

**ALLAMA MUHAMMAD IQBAL  
ON THE  
CONCEPT OF IMMORTALITY**

**(Dr. Naeem Ahmad's اقبال کا تصور بقائے دوام rendered  
into English, edited and reviewed)**

By

**Dr. Abdul Khaliq**

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IQBAL'S CONCEPT  
OF DEATH, IMMORTALITY  
AND AFTERLIFE

Dr. Naeem Ahmad's  
“اقبال کا تصور بقائے دوام”

*Edited, Translated into English & Revised by*

Dr. Abdul Khaliq

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## Preface

Learned people, in general, and Iqbal scholars, in particular, are aware that voluminous literature has already been produced and is being produced at a very rapid pace on various aspects of the thought and message of Allama Muhammad Iqbal; nevertheless, it is also a truism that there still remains an acute shortage of such research-oriented writings in this field as may correctly be described 'purely philosophical' in character, both as regards the appraisal as well as the critical evaluation of his point of view. Many books, essays, theses and dissertations in almost all the major languages of the world are available which dilate on his political, social and religious ideas as expressed in his poetical works but rarely an attempt has been made to give an exhaustive and strictly technical treatment to his philosophical standpoint, specially as it is enunciated in his *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. *The Reconstruction* is the only work of Allama Iqbal, or at least it is the major work, which has really earned for him an international renown and which has given to philosophical thought in Pakistan a sense of belonging to the world philosophical tradition. The book is a difficult reading as the understanding of its contents presupposes a thorough comprehension of almost the entire Eastern and Western thought that is relevant to its subject-matter. Given that comprehension, it proves to be an interesting, thought-provoking reading and the reader loves to go deeper and deeper into its meanings. During my academic travels abroad, every teacher of philosophy, to whom I happened to introduce this book, read it with thorough involvement and appreciated it immensely. Muslim students and teachers, particularly, evinced special interest in its contents. Encouraged by this response I had to send for a number of

copies of the book from my home-country for gifting to them as my humble contribution towards the propagation of the religio-philosophical ideas of Iqbal in foreign lands.

My own interest in Iqbal's thought dates back to the earliest days of my educational career. Being myself a student of Philosophy, Iqbal's philosophical thought captured my attention more than his socio-political and literary concepts, mostly expressed in his poetry and also in his letters and statements. It was my ardent passion for understanding Iqbal's thought that was partly the reason why I opted for the teaching of philosophy as my profession despite various other professions that were open to me. After entering this profession I started writing articles on different aspects of Iqbal studies for various learned journals of the country. Some years ago, my article on 'Iqbal's Concept of Eternity' appeared in 'Iqbal'—a research journal published by the Iqbal Academy—which was well received in knowledgeable quarters. During the writing of this article I was genuinely convinced that Iqbal had a very keen interest in this problem and the eloquent references to it that he had made in his *Reconstruction* could not sufficiently be elaborated and explained within the limits of a single article. Consequently I set up a plan to carry out a detailed research and write a whole book on the subject. The result of this study is in your hands now.

On philosophical and technical subjects it is easier to write in English than in Urdu. One reason is that in the English language technical stature of a strictly philosophical writing can be maintained with convenience. On the contrary, if one undertakes to write in a language whose vocabulary is not so elaborate and comprehensive, he encounters difficulties of expression and communication at every step and so the process of the production of research becomes seriously hampered. Consequently, I too, while writing this book in the Urdu language faced various restraints and difficulties—difficulties of translating the mood of another language, particularly English, and of finding exact equivalents of technical terms. This was all due to, besides, in general, the poverty of the presently available Urdu vocabulary itself, its in-built limitation to discuss extremely



profound philosophical problems.

The question arises: if it was more convenient to write this book in English, why did I choose to adopt the Urdu medium? My answer is: though it is not the case, yet I desire that it *ought to be* the case that the Urdu language becomes so comprehensive and rich that it can easily absorb all kinds of sophisticated, technical and philosophical discussions. Obviously this kind of service to the Urdu language cannot be fruitfully rendered simply by producing more and more Urdu translations of already existing highly academic and scientific texts but also—and more appropriately—by producing in Urdu itself original research. I have been carrying out this project for quite some time almost with a passion. During the past many years I have consistently written in this language even on extremely profound metaphysical subjects. Anyone who undertakes this kind of endeavour will definitely have to face difficulties of expression, to begin with; but ultimately, I am confident, will ensure for it the kind of potential adequate enough to be able to discuss with ease all sorts of sophistications and intricacies.

