to become one of the jewels of that treasure, in the measure of one's capacity to realize the beauty of the Real– *jamāl-e zāt-e haqq*. It is important to stress here the combination of the notions of *jamāl*, beauty– relating to love– and *haqq*, the Real, the True– relating to knowledge. The wisdom which allows one to perceive the truth of other faiths is the fruit of both knowledge and love: knowledge deepened by love furnishes the soul with a sense of the sacred, allowing one to perceive the transcendent source and the sacred ramifications of concepts and forms of the traditions of the Other. This is the wisdom of which the Prophet spoke when he referred to it as a "lost camel": it is lost, insofar as it is alien and unknown, but is nonetheless one's own– the believer has a right to possess it– insofar as it derives from the one and only source of wisdom–*al-Hakīm*, the Wise; and it is one's own because it resonates with the deepest dimensions of one's intellect, with which it is ultimately at one: the wisdom perceived by the intellect cannot be other than the consciousness by which it is perceived. Wisdom is thus "owned" by the intellect which perceives and assimilates it, and, for its part, the intellect is "owned" by the wisdom which is calling out to be assimilated. Conversely, love clarified and given focus by knowledge ensures that discernment is not sacrificed in one's embrace of all in God. As will be seen below, one comes to love even the disbeliever, but one does not fail to discriminate between the humanity of the disbeliever, by virtue of which he is lovable, and the disbelief of the disbeliever, which cannot be loved.

Insofar as one enters into the spirit of love, then, one enters into the beauty of the Real, a reality which defines itself not only as love, but as a love

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[67] The saying of the 'hidden treasure' is not found in the canonical collections, its chain of transmission not being regarded as sound. However, various exoteric authorities do accept the soundness of its meaning, for it accords with the interpretation given by Ibn ʿAbbās of verse, 51: 56: 'I created the Jinn and mankind only that they might worship Me'. Ibn 'Abbās reports that 'knowledge' (*maʿrifa*), is what is meant by 'worship', so that the phrase *illā li-yaʿbudūni* (except that they might worship Me) becomes *illā li-yaʿrifūni* (except that they might know Me). Such exoteric scholars as Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī have no difficulty in citing the saying, together with the implicit validation of its meaning by the comment of Ibn ʿAbbās. See the end of his commentary on 51: 56 in his *Tafsīr al-kabīr* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 2001), vol. 10, p. 194.

which loves to "display itself to another being"– this display being the inner law of "creation". God loved to be known, hence He created. This view of love as streaming forth from the hidden essence of God, and leading back to the beauty of the Real, is entirely at one with the Sufi tradition, and it is this love which is constantly referred to as that inner transformative power which renders knowledge not only salvific but also sanctifying. Without love, knowledge is reduced to the shell of reason working on data received from without; this kind of knowledge cannot realize its inner harmony with beauty. But with love, knowledge is transformed into a mode of participation in the object known; and when the object to be known is God, the union between the subject and the object cannot but be that synthesis of love and knowledge which is the motivating force of the whole of creation: for God *loved* to be *known*. To know God is to know That which loved to be known, so an authentic knowledge of God is always and inexorably accompanied by love of God. Conversely: an authentic love of God will always result in knowledge of God, for this love becomes part of one's being, and it is only by virtue of a transformation of being that one can "know" God in the deepest sense.

In numerous places throughout Iqbal's poetry love is contrasted with knowledge in its lower form, that is, knowledge in the sense of reason. In the *Jāvīd-Nāma*, we have this clear distinction:

Man's reason is making assault on the world,
but his love makes assault on the Infinite.

…

Whoever becomes a lover of the beauty of the Essence

He is the master of all things in existence (tr. modified).[68]

Love is the law and ritual of life,

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[68] *Jāvīd-Nāma*, op. cit., p.26. (*Har-khe 'āshiq shud jamāl-i zāt rā; Ūst sayyed-i jumla-ye mawjūdāt rā*)

See for the original Persian text, *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl– Fārsī* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1994), p.489.

Religion the root of education; and religion is love…

Religion does not mature without love's schooling;

Learn religion from the company of the lords of love.[69]

Religion consists of burning from head to toe in aspiration:

Its consummation is love, courtesy its initiation

…

Soiling one's tongue with ill-speech is a sin

The disbeliever and the believer are alike creatures of God.

Humanity, human respect for human reality:

Be conscious of the station of humanity.

…

The slave of love who takes his path from God

Becomes a loving friend of both disbeliever and believer.[70]

بنده عشق از خدا گیرد طریق

می شود بر کافر و مومن شفیق!

Here we see some of the most radical implications of Iqbal's conception of love. It appears that the "slave of love" leaves behind the spirit of religious

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[69] *Kulliyāt*, p.585.

[70] *Kulliyāt*, p.672-673.

ecumenism and goes beyond the distinction between believer and disbeliever, embracing both of them in an equal love, both of them being equally human and thus equally lovable, whatever the beliefs or lack thereof, espoused. "Be conscious of the station of humanity", Iqbal tells us, as if to insist: the humanity of each human soul takes precedence over everything else pertaining to the human being, including his beliefs. This "station of humanity" is the *fitra*, referred to in the Qur'ān as follows: "So set your purpose for religion with unswerving devotion– the original nature created by God (*fitrat Allāh*), that according to which He created man. There is no altering God's creation. That is the right religion but most men know not" (30:30). The *fitra* can be seen as a trace, a proof, or a reflection of *al-Fātir*, the Originator; given that *al- Fātir* is itself none other than the divine Essence insofar as it engages in its originating, creating relationship with the human being, it follows that the *fitra* of each human being must reflect and "re-present"– in the sense of make present, and not just represent–the beauty and the love which the divine is in its ultimate nature. Each human being is human by virtue of that *fitra* which articulates human reality in terms of the divine; to speak of the *fitra*, the "station of humanity", is to speak of the creative power of divinity: the human proclaims and affirms the divine, without which it is not human. It is to this mystery that the angels bear witness when they prostrate before Adam,[71] and within which is hidden that by virtue of which every human being becomes lovable.

> So even if the disbeliever formally renounces belief in God, his own reality or spiritual "station" cannot be renounced, destroyed, or even fundamentally altered: in the verse (30:30) cited above, immediately after mention is made of the *fitra* we are told: "There is no altering God's creation". In other words, the *fitra* proper to humanity is both inalienable and immutable; by virtue of its very presence, inwardly and objectively, it takes priority over all actions, words performed outwardly and subjectively by the human being.[72] One is reminded here of Meister

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[71] Q 2:34 ff.

[72] According to the Prophet, it also takes priority over all outward religious affiliations: 'Every babe is born according to the *fitra;* its parents make it a Jew, a Christian or a Magian.'

Eckhart's famous dictum: "the more he blasphemes, the more he praises God". Less well known, but equally profound, is what Imam 'Alī says in one of his sermons: "Unto Him bear witness all things in existence, whatever the heart of the disbelieving disputant affirms" (*fa-huwa'lladhī tash-hadu lahu a'lāmu'l-wujūd, 'alā iqrār qalb dhī'l-juhūd*).[73] Thus, even the disbeliever becomes lovable, for he is perceived as a human being, first, and the human being *qua* human being, cannot but express, embody and reflect the beautiful reality of its Creator, whatever he may say or do. It is by virtue of this immutable, objective dimension of his own humanity that even the disbeliever "becomes a loving friend" to the true "slave of God who takes his path from God" as Iqbal put it. One whose path is derived from God sees that each human being can lead back to God along that same path.

In addition, we are told by the Qur'ān that "Wherever you turn, there is the face of God" (2:115). In light of this discussion we can see that this face of the Beloved is mirrored in the whole of creation, but it is found most perfectly reflected in the human being. The Adamic nature is the most perfectly polished mirror in which God can contemplate His own beauty. In the mystically celebrated opening chapter of his *Fusūs al- hikam*, Ibn al-'Arabī describes the Adamic mystery as follows: [74]

The Real wished to see the essences of His most beautiful names or, if you wish, to see His own Essence, in an all-inclusive object encompassing the whole affair, which, qualified by existence, would reveal to Him His own mystery. For the seeing of a thing, itself by itself, is not the same as its seeing itself in another, as it were in a mirror...

We can be certain that Iqbal was keenly aware of this fundamental passage in the corpus of Ibn al-'Arabī. So many of his poems and indeed one of his

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[73] *Nahj al-balāgha,* ed. Muḥammad ʿAbduh (Beirut: Muʾassasa al-Maʿārif li'l-Tabāʿa wa'l-Nashr, 1996) Sermon no.49, p.172.

[74] Translation (with minor modifications) by R. Austin, *The Bezels of Wisdom* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), p.50.

earliest essays, dealing with the Sufi conception of "the Perfect Man" (*al-insān al-kāmil*),[75] leave us with no doubt that this kind of spiritual anthropology informed his perspective in a fundamental manner. The notion of the perfect man being the polished mirror in which God sees Himself in manifest mode must be combined with Iqbal's view of love and beauty as constituting the ultimate substance of the divine, in order to correctly situate his embrace even of the *kāfir*, thus manifesting not so much religious ecumenism as an uncompromisingly spiritual humanism: an anthropology which goes from the human to the divine; whose loving embrace of humanity is inspired by the inescapable beauty of divinity.

One feels sure that Iqbal was one of those devotees of what Ibn al-'Arabī and Rumi called "the religion of love".

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 tables of the Tora 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.[76]

Rumi, in similar vein, proclaims:[77]

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[75] As early as 1900 Iqbal wrote an essay in which he demonstrated his familiarity with this concept, 'The Doctrine of Absolute Unity as Expounded by Abdul Karim al-Jili' *Indian Antiquary*, Bombay, September 1900, pp. 237-46. See also the text of this article prepared by S. H. Razzaqi in his *Discourses of Iqbal*, (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 2004).

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

[77] *Mathnawī,* ed. Abd al-Hamīd Mashāyikh Tabātabāī (Tehran: Nashr-i Tulū', n.d.) II, line 1770.

The religious community of love is separate from all religions:

For lovers, the community and the religion is God.

IQBAL, RUMI AND THE SUFI TRADITION

Michael James Nazir Ali

It is extremely fortunate that this seminar to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Muhammed Iqbal's sojourn in Europe is taking place as this university is also celebrating the 400th anniversary of the birth of John Milton. Iqbāl had, for long, wanted to emulate Milton and in his *Taskhīr-i-Fitrat* (overcoming of nature) he was eventually able to retell the story of *Paradise Lost and Regained* from his own perspective of the self's ability to overcome its lower instincts and to clear away all obstacles in its path until it reaches its destiny. This is, of course, a very different kind of anthropology from the biblical one of creation, fall and redemption but one which is entirely characteristic of Iqbal's work in his post-European period.[78]

My task today, however, is not to speak of Iqbal and Milton but Iqbal and Rumi. Rumi is Iqbāl's mentor par excellence. He appears as such in the *Asrār-i-Khudi* or Secrets of the Self:

پیر رومی خاک را اکسیر کرد از غبارم جلوه ہا تعمیر کرد

The master of Rum transmuted my base earth to gold, He has fired this puff of dust with splendour[79]

In the late *Bāl-i-Jibrīl* he appears again as the *Pīr-i-Rūmī* to Iqbal's *Murīd-i-Hindī.*[80] It is, however, in his *magnum opus*, the *Javīd-Nāmeh*, that Rumi comes

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[78] See further S A Vahid, *Iqbal: His Art and Thought*, Karachi, OUP, 1959, p158.

[79] *Asrar-i-Khudi*, Lahore, Ghulam Ali, 1971, p8, see also S A Durrani (ed) *The Secrets of Self* with notes in Iqbal's own hand on the text of R A Nicholson's classic translation, Karachi University Press, 2001, p9.

[80] *Bal-i-Jibril*, pp134f in *Kulliyāt-i-Iqbal*, Lahore, Ghulam Ali, 1973.

to the centre: he accompanies Iqbal on his journey to heaven and is to him what Virgil, Beatrice and St Bernard are to Dante in the Divine Comedy.[81]

Iqbal's reassessment of Rumi (in which he was followed by scholars of the stature of Nicholson) goes hand-in-hand with his changing understanding of *tasawwuf* or Sufism. In *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, Iqbal is content to identify both Sufism and Rumi with Pantheism. The universe is but a reflection of the Eternal Beauty and love for this Beauty is such that it burns up everything, except the Beauty itself. He claims that, for the Sufi, God is all things.[82] This attitude changed, however, to such an extent that Rumi became Iqbal's master in understanding and propagating his new doctrine of the self and its relationship to the world and God. Iqbal also came to realise that there was more to Sufism than just pantheism and monism. He began to appreciate the work of reformers like Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindī who tried to restore the doctrine of *wahdat ash-shuhūd*, what Anne Marie Schimmel has called the 'unity of vision', in place of the dominant *wahdat al-wujūd* (or essential monism) view of Sufism in his time. Sarhindī believed that the mystic is profoundly related to the divine being but is not identical with it. Nor is the experience of annihilation (or *fanā*) the ultimate mystical experience. Beyond it lies a whole world of the 'journey in God' if the mystic is to attain to maturity in the mystical way or *tarīqa*. This is generally known as *baqā baʿd al-fanā* or survival after mystical annihilation. Both Iqbal and Sarhindī also identify this with the prophetic experience: after the unitive experience the prophet returns to change the world.[83]

An understanding of the emergence of the human person in evolutionary terms is to be found in Rumi as well as in Iqbal. Such an understanding relates humans to the world around them. As opposed to the monists who

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[81] *Javid-Nameh*, Lahore, Ghulam Ali, 1972 (Eng Tr A J Arberry, London, 1966).

[82] *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, Lahore, Bazm-i-Iqbal, 1964, pp88f.

[83] See further Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Lahore, Ashraf, 1971, pp124ff, pp192f, and Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina, pp367ff.

had discarded Neo-Platonism, Rumi describes a differentiated universe where human beings belong to both the spiritual and material dimensions:

یک گوهری چو بیضا جوشید و گشت دریا
کف کرد و کف زمین شد وز دود او سما شد
آنگه ز عالم جان آمد سپاه انسان
عقلش وزیرگشت و دل رفت و پادشاه شد

The one substance boiled like an egg and became the Sea

It foamed the foam became the Earth and from its spray arose the sky.

Then from the spiritual world, the human army came.

Reason was its vizier and the Soul went forth and became King.[84]

In a famous passage in the *Reconstruction*, this is how Iqbal presents his view of the relation of the universe to God and of the emergence of the human ego:

> I have conceived the Ultimate Reality as an ego; and I must add now that from the Ultimate Ego only egos proceed. The creative energy of the Ultimate Ego, in whom deed and thought are identical, functions as ego-unities. The world, in all its details, from the mechanical movement of what we call the atom of matter to the free movement of thought in the human ego, is the self-revelation of the 'Great I Am'. Every atom of Divine Energy however low in the scale of experience is an ego. But there are degrees in the expression of egohood. Throughout the entire gamut of being runs the gradually rising note of egohood until it reaches its perfection in man. That is why the Qur'an declares the Ultimate Ego to be

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[84] *Diwān-i-Shams-i-Tabrīz*, Tabrīz edn, 1280 AH 162 4a.

nearer to man than his own neck-vein. Like pearls do we live and move and have our being in the perpetual flow of Divine Life.[85]

The final part of this passage is, of course, strikingly similar to St Paul's speech to the philosophers in Athens where he is relating his message to the words of their own poets (Acts 17:28). The passage is also very similar to some verses in Rumi's *Mathnawi* which speak of the emergence of the human from inanimate matter and from the animal world. Iqbal knew these verses because he refers to them in *The Metaphysics* and even then saw them as the 'realistic' side of Rumi's idealism.[86] The cosmology of both Rumi and of Iqbal is pan-psychist i.e. they believed the whole universe to be alive because everything shared in Divine Life. Human beings, however, have developed a self-conscious personality and the discussion in both centres around this self-consciousness and its significance for human destiny; self-knowledge is highly valued by Rumi. It is developed as a result of 'response' to the Word of God:

من بندۂ اٰنقوم که خود را دانند
ہر دم دلِ خود را ز غلط برهانند

I will be that people's slave

Who truly themselves know

And every moment do save

Their hearts from error gross.[87]

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[85] *Reconstruction*, p71f.

[86] *Metaphysics*, pp91f and *Mathnawi Book IV*.

[87] *Kulliyāt-i-Shams-i-Tabrizī* (ed M Dervish), Tehran 1341 HS, Vol3, p84, cf AJ Arberry *Rubā'iyāt of Rumi*, (Eng Trans), London, 1949, p188.

The proper affirmation of egohood, according to Rumi, is precisely within the flow of Divine Life and it is by immersing ourselves in self-denial that we find ourselves. Referring to *Mansūr* Al-Hallāj's famous cry *Ana'l Haqq* (I am the creative Truth), he has this to say:

در قلزمِ نیستی خود غوطه بخورد
انکه پس از انَ درِ اناالحق می
سفت

He dived into the sea of his non-entity

And from that won the pearl 'I am the Truth'.[88]

Hallāj is also important to Iqbal as anticipating his own work:

حلاج کی لیکن یه روایت ہے که انَخر
اک مرد قلندر نے کیا راز خودی فاش

But H*allāj's story is that at last*

The secret of the self has been revealed by a man of God.[89]

Such a secret has to be revealed at the proper time and in the right way lest it become our undoing:

انَ انا بی وقت گفتن لعنت است
انَ انا در وقت گفتن رحمت است
انَ انا منصور رحمت شد یقین
انَ انا فرعون لعنت شد ببین

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[88] *Kulliyāt*, p76, Arberry p31.

[89] *Darb-i-Kalim, Kulliyāt-i-Iqbal*, p118.

To say 'I' at the wrong time is a curse

To say 'I' at the proper time is a mercy

The 'I' of Mansūr certainly became a mercy

But the 'I' of Pharaoh became a curse: watch out![90]

According to Rumi, the mystic takes on the characteristics of God in the same way as iron takes on the qualities of fire when it has been in it long enough. It does not lose its own properties entirely but takes on the heat and the glow of the fire so that it can rightly say 'I am the fire':

اَتشم من گر ترا شکست و ظن

اَزمون کن دست رابر من بزن

I am the fire, if you have doubt and suspicion

Try me out yourself, put your hand on me and see![91]

In his lectures Iqbal interprets Hallāj*'s* famous cry in the light of the prophetic tradition:

تخلقوا باخلاق الله

Create in yourselves the attributes of God.

Here unitive experience is not the finite self being absorbed into the infinite. It is rather the infinite passing into the loving embrace of the finite.[92]

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[90] *Mathnawi II*, 2522-23.

[91] *Mathnawi II,* 1345f.

[92] *Reconstruction*, p110, and *Fihi mā Fihi*, Tehran, 1959,l p160.

Both Rumi and Iqbal believed that human beings are free but within the domains of a given moral order. They relied on the prophetic tradition that the true faith was between predestination and free-will. Rumi explains the expression جف القلم(the Pen has dried) as meaning that every action has an effect and a consequence appropriate to it. If you do wrong, you will not flourish. If you act rightly, you will be rewarded. Justice and injustice are not alike and will be dealt with differently.[93] Maulānā Shiblī Nauʿmānī, a distinguished biographer of Rūmī, tells us that Rūmī held that free-will must exist because we behave as if it did:

انسان کے تمام افعال و اقوال سے اختیار کا ثبوت ہوتا ہے۔ ہم جو کسی کو کسی بات کا حکم دیتےہیں۔ کسی کام سے روکتے ہیں۔ کسی پر غصہ ظاہر کرتے ہیں۔ کسی کام کا ارادہ کرتے ہیں۔ کسی فعل پر نادم ہوتے ہیں۔ یہ تمام امور اس بات کی دلیل ہیں کہ ہم مخاطب کو اور اپنے آپ کو فاعل مختار خیال کرتے ہیں۔

> Free-will is proved by all human deeds and words. When we order someone to do something, or stop them from doing it; when we show anger towards another or decide upon a certain course of action; when we are penitent, all these are a sign that we consider the other person and ourselves free-agents.[94]

Iqbal bases his view on the freedom of the human personality on the famous 'trust' verse in the Qur'ān (33:72). Human beings accepted this trusteeship (*amānah*) which other aspects of creation could not.[95] God, according to him, is not only the creator of the Universe and of the human person but also of human freedom. The emergence of free selves is a limitation on the divine but this is not externally imposed. It arises, rather, out of God's free act whereby he has chosen such free selves to be

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[93] *Mathnawi V,* 3131f.

[94] *Sawānih-i-Maulvī-i-Rūm*, India, Undated, p125.

[95] *Reconstruction*, p88f.

participants of his own life, power and freedom. On their part, such selves must realise that their freedom depends on God and it is as they approach the source of their freedom that they get more and more free.[96]

The self is not only free but active. S. A. Khundmiri has remarked that in this area Iqbal was greatly influenced by Rumi. It seems likely that much of Iqbal's vitalism and activism were derived from the philosophy of Henri Bergson and Iqbal's teacher at Cambridge, James Ward, even if it is true that Iqbal was attracted to these philosophers because of their affinities with Muslim thinkers such as Rumi.[97] Iqbal certainly recognised activism in Rumi and even put suitable verses in Rumi's mouth:

مومن از عزم و توکل قاهر است
گر ندارد ایں دو جوهر کافر است
کوهسار اذ ضربت او ریز ریز
در گریبانش هزاران رستخیر

The believer is mighty through a sense of purpose and trust in God,

Without these qualities, he is as good as an unbeliever.

He smashes mountains by his blow,

In his heart are a thousand resurrections.[98]

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[96] ibid 78f, Cf R A Nicholson's Trans of the *Asrar*, *The Secrets of the Self*, London, Macmillan, 1920, pXV.

[97] See further Vahid, op.cit, pp99f, B A Dar *A Study in Iqbal's Philosophy*, Lahore, Ghulam Ali, 1971, pp78ff, cf S A Khundmiri, *Conception of Time* in H Malik (ed) *Iqbal: Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan*, Columbia, 1971, p251.

[98] *Mathnawi Pas Che Bāyad Kard Ay Aqwām-i-Sharq*, Lahore, 1936 p6.

That this is a correct interpretation is seen by examining Rumi's own work:

دوست دار دیار ایں اَشفتگی
کوششِ بیہودہ بہ از خفتگی

The friend loves this restlessness; to struggle even vainly is better than sleep.

A few verses later, he goes on to say:

اندر ایں رہ می تراش و می خراش
تادمِ اَخر دمی فارغ مباش

In this way be ever exerting yourself, until your last breath do not be unoccupied for a moment.[99]

In the end, both Rumi and Iqbal depend on the well-known Arabic proverb:

فی الحرکات برکات

In movements are blessings.[100]

For Iqbal and Rumi it is, in a very real sense, love which makes the world go round. For the latter, it is a force that unifies. The force of attraction in every atom and one form of life losing itself in another and thereby resulting in growth are all forms of love.[101] For the former, the end of love is not a monistic union where all individuality is lost but a union of relatedness. According to him, love 'individualises' the lover as well as the beloved. The

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[99] *Mathnawi I*, 1819-1822.

[100] *Fihi mā Fihi,* p247 cf *Reconstruction*, p123.

[101] K A Hakim, *Metaphysics of Rumi*, Lahore, 1959, pp37ff.

effort to realise the most unique individuality individualises the seeker and implies the individuality of the sought, for nothing else would satisfy the nature of the seeker.[102]

Rumi emphasises the transforming nature of love. It makes service and sacrifice possible and it gives new life in place of death:

از محبت دار تختی می شود و زمحبت بار بختی می شود
از محبت شاه بنده می شود وز محبت مرده زنده می شود

By love the cross becomes a throne, by it the rider the lowly mount

By love the King becomes a slave and by it the dead are raised to life

It is difficult to imagine a better summing-up of the Gospel of Jesus Christ than this.[103] In the preface to the Second Book of the *Mathnawi*, Rumi claims that God's love is primary whereas ours is derivative. He refers here to Qur'ān (5:57) where it is said that God loves believers (*yuhibbuhum*) and that they, in turn, love him يحبهم و يحبونه (*yuhibbūnahu*). The earliest Sufis used the Qur'ānic term for love, *mahabba*. The word *ʿishq*, which had overtones of sensual passion was not used at first and only gradually came to be acceptable. Iqbal and Rumi, however, use both words freely and, it seems, interchangeably. So, Rumi can say:

در عشق مست باش که عشق است هرچه هست

Be intoxicated in love for love is all that is.[104]

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[102] R A Nicholson, *op.cit.* ppXXVf.

[103] *Mathnawi II*, 1529-1531.

[104] R A Nicholson (ed) *Diwani-i-Shams-i- Tabrīz*, CVP 1898, p50.

And for Iqbal:

بے محبت زندگی ماتم همه
کاروبارش زشت و نامحکم همه

W*ithout love, life is all mourning, its affairs disordered and unstable*[105].

But then he can also say:

ابتدای عشق و مستی قاهری است
انتهای عشق و مستی دلبری است

The beginning of love and intoxication is the experience of the tremendum,

its climax is the experience of the fascinans.[106]

Iqbal, as well as the Cambridge scholar Margaret Smith, draw our attention to the contact and dialogue between the early Sūfīs and the Christian monks of the deserts of Syria, Mesopotamia and Egypt. Iqbal goes so far as to say that the presence of this monasticism 'as a working ideal of life' was one of the reasons, in addition to the Qur'an and the Sunnah, for the rise of Sufism in the first Islamic centuries. It is interesting, in this connection, that Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh tell us of the abiding concern of the desert fathers to uphold the priority of God's infinite love and compassion. Ours can only be, however inadequately, a response to such love.[107]

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[105] *Zabūr-i-ʿAjam*, Lahore, Ghulam Ali, 1970, p264 *Zabūr-i-ʿAjam*, Lahore, Ghulam Ali, 1970, p264.

[106] *Pas Che Bāyad Kard*, p15.

[107] Iqbal, *Metaphysics*, pp76f, Smith, *Studies in Early Mysticism in the Near and Middle East*, London, 1931 (reprint Kessinger n.d) and Benedicta Ward (ed), *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, Oxford, 1981, ppVIIf cf Michael Nazir-Ali in D Thomas and C Amos (eds) *A Faithful Presence: Essays for Kenneth Cragg*, London, Melisande, 2003, pp319ff.

Whilst Rumi and Iqbal are in agreement with the Sūfī emphasis on the unitive nature of love, they also want to affirm that such a union is one of relatedness and not absorption into the Divine. In this, they are at one with the mainstream of orthodox Christian, Muslim and Jewish mysticism.

Love leads to the mystic vision, the rest is dispensable. Iqbal quotes from Rumi:

آدمی دیدست باقی پوست است
دید آن باشد که دید دوست است

Humans are sight, the rest is worthless and vestigial

that only is true sight which is sight of the Beloved.[108]

Such a vision is also called 'heart' by Iqbal. The heart 'sees' spiritually and can be in direct contact with that reality which is beyond everyday experience and yet underlies it. Rumi agrees:

حس ابدان قُوتِ ظلمت می خورد
حس جان از آفتابی می چرد

The bodily senses are eating the food of darkness,

the spiritual senses are feeding on the Sun itself.[109]

Rebirth is another significant way of talking about spiritual life and the vision it brings:

سفر در خویش؟ زادن بے اب و مام
ثریا را گرفتن اذ لب بام

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[108] *Mathnawi I, 1406 and Javīd-Nāmeh*, p23.

[109] *Reconstruction*, p15 and *Mathnawi II*, 51.

Journeying into the self – what is it? It is to be born without father or mother. It is to seize the stars from the edge of the roof.[110]

Again, in the *Javīd-Nāmeh* two kinds of birth are compared:

زادن طفل از شکست اشکم است
زادنِ مرد از شکست عالم است

The birth of a child is the opening of the womb; that of the godly is the opening up of another world.[111]

Rumi compares such re-birth directly with the birth of Jesus:

بانگ حق اندر حجاب و بے حجاب
انّ دهد کو داد مریم را زجیب

The call of God, manifest or hidden, gives that which he gave Mary from his very heart.[112]

As we have pointed out, for both Rumi and Iqbal, such a vision is not a reason for the dissolution or absorption of self. It is, in fact, what prepares the self for immortality. Discipline, inward wakefulness and endurance of suffering are needed for the mystic vision and the immortality of which it gives us assurance.[113]

There is, of course, much more that Iqbal and Rumi have in common: their understanding of God, of the nature of revelation and of human

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[110] *Zubūr*, p225.

[111] *Javīd-Nāmeh*, p21.

[112] *Mathnawi I*, 1935.

[113] *Reconstruction*, p. 119, *Fihi ma Fihi*, pp208ff.

destiny, for example. They are also concerned about the relationship of the individual to the community and how this is expressed in the Islamic tradition. Whilst both believe in the superiority of Islam, they are also prepared to go beyond and to consider what may be imaginative, suggestive and even true in other faiths. They both attempt to develop theodicies which explain the ways of God to human beings and, in this, there is no blame if the effort is heroic but, as with Milton, ultimately unsuccessful.

ENCOUNTERING MODERNITY: IQBAL AT CAMBRIDGE

Saeed A. Durrani

Iqbal's stay in Europe (1905-08) transformed his thinking and outlook. He arrived in Cambridge at the age of 27 in September 1905 and enrolled in Trinity College, Cambridge, as an Advanced Student. In his application to the College he stated that he would like to "make a contribution to the knowledge in the west, of some branch of Muhammadan Philosophy. I would propose as a subject of *Research*– "The genesis and development of Metaphysical concepts in Persia" or some contribution to the knowledge of Arabic Philosophy…" (My personal guess is that in proposing the above fields of research he may have been guided by his erstwhile mentor at the Government College, Lahore, Professor Thomas Arnold– to whom Iqbal was greatly devoted.) By 1905, Iqbal was already a fairly well-established young poet of Urdu with an India-wide reputation. But he was, essentially, a poet of nationalistic leanings[114]– despite his early education at a madrasah in

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[114] Since this is a theme that has been emphasized by Dr. Durrani and a part of his presentation relies on the "fact" of Iqbal's development from a nationalist to a "pan-Islamic" for mounting his argument, a brief response seems in order. It was forwarded by Khurram Ali Shafique, our associate scholar from Karachi, and was discussed after Dr. Durrani's paper. See below. (Editors)

To say that Iqbal was a nationalist before 1905 and became an Islamist later is an oversimplification. It overlooks the following facts:

1. Iqbal wrote "Islamist" poetry even in the days when he praised India as a homeland. Even in his prose essay "Qaumi Zindagi" (National Life) he used the word "qaum" (Nation) for Indian Muslims and not for all the Indians, and his definition of the organic unity between religion and culture in this essay was essentially the same which he later offered in his mature philosophy. This essay was published around the same time as his famous poem "*Saray jahan say achha Hindustan hamara*" (Our India, the best of all the world!)

Sialkot on highly traditional Indo-Islamic lines. Iqbal had always been proud of his Kashmiri Brahmanic lineage; and had, indeed, published several poems clearly and expressly deriving from Vedic sources– e.g. his poem entitled "Āftāb"– The Sun– stated by the poet to be the translation of the Hindu scriptures, *Gaiteri.* In another poem, entitled *Naya Shivala* (the New Temple) in his first book *Bang-i Dara* (The Call of the Caravan Bell) he had declared that [*Kulliyat, Urdu,* Urdu, p. 74] 'Every atom of my motherland is a (demi-)god for me'– which had raised eyebrows amongst the orthodox Muslims of India. I quote these instances to demonstrate the pre-1905 leanings of Iqbal towards nationalism and an essentially Hindu-oriented sentiment. And, of course, in his most celebrated poem 'Ode to India' (still widely regarded as the unofficial national anthem of India today) he had declared: [*Kulliyat,* Urdu*,* p.109]

Better than the whole world is our own India

We are its nightingales: It, verily, is our rose-garden.

Thus spake Iqbal, as he came up to Cambridge as a Freshman towards the end of September 1905. But when he left England less than three years later, on 8th July 1908, he had a different personality altogether. What were the influences that transformed him? I shall attempt to unravel some of these

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2. Likewise, even in his later period there is no dearth of poetry that is almost in the same vein as his earlier so-called "nationalistic" poetry: for instance, the lines in praise of the Nehrus in the *Javid Namah*.

3. The misconception is actually based on an underlying political concept, viz., Indian nationalism was always there and Muslim nationalism emerged later. That was the dogma upheld by the Congress and opposed by Iqbal, Jinnah and other Muslim leaders. If you believe in this dogma, then you also tend to believe that Iqbal must have followed the same path: nationalist first and Islamist later. If you believe that the Indian nationalism was a later development that happened at the turn of the century, then you understand that Iqbal's "love of India" in the pre-1905 days was something else, and to confuse it with the Congressite version of "nationalism" would be an *Anachronism*, since that kind of nationalism almost did not exist at that time!

strands in the present paper, and– to mix my metaphors– try to fathom these deeps to reach the undercurrents operating there. In this context, it would, perhaps not be remiss to point out that Iqbal himself was aware of this watershed of European sojourn in his modes of thought. For, in his first book, mentioned above (*Bang-i Dara*), he made a clear demarcation, viz. Part 1: "Up to 1905"; Part 2: "1905 -1908"; and Part 3: "1908-".

While researching for his dissertation, submitted in mid-March 1907 with the title: *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia'*– for which he got a 'Distinction' in his B.A. degree by research on 13 June 1907– Iqbal made a deep study of both 'Eastern' and 'Western' systems of philosophy. His dissertation started with an examination of the thoughts and belief–systems of ancient Persian sages, Zoroaster, Mani and Mazdak; and then went on to Islamic scholars, e.g. Ibn Maskawaih (d. 1030) and Ibn Sina (Avicenna, d. 1037). Iqbal analysed the influences of Greek (whom, in this context, we shall consider to be 'Western') philosophers, such as Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus, on these Persi-Islamic thinkers. Iqbal's very perspicacious and fascinating review of the interplay of classical Greek systems of thought with ancient Persian, Islamic, Sufic and Vedantic concepts is still worthy of careful study today– even though Iqbal modestly remarked in his Introduction: "Original thought cannot be expected in a review, the object of which is purely historical…" The present writer not being a professional philosopher– who is, indeed, a mere physicist by training, not a metaphysicist– cannot presume to pass judgement on the minutiae of Iqbal's analysis of the development of metaphysical concepts in Persia spanning the period from a few centuries BC to the end of the 19th century AD, covered by him in his dissertation (that earned him a degree of PhD from the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universitaet, Munich, on 4th November 1907). Suffice it here to say– as quoted by his nominal supervisor at Munich, Professor Fritz Hommel (cf. my book: *Navadir-i Iqbal Europe mein*– published by Iqbal Academy Pakistan: Lahore, 1995)– that his erstwhile mentor, Professor T. W. Arnold, to whom, indeed, Iqbal later on dedicated his published thesis (rather than to his nominal supervisor at Cambridge, the noted neo-Hegelian philosopher, J.M.E. McTaggart) wrote about this thesis as follows for the attention of his Munich University examiners:

"Whitehall, India Office, Oct. 2nd 1907

I have read Prof Muhammad Iqbal's Dissertation "The Development of Metaphysics in Persia" with interest. So far as I am aware, it is the first attempt that has been made to trace the continuous development of ancient Iranian speculations as they have survived in Muhammadan philosophy and so bring out the distinctively Persian character of many phases of Muslim thought. The writer has made use of much material hitherto unpublished and little known in Europe, and his dissertation is a valuable contribution to the history of Muhammedan philosophy".

(sd) T. W. Arnold, Prof. of Arabic, University of London.

While at Cambridge, Sheikh Muhammad Iqbal came into close contact with such giants of orientalism as Professor E. G. Browne and R. A. Nicholson. The latter, in fact, acted as a Referee for his dissertation in 1907– and in 1920 was to translate into English Iqbal's Persian *Mathnavī*, *Asrar-i Khudī* (*Secrets of the Self*) and thus introduce Iqbal's name to European readership. Professor Browne referred to Iqbal's work in the 2nd volume (pub. 1906) of his *opus magnum*, *A Literary History of Persia* (1902 *et seq*.) Apart from the orientalists, Iqbal also came into contact with various Cambridge philosophers of a high stature, including his neo-Hegelian supervisor at Trinity, J. M. E. McTaggart, A. N. Whitehead, W. R. Sorley of King's (the Knightbridge Professor of Moral Philosophy) and Professor James Ward. At that time, Cambridge was the abode of such towering personalities of the world of philosophy as Ludwig Wittgenstein, Bertrand Russell and George Moore – but I do not know whether Iqbal ever met them or attended any of their lectures. From the sources quoted in his Dissertation, however, it is quite obvious that he was a most conscientious, hard-working, and widely-read research scholar, who spent his time with great diligence. (Indeed, it is well known that he nearly gave up writing poetry around that time– sending a message to his erstwhile friend and promoter, Sheikh (later Sir) Abdul Qadir, Editor of *Makhzan*, Lahore, declaring that: [*Kulliyat,* Urdu,p.162] "… Nations that have work to do have no time to indulge in literary pursuits …". It was only Professor Thomas Arnold who persuaded Iqbal not to give up writing poetry that was of service to his nation.)

It is my belief that his time at Cambridge was a period of great 'input' to his mind and personality. The 'output' over the next decade or so was his

great poems and *mathnavis* that he published in both Urdu and Persian upon his return to India. At Cambridge– and subsequently in Germany and upon his return to London (November 1907– July 1908)– he assimilated much and thought much. This was a very formative period for young Iqbal (who was at that time 27– 30 years of age): it seems to have transformed his personality, his perceptions, and his outlook. His observation, at first hand, of Western culture, civilization and political machinations had already yielded such prophetic poems as the one he wrote in March 1907 (soon after submitting his dissertation, I suspect) where he declared: [*Kulliyat,* Urdu*,* p.167]

Your civilization will commit suicide by using its own dagger:

A nest that is built on a slender bough cannot have much permanence!

Such were Iqbal's thoughts after only a year and a half of sojourn in England. The three and a half months that he subsequently spent in Germany– where he formed a bond of deep affection for his tutor in the German language at Heidelberg, Emma Wegenast, a beautiful, sincere and serious-minded girl of 27, who taught him the works of Goethe, Heine and other German poets– were also a time that made a lasting impact on Iqbal's personality and emotions. It is my belief that it was not the works of German philosophers such as Kant, Spinoza, Schopenhauer, Hegel *et al.* that were the prime factors in this impact– for he was already well acquainted with them in India and in England. It was, rather, the fact that Iqbal, for the first time in his life, lived in a country where he did not feel the oppressive yoke of colonial subjugation. He was able to breathe the fresh air as a liberated human being in an environment where he was at a par with other humans, who were his equals: not his superiors or masters. This, too, boosted Iqbal's self-confidence– so that he returned to India with a fresh fire in his belly. From being a narrow nationalist, Iqbal had transformed into a pan-Islamist– even a cosmopolite and a visionary. Indeed, in a post-1908 poem, entitled *Wataniyat* (Nationalism) and subtitled: ("i.e. Homeland as a Political Concept"), he declared: *[Kulliyat, Urdu, p.187]*

Amongst these new gods, the greatest is Nationhood

Its robes are the funeral shroud of religion.

This idol, that has been carved by today's civilization

Is the destroyer of the land of our Prophet's faith.

And he goes on to explain: [*Kulliyat, Urdu,* p.187]

Your sinews are strengthened by your belief in One God

Islam is your homeland: the blessed Prophet your sustainer.

The famous author of the aforementioned [tarana-i Hindi] (Ode to India), now wrote his [tarana-i Milli] (Ode to the Islamic Nation), in which he extended his idea of nationhood to a global scale. He declared: *[Kulliyat,* Urdu, p. 186]

China is ours, Arabia is ours, and so, too, is India

We are Muslims; the entire world is our homeland!

Apart from this Islamic slant, a very significant change that took place in Iqbal's outlook and system of thought through his close encounter with European civilization– which the organizers of this Seminar have termed *Encountering Modernity*– was his disillusionment with the image of the West that had seemed to bedazzle the Indian– indeed entire colonial populations. He now understood its exploitative, imperialistic and materialistic *modus operandi,* and both overt and covert policies. This led him to declare: [*Kulliyat,* Urdu, p. 305]

The iridescence of modern civilization dazzles our eyes

But this artistry is an artifice of false jewellery.

And then: [*Kulliyat,* Urdu, p. 373]

The splendour of the knowledge of the West failed to bedazzle me

The dust of Medina and Najaf is the collyrium of my eyes.

Note his caustic remarks in the poem entitled "Lenin in the Presence of God": [*Kulliyat,* Urdu, p. 435]

This knowledge, this wisdom, this statesmanship, this governance

They suck blood, and teach the tenets of equality!

Unemployment and promiscuity and inebriation and destitution:

Are these not victories enough for the civilization of the West?

Furthermore: [*Kulliyat,* Urdu, p. 605]

Is this the zenith of your civilization?

Man without work, and woman without a child?

But this did not mean that Iqbal had become so blinkered, narrow-minded and partisan that he could not see and admire the strengths of the Western civilization and its positive advances; for he freely declared: [*Kulliyat,* Urdu, p. 690]

It is no sin to drink deep at the wells of new learning

Open to all are the winehouses of the West.

And he went on to explain: [*Kulliyat*, Persian, p. 648]

The strength of the West comes not from the dulcimer or the lyre

Nor does it spring from the cavorting of veil-less beauties

Its solidity does not stem from godlessness

Nor does its ascendancy result from the Latin script.

The strength of the West is based on science and technology

This is the fire that lights its lamp so brightly.

……..

From the above quotations– both critical and laudatory of the West – one must not conclude that Iqbal was preoccupied with Western attitudes and attributes alone. He was equally concerned with identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the East as well. For lack of time, I shall cite only one example each of the two sides of this oriental coin, as Iqbal saw it.

The tavern of the East still holds in its vaults

That wine – which sets alight men's consciousness

The forest of learning and invention is devoid of lion-hearted men

What is left is but the slaves of the Sufi and the Mullah, O Saqi!

Who has stolen the sharp sword of creative passion?

The learned hold an empty scabbard in their hand, O Saqi!

[*Kulliyat,* Urdu, p.351]

The best solution of this dichotomy prevalent in both systems is, for Iqbal:

[khuz ma Safa wa di' ma kadir] "pick that which is clean and reject what is unclean" from each discipline.

He thus gives the following advice to a man of tolerance and reconciliation: [*Kulliyat,* Urdu, p. 621]

Shun not the East– nor fear the West

It is the command of Providence that every night be turned into a new dawn!

A marriage of the two systems – an amalgam of both traditions – is, in Iqbal's view, the best option for this new era, a New Dawn. Or, as he puts it in *Javid nameh*: [*Kulliyat*, Persian, p.538]

For the Westerners, Intellect is the maker of life;

For the Easterners, Love is the secret of the cosmos.

Intellect recognizes the truth through Love

Love consolidates its works by Intellect.

Rise, and draw the blueprint of a New World

Go, and make an amalgam of Love and Intellect!

I end my peroration by saying that Iqbal's encounter with modernity that started during his stay here in Cambridge a hundred years ago, propelled him throughout his life to try to seek a solution of this great puzzle– how to build a world of peace, amity between nations, intercultural tolerance, love and understanding rather than confrontation and conflict? Iqbal's answer was to seek reconciliation between these two polar forces. Combine your strengths – so that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts! Moderation and tolerance is the message of the wise Arabic aphorism: [*Khayr-ul umuri awsatuha*] The best of things is the middle of things.

Addendum

IQBAL AND THE WESTERN PHILOSOPHERS

Nicholas Adams

Our conference marks the 100th anniversary of Iqbal's study in Cambridge and Munich. In this paper I am interested principally in his study of European philosophy, which extended far beyond his sojourn in Europe. I propose to look at the question of Iqbal's relation to Western philosophy through the lens of his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*[115]. This series of seven lectures in English, published in Lahore in 1930, reveal not only a deep knowledge of the long tradition of European philosophy, but a concern to address late modern questions posed by his contemporaries. The *Reconstruction* shows broad engagement with several figures who are widely read today, including most notably William James, Friedrich Nietzsche, Alfred North Whitehead and Henri Bergson.

We can distinguish two over-arching questions.

First, what was Iqbal's interest in Western philosophy?

Second, what is our interest in Iqbal's relation to Western philosophy?

The first question invites some study of Iqbal's use of other philosophers' arguments. Which arguments does he draw on and rehearse? How do his understandings of their work compare to other interpretations at that time, and to the interpretations of commentators today? In the case of the *Reconstruction* this task is unmanageably hard, because Iqbal's references are generally short. He tends to cite philosophers to illustrate a general point he is making, or to support a broad argument. They are largely cited as

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[115] Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, ed. Saeed Shiekh (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture and IAP, 1986 [1934]). Citations will be to page numbers in this volume.

authorities to confirm a point, and it is very rare to find Iqbal drawing on a chain of reasoning in an extended fashion. This should not be so surprising: Iqbal was a distinguished lawyer. It is quite appropriate for a lawyer to cite previous judgements on an issue as support for a case he is making. I wonder if there is a tendency for Iqbal to treat other philosophers' arguments as analogous to legal judgements, rather than as chains of reasoning that can be adapted, extended or corrected to solve new problems. It is noticeable that Iqbal rarely corrects another philosopher's argument. One can see this in the cases of Nietzsche and Bergson. In disagreeing with Nietzsche he tends not to reconstruct and correct Nietzsche's reasoning, but rather to voice disagreement with Nietzsche's views broadly conceived. This is most clearly evident in the final lecture in which he says of Nietzsche's philosophy that it 'remained unproductive for want of expert external guidance in his spiritual life' (p.154). This is not an argument about Nietzsche's relation to previous philosophy, nor a claim about any particular argument advanced by Nietzsche, nor a claim about the kind of argumentation Nietzsche pursued. It is an observation about Nietzsche the man, as he appears in his writings. And its purpose is to support Iqbal's wider claim about the need for intellectual life to be guided by 'spiritual' concerns. In the case of Bergson, as we shall see, his objection is very general: namely, that the Bergsonian individual lacks a *telos*. Again it is not the detail of the argumentation that is addressed, but an overarching character that for Iqbal needs correcting.

One lesson to be learned here is that there are severe challenges for anyone who seeks to produce a detailed account of Iqbal's relation to James, Nietzsche, Whitehead, Bergson or indeed any other figure in the Western tradition. One can catalogue his references to them, certainly. And one can build a picture of his use of them to support particular points he is making. But it is difficult to discover the kinds of extended engagement that might permit more subtle judgements.

This is not the end of the matter, however. A fuller account, which I shall not pursue here, would look at the ways in which our four Western philosophers, for example– James, Nietzsche, Whitehead, Bergson– were read in the 1920s, and compare this to the renewed interest in their work today in the light of later developments. I am thinking of recent American pragmatism which has changed our view of James, of Heidegger's influential

interpretation of Nietzsche first published in 1961, Deleuze's influential accounts of both Nietzsche and Bergson in 1962 and 1966, and various reappraisals of Whitehead and process thought in the light of changing conceptions of temporality in theology. One might then situate Iqbal within this comparative frame. Such an endeavour would be most interesting, not least because of Iqbal's vision of reality as a living organic materiality, and his insistence that religion is not about thoughts, feelings or actions, but a matter of what he calls the 'whole man'. This has powerful resonances in certain kinds of post-Deleuzian Christian theology which stress the vitality of creation and which, in substantial agreement with Iqbal, voice strong criticisms of forms of description which portray creation and human agency as an already dead network of causes and effects. Drawing out some of these connections would be an invaluable part of any attempt to evaluate 'Iqbal the Contemporary'.

I wish, however, to return to a different dimension to my two questions: what was Iqbal's interest in Western philosophy; and what is our interest in his relation to Western philosophy?

I have already indicated that one of Iqbal's interests was the practice of citing philosophers in support of a particular case, treating them as authoritative previous judgements on analogous cases. But I think there is something deeper here too, which can draw us in to the second question as to what we might learn from Iqbal in his relations to Western philosophy.

Iqbal can be fruitfully read as a reparative reasoner. By this I mean one who is concerned with named problems in the world, and with the resources available for repairing them. Iqbal names certain problems in the world, which I will elaborate shortly. He then goes on to consider various resources for repairing those problems. And, crucially, the *Resconstruction* identifies problems with those reparative resources, and sets about repairing them.

There are thus three broad levels at work, and showing how they operate offers an illuminating account of the *Reconstruction*. Those levels are:

Level one: problems in the world

Level two: systems of repair

Level three: problems in systems of repair

After exploring these a little - which begins answering the question, 'what was Iqbal's interest in Western philosophy?' - we will turn to some reflections on his method, which begins answering the question, 'what is our interest in Iqbal's relation to Western philosophy?'

Problems in the World

Iqbal identifies several problems in the world that call for repair. The three that stand out most vividly relate to different focal distances in his field of vision: Islamic law, the state, and the individual.

In relation to Islamic law, Iqbal identifies as problematic the tendency in some schools to treat their traditions as substantially complete, and to claim that they do not need to adapt or change in the light of new circumstances (p.133). This robs them of their ability to guide those who live in new circumstances.

In relation to the state, Iqbal identifies as problematic the difficulty of reconciling the universal reach of Islam with the particularities of individual nation states. I detect two tendencies in Iqbal's statement of the problems. The first is to emphasise how local non-Islamic habits have tended to distort the universal character of the ethical ideals of Islam (p.124). The second is to suggest that some Islamic states have sought to dominate others, in a way that inhibits the flourishing of the less powerful states (p.126). The first tendency leads Iqbal to call for a more truly universal form of Islam, freed of the distorting effects of parochialism. The second tendency leads him to call for mutual recognition of individual states, so that they can all become strong together and form something like an Islamic league of nations. It was this insight, of course, that led Iqbal to call for an independent state for Muslims in British India.

In relation to the individual, Iqbal holds up as a warning the image of Friedrich Nietzsche: a brilliant, incisive genius whose course of life was

determined solely from within, and thus lacked the necessary discipline and guidance that comes from seeking spiritual direction (p.154). As we shall see, Nietzsche here is the archetypal European man, a Bergsonian man, genuinely full of life, but lacking a telos.

Each of these problems in the world– in law, in the state, in the individual– call for repair, drawing on cultural systems of repair whose purpose is to give the kinds of account of law, of the state, of the individual that can heal suffering in the world.

Systems of Repair

The *Reconstruction* is concerned with philosophy as a system of repair, and with religion as a system of repair. It is of course concerned with much more than this, as the extraordinary fifth lecture– 'The Spirit of Muslim Culture'– beautifully demonstrates. It's one of the most moving accounts of divine excess and abundance of life. But here I want to concentrate on the reparative dimension. The relation between philosophy and religion is one of the concerns of the *Reconstruction* throughout, extending into a variety of contexts of discussion, and so it is not a straightforward matter to articulate it. Nonetheless there are some indications.

Iqbal opens the *Reconstruction* with an account of a conflict between 'reason' and 'faith'. Now any student of the history of philosophy knows that this conflict takes many forms. In the Christian tradition, consider some snapshots: of Augustine in 400 CE, Aquinas in 1250 CE and the Pantheism Controversy in Germany in the 1780s. The relation between 'ratio' and 'fides', or 'Vernunft' and 'Glaube', plays out very differently in the three cases. The first question to pose to Iqbal here is: which version of 'faith and reason' is being played out? Iqbal says of reason (or simply of 'philosophy' sometimes) that it has the following characters:

(a) it is purely rational

(b) it suspects authority

(c) it is merely critical and fails to make positive claims

(d) it grasps Reality piecemeal

He says of faith (or simply of 'religion' sometimes) that it is marked by the following:

(a) it has something like a cognitive content

(b) its doctrines are systems of general truths for directing life

(c) it is something focal in reflection

(d) it grasps Reality in its wholeness.

From this account we can say that the account of 'reason' has a strong resemblance to discussions in Germany in the 1780s: it is critical, sceptical and negative. But the account of 'faith' has more of a resemblance to accounts in France in the 1250s: it completes philosophy, offers an account of the whole, and can be seen to do so through doctrinal claims. It is also worth noting Iqbal's tendency to capitalise 'Reality', and to observe that its meaning is something like a divine intuition of all things as a whole. The claim that religion permits one to grasp Reality in its wholeness is roughly equivalent to the claim that religion is a matter of direct intuition of the whole. This seems to resemble Plato's account of the forms (where religion and philosophy are not distinct in the way they are for later Europeans).

The interpreter of Iqbal should thus beware too hastily thinking that it is obvious what Iqbal means by reason and faith, philosophy and religion, or Reality. It is a quite eclectic account. And if anyone should doubt this, then they need only read his interesting 'compare and contrast' account of Ghazali and Kant, as the text jumps with alarming ease between eleventh century Tus, in Persia and eighteenth century Königsberg, in Prussia.

Iqbal insists that philosophy and religion belong together and complement each other, in functioning as a system of repair for problems in the world. Religion 'stands in need of a rational foundation' and philosophy 'must recognise the central position of religion' (p.2). Clearly quite a lot hangs on what is meant by a 'rational foundation' and a 'central position' in these

claims. It is important, I think, to recognise what Iqbal does not mean. He does not mean that philosophy provides an independent basis for religion: he is not a Cartesian foundationalist. And he does not mean that religion trumps philosophy by dictating in advance what counts as rational, or by eliminating the rational altogether: he is not a Pietist either. Looked at one way, philosophy is about describing parts, and religion is about describing wholes, and the two belong together. His account thus resembles insights familiar in hermeneutics: you need to grasp wholes in order to understand parts, and you need to grasp parts in order to understand wholes.

So here I want to try out a hypothesis for a fruitful reading of this dimension of the *Reconstruction*. Philosophy and religion together, as a mutual interplay of grasping parts and wholes, form a system of repair for problems in the world, especially the problems of the tendency towards stagnation of law, the domination of some Islamic states by others and the directionlessness of modern persons: the social problems these cause, and the inability to address them satisfactorily.

Problems in Systems of Repair

There is something about the mutual interplay of philosophy and religion that is failing to repair problems in the world. This is not a general failure, but one that is, he says, particular to Islamic intellectual life. His baldest claim takes the following stark form: 'During the last five hundred years religious thought in Islam has been practically stationary' (p.6). He paints an arresting picture– a cartoon almost– of how this has come about. He divides European history into three phases. In the first, European thought is inspired by Islam. In the second, European culture develops the most important aspects of Islamic culture, while Islam itself ceases to be generative and starts to mirror Western moves, but with a delay. At the end of this second phase, which is the time in which Iqbal is writing, Islam has had centuries of intellectual stupor while the Europeans have been making mighty strides working out the problems bequeathed by the Islamic sages. The third phase stands before us: it is the reconstruction of religious thought in Islam– whence the title of this series of lectures.

There is no cause for smugness on either the European or the Islamic side. The 'dazzling exterior' of European culture, and the five centuries of European 'serious thinking' on the big problems lead precisely to the directionlessness of modern persons and a refusal to take religious life seriously as a logic of action; and Islam's intellectual stupor has meant that Islamic thinkers are launching themselves headlong towards precisely the European philosophy that has led to this spiritual cul-de-sac. Iqbal's diagnosis and cure in 1930 bear a striking similarity to that of John Milbank in our own time: Islam bequeaths to Christianity a series of problems which from 1300 onwards lead into an increasingly dark dead-end in which the meaningless 'secular' crowds out the meaningful 'religious'; the cure is for the 'spiritualisation' of philosophy (Iqbal) and the return of theology as queen of the sciences (Milbank).

The problem articulated by Iqbal is very serious. The system of repair– philosophy/religion– is either devoid of spirit (European philosophy) or stagnant (Islamic philosophy). It thus stands itself in need of repair.

And here is the crucial question: when philosophy/religion stand in need of repair, what can repair them?

Iqbal's answer is unequivocal: one must reach deep– into the deepest sources of repair in Islam. These are to be found in the Qur'an, *and in the patterns of reasoning which it generates in the Muslim community*.

His method is ambiguous and lends itself to two rival interpretations. One is a kind of natural theology, something like John Locke writing *The Reasonableness of Christianity*. The other is a kind of method of correlation, something like Paul Tillich writing his *Systematic Theology*.

The method elaborated in the second lecture, 'The Philosophical Test of the Revelations of Religious Experience', is to line up a series of debates in philosophy from the rationalism of Descartes to the evocations of biological life-force of H.A.E. Driesch and Wildon Carr. The story told here is one of a transition from a view of nature as a static lifeless mechanism, to a view of nature as embodying a dynamic living principle. Iqbal's account strongly resembles that of his younger contemporary Ernst Bloch in this respect.

Having rehearsed these debates he goes on to show how the Qur'an itself embodies and elaborates a broadly Bergsonian view of time. The Qur'anic concept of *Taqdir* is juxtaposed to Bergson's concept of duration, and the two are allowed to illuminate each other. *Taqdir* is normally taken to refer to the doctrine of predestination; Iqbal prefers to render it 'destiny' and describes it as 'time freed from the net of causal sequence' (p.40). This Bergsonian account produces some interesting inflections of traditional attempts to speak of human free will in the context of divine predestination.

It is possible to mount a 'Lockean' critique of Iqbal, in the sense of a critique that finds Iqbal to be too much like the author of *The Reasonableness of Christianity*. This critique would say that Iqbal first constructs an image of reality drawn from philosophy, and subsequently seeks to show that scripture agrees with, or at least does not contradict, this. In such an account Iqbal, intoxicated by Griesch, Bergson and others, attempts to show how the Qur'an confirms or at least does not contradict their accounts.

But such a critique is hard to sustain: one must notice that Iqbal is not uncritical of Bergson. He greatly appreciates Bergson's elaboration of the *élan vital*, but also finds Bergson to produce an unjustified dualism between will and thought (p.41). He suggests that human action, in Bergson's account, is too arbitrary, undirected, chaotic, unforeseeable. By contrast, the Qur'an provides an image of the teleology of all life towards God, and thus corrects Bergson's philosophy by preserving the moment of free action, but directing it towards the future. Iqbal vigorously rejects the idea that for Islam the universe is the outworking of a preconceived divine plan: 'nothing is more alien to the Quranic outlook', he says (p. 44).

This might indicate a more 'Tillichian' account of Iqbal, where philosophy poses certain questions, which it cannot solve, and theological reflection on scripture provides answers. Just as it would be interesting to know what Iqbal would have made of Ernst Bloch, it would be interesting to speculate how he would see his own method vis-à-vis Tillich's 'method of correlation'.

What is clear is that the repair of philosophy/religion– even the philosophy of Bergson which is perhaps, for Iqbal, the best philosophy that the Western tradition can offer– is a matter of turning to the Qur'an, and

allowing the patterns of reasoning which it generates in the community to reorient its thinking.

Conclusion

We began with two questions: about Iqbal's interest in Western philosophy, and about our interest in Iqbal's relation to that tradition. I have tried to suggest– in a skeletal and somewhat improvised way– that Iqbal's interest in Western philosophy has to do with (1) the ways in which modern European philosophy picks up and develops certain strands bequeathed to it by Islamic thought, (2) its inspiring gradual shift from a static ontology of lifeless cause and effect to a dynamic ontology of life's ungraspable excess and (3) its failure to match its ontological insights with an ethical vision of life directed spiritually towards God. Philosophy is a system of repair, but it stands itself in need of repair, and Iqbal mounts a series of arguments suggesting that a reconstruction of religious thought in Islam can help reorient Western philosophy at the same time as breathe new life into what he sees as a stagnating Islamic intellectual tradition.

What of our interest in Iqbal? I hope I have shown that it is not a purely historical interest. I've tried to make a strong case that Iqbal models a form of reasoning from scripture whose purpose is deeply reparative. It is not just a question of repairing problems in the world, but of drawing on an excess of divine life, attested in scripture, to repair philosophy itself. If we, too, live in a time when philosophy is failing to repair problems in the world– failing to do justice to religious life at a time when religious life, riven with painful conflicts, is informing nearly every area of social and cultural life– we might draw some encouragement from Iqbal.

We too, those of us who worship in religious traditions, have repairs to undertake. As for Iqbal, so for us, this will be a matter of reaching deep into our traditions to draw on the deepest sources of repair. Iqbal considers only the Qur'an as a possible source of repair, and here I think his successors may face challenges and opportunities that were scarcely imaginable in the 1930s. Learning from Iqbal will thus not be a matter merely of repeating him: his reconstructions in the early twentieth century should surely generate new reconstructions in the twenty-first. But that is not our task today. It is our

pleasure and honour to understand and learn from his wisdom, and to remember a figure known affectionately and respectfully by his heirs simply as 'The Allama': the scholar.

IQBAL, PEIRCE AND MODERNITY

Peter Ochs

Few religious thinkers have met the challenges of modernity as successfully as Allama Muhammad Iqbal. I address his thoughts today both to honour the genius who is honoured by my close Muslim colleagues and to learn more deeply from him and from them how my people– and how all our Abrahamic community– may repair the ills introduced by modernity without diminishing the gifts received from modernity.

My first Muslim dialogue partner, Basit Koshul, introduced me to *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*[116] in 1997. Studying Iqbal together we began a practice that led to our interest in scriptural reasoning: our way of studying Abrahamic scriptures together as a means of repairing what we considered the ills of modern academic thought. While Dr. Koshul was introducing me to the reparative theology of Iqbal, I was introducing him to the reparative logics of Charles Sanders Peirce, the American pragmatist whose work in the philosophy of science preceded Iqbal by half a century (he was born 1839 and died 1914). Our celebration of Iqbal today offers me the happy opportunity to reflect on how much these two masters share in the way they diagnose and seek to repair the ills of modernity. There are good reasons to draw the works of Iqbal and Peirce into dialogue. Peirce was the greatest philosopher and logician of science of his day, innovator of such intellectual practices as pragmatism, semiotics, and the logic of relations while also surprisingly attentive to matters of scriptural faith. As Dr. Koshul was the first to show,[117] Peirce's logic of science adds technical precision to

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[116] Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, ed. Saeed Shiekh (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1986 [1934]). Citations will be to page numbers in this volume.

[117] Koshul comments, "My academic interests are focused on interrelating the social science of Max Weber with the theocentric semiotics of Charles Sanders Peirce and then relating this synthesis to the philosophy of religion articulated by Muhammad Iqbal." See Basit Koshul,

Iqbal's philosophy of religion and science, while Iqbal's philosophical theology adds accounts of scriptural and liturgical theology that are undeveloped in Peirce's work. This dialogue, moreover, is not just a matter of intellectual history, since the writings of both Iqbal and Peirce remain profound resources for contemporary philosophies of science and religion.[118]

To introduce this dialogue, I will re-read Iqbal's' *Reconstruction* through the lens of Peirce's pragmatism. In the interest of space, my reading will seek answers to the single most important question a pragmatist may ask today: how shall Scriptural religion respond to the challenges of modernity? When read by way of Peirce's pragmatism, I believe *Reconstruction* responds with the following nine lessons:

> Lesson #1: Scriptural religion is not shocked by radical, historical change but offers itself as teacher and guide to communities and societies facing upheaval.
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> Iqbal writes:
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> Reality lives in its own appearances; and such a being as man, who has to maintain his life in an obstructing environment, cannot afford to ignore the visible. The Qur'an opens our eyes to the great fact of change, through the appreciation and control of which alone it is possible to build a durable civilization. (R 12)

Now, Charles Peirce was first a chemist and mathematician and only later a philosopher of science with a Christian voice. He is perhaps best known for his pragmatism, a method for re-connecting the abstractions of modern

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cited in *Scriptures in Dialogue, A record of the seminar 'Building Bridges' held at Doha, Qatar, 7-9 April 2003*, ed. Michael Ipgrave (London: Church House Pub, 2004), 26. Koshul articulates this argument in his forthcoming PhD Dissertation, *Max Weber, C.S. Peirce and the Unification of the Natur and Geist Sciences* (University of Virginia).

[118] The most cited collection of Peirce's writings is Charles Sanders Peirce, *Collected Papers*, eds. Charles Harteshorne and Paul Weiss (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1934). For one of several sources on Peirce's philosophy of religion, see Peter Ochs, *Peirce, Pragmatism, and the Logic of Scripture* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

western thought to the lived realities they are meant to serve. Peirce's pragmatism offered a means of repairing scientific and humanistic inquiries that, having forgotten their origins and purposes in everyday life, had become self-referential and self-serving. Peirce's pragmatism was taught more widely by his disciple and benefactor William James,[119] whose work introduced Iqbal himself to the psychology and epistemology of American pragmatism. Iqbal's distinction between mysticism and prophecy helps clarify the meaning of pragmatism. He writes,

> "Muhammad of Arabia ascended the highest Heaven and returned. I swear by God that if I had reached that point, I should never have returned." (1) These… words of [the] great Muslim saint, 'Abd al-Quddus of Gangoh… disclose… an acute perception of the psychological difference between the prophetic and the mystic types of consciousness. The mystic does not wish to return from the reposes of "unitary experience."… [But] the prophet returns to insert himself into the sweep of time… [His] desire is to see his religious experience transformed into a living world-force. (R 99)

In these terms we may say that pragmatism was Peirce and James' way of asking their Harvard colleagues to act less like mystics and more like prophets. For Peirce, this pragmatism was a moral imperative rather than a merely alternative school of thought because, after the Fall, intelligence is brought to life for the sake of repairing the wounds of life in this world. I believe Iqbal's pragmatic imperative was to repair Muslim society from the ill effects of modernity– without damaging its good effects. This is the work of *Reconstruction*:

> Humanity needs three things today - a spiritual interpretation of the universe, spiritual emancipation of the individual, and basic principles of a universal import directing the evolution of human society on a spiritual basis. Modern Europe has, no doubt, built idealistic systems on these

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[119] See William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience* (Scotts Valley, CA: IAP, 2009) and William James, *Pragmatism and Other Writings*, ed. Giles Gunn (New York: Penguin Classics, 2000).

lines, but experience shows that truth revealed through pure reason is incapable of bringing that fire of living conviction which personal revelation alone can bring. . . . Believe me, Europe today is the greatest hindrance in the way of man's ethical advancement. The Muslim, on the other hand, is in possession of these ultimate ideas of the basis of a revelation, which, speaking from the inmost depths of life, internalizes its own apparent externality. . . . Let the Muslim of today appreciate his position, reconstruct his social life in the light of ultimate principles, and evolve, out of the hitherto partially revealed purpose of Islam, that spiritual democracy which is the ultimate aim of Islam. (R 142)

Lesson #2: a symptom and mark of change is pain. Scriptural religion offers itself as teacher and guide to communities overcome by pain.

In *Reconstruction,* Iqbal offers an epistemological and scriptural account of pain that begins in the Qur'anic narrative of the creation of man. For Iqbal, the narrative attends to humanity's two elemental desires: the desire for knowledge, and the desire for self-multiplication and power (R 68). Both desires are seated in the form of creation itself: for the Creator is that Supreme Ego who creates all things from the smallest atom to man in the image of "ego", that is, as centres of energy and activities. They are simply varied in their degree of complexity, relationship and self-consciousness. All things therefore desire to know, or assimilate their worlds to themselves, and all things desire to repeat themselves. Thus far, the Qur'anic account could serve as Peirce's ontology, since for Peirce all things, from the smallest atom, have life and seek to know and seek to grow. But what of pain?

For Iqbal, the narrative of the Fall is not about any "moral depravity: "it is man's transition from simple consciousness to the first flash of self-consciousness… Man's first act of disobedience was also his first act of free choice; and that is why, according to the Qur'anic narration, Adam's first transgression was forgiven [2:35-37 and 20:120-122]" (R, 68 and note no. 60 p 170). The story of the tree is a story of man's temptation to ignore the fact that his freedom is bounded by finitude.

The only way to correct this tendency was to place him in an environment which, however painful, was suited to the unfolding of his intellectual

> faculties. Thus Adam's insertion into a painful physical environment was not meant as a punishment; it was meant rather to defeat the object of Satan who, as enemy of man, diplomatically tried to keep him ignorant of the joy of perpetual growth and expansion. But the life of a finite ego in an obstructing environment depends on the perpetual expansion of knowledge based on actual experience. And the experience of a finite ego to whom several possibilities are open expands only by [the] method of trial and error. Therefore, error which may be described as a kind of intellectual evil is an indispensable factor in the building up of experience. (R 69)

Iqbal's account of the tree could well serve as Peirce's anthropology. For Peirce, too, the human being lives in this world as an environment whose obstructions stimulate discovery and change and learning. Each obstruction causes the pain of doubt; doubt leads one to discover his errors, to imagine ways of correcting them, and to test these imaginings through trial and error. This process repeated again and again is the life of the scientific intellect whose distillate Peirce calls "the protean *vir,"* the really human. This *vir* or active-human grows through self-control, mediated by trial and error, and its ultimate distillate is completed science or knowledge of the real, the one real that is this created world. The Qur'anic narrative of the tree thereby provides Scripture for Peirce's account of science and of the pain of doubt that gives rise to it.

But Iqbal recognizes a second narrative, as well, in which human desire for self-multiplication and power threatens its capacity to know the world through trial and error. Satan tempts the humans to eat of the tree of Eternity and with the promise of "the Kingdom that fails not." But each self is finite so that the humans' goals of indefinite self-replication must eventually lead to the conflict of each against the other: this "brings in its wake the awful struggle of ages. 'Descend ye as enemies of one another' says the Quran (2:36). This mutual conflict of opposing individualities is the world-pain which both illuminates and darkens the temporal career of life… The acceptance of selfhood as a form of life involves the acceptance of all the imperfections that flow from the finitude of selfhood" (R 70).

Such an account! This second narrative of pain not only complements but also lends greater clarity to Peirce's account of the category of Pain or Struggle in all human experience.[120] For Peirce, the pains of both doubt and suffering belong to this category, but Iqbal offers Peirce a better means of distinguishing between them. For the twentieth century mystic Simone Weil, this is the distinction between pain and affliction. Weil notes that affliction is a condition of the spirit when, seeing no end of pain, it loses hold of good reasons for living.[121] In these terms, Iqbal's account of the "awful struggle of ages" may be an account of affliction. Beyond the frustrations that are prompted by "an obstructive environment" and that stimulate scientific inquiry, this is the pain that follows war and gives rise to despair. May we say that the difference between these two pains marks the difference between the way modernity contributes to our civilization (refining how we may reason scientifically in response to obstructions) and the way it burdens our civilization (forgetting the reparative purpose of science and thereby leaving so many obstructions in place)? May we say that, for both Iqbal and Peirce, modernity offers instruction in the pain of individualized consciousness, which brings free choice and critical reason? But that modernity also brings the risk of self-serving consciousness, which divides the world into the destructive dichotomies of mere self and mere other and which breeds affliction, beyond pain? If so, then Lesson #2 also introduces one of modernity's defining inner challenges: the challenge of human freedom, not just in modernity but also in the creation of humanity. One of Iqbal's profound contributions is to criticise and repair modernity but only as one must criticise and repair every epoch of human life. Modernity is therefore a problem only because we are modern, just as tradition is a problem when we are traditional and theology when we are theologians. From this perspective, Iqbal provides Qur'anic instruction in how to mend a divided world without

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[120] In his phenomenology– or foundation for logic– Peirce identified three categories of all human experience. He called these "Firstness" (the category of pure possibility or quality or spontaneity), "Secondness" (the category of pain, which he identified with radical separation or dividedness), and "Thirdness" (the category of relation and mediation, which includes all relations of meaning and signification). See, for example, Charles Peirce, "The Universal Categories," in *Collected Papers* Vol. I Par. 41ff.

[121] Simone Weil, *Waiting for God* (Harper Perennial Classics, 2009).

dividing ourselves from the present world. This is to accept the pain of learning while disciplining oneself from becoming an agent of affliction. Reframed in these scripturally elevated terms, Peirce's pragmatic lesson is that to repair affliction without re-imposing it is to repair afflicted creatures (institutions, bodies, or civilizations) through rules of repair that are immanent in them– even if also hidden from view. But how?

Lesson #3: when confronted suddenly by something as different and threatening and potentially undermining as the afflictions of modern civilization, before anything else: Pray.