Today the status of Urdu is the same as was the status which English had in the 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> centuries. During those times, Latin was the living language of the Christian world of Europe. Popes and theologians of various countries acquired their religious education in this language and communicated with others in the same. The entire literature of the medieval period was in Latin. So every student in the European countries had no option but to get his education in this language. However, with the passage of time the scholars began to write in their regional dialects. British thinkers, for example, Locke, Berkeley and Hume, had acquired their education in Latin but they wrote their own philosophies in English. Thus gradually the intellectual heritage of centuries was transmitted to the English language which in due course replaced Latin as the vehicle of original writings.

More or less this is the kind of bright future that I visualize and desire for our own language. Importance of English cannot, of course, be over-estimated and to adopt a prejudicial attitude towards it would not only be improper but also academically

harmful. To begin with, what is required is that along with, and parallel to, the English language, Urdu should also be patronized and adopted. Particularly, our experts who are skilled in arts and sciences should try their utmost to make their own language an equally reliable and authentic means of expression and communication. For the realization of this objective it is indispensable that our scholars should first be well-versed in the diversities of all kinds of knowledge available in the English language and then, having absorbed it and made it their own, should create knowledge afresh in their own language. Importance of the work of translation apart, genuine creativity will be of really durable service to the Urdu language.

Hence my choice to write the present book in Urdu!

During the writing of this book, I had to quote certain passages from English books. I have given Urdu translations of these passages in the main body of the book but at the end of the relevant chapters under 'Notes and References' I have quoted the original texts also. Wherever I have felt that an Urdu word would sound unfamiliar for the reader, I have written the original English equivalent in the brackets. Anyway, at the end of the book I have given a comprehensive glossary of all the technical/semi-technical terms used which shows at one glance the mutual equivalence of English and Urdu terms and phrases.

As to the main theme of the book, I was earlier of the opinion that eternity of life and existence is only a metaphysical problem; but during my studies on the subject I realized that the phenomenon of faith in the life hereafter registers a far-reaching impact on the individual as well as on the collective life of human beings. One example of this truth is the great pyramids which grew out of the ancient Egyptian civilization. Similarly, if we undertake an analysis of Muslim conquests in wars, we shall discover that their faith in the hereafter worked as a great motivating and consummating factor. I have tried to highlight, during the course of this work, the profound socio-cultural implications of the concept of immortality.

Before I close, I shall be failing in my duty if I do not thank Mr. Justice (Rtd) Dr. Javed Iqbal who, despite his multifarious

engagements, found time to go through the manuscript of this book and suggest some improvements, additions etc. His observations disclosed to me certain important points which were earlier unknown to me. Prof. Mirza Muhammad Munawwar, Director, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, accepted the manuscript for publication on behalf of his Academy. I am grateful to him. Mr. Suheyl Umar and Dr. Waheed Ishrat deserve my thanks because it is due to their concerted efforts that the book, after going through various stages, came out of the press in the shortest possible period of time. I am also beholden to Dr. Abdul Khaliq, Professor and Chairman, Department of Philosophy, Punjab University, Lahore, because his suggestions on many occasions during the writing of this book were of great benefit to me.

**Dr. Naeem Ahmad**

10 March, 1989.

## Chapter 1

# Problem of Death and its Philosophical Significance

All great philosophers of all times have directly or indirectly recognized the problem of death, but it appears to be strange that very few of them have made it a subject of their specialized study and detailed examination. As we go through even the history of ancient Greek philosophy we do find here and there stray observations on the subject and on the allied issues. Similarly a number of modern thinkers, while involved in their respective system-building activities, did make some peripheral and oblique references to it but did not realize the importance which perhaps it legitimately deserves. Schopenhauer, the pessimist, was the first notable thinker of modern times who undertook an elaborate discussion on the nature and meaningfulness of death. He, in fact, declared it to be the source and origin from which all sorts of speculations branch off. People may admit or they may refuse to admit, he says, but the motive force of philosophical thought is, in one sense or the other, nothing but the concept of death.<sup>1</sup>

Schopenhauer's attitude towards death had such a great impact on the European movement of Existentialism that the Existential thinkers—almost without exception—from Kierkegaard to the present times have in their writings given central importance to this problem. Many linguistic philosophers of the Anglo-American world too have encountered this problem but they have analysed it in such a way that it does not remain a philosophical problem at all; it is rather relegated to the realm of the 'metaphysical' and thus declared by them to be non-sensical

in character. As to its practical implications it is for them, at the most, an issue to be recognized by psychology or sociology. There is, of course, no doubt that in modern times psychologists and sociologists and even medical scientists too have given immense importance to this problem. In the Preface to *Death and Immortality* Robert Fulton writes:

In the last decade and particularly since the publication in 1959 of Herman Feifel's book *The Meaning of Death* research into the problems caused by death has burgeoned in the United States. Although Feifel could, in truth, state six years ago that we possessed little systematic knowledge about attitudes and reactions towards death, and that not enough attention had been paid to the implications of the meaning of death in this country, the situation has now changed perceptibly. Research into grief and bereavement, studies of attitudes towards death, and recorded responses to death and dying have begun to appear in increasing plenitude in the social and medical science literature.<sup>2</sup>

In the present times experts in medical, ecological and psychological sciences are carrying on researches on the inevitability of the experience of death and the matters that necessarily arise from its prospect. American experts visited the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and interviewed the survivors of atomic attacks there, recorded their reactions to the concepts of 'death' and 'dying' and finally produced reports and published them. In 1956 American Psychological Association arranged a convention in which a symposium was held on 'Psychology of Death'<sup>3</sup>. And so on.

However, insofar as the subject-matter of the present book is concerned, we cannot afford to digress and have a detailed review of such researches because they happen to belong elsewhere. We shall discuss the problem primarily in the philosophical context. Anyhow, wherever it is necessary, we shall also benefit from the studies carried out in other areas. In this connection, findings of parapsychology will be of special interest to us.

## II

Anthropologically, fear of death has been common to all

human beings. Basis of this fear, to begin with, was not that the human organism goes through a process of gradual decay as a result of aging and ultimately expires. In the civilized world of today man's attitude towards death is different from that of the people of ancient times. Now we are deeply convinced that every being that comes to this world must die one day. In other words, we have accepted once and for all that death is an inevitable and irrefutable truth. The primitive man, on the other hand, had never regarded it as essential to the nature of man himself. For him senile decay, decrepitude and decadence of bodily vigour were neither the necessary nor the sufficient condition of death. It was a matter of his experience that sometimes people, who are advanced in years and also have failing bodily organs, continue to live; and sometime those who are young and healthy suddenly meet their death. So he was not afraid and apprehensive of the pangs of death as much as he was of its being mysteriously uncertain and of the sorrowful state of the survivors who lose all contacts for all times to come with the one who is dead and gone. He considered death as the working of an unknown and unseen inimical power which, as if, keeps itself in ambush and, when the occasion arises, suddenly takes away its prey. This power, he was of the opinion, is exercised by a metaphysical being or even by a human person who, through witchcraft and magic, affects a person with some fatal disease: in the absence of such hostile machinations, no one would ever die. Thus the primitive man thought that he knew why death occurred; it mattered little for him as to how it occurred. This was a kind of *a priori* reasoning where ordinary observation and experience was irrelevant.

Primitive man's view that death is not an in-built tendency of the human organism but, instead, is the result of a hostile and angry act of supernatural agencies operating from without occasioned many irrationalities, superstitious customs and practices among them. For example, they would sacrifice the lives of their innocent children and beautiful maidens at the feet of gods and goddesses so as to appease their anger and invoke their pleasure.

If man has been born deathless—congenitally free from the

curse of extinction, how, after all, did the phenomenon of death come about? A typical myth explaining the origin of death is that of the Nama Hotentos:

The moon once sent the louse to promise immortality to man: 'As I die and dying live, so you also shall die and dying live'. The hare overtook the louse on its way and promised to deliver the message. He forgot it, however, and gave the wrong version: 'As I die and dying perish, etc.' The moon in anger struck the hare on its lip, which has been split ever since.<sup>4</sup>

In Old Testament there is a story which says that death was ordained for man, who by birth had been exempted from death, as a recompense for his act of disobedience. The first man created was prohibited by God from eating the fruit of a particular tree. He disobeyed for which he was punished with death. A similar story has been current among the tribes living in the suburbs of New South Wales:

Man was originally born deathless but he was asked not to go near a particular hollow tree. On this tree honey bees had built a hive to live in. One day a woman, moved by the temptation to get honey from the beehive, struck the tree with an axe. Immediately a huge bat came out of the tree. This bat was the death which thenceforth began preying upon human beings.<sup>5</sup>

These and similar stories were current among almost all the ancient tribes from which it can be easily inferred that for them death was not the necessary condition of human existence but was rather an importation from without—an extra-natural, extra-human event that only 'occurs' to man.<sup>6</sup>

Some research scholars have done a comparative study of a child's concept of death and its further evolution, on the one hand, and the earliest man's concept of death and its evolution, on the other, and have pointed out similarities and differences between the two. Though we cannot establish a perfect identity in this regard between the mental development of a child and the mental growth of the human race from its most preliminary state onwards—sometimes the recognition of such identity may even be misleading—yet some resemblance, between them can be fruitfully established. For instance, if we discover as to how and at what age a child becomes aware of death, it may throw some light on

the earliest man's consciousness of the facticity of death and its significance.