Just after his discussion of Adam's fall, Iqbal adds this: In contemplating the end of humanity's struggle of the ages, of self against self, "we are passing the boundaries of pure thought. This is the point where faith in the eventual triumph of goodness emerges as a religious doctrine. 'God is equal to His purpose, but most men know it not' (12:21)… Religion is not satisfied with mere conception; it seeks a more intimate knowledge of and association with the object of its pursuit. The agency through which this association is achieved is the act of worship or prayer ending in spiritual illumination. The act of worship, however, affects different varieties of consciousness differently" (R, 70ff.).

Iqbal does not compose these sentences in a pragmatic voice, as if the prayer emerged as the cry of a science that recognized it had surpassed its limits and found itself in shipwreck: not just unknowing, but urgently needing to know and not knowing how. But, through Iqbal's account, prayer may indeed set the conditions for pragmatic repair. Beginning with the modern voice of William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, Iqbal's observes that "prayer is instinctive in its origin… the act of praying as aiming at knowledge resembles reflection… in thought the mind observes and follows the working of Reality; [while] in the act of prayer it gives up its career as a seeker of slow-footed universality and rises higher than thought to capture Reality itself with a view to become a conscious participator in its life." (R, 71ff.). A paragraph later he concludes: "The truth is that all search for knowledge is essentially a form of prayer. The scientific observer of Nature is a kind of mystic seeker in the act of prayer." (R, 73).

I read Iqbal's response to modernity as first a liturgical one, before anything else. This means that Iqbal's subject is affliction, not mere pain: not localized injustices or even oppressions, but systemic disorders that undermine a civilization's very capacity to know the world, to sponsor a science. To say "pray first" is to say that affliction is the kind of pain that undermines one's trust in all established and conventional practices for encountering the unknown. To pray first is to scrutinize each of these practices, from the everyday habits of the body to the most exacting practices of medicine and morals, to be sure that the problem cannot be resolved within one of those agencies. It is to recognize that, if no means of repair is to be found, this is a sign that one's civilization may be facing a defining moment: this will be either a time for fruitless repetition of failed orthodoxies and conventions or a time for radical renewal. If this is indeed such a time, to pray first is to summon the power of all that remains of current practices– as if to spread one's arms open heavenward as one would open one's arms in prayer –as if the current civilization's practices were a chorus of angels all at once emitting one vast collective cry to God:[122] "God, you are great! Creator, remember us Your creatures, remember who we were on the day You made us, see how far we have fallen since and how empty we are now of the Wisdom out of which You first fashioned us! Hear our prayer! Oh, deliver us Your Wisdom once again so that in Your Wisdom we might find renewed life and renewed ways of knowing You here on this earth."

In Iqbal's more humble voice, to pray first is to recognize that every science is finite, is born out of obstruction to repair that obstruction, but dies away when faced with a wholly new obstruction. One could call it a time for paradigm shifts, but only if these include paradigms that inform our consciousnesses and not just the current disciplines or fashions of our various academic guilds. I trust it is no coincidence that Iqbal introduces his account of prayer in *Reconstruction* immediately after his account of the Fall. As I read him, the first narrative of the Fall introduces science, in the broadest sense, as the human work of learning to know the world and in so

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[122] The notion of cry is suggested by David Ford. See David Ford, "Wisdom Cries," in *Christian Wisdom: Desiring God and Learning in Love* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2007), 14-51.

knowing to repair the pain and struggle that gives rise to science itself… But the second narrative introduces the human-to-human violence that obstructs the pursuit of science and threatens, at times, to destroy all that science has built. This degree of violence cannot be repaired by the science of a given civilization because it is the very fruit of the freedom that also generated this science. The repair can emerge only out of a practice that uncovers the regenerative font of human freedom that informs all science. Peirce called this pragmatism –and I believe in this way he adds something to Iqbal's account. Iqbal calls it prayer and thereby adds a great deal to Peirce's account.

For the pragmatist, the intellect that oversteps its bounds is repaired, adequately, only by being called back to its origins. Within its origins is the hand of its creator, who alone knows the creature well enough to hold a balm for whatever it suffers. Now, neither Iqbal nor Peirce speak directly about the identity of this creator, since the creator's identity can be articulated only in relation to the one who asks for it and, at this initial stage of the *Reconstruction*, the one who asks is not quite ready to think outside the bounds of science, let alone to hear about God. Peirce is the more reticent of the two, since his intended readers are literally laboratory scientists and logicians, while Iqbal's audience may be touched by modernity, but they also know poetry and Qur'an. Much of Peirce's writings therefore remain within the frame of Iqbal's Chapter One, moving at times as far as the issues of Chapter Three. But Iqbal offers the scientist a quicker conversion.

> Lesson #4: To pray is already to exceed the limits of modern propositional science.

Iqbal presents the lessons of *Reconstruction* in developmental stages, so that the discourse offered in the early chapters presupposes a form of cognition and reception that will not be presupposed in the latter chapters. If I am reading him correctly, each stage of the book repairs and elevates the one before it, which also means that each stage has its own dignity and divine purpose as well as its own limits. May I conclude that each stage is thus a stage of prayer, beginning with the prayer that emerges out of the crises of modern science, turning next to the prayers of those who would repair this science? And so on? If so, Chapter One introduces what we might label

"propositional reasoning," or the science of modern civilization that has done its good work but now also faces its limits. To have limits is appropriate in this world of the initial Fall. But to ignore those limits is not appropriate. Chapter One identifies the limits of propositional science, warns gently of the dangers of overstepping them and concludes by introducing the remedy for overstepping: prayer itself encountered first in the simple acknowledgement that one's practice of science has reached an impasse and the unknown, for now, remains unknown.[123]

> The truth is that all search for knowledge is essentially a form of prayer. The scientific observer of Nature is a kind of mystic seeker in the act of prayer. Although at present he follows only the footprints of the musk-deer, and thus modestly limits the method of his quest, his thirst for knowledge is eventually sure to lead him to the point where the scent of the musk-gland is a better guide than the footprints of the deer. This alone will add to his power over Nature and give him that vision of the total-infinite which philosophy seeks but cannot find. (R 73)

> Lesson #5: To pray in response to the limits of modern philosophy is to test the capacities of modern reasoning to address the unknown.

Chapter Two presents itself as a "philosophical test of the revelations of religious experience," from the scholastic arguments for the existence of God to Bergson's account of pure temporal duration. Re-read in light of Peirce's pragmatism, however, Chapter Two would seem to bear a somewhat different fruit. On one level it would enable readers to sense an at-homeness

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[123] In this way, Chapter One of the *Reconstruction* corresponds to Part I of Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, trans. Barbara Galli (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), where the reader is addressed as if she or he could be burdened by a reductively modern consciousness. We may take this to mean someone who thinks, in western secular fashion, only through modern propositional thought. For Iqbal, this is someone for whom the commanding word of the Qur'an would be confrontational, contradictory, paradoxical, or mute. Iqbal does not confront such a reader, however. Even more ironically than Rosenzweig, he reflects back to the reader the limitations, if not contradictions, that are intrinsic to the modern propositional model of reasoning when it is applied beyond its proper domain.

in modes of reasoning that exceed the limits of propositional science: we come to recognize that these rationalities apply to the natural world. On another level, it would challenge readers to move from open-ended prayer to dialogue with the Unknown. Within that dialogue, it would encourage them to inquire after characteristics and names by which the Unknown might be recognized and called. One need not look too deeply beneath the plain sense of Iqbal's writing to recover this pragmatic reading. Chapter Two begins, for example, with propositional reasonings about religious experience (the classic arguments) and ends with several early forms of post-propositional reasoning –such as organicist approaches to biology (such as Driesch's) and process theories of space and time (such as Whitehead and Bergson's).[124] While presented as means of testing the reality of religious experience, the effect of Iqbal's reasoning is, in each case, to test the capacity of a given scientific paradigm to frame questions about the Unknown. If I am right about this, then Peirce's logical studies of the 1880's and on would have significantly strengthened Iqbal's claim. Peirce would have urged him, for example: a) to be more cautious about framing a model like Bergson's *durée* as potentially adequate to religious experience; b) to be more cautious in fact about framing an experience as "religious," since each of these frames becomes proposition-like, predicating something ("religious") of something ("this experience"); c) instead, to propose and test ways of probing what is unknown. He might then evaluate each probing (like *durée*) as either useful or not useful as a means of advancing one step from some crisis of knowledge to some new way of knowing. As for the probing named "God," that is the subject of another lesson.

> Lesson #6: To pray in response to the limits of science is to interrogate the radically unknown.

This brings us to Chapter Three. Appropriate to a dialogue that is not yet finished, Chapter Three introduces the now scientific reasoner, still uncertain

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[124] It could well be argued that these approaches, like Einstein's theories of relativity, belong still to the modern project and within the limits of propositional calculi. Iqbal's intent, however, is to look beyond these limits, as illustrated by his interest in Heisenberg and Planck (R 55-56). His turn is therefore to post-Newtonian sciences built on logics of probability.

of precisely where he or she is going, to liturgy. The defining relationship in *Reconstruction* is indeed between scientific reasoning and what our Jewish philosopher (and friend) Steven Kepnes calls "liturgical reasoning."[125] Liturgy begins in prayer; prayer, most simply put, begins in petition; and the scientific reasoner engages in petitionary prayer as soon as he or she names something out there "unknown" and asks "how can I know you?" In other words, "What in fact leads me forward from reasoning as I know it to a reasoning I do not yet know?" For the scientist, it is in this prayer environment that the phenomenological face of *ayaat* is first encountered: that which, on the divine side, is always already known to be divine sign and which, on the side of human experience, remains some series of phenomena that exceed our comprehension but not our capacity to ask questions. This sign is a response to questions that we can formulate but cannot yet answer.

> Prayer, then, whether individual or associative, is an expression of man's inner yearning for a response in the awful silence of the universe. It is a unique process of discovery whereby the searching ego affirms itself in the very moment of self-negation, and thus discovers its own worth and justification as a dynamic factor in the life of the universe. (R 74)

Liturgical knowing includes interrogative knowing (a category best examined in our friend Robert Gibbs' book *Why Ethics?*).[126] This means asking questions that could be answered because they are probative, and to ask a question presupposes a degree of knowledge**.** Along with asking comes faith: to ask is to trust that, though we enter the dark, what we know can lead us forward if we ask the right questions of what we do not know. Knowing therefore includes discrimination, recognizing the difference between what is known and not known. It means calculation and judging probabilities. Finally and most significantly, it means relationship. *We are in relationship with what is not known.* There is therefore no simple binary between knowing and not knowing; and, if the known/unknown is not a binary relation, then no

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[125] Steven Kepnes, *Jewish Liturgical Reasoning* (London: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[126] Robert Gibbs, *Why ethics? Signs of Responsibility* (Princeton: Princeton University press, 2000), 3-6.

feature of our knowing belongs to a simple binary. That is the signal feature of Lesson #6. Ignorance is a stage of knowing and therefore of relationship.

That conclusion is central, as well, to Peirce's logical and philosophical work. For Peirce the pragmatist, the urgent purpose of logic is not to help us map what we already know but to guide our walking forward into the dark: to guide our probative ways of inquiring after what we do not know, even when our ignorance pains us the most and imperils us. By way of illustration, Peirce's logic of vagueness guides the study of indefinite things; his logic of relatives guides the study of predicates as yet unmarried to specific subjects; and his logic of relations guides the study of bonds, between chemicals or between persons; in the latter case this includes the study of faith and trust as well as bonds to the Unknown.[127]

> Lesson #7: The pragmatist's prayer is personification: an open hand and an outstretched arm, or prayer for the renewal of person to person relationship, including the renewal of law (*shariah*) and the relation of creature to creature.

In Chapter Four, "The Human Ego– His Freedom and Immortality," Iqbal writes that, in the face of both traditionalist dogmatism and modern scepticism, there are strong philosophic and Scriptural grounds for recognizing the reality of the ego and for discerning its irreducibly relational character: "Whatever may be our view of the self-feeling, self-identity, soul, will– it can be examined only by the canons of thought which in its nature is relational" (R 78). Re-read in light of Peirce's pragmatism, the chapter yields what I call a prayer of personification, because it narrates the life of the creature, who, as ego or person, remains the agent of scientific judgment. Lesson #6 taught that, even in a time of profound doubt, the perplexed or afflicted reasoner still has a personal relation to the Unknown. Lesson #7 teaches that the Unknown may itself be personified, since we may, at least probatively, suppose that personal relations are established with other

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[127] See Peirce, "Issues of Pragmaticism," *Collected Papers Vol. 5.460ff.* Cf. Susan Haack, Ch 6 in *Deviant Logic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1975). Ochs, Ch. 7 in *Peirce, Pragmatism, Logic of Scripture.*

persons. The afflicted reasoner addresses the Unknown as person and speaks to him or her, not necessarily through oral human speech, but through some means or measure of interaction. To have a measure is to be known, so that the Unknown is also known to some degree. For Peirce as well as Iqbal, this knowing-unknowing is, at once, relational, vague (or indefinite), and non-absolute. To know relationally is not to know all-or-nothing, but to know however one may tend to know. This is not, therefore, the kind of knowing that can be interrogated through propositional reasoning, since that kind of reasoning requires all-or-nothing judgments (obeying the law of excluded middle as well as the principle of non-contradiction). We may thus recognize why propositional reasoning cannot provide an adequate account of the relationship between known and unknown and cannot therefore guide inquiries into the Unknown. The reasoning that will guide us is relational, personal, interrogative, and probative. But is there reason to call it "prayerful?"

Iqbal writes that,

> It is open to man, according to the Qur'an, to belong to the meaning of the universe and become immortal… Life offers a scope for ego-activity, and death is the first test of the synthetic activity of the ego… It is the deed that prepares the ego for dissolution or disciplines him for a future career… death, if present action has sufficiently fortified the ego against the shock that physical dissolution brings, is only a kind of passage to what the Qur'an describes as *Barzakh* . . . a state of consciousness characterised by a change in the ego's attitude toward time and space… in which the ego catches a glimpse of fresh aspects of Reality and prepares himself for adjustment to these aspects… The resurrection, therefore, is not an external event. It is the consummation of a life-process within the ego. (R, 94-96).

This remarkable passage leads quite a step beyond prayer, but it should provide a very vivid image of the ultimate fruits of reason's effort to interrogate the Unknown. This effort belongs to the deed that, in Iqbal's words, disciplines the ego for a further career – or that, in Peirce's words, generates the protean *vir* of intellectual self-control.

To trust that, despite present afflictions, the Unknown will eventually speak is to address the Unknown through a petition: "Please Unknown, come now, and bring me forward to you." That request is as much scientific inquiry as it is prayerful reasoning. It is a petition displayed as much in the experimental laboratory as in the mosque. Science and prayer are close because they both presuppose interpersonal relationship, petition, and knowing – moreover, a knowing that goes through our relationship to the natural world. So, what does liturgy add to science when science is characterized as petitionary? Perhaps it is that, unlike science, which treats the unknown like a person but does not usually call him a person, liturgy introduces the unknown *as* a person per se. The person speaks and speaks, in fact, in the name of the Prophet. And the person of the Prophet introduces the seeker to the person of Allah.

> Lesson #8: To pray in response to the limits of human-to-human and creature-to-creature relationships is to pray for the divine presence, alone.

Entering this Lesson, the reasoner has now most of the elements of knowing gathered about her. The reasoner now has the name of the Unknown itself, God, and by way of Scripture is beckoned to entertain at least three more dimensions of her epistemic relationship to God:

1. *Scripture speaks in the name of this God, so that the reasoner is no longer one who speaks words into the Unknown but now one who hears words spoken by the Unknown. The voice of the Qur'an confirms the reasoner's trust: yes, the Unknown will speak, and its speech is commanding.*

This is the moment of transformation. Previously, we reasoners ask and the Unknown answers. Now, however, we speak by way of scripture, which declares itself to be the voice of the Unknown, so that we are brought to observe what it is like to be on the other side. In a sense we hear what we imagine the Unknown hears from us: speech. But is this speech asking us something, rather than answering us? In fact, no: there is a great transformation taking place here, for now the speech of the Unknown– revealed as the speech of God– asks in a different way. It asks *of* us, in the sense of demanding and interrogating: who are you, what are you doing, what is your ignorance? What are you lacking? These too are questions.

2. *While the reasoner asked, "Who are you?" the Unknown answers with a demand: Act this way, and then you will know.*

Once again, the speaker asks, but now the speaker introduces himself as author of the very world of which we found ourselves ignorant. And the speaker commands. For Iqbal, the *shariah* is a condition for scientific inquiry. The scientist, in other words, does not inquire into a passive universe, demanding that it reveal its secrets to humanity. Instead, by way of the universe, the creator inquires into humanity, setting the bounds of human action and thereby setting the conditions for scientific inquiry.

> In the history of religious experience in Islam which, according to the Prophet, consists in the 'creation of Divine attributes in man'… In the higher Sufism of Islam unitive experience is not the finite ego effacing its own identity by some sort of absorption into the Infinite Ego; it is rather the Infinite passing into the loving embrace of the finite. (R, 87ff.)

3. *The Qur'an addresses its commands to the Ummah as the precondition and context for what it may demand of reasoners individually.*

> The spirit of all true prayer is social. Even the hermit abandons the society of men in the hope of finding, in a solitary abode, the fellowship of God. A congregation is an association of men who, animated by the same aspiration, concentrate themselves on a single object and open up their inner selves to the working of a single impulse. (R, 73)

Scripture speaks its commands to humanity by way of language and society. In Chapter Five, Iqbal writes, "The mystic does not wish to return from the repose of "unitary experience."… [But] the prophet returns to insert himself into the sweep of time… [His] desire is to see his religious experience transformed into a living world-force" (R 99). Peirce traced his pragmatism from the Scripture's prophetic tradition: a call to the modern academy and seminary to return to the sweep of time and to realities of worldly need and suffering. For Iqbal, this call affirms the perspicacity of modern science while recognizing how this science may be opened to prayer and scripture.

We have come full circle. Scripture opens its commanding voice to science when the obstruction that prompts inquiry is not pain alone, but affliction, as the mark of civilizational upheaval. When civilization is out of order, so too are the disciplines of science, and scientific inquiry is completed only through prayer. Science completed in prayer is science that exceeds the limits of modern propositional thinking and its binary logics. This is science for which the Unknown is a source of instruction and not just an obstacle: a science of probabilities, of vagueness, and of relation; a science through which creator and creature enter into dialogue for the sake of repairing the world, binding together Unknown and knower, creator and worshipper.

Religion In The 21st Century

MUHAMMAD IQBAL'S RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL ARGUMENT FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Basit Bilal Koshul

As the title of his work suggests, the primary task in Muhammad Iqbal's *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* is to address the important issues and challenges facing religion (more specifically Islam) in the modern world. The most important of these challenges are related to "religious experience"– more specifically the verity, possibility, and interpretation of religious experience in a post-traditional world. For Iqbal a healthy religious life at the individual and collective level requires that an honest and exhaustive inquiry be undertaken regarding religious experience. Iqbal notes that, ultimately, religious faith is based on "a special type of inner experience" (Iqbal, Muhammad [1996] *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Lahore, Pakistan: Institute of Islamic Culture, xxi).

This inner experience is itself the product of a vital and dynamic process in which the individual tries to synthesize the partial, conflicting and contradictory facets of his relationship with external, material reality. Because this task of reconciliation has been always difficult, it is easy to understand why family ties, tradition, and cultural norms have been more influential in shaping religious faith than personal experience for most individuals in most cultural settings. In the modern cultural setting, it has become even more difficult to find individuals whose religious faith is based on their own inner experience because "modern man, by developing concrete habits of thought…has rendered himself less capable of that [inner] experience, which he further suspects because of its liability to illusion" (Iqbal, xxi).

In the past the "genuine schools of Sufism" did an admirable job in developing spiritual exercises, psychological techniques and physical disciplines that shaped and directed the evolution of the individual believer's

inner experience (Iqbal, xxi). But these methods are of practically no use for the modern believer because they were developed "for generations possessing a cultural outlook differing, in important aspects, from our own" (Iqbal, xxi). The basic reason why the modern day representatives of the genuine schools of Sufism are failing to fulfill the role that they historically filled is because they "have become absolutely incapable of receiving any fresh inspiration from modern thought and experience" (Iqbal, xxi). Given the unique characteristics of modern culture and the unsuitability of pre-modern methods, Iqbal notes that "…the demand for a scientific form of religious knowledge is only natural" (Iqbal, xxi). In *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* Iqbal sets out to meet this very demand. Iqbal describes the approach that he will take in his attempt to meet this demand in detail:

> I have tried to meet, even though partially, this urgent demand by attempting to reconstruct Muslim religious philosophy with due regard to the philosophical traditions of Islam and the more recent developments in the various domains of human knowledge. And the present moment is quite favourable for such an undertaking. Classical Physics has learned to criticize its own foundations. As a result of this criticism the kind of materialism, which it originally necessitated, is rapidly disappearing; and the day is not far off when Religion and Science may discover hitherto unsuspected mutual harmonies (Iqbal, xxi ff.).

This quote by Iqbal brings to the fore the fact that in reconstructing religious thought in Islam he will 1) give "due regard" to the Islamic tradition and 2) open himself up to modern developments in different "domains of human knowledge". Putting these two things together leads Iqbal to sense that even though there has been great conflict between the two in recent times, religion and science are on a path of mutual harmonization in the near future. He has already noted that mature religious faith can be based only on inner religious experience that the believer has himself gone through. Here he is implying that the harmonization of religion and science is an essential precondition for the possibility of such inner experience in the modern, scientific cultural setting.

This paper will not discuss Iqbal's understanding of the religion/science relationship in comprehensive terms. It will use one particular example and offer it as an illustration of the possibilities of a religion/science relationship that Iqbal's understanding opens up. The particular issue is Iqbal's use of modern scientific thought to redress the inadequacies in the traditional philosophical arguments for the existence of God. The discussion will focus on Iqbal's insight that modern scientific understanding of matter, space, time, and mind make possible a more accurate and clearer understanding of the attributes of God than is possible otherwise. Prior to the advent of modern science, the three standard philosophical arguments for the existence of God (the cosmological, teleological, and ontological arguments) defined the parameters within which theologians articulated a rational understanding of the attributes of God. Iqbal finds these arguments to be woefully inadequate on a number of counts–the most important one being the fact that the philosophical arguments are built on a very shallow understanding of the character of empirical reality. The manner in which Iqbal uses modern science to critique the inadequate philosophical and theological conception of God is the major part of this discussion but it is not the only one.

One can surmise that a crisis in the domain of "religious thought" is the primary motivation behind Iqbal's exploration of the relationship between religion and science. But an argument can also be made that there is a subtext in Iqbal's work which can be called the "reconstruction of scientific thought in the modern world". This subtext is in response to a particular historical situation in which Iqbal finds himself, the modern scientific age. Iqbal sees notable deficiencies in modern scientific thought that undermines our ability to observe, interpret, and understand experience objectively. More specifically he shows how the use of materialistic, mechanistic and reductionist philosophical concepts in modern scientific thought have severely undermined the significance of the most important discoveries in modern physics, biology and psychology. The most damaging effect of these concepts has been the fact that they forestall the ability of science to see how relationships, consciousness and significance/ meaning permeate all aspects of empirical reality (or what Iqbal calls Nature). Iqbal argues that there is an urgent need to purge modern scientific thought of the philosophical concepts that are a holdover from a by-gone pre-scientific era in order to arrive at a genuinely scientific description of empirical phenomena. Towards this end Iqbal turns to resources from within

the religious tradition (specifically the Qur'an) in order to repair the ruptures in scientific thought.

For Iqbal the reconstruction of scientific thought in the modern age is no less urgently needed than the reconstruction of religious thought if justice is to be done to experience– and in both cases the task of reconstruction requires a deep, sustained, and honest conversation between religion and science. In short, we need not share Iqbal's alarm over the crisis within the Muslim community to explore the relationship between religion and science. The crisis in modern scientific thought itself requires that such an exploration be undertaken. The following pages will address each of these two concerns in turn.

Scientific Critique of the Philosophical Arguments

Iqbal notes that the "Qur'an is a book which emphasizes 'deed' rather than 'idea'." (Iqbal, xxi). All of the deeds done by a human being should be in accord with the will of God and the ultimate goal of action done in submission to God's will is that the "attributes of God" permeate the being of the believer. It is only in the person of the believer manifesting the "attributes of God" that one finds the "proof for God" in the world. In the past the primary means of coming to know God's will and attributes was through the person of the Prophet–it was through the Prophet that God's word was conveyed to humanity. After the mission of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) God no longer speaks to humanity in the direct manner of revelation. When the Prophet was among us it was relatively easy to discern God's will and the meaning of God's word–simply walk up to the Prophet and ask him. But with the end of prophecy we are left with a void, a void that can only be filled with the help of rational thought.

Iqbal notes that the dominant modes of rationally understanding the attributes of God in the post-Prophetic period have proven to be woefully inadequate. Here he is specifically referring to the different arguments constructed by philosophers to demonstrate the existence of God. These philosophical arguments have come to be categorized under one of three headings– the cosmological, teleological and ontological arguments for the existence of God. For Iqbal these arguments are demonstrably deficient not

only because each one of them is fraught with internal contradictions but also (and perhaps more importantly) because they "betray a rather superficial interpretation of experience" (Iqbal, 23). Dividing reality into the irreconcilable opposites of cause/effect (cosmological), designer/designed (teleological), and ideal/real (ontological) creates an internal contradiction in each of these arguments and divides experience into an irreconcilable dualism of thought and being.

Iqbal notes that the traditional philosophical arguments of the existence of God (as well as the dualisms explicitly and implicitly present within them) are the products and continuing legacy of the pre-scientific age of philosophy. While the philosophy of the pre-scientific era has made a valuable contribution to human civilization, it is a product of its time and has severe limitations:

> There is no doubt that the ancient world produced some great systems of philosophy at a time when man was comparatively primitive and governed more or less by suggestion. But we must not forget that this system-building in the ancient world was the work of abstract thought which cannot go beyond the systematization of vague religious beliefs and traditions, and gives us no hold on the concrete situations of life (Iqbal, 100).

For Iqbal, the only way to avoid the shortcomings of received philosophical wisdom is to combine a scientific examination of experience with a qur'anically informed perspective. Iqbal proposes that our understanding of the attributes of God should not be based on philosophical categories derived largely from pure speculative thought. Instead we should interpret the scientific description of reality "following the clue furnished by the Qur'an which regards experience within and without as symbolic of a reality described by it, as 'the First and the Last, the visible and the invisible' [57:3]" (Iqbal, 25).

Here Iqbal is offering an interesting proposal–in trying to rationally understand the attributes of God, we rethink the dualistic categories of cause/effect, designer/designed and ideal/real. In their stead we approach the Divine by interpreting experience as the symbol of a Reality that is

fundamentally relational in character– "the First and the Last, the visible and the invisible". At this point Iqbal turns to the scientific exploration of three regions of experience, i.e. matter, life, and consciousness, as described by physics, biology and psychology respectively. First he summarizes the latest findings of modern science and gives the reader a macro-level view of how contemporary physics understands matter, biology understands life, and psychology understands consciousness. Then Iqbal turns to the implications that the scientific description of the different realms of experience has for our understanding of God. While he does not say so explicitly, a careful reading of the text shows that Iqbal is affecting a subtle but profound shift in the cosmological, teleological and ontological arguments for the existence of God and offering an alternative that is more faithful to both empirical reality and revealed scripture. In the following paragraphs I will summarize Iqbal's synthesis.

Physics and the Cosmological Argument

Iqbal begins the discussion with the cosmological argument for the existence of God. He notes:

> The cosmological argument views the world as a finite effect, and passing through a series of dependent sequences, related as causes and effects, stops at an uncaused first cause, because of the unthinkability of an infinite regress (Iqbal, 23).

While the argument begins with the distinction between cause and effect, the way that it unfolds displays a movement from the finite to the infinite. It asks us to conceive of the universe (or Nature) as a finite effect proceeding from an infinite, uncaused first cause (the Divine). Iqbal argues that the logic in the argument is "quite illegitimate" and "the argument fails *in toto*" (Iqbal, 23ff.). The reason he gives for the failure of the argument lays bare its illegitimate logic:

> The argument really tries to reach the infinite by merely negating the finite. But the infinite reached by contradicting the finite is a false infinite, which neither explains itself nor the finite which is thus made to stand in opposition to the infinite. The true infinite does not exclude the finite; it

embraces the finite without effacing its finitude, and explains and justifies its being (Iqbal, 23).

At this point Iqbal offers a summary of the development of the description of Nature provided by modern physics which gives him the warrant to rethink the relationship between Nature and the Divine.

The description of Nature provided by physics has undergone substantial modification since the days of Newton. Classical physics presented a picture of Nature as being composed of inert, dead, enduring stuff (called matter) suspended in an absolute, empty void (called space). Iqbal notes that the "scientific view of Nature as pure materiality is associated with the Newtonian view of space as an absolute void in which things are situated" (Iqbal, 28). Iqbal notes that Berkeley and Whitehead had offered a sound philosophical critique of this materialistic theory of matter. The basic critique of this theory is that it creates an unbridgeable gap between the knowing subject (mind) and the known object (matter):

> Between Nature and the observer of Nature, the theory creates a gulf which he is compelled to bridge over by resorting to the doubtful hypothesis of an imperceptible something, occupying an absolute space like a thing in a receptacle and causing our sensations by some kind of impact. In the words of Professor Whitehead, the theory reduces one-half of Nature to a 'dream' and the other half to a 'conjecture' (Iqbal, 27).

As sound as the philosophical critique offered by Berkeley and Whitehead is, the materialist conception of Nature "has received the greatest blow from the hand of Einstein… whose discoveries have laid the foundations of a far-reaching revolution in the entire domain of human thought" (Iqbal, 27). At this point Iqbal quotes Bertrand Russell as acknowledging that Einstein's theory of relativity has done more to undermine the classical understanding of matter and substance than "all the arguments of the philosophers" (Russell quoted by Iqbal, 27ff.). Iqbal uses the summary offered by Whitehead to describe the revised conception of matter, substance, and space that emerges in the aftermath of Einstein's discoveries:

> According to Professor Whitehead... Nature is not a static fact situated in an a-dynamic void, but a structure of events possessing the character of continuous creative flow which thought cuts up into isolated immobilities out of whose mutual relations arise the concepts of time and space. Thus we see how modern science utters its agreement with Berkeley's criticism which it once regarded as an attack on its very foundation (Iqbal, 28).

In the words of Russell "[a] piece of matter has become not a persistent thing with varying states, but a system of inter-related events" (quoted in Iqbal, 28). As the understanding of Nature offered by physics has evolved from Newton to Einstein to post-Einstein, it becomes obvious that "the empirical attitude which appeared to necessitate scientific materialism has finally ended in a revolt against matter" (Iqbal, 27).

As noted earlier, the cosmological argument conceives of God as the infinite, uncaused first cause and Nature is identified as the finite effect. Looking at Nature as a "system of inter-related events" allows Iqbal to conceive a different relationship between Nature and God. Iqbal notes:

> Nature, as we have seen, is not a mass of pure materiality occupying a void. It is a structure of events, a systematic mode of behaviour, and as such organic to the Ultimate Self. Nature is to the Divine Self as character is to the human self. In the picturesque phrase of the Qur'an it is the habit of Allah (Iqbal, 45).

Here Iqbal has transformed the cause/effect dualism in the cosmological argument to a person-habit relationship between God and Nature. In the midst of apparent arbitrariness, randomness, and senselessness in our world, attentive observation reveals certain patterns and harmonies amidst the apparent arbitrariness. The Qur'an describes these patterns and harmonies as *sunnat Allah*, the habits of Allah (33:62; 35:43; 48:23, etc.). Describing Nature, Iqbal goes on to note:

> From the human point of view it is an interpretation which, in our present situation, we put on the creative activity of the Absolute Ego. At a particular moment in its forward movement it is finite; but since the self to which it is organic is creative, it is liable to increase, and is

> consequentially boundless in the sense that no limit to its extension is final. Its only limit is internal, i.e. the immanent self which animates and sustains the whole. As the Qur'an says: 'And verily unto thy Lord is the limit' (53:42) (Iqbal, 45).

Thus far Iqbal has been offering an interpretation of experience as understood by modern physics. At the end of the last passage he brings this scientific interpretation directly into conversation with the Qur'an. 53:42 can be seen as a particular expression of the general description of the Ultimate Ego in 57:3 as "the First and the Last, the visible and the invisible". Integrating the Qur'anic perspective that Nature is the "habit of Allah" and the perspective of physics that Nature is a "system of inter-related events" gives rise to a perspective in which space, matter and time can be conceived as being the manifestations of the creative activity of God. Consequently the latter "… are not independent realities existing *per se*, but only intellectual modes of apprehending the life of God" (Iqbal, 53). The transformation of the cause/effect dualism at the heart of the cosmological argument into a person-habit relationship has a direct impact on the way the Infinitude of God and the finitude of Nature are understood.

From Iqbal's perspective God should not be thought of as the Infinite relative to Whom finite Nature disappears into insignificance and meaninglessness. Iqbal teaches us to recognize the importance of the finitude of the Infinite and the potential infinitude of the finite. On the finitude of the Infinite, Iqbal notes;

> True infinity does not mean infinite extension which cannot be conceived without embracing all available finite extensions. Its nature consists in intensity and not extensity; and the moment we fix our gaze on intensity, we begin to see that the finite ego must be *distinct*, though not *isolated*, from the Infinite (Iqbal, 94).

In other words, the infinity of God is intensive, not extensive. For Iqbal there are a number of reasons why we should not conceive of God's infinity in spatial (or extensive) terms. The most important among these reasons is the fact that such a conception easily lends itself to the pantheistic inclination to characterize God "as some vague, vast and pervasive cosmic element"

devoid of individuality and personality (Iqbal, 51). Iqbal acknowledges the fact that the revealed scripture in the Abrahamic tradition uses the metaphor of light to describe God and this metaphor "gives the impression of an escape from an individualistic conception of God" (Iqbal, 51). The well known verse of light from Surah Al-Nur has been interpreted by some commentators to imply an impersonal conception of God. Iqbal cites the ayah: *Allah is the light of the Heavens and of the earth. His light is like a niche in which is a lamp–the lamp encased in a glass–the glass, as it were, a star* (24:35). Then he notes that a complete reading of the ayah shows that the

> development of the metaphor [of light] is meant rather to exclude the suggestion of a formless cosmic element by centralizing the light in a flame which is further individualized by its encasement in a glass likened unto a well-defined star (Iqbal, 51).

He then goes on to complement this insight with the findings of modern physics and argue that "the description of God as light, in the revealed literature of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, must now be interpreted differently" because;

> [t]he teaching of modern physics is that the velocity of light cannot be exceeded and is the same for all observers whatever their own system of movement. Thus, in the world of change, light is the nearest approach to the Absolute. The metaphor of light as applied to God, therefore, must in view of modern knowledge, be taken to suggest the Absoluteness of God and not His Omnipresence which easily lends itself to a pantheistic interpretation (Iqbal, 51).

Thus far Iqbal has described the negative outcome of interpreting the attributes of God from the perspective of spatial (or extensive) infinity. Then he goes on to describe how understanding the attributes of God will be impacted if interpreted from the perspective of intensive infinity:

> Modern science regards Nature not as something static, situate[d] in an infinite void, but a structure of interrelated events out of whose mutual relations arise the concepts of time and space. And this is only another way of saying that space and time are interpretations which thought puts

> upon the creative activity of the Ultimate Ego… The infinity of the Ultimate Ego consists in the infinite inner possibilities of His creative activity of which the universe, as known to us, is only a partial expression. In one word God's infinity is intensive, not extensive. It involves an infinite series, but is not of that series (Iqbal, 52).

From the perspective on intensive infinity, the infinity of God does not refer to some impersonal, cosmic force but the unceasing, continuous actualization of the inner potentiality of a unique, concrete, and conscious individual. The actualization of this potentiality manifests itself in the form of ceaseless creative activity. In short, understanding infinity in spatial/extensive terms leads to attributing the characteristics of inertness, impersonality and unconsciousness to God. Understanding infinity in intensive terms leads to attributing the characteristics of individual personality, ceaseless activity, and consciousness to God.

Since the infinitude of God refers to His creative capacities, we will have to rethink the notion of the finitude of Nature. Iqbal has already noted that Nature is to God as habit is to person. Consequently the "finitude" of Nature is a very limited (a very finite?) type of finitude. At any given point in time Nature is finite but given the fact that it is the manifestation of the creative activity of the Creator it is potentially infinite because the creative capacity of the Creator is infinite. Given the fact that Nature is nothing other than the habit of God whose creative capacity is unlimited, it is only natural that the characteristic of infinity is a potential present within Nature. The qur'anically informed description of Nature given to us by modern physics shows Nature as a living, growing, dynamic process that progressively (and potentially infinitely) reveals novel manifestations of truth, goodness and beauty to the attentive observer with the passage of time. In the context of the present discussion the important lesson that Iqbal teaches us is that God should not be characterized as a spatially infinite, Omnipresent, cosmic force devoid of individuality and personality. He is a Unique Individual engaged in unceasing creative activity, whose personal characteristics are manifest in all that He has created.

Biology and the Teleological Argument

After his critique of the cosmological argument, Iqbal goes on to critique the teleological argument for the existence of God. He notes that while the two are closely related–both of them having the cause/effect dualism at their core– their points of emphasis are different. The teleological argument looks at the effect (the world of Nature) and does not stop at merely inferring the existence of a cause (the Necessary Existent), but "scrutinizes the effect with a view to discover the character of its cause" (Iqbal, 24). More specifically, "[f]rom the traces of foresight, purpose, and adaptation in nature, [the teleological argument] infers the existence of a self-conscious being of infinite intelligence and power" (Iqbal, 24). In short, the argument infers the existence of an intelligent designer from the experience of a well designed universe. The teleological argument apparently avoids the pitfalls of the cause/effect dualism plaguing the cosmological argument. But Iqbal's analysis shows that the dualism has insidiously survived in the teleological argument in the form of the designer/designed dualism. Before offering the scientific critique, Iqbal identifies the internal shortcomings of the teleological argument. He notes:

> The argument gives us a contriver only and not a creator; and even if we suppose him to be also the creator of his material, it does no credit to his wisdom to create his own difficulties by first creating intractable material, and then overcoming its resistance by the application of methods alien to its original nature (Iqbal, 24).

The argument ascribes the attributes of Omniscience and Omnipotence to God. God brings his knowledge and power to bear upon material that is completely devoid of knowledge (to say nothing of consciousness) and power (to say nothing of agency) to produce the world of nature. For Iqbal the basic reason why this argument fails is that its conception of the God-Nature relationship is based on the analogy of a human architect who takes inert, dead material and shapes it according to his own knowledge, will, and designs. The reason that the designer/designed dualism fails to do justice to the God-Nature relationship is because when we look at the world of nature it is obvious that:

> [t]here is no analogy between the work of the human artificer and the phenomena of Nature. The human artificer cannot work out his plan

> except by selecting and isolating materials from their natural relations and situations. Nature, however, constitutes a system of wholly interdependent members; her processes present no analogy to the architect's work which, depending on a progressive isolation and integration of its material, can offer no resemblance to the evolution of organic wholes in Nature (Iqbal, 24).

In other words, integration and assimilation resulting from the inner impulses of the designed (in this case Nature) are at least as important in the emergence of the designed as the knowledge and power of the designer. In addition to a number of logical fallacies plaguing the teleological argument, Iqbal describes the shortcomings of the argument from the perspective of modern science.

A review of the history of biology reveals that from its very inception biology had to discard the materialist notion of Nature as being fixed, static, and unchanging– a conception inherited from the intellectual legacy of Newtonian physics. Everywhere that one looks in the organic/natural world one sees growth, variation, and adaptation. But Newtonian physics (and one might add Aristotelean metaphysics) have infected modern biology in the form of a "veiled materialism" since at least the days of Darwin. This is because the old materialist conception of Nature has been replaced by a new mechanistic conception:

> The discoveries of Newton in the sphere of matter and those of Darwin the sphere of Natural History reveal a mechanism. All problems, it was believed, were really the problems of physics. Energy and atoms, with the properties self-existing in them, could explain everything including life, thought, will, and feeling. The concept of mechanism– a purely physical concept– claimed to be the all-embracing explanation of Nature (Iqbal, 33).

From the Newtonian and Darwinian perspectives causality in the world of Nature could be understood in purely mechanistic terms. Iqbal acknowledges the fact that the "concept of 'cause'… the essential feature of which is priority to the effect" is well suited for studying a certain class of phenomena in empirical reality– for example the motion of billiard balls on a pool table.

But, he goes on to note, "when we rise to the level of life and mind the concept of cause fails us" because "the behaviour of [a living] organism is essentially a matter of inheritance and incapable of sufficient explanation in terms of molecular physics" (Iqbal, 34). It is not just the phenomenon of inheritance that cannot be explained in reductive, mechanistic ways employing the notion of "cause and effect," Iqbal notes that the behaviour of the organism itself cannot be explained in these terms either: "The action of living organisms, initiated and planned in view of an end, is totally different to causal action" (Iqbal, 34). A scientific account of such behaviour "demands the concept of 'end' and 'purpose,' which act from within unlike the concept of cause which is external to the effect and acts from without" (Iqbal, 34). Here Iqbal is stating his case for jettisoning the concept of "cause/effect" and adopting the concept of "end/purpose" when studying the phenomenon of life. Then he goes on to offer the scientific grounds for his position.

After acknowledging that "I am no biologist and must turn to biologists themselves for support" (Iqbal, 34), Iqbal offers the insights of the biologists Haldane, Driesch and Carr in support of his position. Haldane notes that there are certain processes in a living organism that can be explained using the conception of cause/effect as it is understood in physics and chemistry. But there are other processes that require going beyond the mechanistic conception of cause/effect. For Haldane the two processes that cannot be explained in terms of cause/effect are the two characteristics that separate a machine from a living organism; self-repair and self-reproduction. The passage of time and the change of environment present unforeseeable challenges and opportunities for the living organism. And the organisms that survive and flourish are the ones which can respond creatively to the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities. An adequate account of the way that life interacts with its environment can only be had when the notion of "ends/purpose" is employed. Whether it is responding to unexpected challenges or taking advantage of novel opportunities, in either case the behaviour of the organism is determined by its ability to choose a particular end (in the future), in light of a general purpose (usually determined by past experience) in order to shape its present behaviour. Combining Haldane's observations with Driesh's description of life as "factual wholeness" Iqbal notes:

> Life is, then, a unique phenomenon and the concept of mechanism is inadequate for its analysis… In all the purposive processes of growth and adaptation to its environment, whether this adaptation is secured by the formation of fresh or the modification of old habits, it possesses a career which is unthinkable in the case of a machine (Iqbal, 35).

A machine can only repeat previously established patterns of action; it cannot invent or discover new patterns. It is obvious that living organisms have not merely continued to repeat patterns that have proven to be life-sustaining in the past, they have also invented or discovered new patterns during their life-course in order to sustain and further the life of the individual organism and the life of the species. In short while the designer/designed distinction helps us to understand the relationship between humans and machines, it is completely inadequate in helping us to understand the relationship between God and Nature, given the characteristics of reproduction and repair that are observed in the world of nature.

Iqbal then uses the insights of Wildon Carr to deepen his critique of applying mechanistic conceptions when dealing with the phenomenon of life. Carr notes that there are two basic problems with a mechanistic account for the origin of life. Firstly, if we consider the intellect to be a means of apprehending reality then a self-contradiction is contained in the claim that the intellect is the product of evolution. Secondly, if the intellect is a product of evolution then science will have to acknowledge that there is a subjective element to knowledge, thereby compromising its claim of objectivity. For Carr the evolution of life as understood by modern biology clearly and obviously necessitates a re-evaluation of the way science understands the principle of cause/effect. Iqbal notes:

> [T]he application of the mechanistic concepts to life, necessitating the view that the intellect itself is a product of evolution, brings science into conflict with its own objective principles of investigation (Iqbal, 36).

Combining the insights of Haldane, Driesh, and Carr Iqbal comes to the conclusion that the attempt to explain the behaviour of living organisms in

mechanistic terms breaks down completely when we consider the ability of living things to discover, invent and create:

> In fact all creative activity is free activity. Creation is opposed to repetition which is characteristic of mechanical action. That is why it is impossible to explain the creative activity of life in terms of mechanism (Iqbal, 40).

Iqbal goes on to ask the biologist to become a little self-aware about his own activity– such self-awareness will make it clear that a mechanistic conception of the relationship between designer/ designed is wholly inadequate to explain observed reality:

> The biologist who seeks a mechanical explanation of life is led to do so because he confines his study to the lower forms of life whose behaviour discloses resemblances to mechanical action. If he studies life as manifested in himself, i.e. his own mind freely choosing, rejecting, reflecting, surveying the past and the present, and dynamically imagining the future, he is sure to be convinced of the inadequacy of his mechanical concepts (Iqbal, 41).

Given the inadequacy of the concepts of a designer who is the cause and the designed which is an effect to provide a coherent account of observed reality (especially that part of reality that is the subject matter of biology) Iqbal offers the alternative of "ends and purposes". Iqbal states that "ends and purposes… form the warp and woof of our conscious experience" (Iqbal, 42). He goes on to detail this point:

> The element of purpose discloses a kind of forward look consciousness. Purposes not only colour our present states of consciousness, but also reveal its future direction. In fact, they constitute the forward push of our life, and thus in a way anticipate and influence the states that are yet to be. To be determined by an end is to be determined by what ought to be. 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. A state of attentive consciousness involves both memory and imagination (Iqbal, 43).

It is only through this non-mechanistic and non-deterministic conception of behaviour that a coherent explanation can be given for the ability of living organisms to pursue an attractive "ought" in the face of an obstructing "is". For Iqbal, the evolution of life over the eons is the result of the conscious and wilful action of living organisms to continuously struggle to modify the actual "is" and bring it closer to an imagined "ought". And this action is explicable only by employing the concepts of end and purpose "which act from within" as being the determining factors in shaping the behaviour of the organism. This is due to the fact that the imagined "ought" is the end, purpose towards which the action is aimed.

Since the concepts of cause and effect are central to the traditional understanding of teleology, the introduction of ends and purposes has a subtle but profound impact on how teleology should be understood. But a cautionary note should be sounded here because Iqbal is calling for a shift in perspective, nor merely a shift in language. When he speaks of "end" and "purpose" he means something very specific:

> The world-process, or the movement of the universe in time, is certainly devoid of purpose, if by purpose we mean a foreseen end–a far-off fixed destination to which the whole of creation moves. To endow the world-process with a purpose in this sense is to rob it of its originality and its creative character (Iqbal, 44).

A mechanistic conception of cause/effect and also end/purpose certainly divests time of "its originality and its creative character". From this perspective, combining the knowledge of the position of all particles, things, and persons at one point in time with the knowledge of the "laws of Nature" allows us to predict all of the future with absolute precision. This fantasy has proven to be powerfully seductive for many scientists in modern times. But this view of things seems to "regard the future as something already given, as indubitably fixed as the past. Time as a free creative movement has no meaning for this theory. It does not pass. Events do not happen; we simple meet them" (Iqbal, 31). For Iqbal there is a striking resemblance between the degenerate, mechanistic understanding of time advocated by many scientists and certain religious conceptions of God's attributes:

> All is already given somewhere in eternity; the temporal order of events is nothing more than a mere imitation of the eternal mould. Such a view is hardly distinguishable from the mechanism we have already rejected. If fact, it is a kind of veiled materialism in which fate or destiny takes the place of rigid determinism, leaving no scope for human or even Divine Freedom. The world regarded as a process realizing a preordained goal is not a world of free, responsible moral agents; it is only a stage on which puppets are made to move by a kind of pull from behind (Iqbal, 43).

For Iqbal this mechanism and determinism have to be rejected as forcefully as materialism (the former are only "veiled" forms of materialism) for the same reason that materialism itself has to be rejected– there is compelling scientific evidence against these conceptions and they also mitigate against the Qur'anic outlook. With specific reference to a mechanistic universe in which everything is pre-determined, Iqbal notes:

> To my mind nothing is more alien to the Qur'anic outlook than the idea that the universe is the temporal working out of a preconceived plan. As I have already pointed out, the universe, according to the Qur'an is liable to increase. It is a growing universe and not an already completed product that left the hands of its maker ages ago and is now lying stretched in space as a dead mass of matter to which time does nothing, and consequently is nothing (Iqbal, 44).

For Iqbal time cannot be nothing and do nothing for the simple fact that "Nature's passage in time is perhaps the most significant aspect of experience which the Qur'an especially emphasizes and which… offers the best clue to the ultimate nature of Reality" (Iqbal, 36). At this point Iqbal reminds the readers of three passages from the Qur'an that he has already mentioned (3:190-1; 2:164; 24:44) and then cites five more (10:6; 25:62; 31:29; 39:5; 23:80) to point out that the Qur'an considers time to be one of greatest symbols of God. The intimacy of the relationship between time and God is summarily conveyed by a hadith that Iqbal quotes in which "the Prophet said: 'Do not vilify time, for time is God'" (Iqbal, 8). The characteristics that are most relevant for Iqbal at this point are dynamism, creativity, and freedom– to the degree that these are characteristics of time they are also the

characteristics of God. And it is with this Qur'anic-scientific conception of time in mind that Iqbal offers an alternative description of teleology:

> From our conscious experience we have seen that to live is to shape and change ends and purposes and to be governed by them. Mental life is teleological in the sense that, while there is no [pre-determined] far-off distant goal towards which we are moving, there is a progressive formation of fresh ends, purposes, and ideal scales of value as the process of life grows and expands (Iqbal, 43ff.)

This scientifically informed and Qur'anically grounded understanding of teleology allows Iqbal to offer a coherent and compelling account of the widely known and widely debated idea of *taqdir*. Most often this word is translated as "pre-destination"– the *taqdir* of (let's say) a person is that which she has been fated to do since pre-eternity. The passage of time means nothing and does nothing to *taqdir*, it merely provides the stage on which a scripted play is acted out. Iqbal's understanding of *taqdir* maintains the sense of "destiny" but removes the characteristic of pre-determinism. He notes:

> Destiny is time regarded as prior to the disclosure of its possibilities. It is time freed from the net of causal sequence– the diagrammatic character which the logical understanding imposes on it. In one word, it is time as felt and not as thought and calculated (Iqbal, 40).

From this perspective the *taqdir* of a person is all the things that she can potentially become before she enters the flow of time. Once she enters the flow of time (among other things) the ends and purposes that she freely chooses, combined with her intentions and actions, will play a critical role in determining which of the myriad of possibilities from pre-eternity is actualized as she moves through her life. Iqbal goes on to further describe *taqdir*/destiny in these words:

> Time regarded as destiny forms the very essence of things. As the Qur'an says: 'God created all things and assigned to each its destiny.' The destiny of a thing then is not an unrelenting fate working from without like a task master; it is the inward reach of a thing, its realizable possibilities which lie

within the depths of its nature, and serially actualize themselves without any feeling of compulsion (Iqbal, 40).

Iqbal's re-visioning of *taqdir* in the light of the findings of modern science (biology) and the teachings of the Qur'an opens up the possibility of revising the traditional understanding of cause/effect. Traditionally all causal agency has been exclusively invested in God (the uncaused Cause) and the effect has been viewed as a passive recipient of a fate determined by the Cause. Iqbal's analysis breaks down the dualism between cause and effect and reveals a reflexive relationship between the two.

In other contexts Iqbal has pointed out that the human being has the potential of becoming a co-worker with God in the pursuit and attainment of ends and purposes chosen by God or by the human being. This means that while the effect (the human being) is preceded by a Cause (God) at one point in it career, the effect is not eternally fated to remain subservient to the Cause because the future is open to new possibilities and new relationships. One of the possibilities is that the effect actualizes some of its inner potential and becomes a co-cause with the Cause in the creation of new worlds:

> Of all the creations of God [the human being] alone is capable of consciously participating in the creative life of his Maker. Endowed with the power to imagine a better world, and to mould what is into what ought to be, the ego in him aspires, in the interests of an increasingly unique and comprehensive individuality, to exploit all the various environments on which he may be called upon to operate during the course of an endless career (Iqbal, 58).

While the effect (human being) does indeed progress beyond being merely an effect and becomes a co-cause with the cause it is still largely subservient to the will and desire of the Cause. Iqbal's insights teach us that the Qur'an points to an even more profound potential within the effect that is the human being. A second possibility is that the effect actualizes even more of its inner potential and aspires to effect the actions of the Cause through the act of prayer. In this case the effect aspires to become a cause for the Cause to act in a particular way, in response to a particular need or desire, arising from a particular historical situation in which the effect finds himself:

> It is the lot of man to share in the deeper aspirations of the universe around him and to shape his own destiny as well as that of the universe, now by adjusting himself to its forces, now by putting the whole of his energy to mould its forces to his own ends and purposes. And in this process of progressive change God becomes a co-worker with him, provided man takes the initiative: Verily God will not change the condition of men, till they change what is in themselves (13:11) (Iqbal, 10).

The way Iqbal has integrated the teachings of the Qur'an with the findings of modern biology allows him to envision human beings becoming co-workers with God in the pursuit of ends and purposes chosen by human beings to create new worlds in line with the purposes, goals, and desires of human beings. Just as Iqbal's reworking of the cosmological argument revealed the potential infinitude of the finite, his reworking of the teleological argument reveals the potential causal agency of the effect. Using the analogy offered by Iqbal in his discussion of the cosmological argument, we can say that Iqbal's reconstruction of the teleological argument replaces the designer/designed dualism with a person-purpose relationship.

Psychology and the Ontological Argument

After critiquing the cosmological and teleological arguments, Iqbal turns his attention to the ontological argument which "has been presented in various forms" (Iqbal, 24) and "is somewhat of the nature of the cosmological argument" (Iqbal, 25). He uses Descartes' version of the argument to lay bare its inner logic. The argument basically runs thus:

> We have the idea of a perfect being in our mind. What is the source of the idea? It cannot come from Nature, for Nature exhibits nothing but change. It cannot create the idea of a perfect being. Therefore corresponding to the idea in our mind there must be an objective counterpart which is the cause of the idea of a perfect being in our mind (Iqbal, 24ff.).

It is obvious that the argument is based on an ideal/real dualism–in its Cartesian manifestation the dualism is expressed in the mind/matter dichotomy. The argument goes on to distinguish the ideal from the real by

attributing the characteristics of immutability, non-corporeality and perfection to the ideal and the characteristics of change, corporeality and imperfection to the real. In other words, the ideal/real dualism contains within it the change/permanence dualism where permanence is equated with perfection and change is considered to be the characteristic of imperfection. The basic flaw in the ontological argument in all its various guises and interpretations, as already detailed by Kant, is that "it is clear that the conception of the existence is no proof of objective existence" (Iqbal, 25). Iqbal details this point in these words:

> All that the argument proves is that the idea of a perfect being includes the *idea* of his existence. Between the idea of a perfect being in my mind and the objective reality of that being there is a gulf which cannot be bridged over by a transcendental act of thought. The argument, as stated, is in fact a *petitio principii*: for it takes for granted the very point in question, i.e. the transition from the logical to the real (Iqbal, 25).

Up till this point Iqbal has rejected the argument on purely logical grounds. The ontological argument fails for the same reason that cosmological and teleological arguments fail– all of these arguments are premised on a dualism in which the affirmation of one part of the dualism requires a negation of the other part.

While we can reject the ontological argument because of its inner incoherence, for Iqbal, we cannot sidestep the ontological problem which is "how to define the ultimate nature of existence" (Iqbal, 37). The reason that the ontological problem emerges is that since the universe is "external to us, it is possible to be sceptical about its existence" (Iqbal, 37). The external universe displays characteristics that constantly impinge upon our inner life and threaten its stability and coherence. The threat of the external "real" universe to our inner "ideal" world is such that the former confronts the latter in the form of an ultimate threat– the threat of death and annihilation. Under these circumstances, the question naturally arises as to the ultimate nature of reality; is it a stable, fixed "ideal" unaffected by change or is it a constantly changing "real" where all appearance of stability and coherence is an illusion? In a very real sense the ontological problem is also a psychological problem. Consequently, Iqbal proposes that we subject

conscious experience to scientific and philosophical scrutiny in order to deepen our understanding of the ultimate nature of existence.

Even a cursory glance at our conscious experience reveals that "there is nothing static in my inner life; all is a constant mobility, an unceasing flux of states, a perpetual flow in which there is no halt or resting place" (Iqbal, 38). When we combine the fact that "change… is unthinkable without time" with the analogy of our inner experience we can say that "conscious existence means life in time" (Iqbal, 38). This evidences that our inner consciousness is related to "what we call the world of space" (Iqbal, 38). Iqbal calls this part of our consciousness the "efficient self" and notes that it "is the subject of associationist psychology" (Iqbal, 38). He goes to describe the efficient self in greater detail:

> [It] is the practical self of daily life in its dealing with the external order of things which determine our passing states of consciousness and stamp on these states their own spatial feature of mutual isolation. The self here lives outside itself as it were, and, while retaining its unity as a totality, discloses itself as nothing more than a series of specific and consequently innumerable states (Iqbal, 38).

The examination of consciousness that leads to the efficient self suggests that the ultimate nature of reality is flux, change, and instability– that there is nothing stable, coherent and permanent in reality.

Modern psychology has not advanced beyond the discovery and description of the efficient self. But philosophical inquiry into the nature of time, especially by Bergson, suggests that consciousness cannot be reduced to merely the efficient self. Building on Bergson's insights, Iqbal notes: "A deeper analysis of conscious experience reveals to us what I have called the appreciative side of the self" (Iqbal, 38). A closer examination of the appreciative side of the self shows that "the self in its inner life moves from the centre outwards" (Iqbal, 38). Exceedingly difficult to recognize and observe because of our daily absorption in serial time, it takes a great deal of discipline to discover the appreciative self:

> With our absorption in the external order of things, necessitated by our present situation, it is extremely difficult to catch a glimpse of the appreciative self. In our constant pursuit after external things we weave a kind of veil around the appreciative self which thus becomes completely alien to us. It is only in the moments of profound meditation, when the efficient self is in abeyance, that we sink into our deeper self and reach the inner centre of experience (Iqbal, 38).

At this "centre of experience" we find that like the periphery of experience (at the level of the efficient self) there is movement and change. But with the appreciative self,

> change and movement are indivisible; their elements interpenetrate 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 'nows' like pearl beads in a thread. Here is, then, pure duration unadulterated by space (Iqbal, 39).

The following description of "pure time" or pure duration combines the understanding of time furnished by careful analysis of consciousness with the insights gathered by a Qur'anic-biological critique of mechanism;

> Pure time…as revealed by a deeper analysis of our conscious experience, is not a string of separate, reversible instants; it is an organic whole in which the past is not left behind, but is moving along with, and operating in, the present. And the future is given to it not as lying before, yet to be traversed; it is given only in the sense that it is present in its nature as an open possibility (Iqbal, 39ff.).

In short, time is experienced by the appreciative self (pure duration) differently than it is experienced by the efficient self (serial time).

Up till this point, Iqbal has engaged in a philosophical analysis of consciousness and time. He has come to the point where he has identified two types of consciousness (i.e. the efficient self and the appreciative self) and two types of time (i.e. serial time and pure duration). Now he turns to the Qur'an and notes that "in its characteristic simplicity" the Qur'an

"alludes to the serial and non-serial aspects of duration" (Iqbal, 39). Here he cites a passage (25:58-9) which states that Allah created the heavens, the earth and what is between them "in six days". Then he cites another passage (54:49-50) which states that when Allah created all things his "command was but one, swift as the twinkling of an eye". After citing these two passages in juxtaposition, Iqbal goes on to comment:

> If we look at the movement 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 Qur'an, as of the Old Testament, is equal to one thousand 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' (Iqbal, 39).

Iqbal recognizes the fact that it is exceedingly difficult to understand and appreciate pure duration using language that has been shaped, primarily, to help us deal with serial time. He tries to overcome the difficulty by offering an illustration:

> According to physical science, the cause of your sensation of red is the rapidity of wave motion the frequency of which is 400 billions per second. If you could observe this tremendous frequency from the outside, and count it at the rate of 2,000 per second, which is supposed to be the limit of the perceptibility of light, it will take you more than six thousand years to the finish the enumeration. Yet in the single momentary mental act of perception you hold together a frequency of wave motion which is practically incalculable. That is how the mental act transforms succession into duration (Iqbal, 39).

This illustration demonstrates that there is a part of the self that can transform "practically incalculable" motion, change and flux into stability, coherence and permanence in the twinkling of an eye. It is in this sense that the appreciative self is that part of consciousness where "the self in its inner life moves from the centre outwards".

Iqbal has used the philosophical analysis of time to provide a fuller description of consciousness and the psychological analysis of consciousness

to provide a fuller description of time. He brings the two fuller descriptions into relationship with each other in these words:

> The appreciative self, then, is more or less corrective of the efficient self, inasmuch as it synthesizes all the 'heres' and 'nows'–the small changes of space and time, indispensable to the efficient self–into the coherent wholeness of personality (Iqbal, 39).

Combining this understanding of consciousness shaped by the Qur'an and psychology with the qur'anically-scientifically corrected understanding of matter and qur'anically-scientifically corrected understanding of life, puts Iqbal in the position to offer a qur'anically-scientifically informed understanding of ontology. He notes:

> We are now, I hope, in a position to see the meaning of the verse– 'And it is He Who hath ordained the night and the day to succeed one another for those who desire to think on God or desire to be thankful' [25:62]. A critical interpretation of the sequence of time as revealed in our selves has led us to a notion of the Ultimate Reality as pure duration in which thought, life and purpose interpenetrate to form an organic unity. We cannot conceive this unity except as the unity of a self–an all-embracing concrete self– the ultimate source of all individual life and thought (Iqbal, 44).

For Iqbal the ontological problem is resolved by going beyond the ideal/real dualism and discovering a "self" that the Qur'an and a scientific examination of consciousness point towards. For Iqbal the self is both prior to time and space and capable of doing what neither time nor space can do:

> Neither pure space nor pure time can hold together the multiplicity of objects and events. It is the appreciative act of an enduring self only which can seize the multiplicity of duration– broken into an infinity of instants– and transform it to the organic wholeness of a synthesis. To exist in pure duration is to be a self, and to be a self is to be able to say 'I am'. Only that truly exists which can say "I am" (Iqbal, 44ff.).

Since the self has an efficient and an appreciative side, for Iqbal the self that has the ability to say "I am" combines within itself the characteristics of movement and stability, flux and coherence, change and permanence.

In the foregoing discussion Iqbal has been critiquing the dominant positions in the ontological debate. One side in the debate associates existence and reality with the "real" and the characteristics of change, flux, impermanence. The other side in the debate associates existence and reality with the "ideal" and the characteristics of immutability, immobility, and permanence. As he has been critiquing these positions, gradually, Iqbal has been putting into place the different building blocks of his alternative position. We can say that up till now he has been engaged in an "efficient" analysis of the ontological problem. But we have reached a point in the discussion where we can offer an "appreciative" statement on Iqbal's understanding of the "ultimate nature of reality". Iqbal states:

> I have conceived the Ultimate Reality as an Ego and I must add now that from the Ultimate Ego only egos proceed. The creative energy of the Ultimate Ego, in whom deed and thought are identical, functions as ego-unities. The world, in all its details, from the mechanical movement of what we call the atom of matter to the free movement of thought in the human ego, is the self-revelation of the "Great I am". Every atom of Divine energy, however low in the scale of existence, is an ego. But there are degrees in the expression of egohood. Throughout the entire gamut of being runs the gradually rising note of egohood until it reaches its relative perfection in man. That is why the Qur'an declares the Ultimate Ego to be nearer to man than his own neck-vein (Iqbal, 57).

Iqbal's resolution of the ontological problem comes in the form of describing Ultimate Reality as an Ego or a Self. In doing so he is aware of the fact that his resolution gives rise to a new problem. In light of what he has said about change and the self he notes that "the question you are likely to ask is– 'Can change be predicated of the Ultimate Ego?'" (Iqbal, 47). For Iqbal this is a legitimate question and also a troubling one because:

> 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… Change… in the sense of movement from an imperfect to a relatively perfect state, or vice versa, is obviously inapplicable to [the life of the Ultimate Ego] (Iqbal, 47).

Iqbal's insights into the characteristic of time as experienced by the appreciative self give him the tools to tackle this difficult problem. He has already noted that the efficient self experiences time in the form of serial change. A closer examination of conscious experience revealed the existence of the appreciative self where time is experienced as pure duration. Now Iqbal brings this discovery furnished by psychology to bear on the problem of the relationship of change to Divine Life:

> A deeper insight into our conscious experience shows that beneath the appearance of serial duration there is true duration. The Ultimate Ego exists in pure duration where change ceases to be a succession of varying attitudes, and reveals its true character as continuous creation, 'untouched by weariness' [(50:38)] and unseizable 'by slumber or sleep' [(2:255)] (Iqbal, 48).

Given the way Iqbal has stated the issue, not only is it possible to ascribe the characteristic of change to the Ultimate Ego, it becomes absolutely necessary. The Qur'an describes Allah as not only The Lifegiver but also as The Living. Modern biology leaves little room for doubt that change is the one characteristic to be found wherever there is life. Combining the Qur'anic and biological perspectives, we can say that practically speaking there is a direct correlation between life and change, consequently we have to ascribe the characteristic of Ultimate Change to the One Who is Most Alive. It is here that the significance of Iqbal's insight that in pure duration "change ceases to be a succession of varying attitudes and reveals its true character as continuous creation" comes to the fore. The Ultimate Ego obviously experiences change but change characteristic of pure duration manifested in continuous, conscious, and purposeful creative activity. For Iqbal this is a point of exceeding importance: "To conceive the Ultimate Ego as changeless in this sense of change is to conceive Him as utter inaction, a motiveless, stagnant neutrality, an absolute nothing" (Iqbal, 48). By stating the issue in these terms Iqbal is challenging the common assumption that perfection means immutability and immobility:

> To the Creative Self change cannot mean imperfection. The perfection of the Creative Self consists, not in a mechanistically conceived immobility, as Aristotle may have led Ibn Hazm to think. It consists in the vaster basis of His creative activity and in the infinite scope of His creative vision. God's life is self-revelation, not the pursuit of an ideal to be reached. The 'not-yet' of man does mean pursuit and may mean failure; the 'not-yet' of God means unfailing realization of the infinite creative possibilities of His being which retains its wholeness throughout the entire process (Iqbal, 48).

In his critique of the ontological argument, Iqbal has affected another subtle but profound shift in not only the explicit dualism at the surface of the argument but also the implicit dualism contained inside the argument. He has moved beyond the fruitless ideal vs. real debates–and which of the two is more real (or more ideal). The ultimate nature of being is neither some inert, immobile "real" (substance) possessing some eternally fixed, universal essence. Nor is it some abstract, immutable "ideal" (form) persisting in a disembodied, eternally unchanging domain. For Iqbal the ultimate nature of reality is an ego or a self. The defining characteristic of the ego is the ability to synthesize apparently irreconcilable dichotomies of matter/spirit, past/future, self/other, permanence/change, etc. In the context of the present discussion the most important point to note is that for Iqbal there is no problem in attributing the characteristic of change and dynamism to the ego. Iqbal is not in the least afraid to attribute the characteristic of change to the Ultimate Self because for him there is no direct relationship between perfection and permanence (or immutability) on the one hand and imperfection and change (or flux) on the other hand. By having identified two different types of "change," it becomes possible for Iqbal to attribute the characteristic of change to a Perfect Self. The way he has described change as it occurs in pure duration means that the more perfect a self is the more it is subject to change. The one activity that the most perfect self engages in incessantly is not abstract, immobile, contemplation of the unchanging, immutable self, but the concrete, continuous, untiring act of creation which is simultaneously an act of self-revelation. It is this act of self-revelation that brought into being all other selves, including the selves of matter, space, time, atoms, rocks, cells, plants, trees, insects, birds, animals, etc.– and the self that consciously investigates these other selves (i.e. the human self) in

order to understand the Ultimate Self of which all other selves are ultimately symbols. In sum, Iqbal's critique and reconstruction has transformed the ideal/real dualism at the heart of the ontological argument into a person-consciousness relationship.

At this point a note of caution may be in order because of a recurring theme in the discussion– Iqbal's critique of dualisms. Given his pointed and persistent critique of dualisms in all their various manifestations one might get the impression that he is a monist of some type. This is clearly not the case. It does not take an extremely attentive reading of *The Reconstruction* to note that while he rejects dualism of cause/effect, infinite/finite, permanence/change, etc. he does not reject the distinctions between the two elements in the pair. He explicitly recognizes that these distinctions are needed and valid (actually vital) in certain contexts and for certain purposes. On an even more basic level, Iqbal uses these distinctions in formulating some of his own key ideas. For example, he notes that the one feature that separates Muslim culture from classical Greek culture is that the highest ideal for the latter "was proportion, not infinity" (Iqbal, 105). In contrast in Muslim culture "we find both in the realms of pure intellect and religious psychology… the ideal revealed is the possession and enjoyment of the Infinite" (Iqbal, 105). Iqbal could not possibly make this distinction if he had wanted to get rid of the finite/infinite distinction altogether. Similarly, in the case of cause/effect, Iqbal notes that the difference between cause and effect is an indispensible distinction that human beings need to employ in their interaction with their natural environment. Human survival and flourishing in the seemingly chaotic and often unpredictable environment requires that they develop a conceptual system that provides them with "some kind of assurance as to the behaviour of things around [them]" (Iqbal, 86). This is done most efficiently by employing the concepts of cause/effect. Iqbal describes the uses and limits of the concept of cause/effect (and we may add also those of finite/infinite) in these words:

> The view of his environment as a system of cause and effect [or as the finite manifestation of an Infinite Creator] is thus an indispensible instrument of the ego, and not a final expression of the nature of Reality. Indeed in interpreting Nature in this way the ego understands and masters

its environment, and thereby acquires and amplifies its freedom (Iqbal, 86).

Maintaining the permanence/change distinction is also essential for Iqbal to express another one of his important insights. As he moves from the discussion of the spirit of Muslim culture to the principle of movement in Islam, Iqbal notes:

> The ultimate spiritual basis of all life, as conceived by Islam, is eternal and reveals itself in variety and change. A society based on such a conception of Reality must reconcile, in its life, the categories of permanence and change. It must possess eternal principles to regulate its collective life, for the eternal gives us a foothold in the world of perpetual change. (Iqbal, 117)

For Iqbal the health and dynamism of a given culture requires that an appropriate balance be maintained between commitment to permanent, eternal values and the willingness and ability to change in order to meet novel challenges and take advantage of novel opportunities. Iqbal notes that the stagnation of contemporary Muslim culture is the result of losing sight of the importance of change and dynamism, while the stagnation of modern Western culture is the result of disregard for eternal, permanent ideals. In short the distinctions of infinite/finite, cause/effect, change/permanence (as well as others) are essential if human beings are to master their physical environment, create a dynamic culture and acquire and amplify their freedom. These distinctions become debilitating when they are absolutized–thereby creating dualisms that divide reality into the irreconcilable opposites of thought and being.

We are in a position to present an integrated summary of Iqbal's position on the contribution that science can make to the reconstruction of religious thought in Islam. For Iqbal the most authentic type of religious faith rests on a "special type of inner experience" that makes it possible for the individual to organically "assimilate an alien universe" (Iqbal, xxi). While its beginning is intimacy with the physical universe, the ultimate goal of religious experience "according to the Prophet, consists in the 'creation of Divine attributes in man'" (Iqbal, 87). Since the universe is nothing other than the manifestation

of the "habits of Allah," combining the scientific study of experience with the teachings of the Qur'an offers the most reliable way of attaining a sound understanding of God's attributes. The Qur'anic-scientific interpretation of experience as it manifests itself in matter and space reveals that reality is not an inert, static thing but a dynamic system of inter-related events. The Qur'anic-scientific interpretation of time reveals that reality is not a sterile, repetitive mechanism but a generative phenomenon capable of creating new relationships. The Qur'anic-scientific interpretation of consciousness reveals that the ultimate nature of reality cannot be described as some immobile, immutable being but only as a consciously acting, ceaseless becoming. Since, from the Qur'anic perspective empirical reality reflects the attributes of the Ultimate Reality, Iqbal is able to offer the following description of Ultimate Reality based on a scientific understanding of empirical reality: God is not some impersonal, formless, immutable, inert force, He is a concretely unique, personal, purposefully acting, conscious Self. In summary form Iqbal's analysis has engendered the following transformations in the classical philosophical arguments for the existence of God:

- From cause/effect dualism to person-habit relationship
- From designer/designed dualism to person-purpose relationship
- From ideal/real dualism to person-consciousness relationship

Consequently, the following picture emerges of the characteristics and relationship between God, the world and the human being from Iqbal's scientific reconstruction of the philosophical argument for the existence of God:

- God– a concrete individual Self in whom life, purpose and intention interpenetrate
- The World– the manifestation of his creative action
- The Human Being– potentially God's co-worker in the future evolution of the world

The foregoing discussion demonstrates how science can help in purging religious thought of materialistic, mechanistic and reductionist concepts. By purging religious thought of these unscientific concepts, religious thought

gains the ability to rationally explicate the existence of a conscious, willing and living Unique God– the God who spoke to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and finally to Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon them all)– a God who can still personally speak (albeit in a different way) to a believer possessing "concrete habits of thought" and living in modern, scientific culture.