Psychologist Arnold Gesell has undertaken an interesting study of the emergence of the idea of death in children. A child till the age of five, he says, still cannot, in general, conceive of the state of not being alive, the state of his non-existence or of his own death. Sometimes he does develop an awareness about it but he may regard it reversible *i.e.* the dead may possibly come back to life just as a person who falls sick can regain his health. His attitude towards death is unemotional and of the nature of a matter-of-fact. At the age of six there is 'a beginning of an emotional response to the idea of death.' He may become apprehensive that his mother will die one day and leave him alone. He connects aggression and killing and sometimes illness and old age also with death, but the former is predominant. He still does not have the conviction that he himself will die. At the age of seven he begins to have a feeling that he may! Final step towards recognition not only that some people die through aggression or sickness or old age etc. but that all people will die including himself occurs between the ages of eight and nine. Correspondingly, it is believed, humanity had also its childhood when death was not recognized as an inevitable truth. But, as man evolved and matured, his concept of death and the matters related to it also underwent a gradual change till he acquired the capacity to derive general conclusions from his observations and experiences: 'all men are mortal' came to be accepted by him as one of such generalizations. Now, it is as sure a principle as, for example, 'fire always burns' or 'water always flows downwards.'

As against the view that certitude about death is a matter of inductive generalization from a number of observed instances there are at least two reactions from modern thinkers. Sheler holds that man instinctively and intuitively knows that he has to die and as an instinct it has always been present in the innermost depths of the human mind. He writes:

Death is... not a merely empirical ingredient of our experience, but belongs to the essence of every other life and our own life too. Thus it has the direction towards death... It is not a frame that, as



it were, by accident tacked on to the picture of various physical and physiological processes but a frame which belongs to the picture itself.<sup>7</sup>

The question is that if there is an intuitive certainty of death among human beings then how is it that the primitive man is recorded to have believed, as shown above, that death is only a contingent and accidental phenomenon. Sheler would reply that this is because of the fact that from eternity man has tried unconsciously to repress this intuition because of its horror. Otherwise, just as consciousness as such is normally a necessary accompaniment of life so is the prospect of death, in particular, the concern of all human beings.<sup>8</sup>

On the contrary, Landsberg insists that a person's deep conviction about the fact of the inevitability of death requires—is in fact conditioned by—a particular experience of the death of someone. Specifically, this is the incident of the death of someone whom he loves, who is very near and dear to him. This gives such an emotional shock to him and shakes his entire being so deeply that various dimensions of the experience of death are immediately revealed to him in all their details. With my beloved I constitute a 'we'. I and my beloved become one. When he dies in fact a part of this 'we', of this oneness, departs. That naturally moves me to my very foundations and gives me an existential awareness that 'I too will die one day'.

Views of Sheler and Landsberg can both be correct without involving any mutual contradiction between them. It is possible that the concept of death be *a priori*, congenitally present in man and it is possible at the same time that a particular phenomenon exposes it to the fullest light of consciousness. The fact is that man acquires certitude about death in a number of ways. Unlike dead matter, man, as a living organism, evolves and goes through various stages of growth and development. Every moment he has also the awareness that he is traversing more and more of the total span of his life and that the time of death destined for him he is gradually approximating. Anyway, it is an established fact that man consciously and deliberately accepted death as an inviolable reality after quite a long time.