Religion and the Reconstruction of Scientific Thought

Thus far the discussion has focused on how Iqbal uses the findings of science to reconstruct religious thought in Islam. As noted in the introduction Iqbal's basic task is to "reconstruct Muslim religious philosophy" in a way that meets the "demand for a scientific form of religious knowledge" which makes sense to moderns whose thinking is shaped by "a concrete type of mind". But when we read Iqbal's work closely it becomes obvious that in the text called the "reconstruction of religious thought in Islam" there is a subtext that could be called the "reconstruction of scientific thought in the West". A brief foray into this area of Iqbal's thought is called for on two accounts. Firstly, Iqbal was not just a Muslim, he was a Muslim of the modern world. Consequently, his concerns cannot be limited to just healing the ruptures in Islamic thought, they extend to healing the ruptures of modern thought as well. Secondly, from the perspective of the modern university, it is Iqbal's effort to reconstruct scientific thought that makes him more immediately relevant to it. Leaving aside the issue of the historical origins of the university, in modern times the university is the temple of science–a temple riven with controversies, debates, and conflicts. The crisis in the university manifests itself in culture at large in the form of crises of meaning, significance and community that have been amply commented upon and documented by notable social scientists and humanists since at least the middle of the 19th century. Iqbal sees the root cause of the various crises in culture at large to be a macro-level projection of crises within science itself. In the previous section we described how Iqbal uses science to help religion recognize and redress the debilitating effects of materialism, mechanism and reduction on religious thought. In the present section we will see how Iqbal uses religion to help science recognize and redress the debilitating effects of materialism, mechanism and reductionism on contemporary scientific thought. There are three particular points on which religion can help science: a) replace the fragmentary character of scientific

knowledge with a relational self-understanding, b) overcome the naïve and unreflective character of scientific inquiry and give it purposeful direction, and c) show science to be a meaningful and enriching cultural activity. In short, religion can help science move from a fragmentary, naïve, and meaningless understanding of the self (that is science) and the other that science investigates (the cosmos) to relational, purposefully self-conscious and meaningful understanding of the scientific self and the natural cosmos.

Iqbal notes that there can be no denying the fact there has been an exponential increase in our knowledge of reality in the age of science– but this has come at a price:

> There is no doubt that the theories of science constitute trustworthy knowledge because they are verifiable and enable us to predict and control the events of Nature. But we must not forget that what we call science is not a single systematic view of Reality. It is a mass of sectional views of Reality– fragments of a total experience which do not seem to fit together (Iqbal, 33).

It is difficult to contest Iqbal's observation that while scientific theories and explanations have proven to be valuable in certain respects, their proliferation has created an apparently inexplicable enigma. Each of the different theories work superlatively well when viewed in isolation but at the same time it is practically impossible to establish any coherent relationship between these theories– this is more so the case today than it was in Iqbal's own day. Not only is it the case that the theories within the sciences, social sciences and humanities are mutually irreconcilable. It is further the case that within the sciences there is no coherent account linking physics, biology and psychology. If we look closer we discover that within any one of the particular sciences, specialization and fragmentation has penetrated so deeply that a coherent account of physics or biology or psychology is not readily available. For example while Newtonian, Relativity and Quantum physics work fine in isolation from each other, the moment we start looking for a unified account of the different branches of physics we run up against significant difficulties. It is not just the case that the sciences have given us nothing more than a sectional view of Reality, it is also the case that they have proven incapable of giving us nothing more than a sectional view of

themselves. The following observation by Iqbal points to the root cause of the impasse:

> Natural Science deals with matter, with life, and with mind; but the moment you ask the question how matter, life and mind are mutually related, you begin to see the sectional character of the various sciences that deal with them and the inability of these sciences taken singly, to furnish a complete answer to your question… Nature as the subject of science is a highly artificial affair, and this artificiality is the result of that selective process to which science must subject [Nature] in the interests of precision (Iqbal, 34).

Physics can give a detailed and precise account of matter, biology of life and psychology of mind but none of the three (either separately or taken together) can give a coherent account of how matter, life and mind are related to each other. In short, the "sectional view of Nature" has meant rending asunder the inner relationship within science itself.

If the matter is laid to rest here we are left with the conclusion that reality is composed of mutually isolated, conflicting and ultimately irreconcilable elements. The sectional view of Nature provided by the different sciences leads to this conclusion. But Iqbal asks us to look at the subject matter of science (i.e. Nature) from a different perspective: "The moment you put the subject of science in the total of human experience it begins to disclose a different character" (Iqbal, 34). For Iqbal, human experience provides the most compelling evidence for the fact that reality is not divided into mutually conflicting, irreconcilable elements– but this can only be appreciated when one notices that empirical reality is not composed of space, time and causality alone; life, will, and consciousness are also a part of empirical reality. It is obvious that a particular science must be selective in choosing its subject matter (i.e. physics chooses matter and leaves aside life). But it would be utter foolishness to claim that "matter" is all that exists in the universe when it is something more than "mere matter" that is actually carrying out the scientific inquiry– i.e. a purposefully living human being who has consciously decided that scientific study of matter is a meaningful activity. Iqbal notes:

> Science must necessarily select for study certain specific aspects of Reality only and exclude others. It is pure dogmatism on the part of science to claim that the aspects of Reality selected by it are the only aspects to be studied. No doubt man has a spatial aspect; but this is not the only aspect of man. There are other aspects of man, such as evaluation, the unitary character of purposive experience, and the pursuit of truth which science must necessarily exclude from its study, and the understanding of which requires categories other than those employed by science (Iqbal, 90ff.)

In other words, all appearances to the contrary, matter, space, and time are parts of a larger whole– a whole which also includes purpose, will, and consciousness. It is only with reference to the latter that the sharp differences between physics, biology and psychology are harmonized into mutually enriching relations.

Iqbal goes on to note that given the character and function of science, we should not expect anything more than a sectional view of reality from science: "Natural Science is by nature sectional; it cannot, if it is true to its own nature and function, set up its theory as a complete view of Reality" (Iqbal, 34). At this juncture the limitations of science stand in front of us in very stark terms. And it is here that science must turn to religion in order to overcome its limitations. Iqbal notes that it is religion "which demands the whole of Reality and for this reason must occupy a central place in any synthesis of the data of human experience" (Iqbal, 34). Should science desire to overcome its limits and take part in a larger project that provides a comprehensive account of reality, it must come into conversation with religion. Iqbal notes that it is religion (more specifically monotheistic religion), and not science or philosophy, which makes the explicit claim that every type of experience that human beings have discovered (material, biological, psychological, etc.) is nothing more than the manifestation of the habits of One Reality. When science opens itself to the religious perspective– the search for wholeness– then its sectional view of itself is replaced by a relational view. Physics, biology, and psychology (taking the most basic level) reveal themselves to be intimately related modes of inquiry making their own uniquely valuable contribution to the painting of a holistic picture of reality.

When the naïve and unreflective sectional understanding of the character of scientific inquiry is replaced with a self-conscious and self-critical (shall we say "scientific") relational understanding the essential first step has been taken in overcoming the fragmentary character of scientific knowledge. In more specific terms Iqbal offers a concrete proposal that will lead to a holistic, self-conscious and self-critical account of scientific inquiry. He explicitly identifies Whiteheads' process physics (Iqbal, 106), Emergent Evolution and Configuration Psychology (Iqbal, 86) as offering the most promising possibility for integrating physics, biology and psychology and producing a holistic philosophy of science. At the conclusion of his discussion which ends with the observation that from the Qur'anic point of view Nature is nothing more than the "habit of Allah," Iqbal makes the observation that this view has the potential of investing science with new meaning and significance:

> Thus the view we have taken gives a fresh spiritual meaning to physical science. The knowledge of Nature is the knowledge of God's behaviour. In our observation of Nature we are virtually seeking a kind of intimacy with the Absolute Ego; and this is only another form of worship (Iqbal, 45).

A careful reading of this point shows Iqbal drawing attention to the fact that science must recognize the prayerful character of its activity for its own well being. The inability of science to recognize its relationship with religion is a sign (maybe even the cause) of its inability to see its own inner relationships. Earlier we noted how the modern university is a conglomeration of different groups of people speaking mutually incomprehensible languages. The irony is that all of these groups present themselves to the world as the representatives of science. Iqbal's insights reveal that the materialist conception of matter, the mechanistic conception of life and the reductionist conception of mind have proven to be not just an obstacle to science's interaction with religion. They have led to fragmentation, naïvete, and meaninglessness within the sciences themselves. This inner conflict manifests itself not only in the form of sundering the inner relationship between physics, biology and psychology but also the

relationship of these sciences with the cultural being (i.e. the scientist) whose life choices, hopes, fears, aspirations, etc. make science possible.

It is interesting to note that this comprehensive proposal to help the sciences recognize their inner relationships and the meaningfulness of scientific inquiry is contained in a book titled the "reconstruction of religious thought in Islam". Iqbal's reconstruction of scientific thought in the modern world shows science to be a meaningful and conscientious undertaking that has inner coherence, while at the same time it is related to other cultural spheres/activities. In sum, Iqbal's understanding of the relationship between religion and science leads to the following conclusion: If religion aspires to attract seekers whose religious faith is based on personal experience (rather than tradition, culture and dogma), religion will have to open itself to science. If science aspires to give a coherent and holistic account of experience (rather than partial and mutually irreconcilable accounts) science will have to open itself to religion. It is only in the aftermath of this mutual opening up that the task of repairing the ruptures in the modern religious community, the modern university and modern culture can begin. The following observation by Iqbal is an apt way to end our investigation of his "reconstruction of religious thought in Islam" and our need for the "reconstruction of scientific thought in the West":

> The quest after a nameless nothing, as disclosed in Neo-Platonic mysticism– be it Christian or Muslim– cannot satisfy the modern mind which, with its habits of concrete thinking, demands a concrete living experience of God. And the history of the race shows that the attitude of the mind embodied in the act of worship is a condition for such an experience. In fact, prayer must be regarded as a necessary complement to the intellectual activity of the observer of Nature. The scientific observation of Nature keeps us in close contact with the behaviour of Reality, and thus sharpens our inner perception for a deeper vision of it… The truth is that all search for knowledge is essentially a form of prayer (Iqbal, 72ff.).

IQBAL'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE LIGHT OF ISLAMIC TRADITION

Ejaz Akram

Iqbal's works are replete with themes that are of a political nature and a plethora of works on his political philosophy have been done. Three generations since the passage of this eminent thinker, modernity itself has undergone major transformation in conditions and perceptions. This necessitates a re-appraisal of Iqbal's views. No critique of Iqbal exists from a traditional viewpoint. Most of the readings of Iqbal have served as an 'intellectual mirror' for Muslim modernists, as the latter interpreted Iqbal in the light of their favourite ideologies. Hence, several readings of Iqbal that range from Communist, Socialist, and Democratic, proliferate. Such readings have been mostly the work of modern social scientists who do not have training either in philosophy or religion (both Western and Islamic), subjects which Iqbal dealt with constantly.

This paper explores Iqbal's political philosophy from a traditional Islamic point of view. It endeavours not just to offer a critical appreciation of Iqbal in the light of Islamic tradition, it also contends to appropriate elements in Iqbal's philosophy that represent continuity with the tradition of Islamic intellectual heritage. After distilling Iqbal's essential spirit, his views on nationalism, state, democracy, sovereignty are analyzed. What emerges from the above mentioned is then looked at in the light of questions such as Iqbal's position on the relationship between religion and politics; points of convergence and divergence between Iqbal's political philosophy and modern Western political philosophy; and lastly, in the field of political philosophy a comparison of Iqbal's ideas with other contemporary Muslim thinkers.

Methodology to Study Iqbal's Political Philosophy

Iqbal was a prolific author. He has left us with moving and soul searching poetry, lectures, short monographs and his correspondence with the

luminaries and political leaders of that time. He was not only a philosopher, scholar and poet, but also a *social and political reformer*. The medium of poetry and his scholarly writings both contain elements essential to his philosophy. The reason he put some of his essential ideas in the medium of poetry keeps him in line with the Persian Islamic tradition, the purpose of which was to move the human soul and effect a spiritual transformation led by contemplation of his poetry. The efficacy of his ideas through the medium of poetry was compatible with the traditional Eastern Islamic genius. It is conventional in an average Persian household (literate or illiterate) where just about everyone knows by rote hundreds of verses of poetry, may those be the verses of Rumi, Hafiz or Sa'di. The same is true of Iqbal. Many Muslims, especially Pakistanis (for whom he became the spiritual founder of a nation) know his beautiful poetry by heart. His poetry had a moving effect for not only the cognitive elite of Muslim India, but even for those who couldn't read could still memorize and quote Iqbal. His philosophical ideas would not have reverberated so much across the Muslim masses of South Asia if they only stayed in academic journal articles. His scholarly writings of course, written lucidly in excellent English contain more elaborate versions of his philosophical ideas, especially his political ideas.

The following question of heuristic interest must be answered by those scholars who are working on Iqbal's thought: Can we subject Iqbal's philosophical ideas in the form of scholarly articles and books to the same rules of appraisal as those found in his poetry? One would think that since ideas are ideas, such a uniform measure of assessment of his philosophy, both in poetry and scholarly writings is fair enough. Our stance differs from the above mentioned position and it is our submission that since there is no paucity of philosophical literature left behind by Iqbal, we should treat his poetical ideas differently. We should do so because the intended audience of his poetical imagination was the Muslim *Ummah*, particularly the Persian and the Indian Muslim world. His poetry is motivational for Muslims whose purpose is to awaken the Muslims' souls in a fashion in which music awakens the human soul. Because this has been performed as an art, to subject it to the logic of *wissenschaft*, would be unfairly reducing it in its scope. Therefore, the standard for appraisal of poetical literature has to be different than the standard with which to assess his other writings. It is important to state that by doing so, we would not risk compartmentalizing Iqbal and doing injustice

to the wholeness of his thought because to quite a large extent, his philosophical themes in poetry and prose mutually lend themselves to each other. Conversely, our aim to approach Iqbal in such a manner is so that Iqbal is not compartmentalized as he has been by many. One should look at the *spirit* behind his ideas and not get wedged between his seemingly contradictory ideas[128] that could be attributable to the times through which Iqbal wrote, his own stages of intellectual growth and the poetical medium of expression. Also, it prevents us from getting caught in the semantics and over-reading Iqbal's political ideas in poetry while the poet must adhere to the rules of his medium. Distilling the *spirit* of Iqbal's writings allows us to look at his political writings as a primary source of his political ideas, supplemented by the fiery warmth of his poetry that aimed at re-awakening the Muslims and inciting them to rise in the face of oppression. However, when it comes to the metaphysical component of his thought, the same standard of appraisal must be applied to evaluate his ideas, may it be poetry or prose, because there, one treads the ground of principles that are of a perennial and immutable nature. Lastly, even though we remain opposed to the historicist school of thought because of the relativity it infuses in the matters of principles, it may be necessary to apply a minor degree of historicism by Muslims of today in approaching Iqbal, so that Iqbal's words are seen in the light of the conditions of his day and age.

Iqbal on the Place of Religion in Politics

Iqbal was a religious thinker. His main source of personal identity and inspiration was Islam. He quoted frequently from the Qur'an. His 'perfect man' was none other than the Prophet of Islam. There was a strong influence of Muslim sages and scholars on him. He criticized secularism very harshly. Even if one picks up anything written by Iqbal randomly, one finds the

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[128] Iqbal's treatment of democracy is a good example of this. He has emphatically asserted that Islam is democratic in nature, and asks Muslims to discover the democratic order of things. At the same time, he does not spare castigating democracy in the West. Because there was no homegrown example of the former in the modern period, Iqbal does not discuss the notion of democracy *qua* itself as it has been done by Greeks of antiquity such as Socrates and Plato, and medieval Muslims such as Al-Farabi, or the Shiite criticism of democratic attitudes and standards.

subject of religion and spirituality being employed full force for the uplift of Muslims of India. To ask whether he was religious or secular would be utterly redundant.

Religion *qua* religion can assist the study of politics involving religion. It is our contention that Iqbal was first a religious thinker and then a political thinker, for political thinking alone does not assist in the study of religion whereas the rigorous study of religion leads to tremendous assistance in the study of philosophy as well as politics. Iqbal's political philosophy is a by-product of his religious thinking. Conversely, his political thinking only reinforced his preoccupation with religion and did not minimize it.

The question whether Iqbal is modernist or traditionalist can be temporarily resolved. Iqbal can continue to be seen as a 'variant' of traditional Muslims thinking. Traditional Islamic philosophers always wrote philosophical subjects of metaphysical importance first in their works. The discussion of political philosophy and politics came much later if it ever did. Even though Iqbal's style of writing has not been a classical Islamic one, he is far-off from being purely modern in our opinion. The discussion of politics occurs frequently in his poetry and other writings, yet his scope cannot be reduced to that of a 'political philosopher' alone. Throughout Islamic history (and this is also true of other religious traditions), we rarely find philosophers who are only political philosophers and nothing else. What we do find in the Islamic Tradition, are philosophers who understand and deal with religious and metaphysical subjects, and later they also philosophize on the issues of society, history and politics. This is observable in the case of most Islamic philosophers, from al-Farabi to Ibn Sina to Mulla Sadra. In modern Europe, the sudden mushrooming of political philosophy alone in the modern age as a vocation after Machiavelli is a process that led to the development of the modern political scientist who is often unaware of the philosophical presuppositions of the paradigms he follows. Contemporary intellectual trends in the Muslim world began to be transformed because of modernity and the impact of modernism on Islamic ways of thinking. The modern Islamic world has seen different types of world conditions, and therefore different quality of political thinking and different quantity of political philosophy. Political philosophy in the contemporary Islamic world has become more prevalent as a consequence of conditions of modernity and

impact of modernism on the Islamic way of thinking. This has come to a point where the new Muslim political scientist whether trained in the Western academia or its inferior replicas in the Muslim world, is awestruck by the 'progress' and 'development' of the West. These new academic 'experts' do not care to know about the adverse effects of modern ways of living, and consequently cannot think beyond progress and development.

As the world enters a new Christian millennium, polarization between hardened secularists and hardened fundamentalists has ever sharpened. Because of the erosion of a middle ground, if Iqbal were alive today, it is conceivable that he would have been labelled as an 'Islamist' because he proposes Islam as a solution to many things.[129] Even though he is critical of the mullah as well as the mystic, it is important to note that he has elements of both present in him[130]. It is clear that he went at lengths to criticize the 'godless' nature of modern politics. In his poem *la deen siyasat* or 'secular politics' he firmly rejects the secular creed saying that secular politics will eventually mortify human conscience:

جو بات حق ہو، وہ مجھ سے چھپی نہیں رہتی
خدا نے مجھ کو دیا ہے دل خبیر و بصیر
مری نگاہ میں ہے یہ سیاست لا دیں
کنیز اہرمن و دوں نہاد و مردہ ضمیر
ہوئی ہے ترک کلیسا سے حاکمی زاد
فرنگیوں کی سیاست ہے دیو بے زنجیر

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[129] Add to this his admiration for al-Wahab, and his criticism of 'Pir Parasti' or saint worship.

[130] Iqbal remembers Mohammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab as the 'great puritan reformer' who sought to bring pure Islam after having seen the dilution of Islam in Persia (See *Reconstruction*, P. 142). The direction in which neo-Wahabism and salafism have developed is what is generally understood as fundamentalist. The people who espouse the political thinking linked to this variant of Islamic thinking are found in Muslim Brotherhood, Hammas and to a lesser extent Jamat-i-Islami of Pakistan and Jamat Islami in Indonesia.

متاع غیر پہ ہوتی ہے جب نظر اس کی
تو ہیں ہراول لشکر کلیسیا کے سفیر!

No truth from me can hide at all its face,

God gave me heart awake and wise, through

In my view statesmanship cut off from creed,

Is Satan's slave, has no qualms, but low breed.

By quitting Church, Europe has freedom gained,

This statesmanship is, like a giant unchained.

When their eyes on some weak domain alight,

Their Priests as vanguard act to wage the fight.[131]

Political Philosophy of Iqbal

It is difficult to demarcate Iqbal's political ideas distinct from other religious and philosophical ideas. His political thought flows out of his religious bent of mind. But upon careful scrutiny, it is often discernible that the deplorable social conditions of Muslims prompted him to embark upon the crusade of awakening them. To do that, he had to look into the historical and intellectual causes of what depressed them. While dealing with the latter in a causal relationship to the former, he diagnoses the pathology at the level of ideas, which once remedied would help the Indian Muslims out of depression. For example, he repeatedly identifies the otherworldliness of Islamic mysticism as the cause of Muslim subjugation. He privileges modern dynamism over traditional 'fixity or staticness'. These are intellectual subjects

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[131] Mohammad Iqbal, "Secular Politics" *(La Deen Siyasat: Zarb-i-Kaleem)* translation: http://www.allamaiqbal.com/

that could be dealt with independently, but for Iqbal, the impetus came inductively from the society to which he gave his answers. Thus the ever recurring theme of decline of the Muslims constitutes the major element of his political worldview. Peripheral to the theme of the decline of Muslims in India, are the questions of nationalism, statehood and democracy. Also, remedial in his conception is his concept of Muslim unity and his desire to see a higher level of cooperation among Muslim states.

We shall deal with these themes individually in the political thought of Iqbal in a way that does not do injustice to the overall spirit of the works of Iqbal.

Nationalism and Iqbal

Iqbal's thought on the issue of nationalism has ranged from his soft view of nationalism to a critically hard one, especially when it came to European experience of nationalism. In his thought "the idea of nationality is certainly a healthy factor in the growth of communities. But it is apt to be exaggerated, and when exaggerated it has a tendency to kill the broad human elements in Art and Literature".[132] Iqbal propounded the idea of religious nationalism. Because Muslims lived in the age of nationalism, it was apparent that to achieve independence from the British, mass movement had to be couched in the language that was comprehensible to the white man. If national self determination had to be the permit of emancipation of Muslims, *and,* it happened to run counter to the teachings of Islam, then nationalism in Iqbal's thought had to be Islamized:

> The law of Islam does not recognize the apparently natural differences of nationality. The political ideal of Islam consists in the creation of a people born of a free fusion of all races and nationalities. Nationality, with Islam, is not the highest limit of political development; for the general principles of the law of Islam rest on human nature, not on the peculiarities of a particular people. The inner cohesion of such a nation would consist not

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[132] Muhammad Iqbal, *Stray Reflections: The Private Note Book of Muhammad Iqbal* (Lahore: Reprinted by Iqbal Academy, 2006) p.86.

in ethnic or geographic unity, not in the unity of language or social tradition, but in the unity of the religious and political ideal; or, in the psychological fact of 'like-mindedness'.[133]

Iqbal, like many other religious thinkers of the Indian Sub-continent seems fully cognizant of the antagonistic relationship between Islam and the idea of modern secular nationalism. The idea of 'Islamic Nationalism' is philosophically speaking quite paradoxical. Islam does not recognize (as Iqbal says) the differences of race and geography because of its universality. Nationalism on the other hand is a product of 'particular' circumstances of modern European history and undercuts the foundation of universalism. Then how can the two be reconciled? Here it seems that Iqbal's position is not grounded in principles, rather pragmatics of engendering such a policy that would take at least geographically contiguous majorities of the sub-continent out of the precarious situation that existed for Indian Muslims. What would happen to all the other scattered minority Muslims throughout India is not dealt with in a spirit of realist politics. It is not conceivable that Iqbal was unaware of the merits of his opposing point of view of Indian Muslims remaining in a United India. Those who championed this point of view ranged from luminaries of his time like Allama Mashriqi, Sir Fazl-i-Hussain and various leaders of religious parties among the Muslims, and Gandhi's movement from the Hindu side.[134] It can be safely assumed that Iqbal sought to legitimize the nationalist movement of the North-western Indian Muslims. He realized that the Muslim disenfranchisement in India was due to the loss of power, which was attributable to a lack of their share in state services from which the Hindus benefited. If the Muslims in India had a

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[133] Mohammad Iqbal, Hindustan Review, Vols. XXII & XXIII, 1910-1911. Reprinted in Muslim Political Thought: A Reconstruction (Islamabad; Alhamra Publications, 2002) P.117.

[134] It was Mahatama Gandhi alone who championed Indian unity in the face of British oppression. Mainstream Hindu politicians, whether belonging to the Arya Samaj or downright secular resisted formation of Pakistan not from the point of spirituality, like Gandhi, but because of strategic aspect of politics and economy. Through hindsight of more than half a century and the plight of Muslims in modern Nehruvian India, we know that Gandhi was right from his spiritual point of view and Iqbal was right from a policy point of view.

state of their own, at least a significant mass of Muslims could evade the structure of oppression from which Iqbal sought out at all cost. In his thought the Muslims of Northwest India, having a state of their own with good relations with their Persian neighbours (with whom they shared just about everything), would constitute a better option to empower Muslims rather than blindly gambling the Muslims' chances in a Hindu dominated democratic India. In his mind, if the British left India, the state structures they created would continue to discriminate against the Muslims for a few more generations. Iqbal in our opinion was exact in his foresight.

Because Indian Muslims today are almost just as disenfranchised and harassed as they were before the creation of Pakistan. This is not so only in the case of Muslims of modern India but also the lived experience of other minorities of contemporary India. Muslims of contemporary India are harassed compared to the Pakistani Muslims. A casual tour of Delhi can substantiate the above claim. Muslims in Delhi are relegated to a few quarters and other than their relics from the past (from which the Indian ministry of tourism benefits on a daily basis) the Muslims only nominally contribute to the culture of modern Hindu India. Save Deccan, this is true in other parts of India as well. With the advent of saffronization of India, Islam and Muslims are looked upon as the scapegoat to be blamed when things go wrong. The school history books of modern India are revisionist books that aim at eliminating to the extent possible, or at least present in a diminished and a secular way, the history of Islam in India.

Iqbal's idea of Muslim nationalism may not be defensible in the light of universal Islamic principles, but it certainly deserves merit because of being a perceptive *policy* that had to be legitimized for the sake of Muslims at that juncture of history. Muslim nationalism arose as a reactionary force against European colonial domination and its aim was the overthrow of European control. Nationalism as a force and sentiment also has a special affinity towards secularism. In the European case, gradual recession of religion transformed the society into a secular one and besides many other things nationalism was a political by-product of it. In the Muslim world however, the opposite has happened. Nationalism has been an instrument of self-determination from colonialism, but it has lent itself towards secularization of society. Z.A. Ansari has argued that:

> In the Muslim world nationalism has… generally denoted the drive to get rid of alien control and dominance. It is nationalism in this sense that has been the most powerful driving force in the contemporary world of Islam. It is nationalism in this sense which has found a ready and enthusiastic response from the broad masses of Muslims in all parts of the Muslim world. However, in course of time there has also developed a nationalist ideology which, in its content, is hardly distinguishable from any other nationalist ideology and seems to take no notice of the peculiar ideas and institutions which characterize the Muslim society.[135]

Iqbal never lived long enough to see the later changes brought about by nationalism in the Muslim world, especially in South Asia where nationalism led to irredentism in the case of Bangladesh. Further, nationalism in concomitance with nation-state as the unit of transnational politics has a special connection with the capitalist world economy. The capitalist world economy relies on a certain set of laws of secular origin to achieve its objectives. It seeks to remove religious and intellectual attitudes and institutional obstacles towards accumulation and profit that stand in its way.[136] Thus nationalism, nation-state and the world economy are linked and have proved to be a supporting force for secularism which Iqbal had not anticipated.

Perhaps it would have been better that Iqbal invented another word for what he visualized as 'the Islamic nation' or 'Muslim nationalism'. Just a few decades after Iqbal, we saw the Muslim world experiencing a wave of nationalism. The Indian, the Persian, the Afghan, the Turk and the Arab; all areas of *dar-ul-Islam* experienced this phenomenon in one way or the other. For the Indian it was more explicable because of the shackles of European colonialism. For the Arab however, it was more of a confounding experience. The Arab sought to throw off the Ottoman yoke in favour of European

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[135] Zafar Ishaq Ansari, "Iqbal and Nationalism" in *Iqbal Review: Journal of the Iqbal Academy* Volume II, No. 1, April 1961, P. 65.

[136] See Ejaz Akram, "Globalization and the Muslim world" *in Islam, Fundamentalism and the Betrayal of Tradition*, Ed. Joseph Lumbard (Bloomington: World Wisdom Press, 2004)

domination, which he still has not been able to overthrow. Arab nationalism was initially ignited by Western educated Arabs mostly from Syria most of whom were Christians.[137] As Nasr has argued that Arab nationalism first helped bring about the breakup of the Ottoman Empire from an already 'unified' state and later sought to re-unify them again under the rubric of Arabism.[138] The new nationalism according to Nasr:

> was originally of a purely Western and secularist origin, became gradually Muslimized as it penetrated the masses, to the extent that today Arabism, or *'Urubah*, is identified closely by the majority of the common people almost automatically with Islam.[139]

Until recently, for many Arabs, categories of Muslim and Arab are almost used interchangeably and the boundaries between national and Islamic affiliations are rather loose. The Western educated elite in the Arab world however, much like the South Asians, have a special proclivity to become secular nationalist, which leads to a gradual erosion of their Islamic identities. For these Arabs the 'nationalization' of Islam leads to the view of the Prophet of Islam merely as an Arab hero and Islam as a historical product of Arab genius.[140] Unfortunately, for the secular nationalist Arabs the miracle of Islam is reduced to Mohammad as the 'racial hero' abdicating the substance of the Qur'an and the miracle of religion. Their South Asian counterparts of Marxist orientation have also tended to go along the same route. The effect of extreme nationalism on the Persians, however, has been quite the opposite. While the Arab looks at his Islamic heritage as an Arab, the Persian (and the Turkish) secular nationalists have sought to jettison their Islamic heritage by getting rid of Arabic heritage, realizing little that it was the Arabic

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[137] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islam and the Plight of Modern Man*. (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1999) P 90

[138] Ibid. P. 90

[139] Ibid. P. 90

[140] Ibid. P. 119 Footnote 1.

impact on Persian that made it an ecumenical language of *dar-al-Islam* culturally and geographically.[141] Something similar is being done by the modern Hindu in India as well. He too vies to get rid of Islam from his heritage. This has been done to a point that the ostensible lingua franca of India (Hindi or *Hindustani*) spoken in the media is almost incomprehensible to many South Asians because of the substitution of Arabic, Persian and Turkish words by Sanskrit words to the point that what is spoken on the streets and schools bears little resemblance to the official 'cleansed' Hindi.

Three generations after the independence movements of nationalist dispensation in the Muslim world, the global Muslim community must also remember that by asserting one's nationality at the cost of one's religious identity has disastrous consequences for a higher level of cooperation and unity among Muslims. If one tread's down the slope of nationalism, its steepest stage may precipitate an unrecoverable fall in which universal brotherhood soon becomes challenged by an overweening narcissistic ambition whose historical results were the two bloody wars of Europe. Irving Babbitt pointed out that secular politics have always blamed religion for being divisive and bloody and human brotherhood is stressed either in its 'secular missionary' form or its Marxist-Leninist form. The cost of discarding the sacred has resulted in more bloodshed and violence in the secular era of Europe than in Christian Europe:

> By spreading 'brotherhood,' France ironically produced intense nationalism, both within France itself– as the European coalition fought to contain the 'Christ of nations' and reverse the revolution– and outside France as its mass army waged an ideological crusade and sparked nationalist resistance among its neighbours. Sentimental brotherhood in the eighteenth century had ended with all of Europe at war; the 'will to brotherhood' had been revealed as the 'will to power,' externally in

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[141] Ibid. P. 121. Footnote 23.

empire-building and internally in the ideological imperialism of the Reign of Terror.[142]

Iqbal's view of nationalism radically departs from the European conception of nationalism for two reasons: Firstly, he was against secular politics and because of that he had disdain for the type of nationalism that emerged from Modern Europe. In *Zarb-i-Kaleem*, he exhorts:

God, the politics of the Franks, With your creative powers ranks

The rich alone and aristocrats, Obey its calls and dictates.

One Devil out of fire You raised, For Franks a track You have emblazed

The West has by its guile and art, Filled with Satans the human mart.[143]

Secondly, nationalism for Iqbal is not an end in itself, but means to a greater end. This theme cannot be fully understood unless we look at his views on Muslim unity. Even in the case of the Indian Muslims, Pakistan was not sought by him as a secular nation, but a country where the Muslim way of life (including its laws and institutions) could be fully realized. To this end, it was an amalgamation of four major nationalities (Punjabi, Sindhi, Baluch and Pashtun) and other minor ethnic and religious nationalities such as the kafirs, shinna, Hindus and Christians, that were to comprise West Pakistan. Pakistan was to be a transnational union of geographically contiguous states that were ethnically and linguistically diverse. In the case of Bengal which was initially East Pakistan, the 'national' union even transcended geographical contiguity. The only thing that was a unifying force in bringing these diverse areas together was Islam. That is why Pakistan is studied for exceptional cases in comparative and cross-national studies because such cases in recent

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[142] See Joseph Baldacchino, "Can a Decadent Nation Impose International Peace" *Humanitas*, National Humanities Institute. http://www.nhinet.org/decadent.htm

[143]Mohammad Iqbal, "Statesmanship [Politics] of Franks [White men or European Foreigners]" *(Siyasat-i-Afrang: Zarb-i-Kaleem)* translation: http://www.allamaiqbal.com/

international history have been non-existent. One must credit Iqbal not for nationalism, but trans-nationalism.[144]

In Iqbal's view nationalism that is territorial and not pegged in a religious worldview was nothing but fanaticism. Iqbal argues that European nationalism has objective bases, i.e. language, race and territory, in contrast to this, the Muslim view of what ought to constitute a nation was subjective in nature. It transcends limitations of territorial boundaries, race and language and is based upon an inter-subjective notion of space-time, a worldview that can only be understood in relation to Islamic beliefs and values. He states:

> As a matter of fact all nations are fanatical. Criticise a Frenchman's religion; you do not very much rouse his feelings; since your criticism does not touch the life-principle of his nationality. But criticize his civilization, his country, or the corporate behaviour of his nation in any sphere of political activity and you will bring out his innate fanaticism. The reason is that his nationality does not depend on his religious belief; it has geographical basis– his country. His *'asabiyayat* is then justly roused when you criticize the locality– which he has idealized as essential principle of his nationality. Our position, however, is essentially different. With us, nationality is a pure idea; it has no objective basis. Our only rallying-point, as a people, is a kind of purely subjective agreement in a certain view of the world. If then our *'asabiyyat* is roused when our religion is criticized, I think we are as much justified in it as a Frenchman is when his country is denounced. The feeling in each case is the same though associated with different objects. '*asabiyyat* is patriotism for religion; patriotism *'asabiyyat* for country.[145]

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[144] Ejaz Akram, "Unity or Uniformity: The Percursors of Islamic Unity in the Modern Age: Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Iqbal and Seyyed Hossein Nasr" in *Beacon of Knowledge: Essays in Honor of Seyyed Hossein Nasr* (Lexington: Fons Vitae, 2002)

[145] Muhammad Iqbal, *Stray Reflections: The Private Note Book of Muhammad Iqbal* (Lahore: Reprinted by Iqbal Academy, 2006) pp. 32-35.

Iqbal makes little distinction between European nationalism and patriotism here, as he sees the latter in the light of Khaldunian notion of '*Asabiyyah*, which has received criticism by later day Muslim scholars because of its concatenation with nationalism. Perhaps 'solidarity' would express '*Asabiyyah* more than nationalism. And if so, solidarity is not only a property of a family, large kin, nation, or even the Muslim *Ummah*. The Prophet of Islam is known to have said that the love of *watan* (one's homeland) comes from *iman* (faith). Since in principle the issue of nationalism has been resolved in the Islamic tradition, it is rather superfluous to juxtapose it with modern secular nationalism. Throughout the history of Islam, the Turk has known that he is not Persian, and the Indian has known that he is not Malay and the Arab has known that he is not Chinese. Muslims have known and experienced larger ethnic and geographical factors of one's identity, but never had they been reduced to just that. Therefore, Iqbal is right in pointing out towards the subjective basis of identity formation among Muslims.

Further, in order to fully understand Iqbal's position on nationalism and trans-nationalism, one must look at his philosophy of the state and its relation with the principle of elective democracy and his views on the institution of caliphate in the modern age.

State and Sovereignty in Iqbal

In Iqbal's famous Allahabad presidential address, he stated:

> … I, therefore, demand the formation of a consolidated Muslim state in the best interests of India and Islam. For India, it means security and peace resulting from an internal balance of power; for Islam, an opportunity to rid itself of the stamp that Arabian imperialism was forced to give it, to mobilize its laws, its education, its culture, and to bring them into closer contact with its own original spirit and with the spirit of modern times.[146]

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[146] Presidential speech delivered to the annual session of Muslim League at Allahabad. 1930

Unfortunately, 'modern times' are characterized in the traditional light of thinking as those that lack spirit and it is difficult to see how 'modern times' can accommodate the totality of Islamic thinking. Iqbal said that "politics have their roots in the spiritual life of man".[147] Muslims had a homeland in India, but he championed the cause of a separate Muslim *state* because he sought to safeguard the spiritual life of Muslims in a culture that seemed doubly perverted to Iqbal. On the one hand, he saw the British who had broken down the institutional framework of Mughal India. This had direct bearings on the Muslim way of life, due to which the Muslims felt anguish and anxiety. He sought to protect Muslim culture from un-Islamic influences and rapid influx of foreign elements.[148] On the other hand, he saw the 'new Hindu' who had already welcomed the end of Muslim rule in India and now seemed happy with the prospects of self-rule after many centuries without realizing the damage that was being done to him:

> The modern Hindu is quite a phenomenon. To me his behaviour is more of a psychological than a political study. It seems that the ideal of political freedom which is an absolutely *new* experience to him has seized his entire soul, turning the various streams of his energy from their wonted channels and bringing them to pour forth their whole force into this new channel of activity. When he has passed through this experience he will realize his loss. He will be transformed into an absolutely new people– new in the sense that he will no longer find himself dominated by the ethical ideals of his ancestors whose sublime fancies have been a course of perpetual consolation to many a distressed mind.[149]

With the advent of the *Arya Samaj* movement, the headlong radicalization of Hindus became apparent to Iqbal quite early on. This is one of the major

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[147] Muhammad Iqbal, "Toward Separate Muslim Homelands" *Presidential Address delivered at the Annual Session of the All-India Muslim Conference*, Lahore. March 21st, 1932.

[148] Muhammad Iqbal, Lecture Extracts printed in *Report on the Census of India*, 1911, Volume XIV, pp. 162

[149] *Stray Reflections*, P. 39

reasons why he sought to empower Muslims. He foresaw the shadow of Hindu fascism and tyranny of Hindu dominated democracy. While coexistence with the traditional Hindu was a possibility, as it had been realized in Muslim history, with the modern Hindu, Iqbal saw no such chances of existence based on mutual acceptance and respect. To this end, he visualized for Indian Muslims a state of their own whose economy and defence was in their own hands. Iqbal's idea of the creation of Pakistan was not a search for a homeland but a state. Muslims already had a homeland in India. Even the Indian Muslims today have a homeland, but what the contemporary Indian Muslims do not have (which Pakistanis do to a considerable extent), is a much greater level of political control over their own destinies. Despite all the things that may have gone wrong in the modern state of Pakistan, this is more or less what Iqbal visualized and his dream was indeed a gift that was eventually realized. Achieving power, especially state power was deemed essential by Iqbal to steer a significant mass of Indian Muslims out of a dangerous impasse:

> To my mind, government, whatever its form, is one of the determining forces of a people's character. Loss of political power is equally ruinous to nations' character. Ever since their political fall the Musalmans of India have undergone a rapid ethical deterioration. Of all the Muslim communities of the world they are probably the meanest in point of character. I do not mean to deplore our former greatness in this country, for, I confess, I am almost a fatalist in regard to the various forces that ultimately decide the destinies of nations. As a political force we are perhaps no longer required; but we are, I believe, still indispensable to the world as the only testimony to the absolute Unity of God– Our value among nations, then, is purely evidential.[150]

Gaining political power to spread the truth was essential in modern times according to Iqbal. He echoes Maududi in this view, who said that nothing worthwhile can grow on a tree that has rotten roots. Gaining political power, according to Maududi was absolutely necessary to make sure that the state remained a safeguard of the Islamic way of life. Whereas Iqbal hatched the

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[150] *Stray Reflections*. P.27

idea of Pakistan which would be a state that assures no hindrance in an Islamic way of life, Maududi sought to further Islamize Pakistan because he saw that the un-Islamic foreign influence was too strong that needed to be checked. According to Iqbal the degeneration of the Indian Muslim's ethic was primarily due to the loss of his political power which enabled the foreign rule which had altered the Muslim's course of destiny. Iqbal is said to have remarked: "Power toucheth falsehood, and lo! it is transformed into Truth".[151] In order to create an ambience that favoured a Muslim way of life, a Muslim state was indispensable in Iqbal's view. Civilization in his view was merely a 'thought' of a powerful man because the powerful man creates environment and the feeble have to adjust themselves to it.[152]

Even though we find in Iqbal's thought the necessity for Muslims of South Asia to have a state of their own, what kind of state that would be in its ideological orientations is not talked about much. This is perhaps because Iqbal died too soon. He missed the seven year period between the Objectives Resolution of 1940 to the independence and creation of Pakistan in 1947. This was the period of most intense struggle for separate statehood for Indian Muslims. It is conceivable that had Iqbal been alive at that juncture, his counsel into shaping the Pakistani constitution would have been most sought after. In his commentary on the 'forms of government' we find that he talks of democracy at length in his writings as well as his poetry. He cites al-Mawardi in the principle of election when it comes to the issue of governance, but one can conjecture that since Iqbal wanted an independent state for Muslims and his ethos was inseparable from the basic teachings of the Qur'an, he would have proposed an 'Islamic' ideology for Pakistan. After all, that was the *raison d'être* of Pakistan.

It is important to note that the state is situated in Iqbal's thought *below* religion. He rejects the distinction between spiritual and temporal domains: "In Islam the spiritual and the temporal are not two distinct domains, and the nature of an act, however secular in its import, is determined by the

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[151] Stray Reflections. P. 83

[152] Ibid. P.82 & 84

attitude of mind with which the agent does it".[153] Iqbal rejected the dualistic western view in which the temporal and spiritual constituted separate spheres. He said: "In Islam, it is the same reality which appears as Church looked at from one point of view and State from another".[154]

Islam according to Iqbal was a single 'unanalysable' reality and in his view the state (and state sovereignty), like other institutions in Muslim societies must bear the stamp of Islam:

> The essence of *Tauhid* as a working idea, is equality, solidarity, and freedom. The state, from the Islamic standpoint, is an endeavour to transform these ideal principles into space-time forces, an aspiration to realize them in a definite human organization. It is in this sense alone that the state in Islam is a theocracy… The Ultimate Reality, according to Qur'an, is spiritual, and its life consists in its temporal activity… The state according to Islam, is only an effort to realize the spiritual in human organization [and] in this sense all state, not based on mere domination and aiming at the realization of ideal principles, is theocratic".[155]

Iqbal took to task the Turkish reformers' view of state and criticized it saying that "the nationalist theory of state, therefore, is misleading inasmuch as it suggests a dualism which does not exist in Islam".[156] He corroborates the views of Turk poet Ziya Pasha who suggested that all Muslim states must first achieve independence of statehood and then range themselves under an acceptable Caliph, and if such a thing is not possible at this moment in

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[153] Reconstruction, P. 122

[154] Ibid. 122.

[155] Ibid. 122-123

[156] Ibid. 123

history, then they must wait.[157] Iqbal recognized this as the forthcoming trend in Modern Islam.

State sovereignty however, as in the traditional line of thinking belonged to God with man as his vassal. In *Javid Nama's* "Divine Government" he advocates:

The servant of God has no need of any station,

no man is his slave, and he is the slave of none;

the servant of God is a free man, that is all,

his kingdom and laws are given by God alone,

his customs, his way, his faith, his laws are of God…

when other than God determines the aye and nay

then the strong man tyrannises over the weak;

in this world command is rooted in naked power;

mastery drawn from other than God is pure unbelief"[158]

It is quite evident the state and religion in Iqbal's view were absolutely inseparable:

"the *'Id of* the free people is the glory of State and religion,

the *'Id* of the slaves is but a congregation of Muslims"[159]

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[157] Ibid. 126

[158] "Divine Government" *Javed Nama*

Iqbal wanted to assure the Muslim way of life in Pakistan. Any scholar of Islam knows that the Muslim way of life is intricately related to the Divine Law or *shariah*. It is inconceivable that Iqbal would want to jettison *shariah* in favour of any other law, whether it came to prisoner's rights, inheritance or divorce. Whose *shariah* would rule the new state of Pakistan is obviously not talked about, because it would have been premature to do so in Iqbal's later days. The task of building the state first was more urgent. Most likely, Iqbal would have proposed a *fiqh* council in which the common denominator of all sects would be inviolable and other differences may be allowed to exist. If in Iqbal's Pakistan *shariah* could not be bypassed, before it could have bearings on the political life of Muslims, it would have first surfaced in the social and *economic* issues of Muslims. Iqbal may be celebrated by many as a modernist, but as long as any policy maker distilled and converted his economic thought into policy, he would remain very much in line with the traditional Islamic line of reasoning.

Iqbal did not have a positive view of the modern economy that was implanted by the Europeans in India as in the rest of the world. About the capitalist world economy, he said:

> The people of Asia are bound to rise against the acquisitive economy which the West has developed and imposed on the nations of the East. Asia cannot comprehend modern Western capitalism with its undisciplined individualism… both Muslim and non-Muslims have yet to discover the infinite value of the legal literature of Islam and its significance for a capitalistic world whose ethical standards have long abdicated from the control of man's economic conduct.[160]

Discussing the role of Jews in European economy in *Zarb-i-Kalim*, he says:

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[159] "What Should Then Be Done O People Of The East" *Pas Chih Bayad Kard Ay Aqwam-I Sharq*

[160] Muhammad Iqbal, "Toward Separate Muslim Homelands" *Presidential Address delivered at the Annual Session of the All-India Muslim Conference*, Lahore. March 21st, 1932 in *Muslim Political Thought: A Reconstruction* (Lahore: Alhamra, 2002) pp. 215 & 222.

یہ عیش فراواں، یہ حکومت، یہ تجارت
دل سینہٗ بے نور میں محروم تسلی
تاریک ہے افرنگ مشینوں کے دھویں سے
یہ وادی ایمن نہیں شایان تجلی

Great luxury, government and trade

Prevail in countries of the West

Their hearts are quite devoid of light,

Their breasts are blank of case and rest.[161]

He was equally suspicious of the communist economic propaganda. About Karl Marx, he wrote:

تری کتابوں میں اے حکیم معاش رکھا ہی کیا ہے اٰخر
خطوط خم دار کی نمائش، مریز و کج دار کی نمائش

O wise economist, the books you write

Are quite devoid of useful aim:

They have twisted lines with orders strange

No warmth for labour, though they claim.[162]

In his poem 'Lenin Before God' in *Bal-i-Jibreel*, he said:

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[161] "Europe and Jews" Zarb-i-Kalim

[162] "Karl Marx", Zarb-i-Kalim

یہ علم، یہ حکمت، یہ تدبر، یہ حکومت
پیتے ہیں لہو، دیتے ہیں تعلیم مساوات

بے کاری و عریانی و مے خواری و افلاس
کیا کم ہیں فرنگی مدنیت کے فتوحات
وہ قوم کہ فیضان سماوی سے ہو محروم
حد اس کے کمالات کی ہے برق و بخارات
ہے دل کے لیے موت مشینوں کی حکومت
احساس مروت کو کچل دیتے ہیں آلات

…There science, philosophy, scholarship, government,

Preach man's equality and drink men's blood;

Naked debauch, and want, and unemployment

Are these mean triumphs of the Frankish arts

…Denied celestial grace a nation goes

No further than electricity or steam

Death to the heart, machines stand sovereign,

Engines that crush all sense of human kindness.[163]

Martin Lings in an essay titled "The Political Extreme"[164] writes that the modern age has abdicated the middle ground which is a key for moderation

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[163]"Lenin Before God" Bal-i-Jibreel

[164] See Martin Lings, The Eleventh Hour"

and avoidance of extremes demanded by the teachings of Islam. He argued that on the one hand there is the liberal secular world with its predatory economy and on the other, there is the promise of charity, albeit without Christ. This is a dilemma for the whole of the modern Muslim world. How does one bring about a *shariah*-compliant economy? The answer to this is not easy. For Iqbal again, the answer is in empowerment to an extent that you can change all that one day. The Soviet Union tried to change that but soon realized that it was an isolated island that was engulfed with capitalism and was nothing but a defiant player with the rules that were actually set in the capitalist world system.[165] It is now apparent to us (as it was to Iqbal) that the Muslim way of life is not linked with political power and proprietorship of the state alone, it is also linked with the type of economy that operates in the Muslim areas. The Muslim world is full of Muslims running their own states, but not a single one of them have achieved an alternative to this. One reason for that is that even though Muslims have their own states, tremendous resources, enormous human capital, they have not achieved a high level of cooperation amongst each other. Had Iqbal been alive to see the formation of the European Union, he would have written another poem in praise of the devil eulogizing the 'godless' achieving unity while the *tauhidi* Muslims who emphasize unity most, in all walks of life, are utterly scattered. If Muslim states today were each other's major trading partners, it is conceivable that they could form a monetary union of their own in which the instruments of a *shariah*-compliant economy can gradually be instituted that would combine rules of private property recognized by Islam and also a mechanism of charity (socialism) albeit from within the Qur'an.

About interest in modern economics, Iqbal said:

Usury darkens the soul, hardens the heart like a stone,

makes man a ravening beast, without fangs and claws.

It is lawful to draw one's sustenance from the soil–

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[165] For a pithy discussion of this, see Immanuel Wallerstein's "Capitalist World System".

this is man's 'enjoyment', the property of God.

The believer is the trustee, God is the possessor;[166]

It is therefore safe to assume that Iqbal saw politics and economics not as separate spheres but mutually constitutive, and sought to empower Muslims on both fronts before they could take control of their own history.

Linked to the discussion of state and its economy is the question of governance about which Iqbal wrote plenty. It is therefore exigent that one critically evaluates his notion of democracy, since he condoned it and refuted it at the same time.

Iqbal and Democracy

Now we venture into an area where Iqbal represents a break from the Islamic intellectual tradition of hundreds of years. Iqbal has insisted at several places in his works that democracy and equality are the true Islamic systems. This claim we find is very hard to defend on Iqbal's behalf. However, it is important to take both the early and later works of Iqbal and compare them together to see what best captures the ethos of Iqbal. Iqbal rejected the divine right of kings to rule.[167] He did so taking the examples of the English kings and negating the Persian Islamic concept of *zill-i-Ilahi* in which the emperor is seen as the 'shadow of God'. Iqbal did not compare monarchy with other forms of government such as aristocracy, timocracy, oligarchy, democracy and anarchy. It is our own reading of Iqbal by transcending his terminology and by intuitively knowing his ethos, that Iqbal's favourable type

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166 "Afghani's Message to the Russian People", *Javed Nama*

167 Muhammad Iqbal, "Divine Right to Rule" in *Muslim Political Thought: A Reconstruction* (Lahore: Alhamra, 2002) pp. 106-112.

of government was neither monarchy, nor democracy, but platonic timocracy.[168]

In the light of some passages by Iqbal, we shall critically appraise his views on democracy.

In his essay "Muslim Political Thought in Islam", Iqbal asserted that:

1. …the Muslim Commonwealth should be based on the principle of equality, there is no privileged class, no priesthood, no caste system…
2. The law of Islam does not recognize the apparent natural difference of race, nor the historical differences of nationality…
3. The life of modern political communities finds expression, to a great extent, in common institutions, Law and Government… the Caliph is not necessarily the high-priest of Islam; he is not the representative of God on earth…
4. The Prophet himself is not regarded as absolutely infallible by many Muhammadan theologians [and he cites Abu Ishaq and al-Tabari]…
5. It is clear that the fundamental principle laid down in the Qur'an is the principle of election… Unfortunately, however, the idea of election did not develop on strictly democratic lines…[169]

The above mentioned way of thinking in Iqbal was in 1910-11, when he had returned from London and taught as an Assistant Professor in Government College, Lahore. For the sake of juxtaposition, lets take a look at the later views of Iqbal, that represent the absolutely 'ripe Iqbal'

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[168] By Timocracy, Plato meant the rule of the 'brave' who are marked neither by supreme knowledge (as in the case of the philosopher-king), nor by adhering to the Original Principles (as in the case of the aristocrats), but those who are marked and moved by *valor and honor*, as distinct from those below such as the oligarchs who are moved by personal interests and profit, and distinct from the democrats, who are moved by demagoguery and hedonism.

[169] Muhammad Iqbal, *Hindustan Review*, Vols. XXII & XXIII, 1910-1911. Reprinted in *Muslim Political Thought: A Reconstruction* (Lahore: Alhamra, 2002).

representing the apex of his intellectual development. Two years before his death, in *Zarb-i-Kalim*, he wrote a poem by the title of *Kingship*, as follows:

خودی کو جب نظر اآتی ہے قاہری اپنی
یہی مقام ہے کہتے ہیں جس کو سلطانی
یہی مقام ہے مومن کی قوتوں کا عیار
اسی مقام سے اآدم ہے ظل سبحانی

When Selfhood sees its sway and upper hand,

This exalted state the folk as kingship brand.

'This rank gives verdict of a Muslim's worth,

And makes him vicegerent of God on earth.[170]

In the Reconstruction, Iqbal concludes his essay "The Principle of Movement in the Structure of Islam" by saying: "Let the Muslim of today appreciate his position, reconstruct his social life in the light of ultimate principles, and evolve, out of the hitherto partially revealed purpose of Islam, that *spiritual democracy* which is the ultimate aim of Islam".[171] In 1917, Iqbal remarks about democracy with some ambivalence: "Democracy has a tendency to foster the spirit of legality. This is not in itself bad; but unfortunately it tends to displace the purely moral standpoint, and [makes] the *illegal* and *wrong* identical in meaning".[172]

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[170]"Kingship" *Zarab-i-Kaleem*

[171] *Reconstruction*, P. 142.

[172] *Stray Reflections*, P. 108. (Note: words 'wrong' and 'illegal' in this quote have been italicized by the author to ensure clarity of meaning. The original quotation was as follows: "Democracy has a tendency to foster the spirit of legality. This is not in itself bad; but

It can be seen that Iqbal gradually moved away from modernism in his political thinking. Initially he emphasized equality and democracy, but later after having witnessed the bloodbath of European democracies, he turned towards the idea of 'spiritual democracy' rather than democracy as such. Just like his views on nationalism stipulated that Muslim nationalism is not like the European nationalism, but a special one, so too was democracy supposed to be a Muslim democracy. His ambivalence about the chances of democracy in a secular set (like that of Europe) gradually grew, which is apparent in the following verses:

Woe to the constitution of the democracy of Europe!

The sound of that trumpet renders the dead still deader;

those tricksters, treacherous as the revolving spheres,

have played the nations by their own rules, and swept the board!

Robbers they, this one wealthy, that one a toiler,

all the time lurking in ambush one for another;

I will take nothing from Europe except-a warning!

You enchained to the imitation of Europe, be free,

clutch the skirt of the Koran, and be free![173]

In *Zarb-i-Kalim*, Iqbal sums up his view on democracy:

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unfortunately it tends to displace the purely moral standpoint, and to make the illegal and wrong identical in meaning".)

[173] "Divine Government" *Javed Nama.*

جمہوریت اک طرز حکومت ہے کہ جس میں
بندوں کو گنا کرتے ہیں، تولا نہیں کرتے!

Democracy means a mode

To rule the common man

No doubt, they count the votes,

But conduct do not scan.[174]

The above verse surely carries the spirit of Plato in it. Democracy in this sense is the rule of quantity, and not quality. Since there exists an opposition between quantity and quality, this form of rule will always undercut the chances of developing a qualitative character among Muslims for modernity is nothing but a reign of quantity.[175] Iqbal gradually grew quite cynical and critical of all the modern ideologies including democracy. Just three months before his death, he remarked:

> But in spite of all these developments, the tyranny of imperialism struts abroad, covering its face under the masks of Democracy, Nationalism, Communism, Fascism and heaven knows what else besides. Under these masks, in every corner of the earth, the spirit of freedom and the dignity of man are being trampled underfoot in a way to which not even the darkest period of human history presents a parallel. The so-called statesmen to whom government and leadership of men was entrusted have proved demons of bloodshed, tyranny and oppression… national unity too is not very durable force. Only one unity is dependable, and that unity is the brotherhood of man, which is above race, nationality, colour, or language. So long as this so-called democracy, this accursed nationalism

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[174] "Democracy" *Zarb-i-Kalim*

[175] Rene Guenon, "Quantity and Quality" in *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of Times*, (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1999/ Reprint) P. 10 and 19-24

> and this degraded imperialism are not shattered, so long as men do not demonstrate by their actions that they believe that the whole world is the family of God, so long as distinctions of race, colour and geographical nationalities are not wiped out completely, they will never be able to lead a happy and contented life…[176]

Because the Western democracies in Iqbal's view have lent themselves to imperialism, they cannot form a good role model for the Muslim world. Their causal relationship with secularism, nationalism and the institution of the nation-state has made them bereft of any universality, yet these structural units of modernity parade as universal.

When we look at the trajectory of development of Iqbal's thought, it becomes quite apparent that in his later years he reformed his notions of democracy. Since the death of Iqbal, we can analyze a few cases of democracy and see which one has fared better for Muslims, keeping in mind that owing to different conditions, an experiment in one part of the Muslim world may not be applicable in the other. We have states like Iran, which are more democratic than today's America for example, if we look at the percentage of population voting and sanctioning mandate to the ruling authority. The West is not happy with this obviously because of what it construes as the union of state and clergy; it is deemed a theocracy. That is precisely what Iqbal had in mind, minus the Shiite factor of legitimacy in Iran[177]. Next we find states like Turkey that albeit democratic are not democratic enough for the European Union. Third, we find states like Malaysia that have fared well lately, yet considered autocratic by Western standards. Then, we have Pakistan whose democracy has been at the mercy of the whims and interests of the West to a large degree and finally we have the Arab world, where in just about all of the 22 Arab states, we find autocratic governments. The concept of spiritual democracy by Iqbal in my opinion is not tied to a merely 'procedural' democracy but a 'substantive'

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[176] New Year's message broadcast from All India Radio, Lahore Station. January 1st 1938. *Reconstruction of Muslim Political Thought,* pp. 230-232.

[177] Vilayat I Faqih. Oliver Straw

democracy. Procedural democracy is that of elections and ballots (like India), while economic and political injustice abounds. Substantive democracies are those where the citizens do not lead the life of fear and justice abounds, whether there are elections or no elections. In the case of the Muslim world, as Seyyed Hossein Nasr has put it, there is a social system which is democracy of married monks. From the traditional Muslim point of view, democracy at best is irrelevant and especially today, it may not be suitable at all. It is important to note that just like in the pre-independence era of modern Muslim period, nationalism became a buzzword for 'self-determination', in the post-independence era it is democracy that has assumed the same position. In the post-independence era, we have seen that in most places of the Muslim world the West has preferred to impose dictatorial regimes because they are expedient tools of neo-colonialism. If the Muslims have sought to protect and evade the illegitimate policies of World Bank and America, they hide behind democracy because that helps silence the West. The West itself is not too fond of democracy anymore, given the sweeping forthcoming demographic change inside the West. The white population of the West, which is not reproducing much, may become minorities in their own countries within a generation or two. If that happens under the democratic setup, democracy may allow power to be hi-jacked to non-whites or people of non-Western origin. Therefore, the Western cognitive elite is ambivalent about democracy even within the West, and outside the West, their track record of supporting dictatorships in the Muslim world is crystal clear. While criticizing the connection of Western imperialism and its relationship with democracy, Iqbal said:

> The imperial ambitions of the various nations of Europe indicate that the Westerners are tired of Democracy. The reaction against Democracy in England and France is a very significant phenomenon. But in order to grasp the meaning of this phenomenon the student of political sciences should not content himself merely with the investigation and discovery of the purely historical causes which have brought it about; he must go deeper and search the psychological causes of this reaction.[178]

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[178] Muhammad Iqbal, *Stray Reflections*, P. 109.

Even though the English and the French reaction Iqbal is talking about is from the interwar period after which both experienced democratic governance for many years, Iqbal's view is almost prophetic in light of the incipient fear of democracy that has developed in the West because of the changes mentioned above. Criticizing the so-called pluralism in the modern Western states, Iqbal said:

It characterized State as multi-national,

and thus covered its trickery under this naïve phrase.

One can hardly move about freely in its environment,

no door can be opened by its keys.

It said to the bird in cage, 'O sorrow-stricken bird,

build thy nest in the house of the hunter;

he who builds his nest in meadows and gardens

cannot be secure from falcon and hawk.'[179]

Iqbal has plenty of references in his poetry on the issue of democracy, but he has failed to do so from a purely traditional Islamic point of view. It is true that primary Islamic sources (such as the Qur'an and Hadith) have said nothing against democracy. However, it should be noted that democracy as it exists in the modern world was not known to the Arabs among whom Islam came, because the modern notions of democracy are linked to structural changes in society that only happened in the very recent phase of world history. However, the notion of democracy, long before the Arabs and Persians, had been dealt with in the Greek tradition. From Plotinus until Artistotle, the Greek philosophers dealt with this concept. Its best

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[179] "What Should Them Be Done O People Of The East" *Pas Chih Bayad Kard Ay Aqwam-I Sharq*

articulation is found in Plato's representation of Socratic thought. The Muslim scholars throughout Islamic history knew about it and endorsed the Platonic view that democracy was one of the least desirable forms of government. We know that Iqbal was cynical of Plato and his ideas, but it is surprising that Iqbal quoted from al-Mawardi (only because of his emphasis on electoral college for the election of the Caliph) but chose to ignore the towering figures of al-Farabi, Ibn Bajjah, al-Dawwani, Ibn Masarrah, Ibn Tufayl, Imam Ghazali, Nizam-ul-mulk and the entire corpus of the Shiite tradition! Even al-Mawardi if studied carefully lends no support to modern democracy because he does not talk of a 'universal suffrage', but decisions taken by notables only from certain quarters of the seat of caliphate, which during his time, was Baghdad.

The Traditional Islamic view on who is the legitimate authority, who should wield state power, is linked to knowledge and piety. The biggest difference among the Shiites and Sunnis also lay not on who should be the caliph or imam, but the qualifications necessary for the office of the caliph or the imam. The classical spirit of Islam asserted that the person who is fit for rule, is the one who knows most, who has a scholarly command of *shariah*, the one who is free of physical and mental defects and the one who is also known for his honesty and piety. In other words, that person should be the most perfect in society compared to others.

Different Islamic philosophers have stipulated different theories of election/selection of such a person, but even if consultative election is recommended between contenders, the electoral college can only consist of those whose opinion carries more weight than the others. Masses are not part of any such election. The Shiite tradition further demands that since the Imam is unerring and *ma'sum* or innocent, he cannot be elected because those who are 'below' him in everything do not have the sanction to elect him. The imam in the Shiite tradition therefore was selected by investiture by the previous imam when the imams were living, and never elected. After the 12th imam (Mahdi) who went into occultation, the science of eschatology developed that he will return as the precursor of Jesus Christ and short of the grand apocalypse, the battle between Truth and falsity, the Truth will prevail. Iqbal is either silent or dismissive of this eschatology because his progressive view has produced a view of the possible restoration of Muslim grandeur,

without the ultimate telos. These ideas in Iqbal's opinion belong to the old baggage of the Magian crust that has eclipsed true Islam. About Mahdi, Iqbal says: "Now this doctrine of the absence of the Imam has a very important political aspect which few students of Islam have fully appreciated. Whether the Imam really disappeared or not, I do not know; but it is obvious that the dogma is a clever way of separating the Church and the State".[180] In the personal reflections, he also said: "Give up waiting for the Mehdi– the personification of *Power*. Go and *create* him".[181] This undercuts the spirit of an important Islamic eschatological doctrine of Islam, which is not exclusively believed only by the Shiites, but also by many Sunnis.

Traditional Islamic thinking, in the lines of Plato's concept of the Philosopher-King saw the perfect type of rule in the covenant of Medina and associated it with the rule of the Prophet-Statesman, the Prophet of Islam. For the modern Islamic philosopher, from the end of the era of the 'rightly guided Caliphs' the good period of Islamic history screeches itself to halt! From then on the kingships and sultanates in consorts with Sufism become the scapegoat that caused the downfall of the Muslim world. Iqbal, too, has fallen in this trap. It is important to remember that just like Islam says nothing against democracy, it says nothing against kingship, or other forms of government. The referent object of good statesmanship and sensible government is *justice,* regardless of the form of government. Equality, not being the same thing as justice has never been important, (see section on Iqbal and Modernism).

In the modern period particularly, it is next to impossible to talk in favour of kingships or against Montesquieu's theory of separation of powers. All power in Islam in its perfection belongs to God.[182] Among humans, the power and the sanction of law belongs to the law of God, the *shariah*. The

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[180] Muhammad Iqbal, *Hindustan Review*, Vols. XXII & XXIII, 1910-1911. Reprinted in *Muslim Political Thought: A Reconstruction* (Lahore: Alhamra, 2002). Pp. 129-130

[181] "Waiting for the Mehdi", *Stray Reflections* P. 85.

[182] *La quwa ila billah*. There is no power save God.

duty of King, Caliph, Sultan, Imam or a parliament is to make sure that the law of God is promulgated and there is no hindrance in practicing it. The moment one splits the tawhid of power, the more difficult it becomes to practice the *shariah*. At the summit of human custody of power, all powers should convene and be consolidated, not separated. The moment the theory of separation of power became fashionable in Europe, the old order crumbled and especially in France, a reign of terror ensued. Even in Europe, it was Napoleon's monarchy that gave a temporary respite to incessant bloodshed. In Spain, Franco's monarchy proved instrumental in saving Spain from the clutches of communism. And one can go on with such examples. Conversely, there are plenty of examples when democracies such as Hitler's German republic have committed horrendous crimes against innocent people, not to mention the military or ideological assault of the Western democracies in the Non-West, particularly the Muslim World.

As mentioned above, it seems apparent to us through the ethos of Iqbal that his notion of democracy, like nationalism, was merely an instrument of awakening Muslim masses and their mobilization for the sake of collective action and not a cardinal principle of Iqbal's worldview. While studying the vast corpus of Iqbal, it is important to distinguish between his unwavering principles and his policy recommendations. As many 'politically active' Muslim political thinkers have experienced that modernity has forced Muslims to take short term decisions that may seem counter to the traditional spirit of Islam for the sake of the greater good, the *maslahat-i-Ummah*. Khomeini promised the spill over his revolution, but decided otherwise, Maududi opposed the formation of Pakistan on grounds of Islamic principles, but accepted Pakistan and migrated there. Similarly, a person of Iqbal's calibre knew Islam's position on nationalism, nation-state and democracy, but realized the nature of transformation that had already taken place in the Muslim world, and in order to protect Muslim interests he sought to Islamize them.

I

Analyzing Iqbal's Political Philosophy

A fair and judicious analysis of Iqbal's thought remains incomplete without answering the following questions: Firstly, where does one see the points of convergence and divergence between Iqbal's political philosophy and modern Western political philosophy? Secondly, how does Iqbal's political philosophy compare with other political thinkers of the contemporary Muslim world? [183]

The answer to the first question, in our view is the following: The essence of Iqbal's thinking, inasmuch as it is wed to the Islamic tradition, there is not much of a middle ground between the philosophical presuppositions (and the worldview it has produced) held by the major strands of modern/Western political philosophy. Perhaps the only common area where Iqbal lends himself to the modern political philosophy is his anti-imperialism about which scholars of critical theory such as Foucault, Habermas, Ashis Nandy and Immanuel Wallerstein would share a common ground. With all of the above, however, Iqbal would radically depart over issues such as secularism and promulgation of Divine Law in the public sphere. Convergence between Iqbal's Islamic political thought and modern political philosophy is only temporary. Justice as the perennial theme in Islamic political philosophy is more often substituted with 'equality' with which modern philosophy confounds it. It is true that Iqbal emphasized equality, but it is well known that the political lessons drawn from the Qur'an are not because it is *kitab-al-masawaat* (book of equality), rather it is *kitab-al-insaf* (book of justice). Iqbal's own later views on quality versus quantity in the context of democracy validate that. Modern worldviews that mutually constitute modernity and the essential ethos of religious worldviews in our view are irreconcilable. They can only tolerate each other, not mutually accept each other. Especially the issue of modern economy and the lifestyle it has generated is seminal in this debate. Iqbal views with disdain both the type of economic systems the West has offered and seeks to empower the Muslim *Ummah* to an extent that they become a catalyst in overthrowing both the systems because they cannot be merely reformed. They must be shaken from their roots, which is very difficult, given the strength of political forces ready to protect them. In our opinion, even those Muslims who want so-called

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[183] Suheyl Umar, Personal correspondence.

reform, do so to protect the 'form'. It is altogether another matter that on the slippery slope of reform they may come to a point where the form is no longer there.

To answer the second question, if we compare Iqbal to the contemporary Muslim thinkers (20th/21st Christian centuries), we find that Iqbal has much more in common with the worldview and concerns of people like Maududi, Khomeini and other 'politically active' scholars such as Rachid Ghanouchi. With minor modifications, this will be so in all of the categories of modern political philosophy discussed above such as the issue of nationalism, democracy, state, sovereignty. It is not easy to stay wed to traditional Islamic principles and make policies and plans of action for Muslim societies that stay in consonance with traditional principles. The nature and condition of the modern world is such that it will force you to depart from them. This has been the challenge for modern philosopher-statesmen like Iqbal, Maududi and Khomeini. On the other hand if we compare Iqbal to 'non-politically active' contemporary *traditionalist* Muslim scholars, such as Rene Guenon, Frithjof Schuon, Martin Lings and Seyyed Hossein Nasr, we find significant differences. Firstly, we find difference in the use of language and terminology. For the traditionalist scholars Iqbal would be considered mostly an exoteric scholar of Islam who has given in to the ideology of progress and deviates often from the traditional elements of Islamic political philosophy. They would look at him in the light of the Hindu doctrine of caste and assign him a category of that kashatriya who is still respectful of the Brahman. At best, he could be compared to Julius Evola from the Christian Tradition because of his emphasis on dynamism vis-à-vis contemplation. Even with Evola one could see a difference. Evola, like the other scholars of Islam mentioned above, was interested very much in the esoteric doctrines of the Eastern religious tradition. His mastery of Hindu esoteric doctrines was impressive and perhaps Rene Guenon influenced him. Iqbal did not employ to discover a universal metaphysic and studied Islam somewhat on exclusive grounds. In Iqbal, we rarely find the knowledge of Unitarian doctrines in Hinduism that corroborate Tawhid, instead we see him lamenting the modern Hindu from whose mischief he seeks relief. Iqbal is similar to Evola because of his emphasis on heroism and dynamism within the context of a religious tradition.