### III

Modern philosophers have raised a pertinent and very interesting question: 'Can I witness my funeral?' On this subject, besides the philosophers, psychologists have also written a lot. To begin with, it is a patent fact that a man is worried about his own death to the extent to which he may not be worried about the death of anyone else. Particularly, the death of those with whom he has no emotional relationship carries the least importance for him. One can conceive another person's death and can even imagine how it occurs, but he can have no conception of his own death. Man's consciousness comprises, in the last analysis, his observation and experience extending over the entire period of time from his birth to death. Whatever conception he is able to form of the supersensible and the metaphysical realities too is ultimately grounded, somehow or other, in his sense experiences alone. In the words of the famous British empiricist John Locke:

...All our ideas come from experience *i.e.* from sensation and reflection. In that all our knowledge is founded, and from it ultimately derives itself. Our observation, employed either about external sensible objects or about the internal operations of our mind perceived and reflected on by ourselves, is that which supplies our understanding with all the material of thinking. These two are the fountains of knowledge, from whence all the ideas we have, or can naturally have, spring.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, death, which is the negation of life, is the discontinuance of sense experience. This is the crux of the difficulty regarding the question raised above.

However hard a person may try, he cannot have a concept of his own death *i.e.* of the discontinuance of the chain of his own sense experiences. A mental picture of the most ultimate and the most abstract beings can be developed somehow or other with the help of sense impressions but no mental picture can be formed and no conception can be developed of the phenomenon which comprises the very disruption of all sensations. Freud says: "Whenever we make the attempt to imagine our death" we can on reflection "perceive that we really survive as spectators".<sup>10</sup> So,

to form a concept of our own death or to witness our own funeral is logically impossible as it necessitates that to witness our own funeral we must somehow be alive and conscious: how can a non-living being be living at the same time!

In the sense in which Freud has used the word 'spectator' it is definitely logically impossible to entertain a 'living' concept of one's own death. However, if, we think a little closely we find that Freud's argument is not totally convincing. 'Spectator' has two possible meanings. According to one interpretation, as is the case with Freud's argument, it is necessary that he be present as a living, conscious existent, but not so according to the other equipossible interpretation. Suppose I make up a plan to visit the Taj Mahal of Agra next month in order to observe the beauties of its construction from all angles. If I *now* visualize this entire spectacle that is yet to be, I find myself as a living and conscious spectator of the Taj Mahal. Suppose that, due to certain reasons, the program of my visit to the Taj Mahal is cancelled. Now I once again conceptualize the Taj Mahal and various persons looking at it. This time I do not find myself among the spectators: thus the word 'spectator' has two meanings. According to the one, my existence as spectator is necessary but, according to the other, it is not so. In this second sense I deliberately set myself apart from other spectators. This means that I am capable of thinking from a specific angle of my mind and consciousness such that my own being stands eliminated: So it can be said that a person can have a concept of his non-existence before birth, and if that is possible then it should be possible to conceive one's non-existence after his death.

As opposed to Freud there are some existential thinkers who regard death—despite being the negation of their own existence—as conceivable. Martin Heidegger in the first section of the second part of his book *Being and Time* has undertaken a discussion of the problem of death and dread. Heidegger's main thesis in the book is that study of Being is the real and basic concern of philosophy. The aspect of being of which he takes special account is Dasein *i.e.* the human being—not the being of this or that man but the being of man as such. It is only human

beings who try to understand Being, so an analytical study of Dasein is an important basic condition of the study of Reality or Being as such. Man finds himself in a world which has already existed. It is not a world of his own choice, so his existence in it is not authentic. In order to acquire authenticity he has to create for himself a world of his own. This further requires that he should withdraw from the external, practical life and attend to his own situation. From the consideration of one's own conscious existence it transpires that it comprises various moods. One of these moods is that of self-centeredness. This is the mood of dread. All the other moods are related to some one or the other aspect of the external world but dread has no reference to any external object—in fact it is the feeling of vacuity, nonentity and nothingness. It is against this perspective that we have to give special importance to the concept of death as such for a comprehensive awareness of life and for the formation of our subjective world. We regard death as the indispensable condition of our 'being-in-the-world'. We are 'being-to-death' *i.e.* death is the goal of our life-journey. Dread, or what Heidegger also calls 'Augst', gives us the feeling of freedom and the consciousness of authenticity. Heidegger's thought, in general, is garbed in ambiguous, unfamiliar terminology. On the basis of his writings it is difficult to construct a systematic, coherent point of view regarding his concept of death. His American follower Koestenbaum has, to an extent, eased out this difficulty for us. He says:

Our death is generically different from the death of others. We encounter here a very serious and altogether a fundamental ambiguity in the word 'death'. A phenomenological analysis discloses that when we think of the death of another, we eliminate an object within the world, without at the same time eliminating the observing ego or the subject. If a man examines closely what he means by the death of another person, he recognizes that he himself is still in the picture: he is the observer contemplating the scene, even if the scene may be only in his imagination. Death (of another) is an event within the world, while the life world, the world of human experience endures.<sup>11</sup>