II

A related issue to the above questions should also be answered. Modern Western academics have pointed out toward a 'paradigmatic crisis' in contemporary thought which also spills over in the field of political philosophy. Does Iqbal's thought offer anything that speaks to this crisis and make a contribution to its resolution?[184]

In our view, Iqbal does not want his political philosophy to be merely an addendum of what he considered the sickening Western world. Instead, he wants to use the challenge of modernity to give Muslims a wake up call. In *Arghman-i-Hejaz,* he says:

The Muslim draws content and kingship close,

He views the man and God in a close pose.

From this Age but I wished to run away,

Who has mixed the kingship with Satan's way[185]

Iqbal never intended to produce a secular, liberal and consumerist society, which lives by bread alone, rather he wanted a society of Muslims which lives by the spirit of the heart. He intended to cultivate the 'Alamgiri' type character who he describes as the Muslim type.[186] Alamgiri character is associated with the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb Alamgir who was known for his military genius, discipline, austerity and piety. It is important to note that Aurangzeb is a villain in modern Hindu history. He is considered as a fanatic who imprisoned his father and blinded his brother Dara Shikoh because of his lust for power. Instead, modern Hindus remember Mughal emperor

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[184] Suheyl Umar, Personal Correspondence.

[185] *Arghman-i-Hejaz.*

[186] *Muslim Political Thought: A Reconstruction*, p.180.

Akbar as the paragon of ecumenism because he innovated (without success) a new religion and married a Hindu woman. Before discovering universality in Iqbal vis-à-vis the West, it should be noted that his favourite hero is not universally accepted to the moderns of his own abode, India. Iqbal could have used the example of Akbar instead of Aurangzeb, for he was after all the apex of Muslim rule in India, but Akbar was not austere enough for Iqbal's taste. Central in Iqbal's thought is acquisition of political power by Muslims without sacrificing the essentials of Islam that can only be superficially seen as modern, but in their essence corroborate other religious traditions and not modernism. This is of course not highlighted in Iqbal's thought, as it is with its full elaboration by the scholars of the contemporary school of Traditionalism.

III

It is arguable that if it hadn't been for the idea of Pakistan, Iqbal would not have been any more popular than Bediuzzeman Said Nursi of modern Turkey or Fazalur Rahman of modern Pakistan or Jalal Aal-i-Ahmed of modern Iran. The same goes for Maududi and Khomeini; had they not stepped into the political arena, they wouldn't have been studied as they are now. Iqbal has gained his popularity in approximately half a billion Muslims in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh today, only secondarily because of his philosophy, but primarily because of his poetry, the idea of Muslim nationalism and Pakistan, which was perhaps the need of the Muslims of Indian Sub-continent at that point in history. If this weren't so, his popularity in the Persian or Arab speaking part of the Muslim world would be the same as in South Asia, which is not the case. Thus, Iqbal's idea of Pakistan, along with his political philosophy, are the major reason why Iqbal is 'over-studied'[187] and a much bigger philosophical giant like Mulla Sadra is virtually unknown to a vast majority of the educated elite of South Asia, and hence understudied.

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[187] By over-studied, we mean here the number of people who have approached Iqbal from one point of view or the other. Perhaps he is understudied in a more qualitative fashion. Further, criticizing Iqbal inside Pakistan is equivalent of burning the star-spangled banner in America.

The impact of Iqbal has been significantly more than many other thinkers of the same era. As mentioned earlier, this is primarily attributable to the idea of Pakistan, the scope of his poetical writings and also because of the ability of the masses to grasp Iqbal's thought and its relevance to their conditions. It is difficult for ordinary people to grasp the subtleties of Ibn Sina or Mulla Sadra, figures of much higher importance in the intellectual history of Islam. This goes to show that there is no democracy of knowledge. There are levels of understanding and those who are able to grasp the highest are often few. Modern proponents who may believe in democracy of knowledge often argue that it is the ability of a thinker to make comprehensible, sublime knowledge to the masses. But that element of Iqbal which is intellectually accessible to the general public is often political and social rather than spiritual in the metaphysical sense the term.

Iqbal seemingly offers to bridge the modernity/tradition divide in his political thinking but he himself acknowledges that he has nothing new to offer.[188] Iqbal fundamentally remained pegged in the Islamic tradition and the legitimacy of his thought comes from that source alone. Modernism in Iqbal's thought is only due to the circumstances of those times and nothing more. It is not essential to the thought of Iqbal, rather it was the need of the hour. Incidentally for many this has added to the charm of Iqbal's thought; while the traditional Muslim can understand where Iqbal is coming from, his modern counterpart can also accept him as 'creative, fresh and new', elements that he deems essential for an anticipated reform of Islam.

There are limits to reconciliation of religion and modernity in general and Islam being the last frontier that modernity wants to conquer, there are major limits to a conclusive reconciliation between them. Modernity only tolerates religion and does not accept it fully. It views religion as such, as a backward form of human consciousness. The Modern west particularly views Islam as backward and as a threat to human civilization. Thanks to the presence of minority of sane voices in the West who do not think so, but they are marginalized in their societies from the government policies and media that shape their masses' view of Islam. Samuel Huntington in our opinion, is at

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[188] *Muslim Political Thought: A Reconstruction*. P. 210.

least half right in claiming that there is a clash, although it may not be between civilizations.[189] The onus of success in a political dialogue (leave alone a religious and intellectual one) depends not on the intellectuals and scholars of the Muslim world, like Iqbal, but on the West itself. Since the West wields the sword in the world arena and Muslims are politically weak, the chances of dialogue are slim. Either the Muslim world has to become powerful enough that the West will 'need' a dialogue or the West itself has to become enlightened enough so that it respects and values Muslims and offers a dialogue. For dialogue of any kind to happen, either the parties engaged in a dialogue must be at parity, or if there is disparity, both the parties should be enlightened. If both the parties are enlightened, any friction between them will be of a temporary nature and will soon be resolved because of their enlightenment. The sustained Western push into the Muslim world for the last two hundred years is indicative of the fact that the West is not interested in a dialogue with the Muslim world as long as they can enforce their favourable terms and conditions on the Muslims according to their whims. The West is interested in dialogue with China and Russia, but not the Muslim world, and as said earlier, the reasons for that are obvious. Iqbal's greatest contribution in my opinion was convincing Muslims that they must empower themselves because Western policies towards Muslims are unethical:

فساد قلب و نظر ہے فرنگ کی تہذیب
کہ روح اس مدنیت کی رہ سکی نہ عفیف
رہے نہ روح میں پاکیزگی تو ہے ناپید
ضمیر پاک و خیال بلند و ذوق لطیف

The culture that prevails in West,

Corrupts the heart and gaze of man

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[189] For somewhat detailed discussion of this, see Ejaz Akram, "Religion as a Source of Reconciliation Between Civilizations", in *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* (Herndon, IIIT, Volume18:3)

Its soil is full of stains and spots

That at leisure one can scan.

If soul of man becomes defiled,

Of conscience clean it gets bereft

It soon forgets high aims and ends,

No taste refined in it is left.[190]

As mentioned earlier, Iqbal's modernism is only incidental and instrumental for the sake of *collective action* on behalf of the Muslims. Because the contemporary Muslim world is also *in* the modern world, even if not a product of it properly speaking, therefore every action Muslims propose to protect themselves will require modernization. If Muslims seek to protect themselves and their homelands, resources and their states, they will need an army. To face other modern armies they must have the same tools of armed resistance as their opponents. In order to do that, they must have sophisticated tanks and aircrafts. If they cannot 'import' them from their conceived enemies, then they have to make those themselves. This requires industrialization of their economies. Industrialism requires either a command economy or capitalist one that works on the profit motive but also produces fungible technologies. To achieve the former in the Soviet, Chinese or Cuban style, many societies have had to lose God which the Muslims are not willing to do. In order to acquire them like the capitalists, one must give up Iqbal's '*ilmul iqtisad*' and the principles that govern Muslims' economic attitudes that he talked about. If we embark upon the latter route, the societies may not become Godless overnight (as in the communist case) but they will surely secularize in the long-run. Even the so-called Islamic states (such as Iran, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan to some extent) have found it difficult to bring

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190 "Western Culture", *Zarb-i-Kaleem.*

all of contemporary laws and practices in conformity to the fundamental values of Islam. This is especially true in the economic arena.

Knowing Iqbal's essential ethos, it is clear that he is not ready to sacrifice Islamic heritage in the process of empowerment so much so that the Muslims lose the very essence that makes them Muslims. Iqbal admonishes the Muslims not to become like the West in all walks of life:

ترا وجود سراپا تجلی افرنگ
کہ تو وہاں کے عمارت گروں کی ہے تعمیر
مگر یہ پیکر خاکی خودی سے ہے خالی
فقط نیام ہے تو، زرنگار و بے شمشیر!

Your being whole from head to foot reflects the West,

Her masons in you have shown their art at best.

Devoid of Self, your frame from clay and water made,

Is like a spangled sheath that has no steel or blade.[191]

The question 'what must be done' for the Muslims to protect their bodies, resources and countries while protecting their beliefs and values is a difficult one, which cannot be answered that easily. Perhaps at this point in history no one can answer it. Only time will tell. For the short run, however, an Iranian style 'modern state' seems like a viable path to take, with an alternative mechanism of conferring legitimacy other than the concept of *vilayat-i-faqih*, so that it may also suit the Sunni dominated areas.

Conclusion

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[191] "Bewitched by West", *Zarab-i-Kaleem*

If Iqbal veered into modernism and departed from the Islamic tradition, it was not for the sake of modernity itself but for the safeguard of *tradition*, which in his foresight was clearly in danger.

In this paper we analyzed Iqbal's views on nationalism, state, state sovereignty and democracy. Leaving the strategic and visionary elements of Iqbal besides, in the case of state and state sovereignty, his philosophical position does not depart significantly from the traditional Islamic point of view. God Almighty is seen as the Sovereign and humans as the custodians of power entrusted by God. In the case of nationalism and democracy, he departs from the classical Islamic position but returns back to it. A nation in his view is an organic sub-category of *Ummah* and *millah*. A workable idea to mobilize the 'nation' for achieving statehood is his visionary policy. At the same time he does not spare nationalism as it created havoc among the Europeans. If Iqbal changed the word 'nation' to describe the Muslim *Ummah*, and coined another term instead, all would be fine. However, because of the use of modern terminology the confusion arises initially. However, the confusion soon subsides because the content of Iqbal's nationalism is not really nationalism as it is understood in cross-national studies, a sub-discipline of political science that studies just nationalism. Similarly, Iqbal begins with stating that democratic principles are Islamic, but coming back full circle where he castigates the producers of the new democracy and contrasting 'Islamic democracy' with the modern Western one as a 'spiritual democracy'. The question whether spiritual democracy is only an attitude or a structural form of governance is vague. It is our contention that Iqbal ventures to tread modern ground only because of necessity and not because he was in need of borrowing new principles. The essential principles that govern his ethos all come from sources that are the seminal sources of Islamic Tradition.

POSTSCRIPT

Had Iqbal Been Alive Today

Judging through the essential values of Iqbal, he would have been happy to see the formation of Pakistan. He would have been sad at the cessation of Bangladesh. He would have been happy that Pakistan, albeit a poor state, is

relatively strong, given its military. He would have been unhappy about Afghanistan. He would have been unhappy to see the level of crime and fraud in Pakistan. His remedy for that would not have been more liberalism, but more Islam. Compared to Pakistan and Afghanistan, he would have been happy to see Iran because of Iranian defiance against imperialism. He would have been unhappy to see how the Muslim world is still suffering from neo-colonialism. He would have been appalled at sectarianism. He would have been pessimistic about degradation of life and human ecology and thus chances of modernity to emancipate mankind, and may have revised his views on human 'progress'.

Pakistan: A Secular or an Islamic State

In contemporary Pakistan it has become fashionable to argue whether Pakistan was intended by its founders (the leaders along with the masses who were led) to be a secular state or an Islamic one. This debate that lay dormant for decades has been revived at the behest of those who harbour a secular agenda either due to their personal proclivities or from those who are following directives from their masters residing in Western nations. If we reduce the debate to its binary opposites, we find the pseudo liberal who parades as liberal, but in the superficial element of his outlook is ostensibly secular (and materialist to the hilt) is on one side of the fence. Generally speaking, the latter is neither cognizant of the consequences of the secular experience of the West, nor is he concerned about the role of ethics and the deleterious effect of development on human society and ecology. On the other side of the fence we find a figure, known in the West by the name of 'Islamist'[192]. The outlook of the Islamist is that of a bearded looking restive fellow, who, due to the lack of nuanced knowledge of his own tradition, appears exclusivist and reactionary in nature. But the Islamist gains respect from certain quarters of the society because of his recourse to the discourse

[192] It is curious to note that whereas the translation for the word 'fundamentalist' has come about somewhat belatedly in the Muslim world in general (in Urdu, *bunyad parast*), a comparable word for the term 'Islamist' is yet to be coined in the Urdu media. In the Western use, the difference between the two may be none, whereas in the Muslim world both terms before their Western inceptions were positive and laudatory.

of Islam. Save the exceptions of Iran and Saudi Arabia[193], secularists in the Muslim world are running their countries while the Islamists are mostly in opposition movements and contentious political parties, sometimes allowed and often banned by the states. The pushers for a secular Pakistan present the straw man of the Islamist as a horrific alternative to a secular state and want the public to jump on the secular bandwagon, realizing little the dangers of throwing away the baby with the bathwater. Moreover, the secularists have the national and international civil, military and media establishments to back them up. It is unfortunate that the debate has been framed in a way that evades the middle ground, which is neither represented by the secularist nor the fiery fundamentalist. But so is the nature of the times we live in. The middle ground in our opinion is within traditional Islam that transcends both, albeit its spirit remains antagonistic with the structures and ethos created by the modern world. Intellectually and spiritually the traditionalist proponents of this middle ground remains one of the few intellectual challengers of the modern worldview. Because of power in numbers and the nature of modern Muslim mass society, politically and militarily this challenge to modernity, through modernity itself, has become the prerogative of the fundamentalist.

At this point in history, whether an Islamic state brings about Islamization of people or the Islamicness of people gives birth to a state that is Islam conscious is redundant. Maududi and Khomeini would argue that a state must directly enforce an Islamic way of life in order to counter the anti-spiritual tendencies of the modern, secular, liberal, Western world. In this view, protecting the Muslim way of life through certain institutions and laws, the state must play an active role. The liberal/modern Muslims would argue otherwise. If both agree that the Islamicness of society is at stake, the debate becomes redundant because both are mutually constitutive. Both diagnoses presented above of erosion of Islamic ethics in public life may be valid. Therefore, it can be safely assumed that an Islamizing state shaping people's socio-religious moorings *and* Islamically inspired people giving birth to an Islamic order, feed each other. In a country like Pakistan, from either of the two routes, the state in the end does become more or less Islamized.

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[193] And to a lesser degree, Sudan, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Are Deplorable Conditions of Indian Muslims Cause or Effect of Partition?

All those causes that led to the formation of Pakistan out of the Indian Sub-Continent still exist in the modern state of India. With the advent of saffronization of India, the Muslims feel ever uncomfortable and disenfranchised. This puts the Indian Muslims in a difficult predicament. Since the creation of Pakistan, the Muslims in India have been mistrusted because of their cosy relationship with Pakistan. This relationship was primarily due to the earlier cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy, i.e., transnational solidarity with oppressed Muslims around the world. This support ranged between Indian Muslims in Hyderabad cheering for the Pakistani cricket team to Pakistan's support for Kashmiri self-determination in Indian-held Kashmir. Gradually, however, the Indian Muslims seem to be under more pressure to distance themselves from Pakistan. Indian Muslims' sympathy for Pakistan is viewed with suspicion by the Hindus. Many Indian Muslims develop a disdain for Pakistan either because of envy or because of an effort to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the Hindus. Notwithstanding the ifs and buts of history, it is safe to conjecture that if Pakistani Muslims remained a part of India, their conditions would have been more or less the same as their subjugated and demoralized Indian counterparts. Out of all of India's neighbours that are often bullied by India only because of its size, only Pakistan has stood up to India. Due to this, people of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan are on good terms with Pakistan.

W'Allahu Alim, and God knows best!

IQBAL'S VIEW OF IJTIHAD AND A MODERN ISLAMIC STATE

Javid Iqbal

Pakistan was established as a homeland for the Muslims of this region. Therefore, its pre-Islamic history is not definitive in determining their national identity. The only binding force among the inhabitants of this country is their common spiritual aspiration. Consequently, the problem of their national identity and statehood has to be resolved in the context of Islamic values.

It is against this backdrop that I have discussed the present topic. The basic question that needs to be asked in this regard is: which interpretation of Islam, conventional or "reconstructive", provides an answer to the issues of nationality, law and statehood of the Pakistani Muslims? It may be pointed out that my approach is that of a "re-constructionist", so aptly described by the late Professor Eqbal Ahmed as "one who seeks to blend tradition with modernity in an effort to reform society".[194] This is precisely the foundation on which Pakistan was established. I have explained in my works that the real reason underlying the objections of the religious stakeholders to the Pakistan movement was their fear that this movement was based on a "reconstructive" rather than a "conventional" interpretation of Islam.

It is therefore necessary to preserve and protect this idealism from religious extremists who do not have a clear idea of a modern nation-state, and who would not let a chance pass by to transform it into a country in which their own traditional version of Islam would prevail. Ideologically speaking, the Muslims of Pakistan do not accept the Turkish, the Saudi, the Iranian, or the Taliban paradigms of nationality and state. On the contrary, they aspire to unify the Islamic world with the projection and propagation of their own reconstructive and progressive model. The stand taken by Pakistan

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[194] Eqbal Ahmed, *Islam and Politics, "The Islamic Impact"* Syracuse University, 1984.

in supporting the international community to eradicate terrorism from the world can be considered as a test of the durability of Pakistan's ideology.

In Iqbal's opinion, Islam can succeed in establishing such a society in the form of a Muslim community (Ummah). His ideas with respect to the Individual and Collective Ego are based on the Qur'anic conceptions of a perfect Muslim individual and the Islamic society.

The ethical values which can be derived from his metaphysics are such attributes as love, freedom, courage, high ambition, and supreme indifference towards the acquisition of material comforts. The cultivation of these attributes is likely to result in the fortification of man's personality. The acts of such a person would be creative and everlasting. The factors which destroy man's personality arise from stagnation, the opposite of creative activity. Stagnation gives birth to passive virtues like humility, submission or obedience as well as to fear, corruption, cowardice, begging or asking not only for the means of livelihood but also for ideas from others, imitation and finally servitude. Servitude debilitates individuals and societies, and the blind and cynically indifferent rolling on of time obliterates even their trace in history.

With his philosophy, Iqbal desired the rebirth of the spirit of inquisitiveness and defiance among the Muslims so that they, as individuals and as a society, rediscovered their lost position in the fields of creativity and innovation. He demonstrated through an analysis of history, that in the sphere of human knowledge the Western civilization was an extension of the Islamic civilization. Everything in Western thought that led to human progress was an elaboration of those very ideas, theories, and debates which were initiated by Muslim thinkers and scientists. Iqbal's vision of new Muslim individuals constituting a new Muslim society, created a bridge between Islam and the West. But this dream of bringing into being a 'new world' (*Jehan-i-Nau*) could not be realized unless the mode of religious instruction was altered and a generation of new Ulema appeared; and a modern Islamic state was established.

Iqbal perceived that Muslim society was suffering from numerous maladjustments. He drew its portrait in one of his Urdu articles, '*Quami Zindagi*' which appeared in the journal *Makhzan* in 1904. He observed:

> This unfortunate community has been deprived of political, industrial as well as commercial power. Now unconcerned with the demands of times and smitten by stark poverty, it is trying to survive with the help of the useless staff of contentment. Leaving aside other matters, it has so far not been able to settle its religious disputes. Every other day a new sect is brought into being which considers itself exclusively as the heir of paradise, declaring the rest of mankind as fuel for hell. This form of sectarianism has scattered the Muslims in such a manner that there is no hope for unifying them as a single community. The condition of our Maulvis is such that if two of them happen to be present in one city, they send messages to each other for holding a discussion on some controversial religious issue, and in case the discussion starts, which usually does, then it ends up in a deplorable brawl. The width of knowledge and comprehension which was a characteristic of the early Ulema of Islam does not exist any more… The situation is quite serious, and there is no solution of the problem except that the entire community should direct its mind and soul completely towards reforming itself. God does not change the condition of a community unless it changes itself.[195]

According to Iqbal one of the most important factors for the establishment of a new Muslim society is to accomplish a reform in Islamic culture. For this purpose he felt the need for educating and training the Ulema. He argued:

> The question of cultural reform among the Muslims is in fact a religious question, because there is no aspect of our cultural life which can be separated from religion. However, because of the occurrence of a magnificent revolution in the conditions of modern living, certain new cultural needs have emerged. It has therefore become necessary that the decisions made by the old jurists, the collection of which is generally

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[195] *Oriental College Magazine,* Jashn-i-Iqbal Number, ed, by Dr. Ibadat Bareilvi, pp. 19-39.

known as the Islamic Shari'ah, requires a review. The decisions delivered by the former jurists from time to time on the basis of the broad principles of the Qur'an and the Traditions, were indeed appropriate and practical for those specific times, but these are not completely applicable to the needs and requirements of the present times. If one reflects deeply on the conditions of modern life, one is forced to arrive at the conclusion that just as we need the elaboration of a new *'Ilm-i-Kalam* for providing a fresh religious motivation, we likewise need the services of a jurist who could by the width of his vision stretch the principle so widely as to cover all the possible situations of the present cultural needs. As far as I am aware, the Muslim world has not yet produced any such great jurist, and if one were to consider the magnitude of this enterprise, it would appear that perhaps it is a job for more than one mind to accomplish, and it may require at least a century to complete the work.[196]

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

> Who does not know that the moral training of the Muslim masses is in the hands of such Ulema and preachers who are not really competent to perform this duty. Their knowledge of Islamic history and sciences is extremely limited. In order to persuade the people to adopt in their lives the moral and religious values of Islam, it is necessary for a preacher of today to be not only familiar with subjects like history, economics and sociology, but he must also have complete knowledge of the literature and modes of thinking of the community.[197]

In the thirties the Aligarh Muslim University thought of introducing a new faculty of Islamic studies. Aftab Ahmad Khan, Chancellor of the University wrote to Iqbal seeking his advice. Iqbal wrote a long letter to him which is a very important document. Some of the extracts are:

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[196] *Ibid.*, pp. 19-39.

[197] *Zinda Rud*, p. 308.

Our first and foremost object should be to create Ulema of proper qualities who could fulfil the spiritual needs of the community. Please note that along with the change in the outlook of the people their spiritual requirements also undergo a change. The change in the status of the individual, his freedom of thought and expression, and the unimaginable advancement made by the physical sciences, have completely revolutionized modern life. As a result the kind of *'Ilm-i-Kalam* and the theological understanding which was considered sufficient to satisfy the heart of a Muslim of the Middle Ages, does not satisfy him any more. This is not being stated with the intention to injure the spirit of religion; but in order to rediscover the depths of creative and original thinking (*Ijtihad*), and to emphasize that it is essential to reconstruct our religious thought… Like many other matters, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's far-sightedness made him also look into this problem. As you may know, he laid the foundations of his rationalism on the philosophical doctrines of an ancient and bygone age for the resolution of this problem… I am afraid, I do not agree with your proposed curriculum of Islamic studies. In my view the revival of the faculty of Islamic studies on the old lines would be totally useless. As for the spiritual value of the ancient theology, one can say that it is based on antiquated ideas, and as for its educational significance, it is irrelevant in the face of the emerging new problems or the new presentation of the old problems. What is needed today is to apply one's mind in a new direction and to exert for the construction of a new theology and a new *'Ilm-i-Kalam*. It is evident that this job can be accomplished only by those who are competent to do it. But how to create such Ulema? My suggestion is that if you desire to keep the conservative element of our society satisfied, then you may start with the faculty of Islamic studies on the old lines. But your ultimate objective should be to gradually bring forward a group of such Ulema who are themselves capable of independent and creative thinking (*Ijtihad-i-Fikr*) in accordance with my proposed scheme… In my view the dissemination of modern religious ideas is necessary for the modern Muslim nations. A struggle has already commenced in the Islamic world between the old and new methods of education as well as between the upholders of spiritual freedom and those monopolizing religious power. This movement of independence of human thought is even influencing a conservative country like Afghanistan. You may have read the speech of the Amir of

Afghanistan in which he has attempted to control the powers of the Ulema. The emergence of numerous such movements in the other parts of the Muslim world makes one arrive at the same conclusion. Therefore in your capacity as the Head of a Muslim university, it is your duty to step forward in this new field with courage.[198]

Iqbal's Vision of Modern Islam

Iqbal does not define Islam as a theologian but as a philosopher. Thus, in his perception, Islam as a religion and as a culture, is humanistic and egalitarian. Any interpretation of Islam which sanctifies feudalism and discriminates between man and man, is not acceptable to Iqbal. He claimed that humanism was a product of Islamic culture and was a gift of Islam to the West. Iqbal realised that modern Islam requires 'emancipation' from the medieval fancies of theologians and jurists, and proclaimed: "Spiritually we are living in a prison-house of thoughts and emotions which during the course of centuries we have weaved round ourselves".[199] For this reason he rejected the dynastic/hereditary Caliphate, Imamate or Sultanate as the outmoded forms of government which the Muslims evolved.

Iqbal's View of the "Public Sphere"

For assessing Iqbal's views on managing the "Public Sphere" it may be useful to discuss the two varieties of secularism which the Western civilization has developed as an essential part of its political ideology. Irrespective of historical background of the development of this concept, secularism adopted by capitalistic democracies is based on the principle of the state being neutral in matters of religion. It is also stated to be a guarantee of equality of all citizens regardless of their spiritual background as the state is governed exclusively under man-made laws (not connected with any religion) and these laws are uniformly applicable to all citizens. Also, it is a guarantee of acceptance not just tolerance of minorities, religions and

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[198] *Ibid.*, pp. 318-320.

[199] *The Indian Annual Register 1932*, Vol. 1. p. 306.

cultures. The other variety of secularism was evolved by socialist countries, which meant a 'state without religion' or the 'imposition of atheism on citizens as a state policy'. After the collapse of the Soviet Union this form of secularism has ceased to exist, and at present the Russian Federation and the other former socialist countries have adopted the capitalist version of this doctrine.

Iqbal, as a deeply religious man, advanced the argument that the discoveries of modern physics, particularly regarding matter and nature, are very revealing for the materialists and the secularists. His argument proceeds like this:

> The ultimate reality, according to the Qur'an, is spiritual and its life consists in its temporal activities. The spirit finds its opportunities in the natural, material and the secular. All that is secular is therefore sacred in the roots of its being. The greatest service that modern thought has rendered to Islam and as a matter of fact to all religions, consists in its criticism of what we call material or natural, a criticism which discloses that the merely material has no substance until we discover it rooted in the spirit. There is no such thing as a profane world. All this immensity of matter constitutes a scope for the self-realization of the spirit. All is holy ground.[200]

In Iqbalian terms, secularism is rooted in the spirit. Therefore, there is no justification in regarding secularism as anti-God. If secularism means guaranteeing the rights of "religious freedom" and "equality of all citizens" by the state, then certainly it cannot be opposed to Islam. Iqbal's Islamic state is expected to have "mixed" laws. Islamic laws would apply only to the Muslim citizens whereas the minorities would have the freedom to be governed under their own personal religious or customary codes of law. As for the third category i.e. man-made laws, these would be applicable uniformly to all the citizens in the best interests of the state. In this background the discussion of accepting or rejecting secularism is not at all relevant to the state in Islam, which is admittedly not a theocracy.

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[200] *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 155.

However, it would be useful in this regard to examine the "settlements" that have been experimented during the last century or so. Before the fall of Soviet Communism both the capitalist and communist worlds tended to write religion out of their scenarios of the future. Today, projections of a simply secular future seem less persuasive. The shift in perception is probably mainly due to what is called militant Islam, beginning with the Iranian Revolution and climaxing in the destruction of the World Trade Centre in 2001. But one might argue that this perception is just catching up with the reality obscured by the expansion of Communism earlier in the twentieth century and by the influence, especially in the media and education, of a largely secularized Western-educated elite throughout that period. Probably between 4 and 5 billion of the world's more than 6 billion people are directly involved with a religion today, and this picture seems unlikely to change a great deal during the rest of the twenty-first century. So during the lifetimes of all of us now alive we would do well to reckon seriously with religions as shapers of our world, for better or for worse. This does not mean that we have a purely religious world to deal with; rather *it is simultaneously both religious and secular in complex ways*. There are important issues between the religions; but there are also further, overlapping issues between each of the religions and the various secular understandings and forces.

Here it would be wise to take account of the ways such relationships have been handled in the recent past, by referring to the three major "settlements" made in this regard, namely, the British, the French and the American. I would refer to one of the sessions of the Clinton Global Initiative in the section on "Religious and Ethnic Conflict" to make my point. It had a panel with an Englishman, a Frenchman and an American. As they spoke about religion and politics the Frenchman resisted any suggestion that religions should be taken seriously as religions within the political sphere: problems were traced mainly to economic causes, and he was confident that if poverty were dealt with effectively the unrest in French cities would disappear. The American (who was also a Muslim) insisted that the religions needed to contribute to public discourse but that the American separation of Church and state was a healthy thing. The Englishman, John Battle MP (Prime Minister Tony Blair's special adviser on religion), told stories of his own involvement with religious communities in his Leeds constituency, and evoked a complex settlement in which religious bodies were seen as

stakeholders in society with whom the government and other public bodies were in constant communication and negotiation and whose identities could be affirmed by such means as state-supported faith schools. It was as if each was representing his own nation's settlement, developed over centuries. Making judgments on such complex achievements, each worked out in special circumstances, is dangerous, but I will risk it in summary form.

I think that in the current world situation the French secularist solution is the least satisfactory. It, like the others, is understandable in historical terms– working out the epochal, often bloody confrontation between the French Revolution and Roman Catholicism– but its practical exclusion of religions from the public sphere (including state schools and universities) is in effect the establishment of a state ideology that is not neutral in relation to religion but is suspicious, critical and often hostile. It envisages a secular public sphere. It is not well suited to a religious and secular world.

The American separation of church and state is far more benign with regard to the religions, and in fact religion plays a major role in American politics. But there has been a tendency to try to use the separation to create a neutral public space, where it is illegitimate to draw explicitly on religious sources. This 'lowest common denominator' public square (expressed, for example, in banning official recognition of any particular religious symbols, holidays or practices and refusing to let state schools teach religious education or state universities teach theology as well as religious studies) is increasingly being criticized, even by secular thinkers such as Jeffrey Stout of Princeton University, who see it as an impoverishment of public life. Both religious and secular traditions should be able to contribute in their distinctive ways to public debate rather than reducing all discourse to a secularized lowest common denominator.[201]

That, at its best, is what happens in Britain also. Its particular history has kept religion involved in its public life, sometimes controversially, usually resisting pressures from those quarters that have more sympathy with secularist, often atheistic ideologies and would favour a French-style

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[201] Jeffrey Stout, *Democracy and Tradition* (Princeton University Press, Princeton 2004).

settlement. Britain also comes out rather poorly from comparative studies of the relative alienation of the Muslim minority from the rest of society. In global terms, Britain has the conditions for pioneering work in shaping a religious and secular society that draws on the resources within each of the traditions for peaceful living and working together. They have an extraordinary range of religious communities in a society that has also experienced intense secularization.

The British settlement *works within what one might call a minimal secular and religious framework that enables mutual public space*. This has been shaped over many centuries and is constantly open to renegotiation. The framework is minimal in that it refuses to impose either a particular religious solution or a particular secular solution and so lives by ongoing negotiation rather than by appeal to a fixed constitution or principles. It, therefore, helps to create a mutual public space with possibilities for shared discussion, dialogue, education, deliberation, and collaboration– in contrast to the French tendency towards strictly secular public space and the American tendency towards neutral public space. But for all practical purposes this constant, ongoing negotiation leaves the British settlement little better than the others, oscillating between secular pluralism and religious exclusivism.

As for Islamic legislation in Iqbal's proposed Islamic state, he urges that *Ijtihad* must be adopted as a legislative process in the elected assemblies. This is the only form, which *Ijma'* (Consensus of the Community) can take in a modern democratic Islamic state. It may be interesting to note that Allama Shibli believed that decisions in *'Ijma'* on the majority basis were recognized as correct in Caliph Umar's times.

Iqbal also held that the modern Muslim liberals' claim to re-interpret the Shari'ah (or the foundational legal principles of Islam), in the light of their own experience and the altered conditions of modern life, is perfectly justified. He is convinced that the Islamic world is confronted by new intellectual forces, which were unleashed by the extraordinary development of human knowledge. He suggests that every generation of Muslims, guided but unhampered by the work of its predecessors, should be permitted to solve their own problems. He maintains:

> The growth of a republican spirit and the gradual formation of legislative assemblies in Muslim lands constitutes a great step forward to transfer the power of *Ijtihad* from individual representatives of Schools to a Muslim legislative assembly. This is the only possible form which *Ijma'* can take in modern times. It will secure contributions to legal discussion from laymen who happen to possess a keen insight into affairs. In this way alone we can stir into activity the dormant spirit of life in our legal system and give it an evolutionary outlook.[202]

Although Imam Abu Ishaq Shatibi (whom Iqbal mentions in his *Reconstruction* Lectures) accepts the possibility of *Ijtihad* in *Ijma'* by a non-believer, Iqbal does not touch the question whether or not the Non-Muslim members of a modern Muslim legislative assembly (*Ijma'*) could participate in *Ijtihad* on Islamic law-making. So far as the practicing of *Ijtihad* on individual basis is concerned, in British India in the course of the development of Anglo-Muhammadan Law, a Non-Muslim judge decided matters involving Muslim Personal Law without any objection on the part of the Ulema.

Evidently in emphasizing equality, solidarity, and freedom, Iqbal desires to incorporate in his Islamic democracy, the principles of supremacy of the rule of law, guarantee of human rights, realization of social and economic justice, as laid down in the Qur'an and Sunnah. He is reluctant to discuss some aspects of the Shari'ah, especially the problems of civil and criminal legislation, which require re-interpretation. The reason for his hesitation is the conservative character of the Muslim community, which, because of sectarian differences, is not yet emotionally prepared to accept that the Shari'ah in its spirit is cohesive and not divisive, and Muslims need to restore its original spirit.[203] Despite his caution in this matter, his scattered views indicate the trends of his progressive thought.

One important qualification of a legislator, in Iqbal's eyes, is that he should be a lawyer who has studied conventional Islamic Fiqh in the light of modern

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[202] *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 138.

[203] *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 164, 165.

jurisprudence. He desires that a new syllabus, integrating both disciplines should be introduced in the schools of legal instruction. He explained this approach in answer to a question as to how present Muslim legislators, with no knowledge of Islamic law, would interpret and make laws without committing grave mistakes. Iqbal recommends that in the absence of qualified legislators, a Board of Ulema be nominated as a part of the legislative assembly. They should have no right to vote, but should only help and guide free discussion on questions of interpreting Islamic law. This improvisation should be merely a temporary arrangement as a safeguard against erroneous interpretations. In the process of Islamic law-making in modern times, Iqbal is aware of the sectarian and intellectual limitations of traditional Ulema who are inclined to differ from one another on trivial matters and are unlikely to provide proper guidance. Therefore, he appreciates the importance of the 'non-Ulema' experts in specific fields, and the general contribution which laymen can make, especially if they possess keen insight into affairs.[204]

Iqbal was the first Muslim thinker in South Asia to define the state in Islam as a spiritual democracy. He argued that:

> In view of the basic idea of Islam that there can be no further revelation binding on man, we ought to be spiritually one of the most emancipated people on earth. Early Muslims emerging out of the spiritual slavery of pre-Islamic Asia were not in a position to realize the true significance of this basic idea. Let the Muslim of today appreciate his position, reconstruct his social life in the light of ultimate principles and evolve out of the hitherto partially revealed purpose of Islam that spiritual democracy which is the ultimate aim of Islam.[205]

This passage is rather unconventional. From where did Iqbal derive this idea? He does not explain. He may have picked up the idea of "spiritual democracy as the ultimate aim of Islam" from the principle on which

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[204] *Ibid.*, pp. 175, 176.

[205] *Ibid.*, pp. 179, 180.

'Mithaq-i-Medina' was fashioned. In a verse from the Qur'an the principle is enunciated in the following manner. Allah addressing mankind commands:

> For each of you We have given a law and a way (of life) and if Allah hath willed He would have made you one religious community. But (He hath willed it otherwise) so that He may put you to the test in what He hath given you. Therefore compete with one another in good works. To Allah will ye be brought back. And He will inform you about that wherein ye differed.[206]

Iqbalian idealism is an appropriate example of the fusion of some new Western ideas with Islam. Clearly he was ahead of his time as the Muslim community was not ready to accept his views. Iqbal's Western critics or Western–oriented Muslim critics may find his concept of a modern Islamic state as anchored in 'secular humanism' or 'liberal unitarian humanism'. To Iqbal, the spirit of Islam is inclusive and limitless. As established by its past history, it is capable of assimilating all the new ideas of other civilizations, giving them its own synthesized direction. He was convinced that:

> The inner catholicity of the spirit of Islam is bound to work itself out in spite of the rigorous conservatism of our doctors. And I have no doubt that a deeper study of the enormous legal literature of Islam is sure to rid the modern critic of the superficial opinion that the Law of Islam (Shari'ah) is stationary and incapable of development.[207]

Main features of Iqbal's modern Islamic state

1. It is a democratic state.
2. Parliament should adopt '*Ijtihad*' as the guiding principle of particularly Islamic legislation to cope with the requirements of modern times.
3. The separation between the religious establishment and state organs

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[206] Qur'an, sura 5: verse 58.

[207] *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 164.

is strictly functional. It is not identical to the separation of church and state.

4. The Criminal Law of Islam need not be enforced dogmatically.
5. Interest-free banking need not be enforced in order to promote the free-market economy.
6. The state must protect the economic rights of landless tenants and workers, and impose tax on agricultural produce.
7. The state is also under an obligation to protect and determine the minimum wages of industrial workers and to provide them medical care and assure compensation upon their retirement.
8. To strengthen national integration in a Muslim majority state the principle of joint electorates can be adopted.
9. While spiritual democracy remains undefined, it seems to stand for equality of all citizens regardless of their race, religion or creed.

RELIGION AND CULTURE

Robert Gibbs

Our era represents novel opportunities and challenges arising from the new proximity that our technology and imagination affords. We all are in contact through e-mail and the web with people around the world, in an almost limitless and effortless way, transforming communication into a virtual nearness undreamed of even in the 20th century. We travel by plane from continent to continent, and are less than a day away from most centers of population and culture– indeed, the vast majority of the participants in the Cambridge conference traveled by air from afar. And the nearness of cultures arises less from technology, than through the collaboration of people from diverse societies. This is an age of immigration, of changes in where people live, and with whom they can work, study and pray.

If we did not value the close interaction, the proximity with others, we would not have developed nor use the web and the airplanes. Of course, we use these technologies for commerce, and even, alas, for military purposes, for political and national ambition, but also for science. Deeper than these uses for our new proximity, however, is a desire for relations that connect us with others across distinctions– not for a dissolution of everything into a globalized soup or a multinational corporate or consumer society –but a recovery and exploration of the distinctive visions of justice and of holiness, and the chance to learn from each other how to live well together.

In such a moment we are far beyond the context of the earlier part of the 20th century. Iqbal's world knew travel, but mostly by train and ship. It knew telecommunications in the form of wireless and radio. But in the colonial context, it already knew much about immigration, and perhaps most significantly, it was a world in which study and collaboration already produced new modes of proximity. The conference convened in Cambridge and London commemorated both Iqbal's own life and travels, but also the abundant and vital immigrant community of Pakistanis in the UK, as well as the ongoing engagement with Islamic studies at Cambridge University. E-

mail and intercontinental air travel are only repeating and expanding the opportunities that were already available one hundred years ago. And so they arise and flourish because of desires and exigencies that bind us with Iqbal's time and thought.

Thus as we look forward to the shape and indeed the task of Religion and Culture in the 21st Century, we take recourse to insights and visions from Iqbal's life and writings in order to think more deeply if not exclusively about the influences upon Iqbal's thought nor about the direct impact of his thought, but about the possibilities for creative, novel contributions from Iqbal's thought to our era.

My task in this short paper will be to begin with general reflections on the term Culture, and to proceed to the relation of poetry and language in culture. Here I refer to Iqbal as poet as 'opening the gates' of our souls to love.

In the second section, then, I will examine how the multiplicity of languages itself points to a multiplicity of cultures. The account of cultures, then, will require an attention to particularity– but one not identical with nationalisms. Here Iqbal's account of the contribution of Islamic culture to European culture alerts us to the logic of particularities and the fecundity of multiplicity.

In the third section, however, I turn to the first term, *Religion,* and here the desire for what transcends ourselves and our world finds an articulation. Poetry becomes prayer. But religion is not itself primarily a matter of cognition, but rather a realization of insight, by engendering particular social relations. In this moment, then, religion gains a place in relation to cultures as their orientation and also as a means of negotiating plurality.

The final issue, then, is to think about religions. For Iqbal religion meant not only Islam but also Christianity and Judaism, and in the context of the creation of Pakistan, Hinduism. The practical challenges of his political action are not my focus, but the recognition of plurality as more than a mere political fact, but rather a spiritual challenge (and opportunity) points to the future work for religion and cultures, or, as I will suggest, Religions and

Cultures. My suggestion is that Iqbal's insights into the relation of Islamic Culture and Religion can offer us valuable inspiration in thinking together about the way the proximity of religions offers not only challenges but also resources for developing the proximity of cultures. This raises the probing question for the 21st century: the meaning of the multiplicity of cultures. I will then focus on Religions and Cultures, and perhaps with all of those s's we will also begin to see the promise of the 'and'.

Section 1: Culture

Culture has a wide range of meanings. We might focus our attention on the rooms we sit in or more simply the food we enjoy at home. For our senses have all been educated by culture, and if there is a role for religion in the 21st century, it is to address culture itself, and to give a promise to the senses of what cannot be perceived, God. Culture, of course, is much more than art and beauty, but at its highest points, culture aspires to what exceeds our needs and so to what endows meaning on the world in which we live. I am no poet, and if I reflect on beauty and culture, it is as a philosopher, and here the tension is sharp. For culture, like religion, informs, or simply 'forms' the world in which we live. Philosophy is usually abstract, even distant, but culture begins with the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the chair you are sitting in, and the light that shines on this page you now read. If philosophy aspires to be universal, culture is individual, distinct one culture from another. I write as a philosopher about something, culture that does not aspire to philosophy. And if we can think about culture, we might then also think about religion– for it, too, is stretched between the universal and the individual, between the concrete experiences of this world and the absolute, absolved from the world.

So let us begin with a brief view of culture, and in particular art. Let culture stand for all of the ways that we form the world, the human institutions, practices, production of things and systems– and to distinguish culture from economics for our purposes, let the guiding principles of the world we are concerned with be centered around people and their ways of making sense of the world. Culture forms people, and in so doing depends on things, systems, means of production, and so forth. All of our experience, thus, as human beings, arises from culture. Such a view, moreover, is

profoundly dubious about the value of wild nature and of the assumption of any 'natural' kind of experience. Certainly in our time culture has formed even our access to the waves, the mountains, the whales and seals, even to the desert. But in so far as we seek an objectivity that transcends our culture in the wilderness, it stands not simply as a 'product' packaged by culture, but rather as a specific response to the normal condition: that we are cultured.

Our senses, as well as our environment, are constructed through human creativity, reflecting not just simple desires, but rather, desires for social relations and for what stands beyond us. Again, however venal and commercial our culture becomes, it is animated by desires that leave traces throughout culture. Thus in every meal, there is the desire for fellowship and even, for a satisfaction that sustains us in our bodies but not merely that sustains our bodies. It takes great efforts and systems, agriculture, transportation, careful cooking and serving, ploughs, trains, ovens, plates and much more to serve and to enjoy a good meal (and even a cheap and fast and easy meal).

Idolatry is that danger when culture perverts our desires and offers false satisfaction, turning our aspiration into a complacency. For in general, the risk of culture is that whatever forms it takes will be gasped too tightly, will be held as absolute, as bearing the full meaning of things. In idolatry, desire fixes on the object, and hides both the one for whom the thing was created and also the reach beyond the specific object. It is possible for culture to offer false desires and to teach us to rest in the objects. It is not possible to paint a portrait without running the risk that it will divert desire to the painting and not see it as a painting for someone of something. It is not possible, even, to cook a meal without running the risk that someone will eat it with a fixation on the food itself and not on the desires we have to share with others.

Beyond culinary arts, there are arts that form our desires by developing the desires for others and for what transcends our merely material conditions. Those arts do not (in the mode I indicated above) abstract from our bodies, but work with our eyes, our ears, and other senses. The education of our sensibility attunes us to how there is more to the desire of each sense. Culture creates new ranges of sensibility– not just a new spice (although that

too), but new ways of seeing and hearing. Education, then, becomes both a matter of learning to think differently, drawing on our desire to learn; it also becomes a creativity of new experiences and a disciplining of our desires to reach beyond our current culture and world.

Poetry has a distinctive and prized place in all of culture. For words are not things, but are animated by our desire for each other and for what is other than the words themselves. Poetry can illuminate the desire for more than the word in the word; not by silence, but by the word itself. Poetry teaches us to hear beyond the words, not simply in them. But if all sensibility is cultured, and is engendered by desires that lead beyond the objects of the senses, that culture addresses the social and transcendent dimensions of our experience, then poetry takes as its medium language itself. And what is that? How does language hold a distinctive place in culture? First of all it is addressed to others. While we are accustomed to think of the first relation in language being to the thing named, to what language refers to; I would say that words are first *to* someone and in that relation are they *about* something. Now one might say that all of culture, including the design of the chairs you are sitting upon, is to someone (or for us), and that in so far as the legs of the chair are designed to bear us, their leginess, indeed the chair-ness itself, all derives from our needs to relax and to have our weight relieved.

Language, however, is our prime way of sharing things in culture. It has the capacity to give and to take, to instruct and to offer experience as a representation. It presents the world to others, and it represents the world, too. But poetry is the way that language shows the work of language itself– not in a closed self-reflexivity, but rather in an opening out of the way that language (and signs in general) move beyond themselves.

The task for language is its absence of materiality. It is invisible, and forms culture without manipulating things. As such, language engages our desire for what exceeds, offering us a way to reach beyond, and also replacing the visible with the invisible. Poetry challenges us to not rest satisfied with words as words; it challenge us to move beyond images. Here the critique of idolatry emerges most forcefully. For poetry displaces its images and so increases the desire for what exceeds words, and even what exceeds the visible. Poetry displays language at play, language challenging the visibility of

everything that can be named by words, letting us question the power of language to name, to locate our desire in a thing.

Perhaps the key insight that language is capable of motion more readily than other aspects of culture, that one can displace one word with another, and that as such, language is iconoclastic more than most of the high and low forms of culture is no longer so secure– for from moving pictures to television, to our current moment of virtual reality and life on the web, we now have visual media that also participate in these dynamics of displacement. Doesn't a wiki or even a regular website disturb the desire that diverts into idolizing the image? If language is key, in the 21st century, it will be because it is still the medium in which interactions occur (whether on the phone or the web, or in the cinema)– or at least, it is the medium where the challenge to the fixity of the desired object is most disrupted.

It is not surprising, in any case, that poetry is a privileged cultural form throughout the world, and also in Muslim cultures. I am trying, in a somewhat awkward way to situate the specificity of poetry within the realm of culture as a way of orienting ourselves to Iqbal and to the future. And at this particular moment, I wish to engage Iqbal as poet, within the narrow linguistic limitations I have. There is much significant scholarship on Iqbal as poet, but I will limit myself to catching only a small insight. The problem is compounded because Iqbal wrote in diverse languages and genres– and in many ways, as far as an amateur can tell, he was performing much of the work of culture that I have been outlining. But if I turn to one of his masterpieces, "The Mosque of Cordoba", I think we can see in his poem the dynamic that I have been discussing about culture and the desire for what transcends.

The passing of time is a key element in all of Iqbal's thought, and so the appearance of a thing (or of a word) must negotiate with its temporality. In January 1931, he visited the mosque of Cordoba and composed a poem to the mosque, a mosque which was made into a Cathedral. And yet it still stands, and he was permitted to pray there.

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

All things built on this earth sink as if built on sand! (*Poems,* p.98)

The standing stone is not permanent, but, exceeds itself. In peels of language, Iqbal proclaims love:

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

Show where some servant of God wrought into some high shape

Work whose perfection is still bright with the splendor of Love--

Love, the well-spring of life; Love, on which death has no claim. (*Ibid)*

The love itself is not the object, but it shines with splendor in this mosque, in the beauty of the walls and arches. The building thus shows something beyond itself, the love which itself transcends the passing away of time, of life. I leave aside the much more complex question of to whom the building reveals the love beyond itself– for once it was Muslim, and now it is Christian, and in both cases it is a place for prayer.

But the peels of language, the poetry that he writes, has a distinctive relation to the building itself. Iqbal writes

Shrine of Cordoba! from Love, all your existence is sprung.

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

Color of stone and brick, music and song or speech,

Only the heart's warm blood feeds such marvels of craft;

Flint with one drop of that blood turns to a beating heart--

Melody, mirth and joy gush out of warm heart's-blood.

Yours the soul-quickening pile, mine the soul-kindling verse,

Yours to knock at men's hearts, mine to open their gates. (*Ibid.* p 100-2)

It is the relation of the *stone* and *brick* to the *song* and *speech*, the *pile* to the *verse*, that interests me here. For in both cases, they emerge from love and they draw on the *warm heart's blood*, on the passion of love. The key issue is what they can achieve in their limited existence. And here is the contrast that fashions our theme of culture:

For the building *knocks at men's hearts*– it is a call, an attempt to get in, to quicken them. To see the building as an opening, a place for love to generate life in the soul. But poetry, the prayer, instead strives *to open their gates.* The chiasmus is clear: not knocking at the gates and opening the hearts, but rather, knocking at the heart and opening the gate– with words. The building knocks– it resounds with a call. The words open gates: that is the gate that shows the way to love to life.

This poem is a remarkable anthem to a building, a mosque where once Muslims met to pray. The building was not a fortress or a factory or a palace or a home, but a place devoted to the knocking of the call from love. The poem, however, is able to open our gates to the power of the mosque, to articulate (even in its own passing through time) the way that culture calls us beyond the object, beyond the function, beyond its present.

Section 2: Languages and Cultures

"The Mosque of Cordoba" was written in Urdu (a form of Hindi written in Arabic script, with close affinities to Arabic and Persian). Iqbal spoke and wrote in several languages– he became adept at many languages because he wished to speak to different people– to the English, of course– because they were not only his intellectual community in Cambridge, but also the rulers of his homeland. But he also engaged the Persian traditions of poetry in Farsi; the world of thought and contemporary political issues in Urdu; the Islamic tradition in Arabic; the scholarly world in German, and his mother tongue, Punjabi. So many languages with so many different communities to address. So let me note, at this juncture that poetry because of its subtle engagement with a specific language, is the hardest to translate. Its iconoclastic capacity depends on the distinctive dangers of its specific language. And so, for all

lovers of Iqbal's poetry, my apologies for working solely with an English translation.

Here we begin to shift our register, for, like a good philosopher, I have been speaking about language and about poetry. But now we must consider that there are languages. And this concrete reality is more disruptive: if language has a key role in forming culture, then the discovery that there are languages must be linked to the observation that there is not culture, but many cultures. And while it is not obvious that languages are in any sort of contest or conflict, it may well seem that we are in a constant struggle of cultures. The challenge of translation displays how each language forms our experience and displays certain kinds of possibilities for experience and action, but most of the time we do not see this as a struggle for control. True, some have argued for one universal language, but the 21st century dawns with keen insights into the need for many languages, and for poetry in each, and for the study of each. Perhaps a philosopher may be forgiven the desire for a single universal language; a poet could not be. Iqbal wrote poetry in different languages, and in a key aspect, in different cultures. To most of us in the early part of the 21st century, this is a sign of his relevance, indeed, of a kind of urgency to be found in poetry. For if the topics are those of eternal truth and desire for what transcends us, the poets write in diverse traditions and tongues because each culture brings its own important contribution to our world where we are near many others.

But I think that it is fair to say that what makes our time most challenged and most promising is that new proximity. We may meet in a conversation, across real cultural differences. Iqbal is not the first multi-cultural person, but his fluency in very different cultures contributed directly to his genius. And as we proceed into this century, it is well to learn multiple cultures, multiple languages, and to see how there is an abundance of ways of interpreting the world.

Section 3: Religion

But, you ask, so much culture, and so little comment about religion? It is in the context of desire and poetry that I draw a bridge to religion (and as should be clear, to religions). For the very depth of the relation of culture

and desire ultimately finds its strongest reality in religion, and the realm of poetry in prayer. In religion, the desire for the other person and for what transcends us is discerned as the love for God. Such desire is not a separate sphere of culture, but is born throughout our cultures, and animates all culture. But religion can name that desire, and can refuse the distraction of idolatry. It is not that religion has the answer for culture's desire– religion fans the desire that breathes in culture. It increases desire and purifies it. And so in prayer, the poet achieves an escape from the distraction of things, and even from that of words.

But religion is not simply a mystical desire. In one lengthy discussion of culture, Iqbal focuses on the spirit of Muslim culture as arising from Prophecy. While the mystic and prophet share a distinctive experience of vision, the prophet "seeks opportunities of redirecting or refashioning the forces of collective life." (*Reconstruction,* 125). Muslim culture begins in the task of the prophet. What Iqbal offers, in the early part of the 20th century, is an account of the contribution of Islam to Western culture as primarily a matter of science and knowledge. He articulates something much deeper than influence or connection; rather, a specific appeal to reasoning about both nature and history– an appeal that offers a deeper ground for induction, for empiricism, for attention to the concrete. I have focused on the aesthetic dimension of culture, which culminates in poetry, but in his account of Spirit of Muslim Culture he is looking for a way to identify cultural specificity to the medieval Islamic discovery that the world is dynamic, and that access to truth will lie through the concrete. I am not keen to evaluate his specific historical claim about the way that the Modern West both found and lost its compass. But what interests me is how his account of Muslim culture can dignify the concrete without losing the desire for the transcendent. Consider the following passage:

> But we must not forget that this system-building in the ancient world was the work of abstract thought which cannot go beyond the systematization of vague religious beliefs and traditions, and gives us no hold on the concrete situations of life. (*Reconstruction,* 126).

The challenge then is how to take up the concrete situations of life, and indeed, in a specific resonance with pragmatism, to test religious experience

"by its fruits" (*Ibid.* 27). Were mystic experience enough, there would be no need for this ultimate test, founded on prophecy; were abstract systems enough, we would not find in Muslim culture the attention to concrete things in mathematics, physics, and biology; nor to human history in its specificity. For Iqbal, the key to all of this enquiry and verification lies in the revolution in ontology that sets the world in motion in time. A dynamic world, reflecting in its every change infinite love, requires attention as such, and not primarily through abstraction and a priori categories.

I wish to focus our attention, at the start of the 21st Century, on the promise of the multiplicity of concrete situations of life, and on the ways that cultures can negotiate and articulate these multiplicities. Clearly for Iqbal, the religious dimension of culture oriented and engendered the features that made each culture different. His interpretation of Muslim Culture can help us distribute our attention over the variety of concrete situations of life, in order to think better about the multiplicity of religions as well as cultures.

Like cultures, religions speak their own languages. I would not say one language-one culture-one religion. Rather, for some religions there are many languages. For Christianity: Greek and Latin, and English, too, of course. For Judaism: Hebrew and Aramaic, Ladino and Yiddish, Arabic and French and German and even English. And for Islam: Arabic, of course, but also Farsi, and Urdu, and Punjabi, and again, English. The languages of poetry are like streams that flow into the lakes of the religions. There may be a dominant stream, but these (and other religions as well) are confluences of multiple cultures. And in each case, the religion gives sustenance to the cultures, and inspires the desires that exceed the mere needs of humanity.

But I wish to move beyond the collections of languages in religions, and suggest that for the 21st century we need to see that multi-culturalism also depends on a deep understanding of the multiplicity of religions. Here the bi-national solution that Iqbal championed reflects a keen insight about not the diversity of culture, but the diversity of religions, and how to protect that diversity. So if I may extend the metaphor, from the lakes, rivers flow to the sea– and just as the many streams irrigate the uplands, so the many rivers bring life to different communities. Contributions from various religious traditions to our world are like cultures grown on the banks of rivers. If

religions are the ways that cultures gain their truest direction, are able to name the sources of inspiration and of desire within culture, then the multiplicity of religions shows that there are different ways to name God and to purify our desires for God and for each other.

Within my world in North America, there is now a growing awareness that the abundance of cultures does not just mean that we can eat a different kind of food each night of the week, but that cultures require nurturing and support, and that if multiple cultures are encouraged, the common good is enhanced, because it is good to live in a place where people do things differently and contribute to a conversation across their differences, not only despite or without recognizing them. In Canada, especially, and Toronto most of all, multi-culturalism is a widely espoused perspective. I am not sure whether in other countries this is so embraced, nor do I think that most thinkers from the early 20th Century would have seen the *multi* as a positive condition.

But lest I slip into a jingoism, I must add that there is genuine confusion within my society about whether these cultures and ethnicities rest on religion, or can stand free from the diverse religions that seem to be the very root of these various cultures. This multi-culturalism is a descendant of liberal political theory, and it is struggling to take communal differences seriously, but cannot quite recognize the religious dimension to this endeavour. For Iqbal, while the role of language in culture was not at the center of his concept of culture, religion was unmistakably so. In his own life he held together many languages, and conversed with people from many cultures. He resisted the interpretation of nationalistic culture, and here he would have been much at home with the abundant diasporaic communities of our time. But is the multiplicity of religious cultures itself religiously desirable?

Section 4: Religions and Cultures

And so, I turn to Cambridge. Before I do, I wish to make a brief detour to Pakistan– to a complex society that engages directly the insights that cultures gain their full depth from religion, and if the political tensions map and do not map on top of the religious differences, the recognition that what might

have been a minority religion could thrive as religion in a separate institutionalized state is a dramatic and still difficult lesson from Iqbal.

But I turn to Cambridge because the Cambridge Inter-Faith Program is setting out a new path to embrace the diversity of the cultures of the world– by focusing on the diversity of religions. The Interfaith program does not set its goal as the formation of a single world religion, but rather the active and scholarly engagement with other religions, and in the first instance the Abrahamic ones. In that context several years ago I met Muhammad Suheyl Umar here in Cambridge. We met in a group called Scriptural Reasoning, where we were reading the holy writings of those three traditions. I am a philosopher but Umar is a man of great culture. And we met to learn from each other how our distinct religions interpreted their holy texts. Interpretation of scripture requires insights into poetry and language, as well as the rigors of conceptual thought– but it was not our interdisciplinary exchange that spawned our friendship, but our religious commitment to our own traditions and to the conversation with the other. We conversed over texts diverse in religion and in languages. In the fellowship of studying together we have begun to learn about each other's religions, and also about our cultures. But I wish to focus on the possibilities for multiple religions and the place of the university to foster this conversation. For what purifies our own traditions is this close engagement with another tradition, and the freedom of the university makes possible a level of interchange that in a civic setting might not be possible.

So as we face the future of Religion in the 21st century, then just as we are slowly learning to cherish and nourish the multiplicity of cultures, we can also learn to hold a deep conversation that preserves and supports the multiplicity of our religions. It may be for some that the tension between religions limits them to exchange and conversation at the more diffuse cultural level; but the deepest conversation awaits us between religions, and to hold that conversation will likely take the leadership of the university. By cultivating our desires to learn, a desire that can be purified in conversation across cultures and even more across religions, the university can teach us to find that deepest ground for the cultural conversation. And through the intensive study and comparison of languages, cultures, and religions, the university trains us to see that ignorance and idolatry are the sources of our

aversion to cherishing the bounty of the multiplicity we see in our world. Thus the word 'and' of my title shows us that the diversity of cultures points to the abundance of blessings in the diversity of religions, even as the abundance of religions nurtures the bounty of cultures.

And if Iqbal left Cambridge prepared to write the poetry that would one day fashion a dynamic for the founding of Pakistan, creating a new relation between religion and culture; then one hundred years later we can learn to create new relations between cultures and religions.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Dr. Ahmed Afzaal

Ahmed Afzaal was born and raised in Pakistan. His fascination with Iqbal was kindled at the age of 11, partly as a result of the excitement generated by Iqbal Centenary celebrations in 1977. It continued to simmer quietly, and was fueled two years later when he won a collection of Iqbal's Urdu poetry in a quiz competition. It was fired up even more during his teenage years as a result of his discovery of and growing interest in the Qur'an, surviving even the icy cold logic of science that he later experienced in medical school. Finding his temperament and passion unsuited to the medical profession, he turned his attention to the study of religion. He completed his doctorate in the area of "Religion and Society" in 2006, and is currently assistant professor of comparative religion at Concordia College in Minnesota, United States.

Dr. Basit Koshul

Dr Basit Koshul is an Associate Professor at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) in Lahore, Pakistan. He received his PhD in 2003 from Drew University, USA, specializing in the sociology of religion. His areas of research include the interaction between modernity and religion, philosophy of science, philosophy of religion, the sociology of culture and the contemporary Islam-West encounter. He is especially interested in exploring and integrating the insights of Allama Muhammad Iqbal, Charles Sanders Peirce and Max Weber, with reference to the aforementioned issues. Dr Basit has a number of books to his credit, including *The Postmodern Significance of Max Weber's Legacy: Disenchanting Disenchantment* (Palgrave, 2005). He has co-edited a collection of essays entitled *Scripture, Reason and Contemporary Islam-West Encounter: Studying the Other, Understanding the Self* (Palgrave, 2007).

Dr. Ejaz Akram

Dr Ejaz Akram is an Associate Professor (Religion & Politics) at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS).

He joined the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at LUMS in 2005. He holds a Ph.D. in World Politics (Specializations: Religion & World Politics and Comparative Political Philosophy) from the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. He also holds two M.A. degrees; Master of Arts in Comparative & Regional Studies (Middle East & South Asia) from the School of International Service at American University in Washington D.C., and Master of Arts in International Relations from CUA, Washington, D.C. Before joining LUMS, Dr Akram was Assistant Professor at American University in Cairo, Egypt for two years. He also taught at Franklin & Marshall in Pennsylvania.

Dr Akram's research and teaching focuses on Islam and the Muslim world, and also the religio-political issues and political philosophies of Christianity and Hinduism.

Dr Akram has published several books, scholarly articles, reviews and editorials, and appeared on several radio and television programs in North America, the Middle East and South Asia. Some of his recent books include; *Ideals and Realities of Regional Integration in the Muslim World: The Case of the ECO,* with Oxford University Press*; Islam-Christian Relations: Impact of Western Missionary Activity on Coptic-Islamic Relations in Egypt* (forthcoming); *Crisis of Parliamentary Governance in Pakistan: An argument for Presidential Federalism* (forthcoming); and "*Globalization and the Muslim World: Modernity and the Roots of Conflict"* in *Islam*, *Fundamentalism and the Betrayal of Tradition*.

Dr. Javid Iqbal

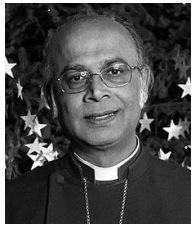
Dr. Javid Iqbal was born in Lahore, where he received his early education. He studied in Government College, Lahore for his Bachelor of Arts (Hons) and Masters in English and Philosophy. He gained his PhD in Philosophy

from the University of Cambridge, England, and his Bar-at-Law, from the Lincoln's Inn, London. He holds an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters, from Villanova University, USA and an honorary Doctorate of Islamic Literature & Science from the Seljuk University, Turkey.

From 1956 to 1970 he practiced law at the High Court while teaching at the Law College, Punjab University, Lahore as a Visiting Lecturer. He was the Visiting Professor for Islamic Culture at the University of Mexico in 1962. He became a Judge at the Lahore High Court in 1971 where he was elevated to the eminent position of the Chief Justice in 1982 and headed the institution till 1986. From 1986 to 1989 he served as Judge for the Supreme Court of Pakistan. He holds the distinction of being the Vice-President, Governing Body, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Member/Vice-Chairman Governing Council of OIC Centre for Preservation of Islamic Cultural Heritage, Istanbul, Permanent Member of the Royal Academy for Islamic Civilization Research, Amman, Jordan and Member International Committee Qaddafi Human Rights Award, Libya. He has also been Pakistan's Delegate to the United Nations General Assembly and has represented Pakistan on various other forums.

Dr. Javid has lectured in America, Canada, Europe, the Middle East, Pakistan, Egypt, Syria, Turkey and Iran. He is the author of a large number of articles in Urdu, English, Persian and Punjabi on Islamic Political Thought, Ideology of Pakistan and Philosophy of Iqbal. His works include *Ideology of Pakistan & Its Implementation, Stray Reflections: A Note-Book of Iqbal, Legacy of Quaid-e-Azam, Mai Lala Faam* (Urdu Collection of Papers on Iqbal), *Zinda Rood* (Urdu Biography of Iqbal), *Afkar i Iqbal* and *the Concept of State in Islam– A Reassessment*.

Dr. Michael James NazirAli



Michael James Nazir-Ali (born 19 August 1949) is the Pakistani-born 106th and current Bishop of Rochester in the Church of England. He holds dual Pakistani and British citizenship. Bishop Nazir-Ali attended Saint Patrick's High School, Karachi, read economics, Islamic history, and sociology at the University of Karachi (BA 1970) and

studied in preparation for ordination at Ridley Hall, Cambridge (1970). He undertook further postgraduate studies in theology at St Edmund Hall, Oxford (BLitt 1974, MLitt 1981), Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge (MLitt 1976), and the Australian College of Theology (ThD 1983). He has also studied at the Centre for the Study of World Religions at Harvard Divinity School and in 2005 he was awarded the Lambeth DD. He has a number of other doctorates. His particular academic interests include comparative literature and comparative philosophy of religion. In addition to teaching appointments in colleges and universities in many parts of the world, he has been a tutor in the University of Cambridge, Senior Tutor of Karachi Theological College, and Visiting Professor of Theology and Religious Studies in the University of Greenwich. He has been elected an Honorary Fellow of his colleges at Oxford (St Edmund Hall) and Cambridge (Fitzwilliam). From 1986 until 1989, while he was Assistant to the Archbishop of Canterbury and Co-ordinator of Studies and Education for the Lambeth Conference, he was Honorary Curate of Oxford St Giles and St Philip and St James with St Margaret.

Bishop Nazir-Ali's published writings include the following: *Islam: A Christian Perspective* (1983); *Frontiers in Christian-Muslim Encounters* (1987); *From Everywhere to Everywhere: A World View of Christian Mission* (1990); *Thinking globally, acting locally* (1992); *Mission and Dialogue: Proclaiming the Gospel Afresh in Every Age* (1995); *The Mystery of Faith* (1995); *Citizens and Exiles: Christian Faith in a Plural World* (2000); *Shapes of the Church to Come* (2001); *Understanding My Muslim Neighbour* (2003); *Conviction And Conflict: Islam, Christianity And World Order* (2005).

Muhammad Suheyl Umar

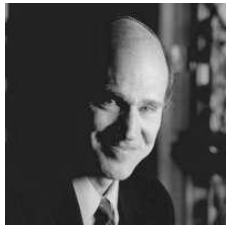
Muhammad Suheyl Umar is the Director Iqbal Academy Pakistan and his area of specialty and interests include Sufism as well as the thought of Muhammad Iqbal and the intellectual history of the Indian subcontinent from Shah Waliullah to Iqbal. He is the Founder-Editor of *Riwayat*, a scholarly Urdu journal; Editor, *Iqbal Review*, a quarterly journal, published alternately in Urdu and English (as well as in Persian, Arabic and Turkish) focusing on Iqbal studies in addition to Islamic

Studies, Comparative Religion, Philosophy, Literature, History, Arts and Sociology.

Dr. Nicholas Adams

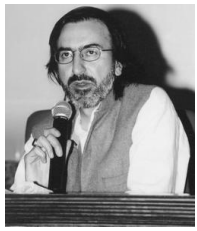
Nicholas Adams studied music at Cambridge before switching to theology. He wrote a doctoral dissertation on Jurgen Habermas under the supervision of Nicholas Lash, after which he was a research fellow in Theology and Social Theory at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. Since 1998 he has taught philosophy and theology at the University of Edinburgh. From August 2008 he will take up a two-year post as the Academic Director of the Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme. He has written articles on the relation of philosophy to theology, on scriptural reasoning, and is the author of *Habermas and Theology* (CUP, 2006).

Dr. Peter W. Ochs



Dr Peter W. Ochs is the Edgar M. Bronfman Professor of Modern Judaic Studies, Modern Jewish Thought at the University of Virginia. He is the co-founder of the Society for Scriptural Reasoning and is the founding editor of *The Journal of Scriptural Reasoning*. His interests include Jewish philosophy and theology, modern and postmodern philosophic theology, pragmatism, and semiotics. His extensive corpus includes books such as *Peirce, Pragmatism, and the Logic of Scripture* (Cambridge, 1998) and *Reasoning After Revelation: Dialogues in Postmodern Jewish Philosophy*, with Steven Kepnes and Robert Gibbs (Westview Press/Perseus, 1998). His current area of research delves into topics such as Muslim-Jewish-Christian dialogues on scripture and reason, philosophy and Jewish prayer, and (in progress) quantum theory and theology. These topics are part of the broader subject matter on relations between contemporary Jewish thought and classical biblical and rabbinic sources; Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions of scriptural interpretation; and relations among contemporary religious, philosophic, and scientific reasoning.

Dr. Reza Shah Kazemi



Dr Reza Shah- Kazemi received his PhD in Comparative Religion from Kent University in England in 1994. He is a Research Associate at the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, and is the Managing Editor of *Encyclopedia Islamica*, an abridged English translation of the Persian *Great Islamic Encyclopedia*.

His publications include *My Mercy Encompasses All–The Koran's Teachings on Compassion, Peace and Love* (Shoemaker and Hoard, 2007); *Paths to Transcendence– According to Shankara, Ibn 'Arabi and Meister Eckhart* (World Wisdom Books, 2005) and *The Other in the light of the One: The Universality of the Qur'an and Interfaith Dialogue* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2006).

Dr. Robert Gibbs

Robert Gibbs is Professor of Philosophy and the Inaugural Director of the Jackman Humanities Institute at the University of Toronto. He has published widely on Jewish and Continental Philosophy. His main work is *Why Ethics? Signs of Responsibilities* (Princeton, 2000). He is one of the original members of Scriptural Reasoning and is engaged in intensive conversation in the relations among the Abrahmic traditions. His current research is on Law and Ethics.

Dr. Saeed A. Durrani

Dr Durrani was Educated at the Government College, Lahore, Universities of Cambridge and Oxford, gaining a PhD in nuclear Physics. He did his postdoctoral research in the UK, Germany and Canada. He has been the Director of the Atomic Energy Centre, Lahore, and has taught at the Department of Physics, University of Birmingham. Dr Durrani was the Founder and Editor- in- Chief of the international research journal, *Nuclear Tracks,* published by Paragon Press, Oxford. He was the leader

of one of 8 British teams to work on Moon Samples retrieved by NASA and the unmanned Russian missions to the moon. He has contributed over 300 research articles on the subject of thermal history of the moon and meteorites.

Dr Durrani has also made many creative contributions to literature, poetry, and literary biography– especially on the life and thought of Allama Muhammad Iqbal. He is the author of several seminal books on Iqbal in Urdu and English, including *Iqbal Europe mein* (1985); *Navádir-i Iqbal Europe mein* (1995); Facsimile Reproduction of Nicholson's Translation of *Asrár-i Khudí* with extensive amendments in Iqbal's own hand (2001); and Arberry's MS Translation of Iqbal's *Gulshan-i Ráz-i Jadid*.

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