According to Koestenbaum, during the observation of another man's death, the observer is of course present but when a person forms a concept, and imagines the phenomenon, of his own death, his existence as an observer is eliminated. His personal self being thus eliminated, the feeling is almost like falling perpetually downwards to unfathomable depths. During the observation of the death of others the world does not disappear but during the activity of conceiving one's own death, the world tends to disappear. In fact, according to him, my death is the death of the entire world. 'My death' amounts to the feeling of nothingness or of an absolute void; not so in the case of the death of the other because this latter experience involves manifold references to the world at large.<sup>12</sup>

The objection that was raised against Freud can be levelled against the views of Koestenbaum too; *i.e.* for witnessing one's own funeral it is not necessary that the person retains a living, conscious state after his death. Mind does have an angle of vision from which it can 'observe' his own funeral even if the sentient being himself stands eliminated. Moreover, when both Heidegger and Koestenbaum say that a person's death is for him death of the entire world, it appears to be an exaggerated statement. They are justified only to say that a person's death is the death of his entire subjective world. Before people die they write wills in regard to the distribution of their property etc. among their heirs or various charitable institutions because they know that after their death the world will continue to be. Heidegger and Koestenbaum must themselves have had taken many steps during their lives for the welfare of their children and others who would succeed them. Thus a person regards his death to be the end of his own personal world and not the external, objective world at large.

#### IV

It will be in place here to say a few words about those researches<sup>13</sup> which Freud conducted in regard to 'death' and the 'death instinct'. We have seen above that according to some thinkers death-consciousness is present in the mind of every

human individual as an intuitive certainty. Just as life is a self-evident fact for him so certainty of the prospective cessation of his life is ingrained in the innermost depths of his nature. Freud subscribed to this point and systematically propounded it with a scientific gusto.

It appears to be strange that early researches of Freud which related to the unconscious, the interpretation of dreams and the critical appraisal of some psychical disorders have become widely known among his readers but the views expressed by him in the later period of his life have not received the attention that they deserve. His concepts of Eros (or life instinct) and Thanatos (or death instinct) belong to this period. The gist of his life-long studies was that libido has two basic instincts: the instinct of self-preservation and the instinct of self-propagation. Both these instincts have one common objective in view *i.e.* the promotion of life and its evolution through various stages of growth and development. All the instincts in human beings can be subsumed under their natural desire for the protection of life. This is the life instinct. But what is that which is opposed to this instinct. According to Freud, it is the instinct of death.

Journey of life has its irreversible goal in death. The entire process of the growth and evolution of life in an organism takes him back to the stage from which that process started *i.e.* the lifeless materiality. In his own words:

The attributes of life were at some time evolved in inanimate matter by the action of a force of whose nature we can form no conception. It may perhaps have been a process similar in type to that which later caused the development of consciousness in a particular stratum of living matter. The tension which then arose in what had hitherto been an inanimate substance endeavored to cancel itself out. In this way the first instinct came into being: the instinct to return to the inanimate state: it was still an easy matter at that time for a living substance to die; the course of its life was probably only a brief one whose direction was determined by the chemical structure of the young life. For a long time, perhaps, living substance was thus being constantly created afresh and easily dying, till decisive external influences altered in such a way as to oblige the still surviving substance to diverge ever more

widely from its original course of life and to make ever more complicated *detours* before reaching its aim of death. These circuitous paths to death, faithfully kept to by the conservative instincts, would thus present us to-day with the picture of the phenomenon of life.<sup>14</sup>

From the above quotation it transpires that Freud extended his researches regarding the concept of death to the phenomenon of the emergence of life. The term 'Thanatos' was used by him for the first time in 1920 in his book *Beyond The Pleasure Principle*. In this book his hypothesis was that a living being, as it grows and matures, carries in itself the process of death also which he calls 'the tendency of return to the inorganic matter'. The views of the ancient savages who regarded death as a supernatural event, an unfortunate affliction or punishment perpetrated from without by some mysterious, unforeseeable force, are not acceptable to him. On the contrary, the concept of death which he is trying to bring out is that of a natural phenomenon—a phenomenon ultimately grounded in the nature of man. The instincts whose purpose is to preserve and propagate life are the very myrmidons of death also.<sup>15</sup> These instincts see to it that, after the life-journey is accomplished by an organism, death must overtake it. 'Hence arises the paradoxical situation that the living organism struggles most energetically against events (dangers, in fact) which might help it to attain its life's aim rapidly—by a kind of short circuit'. In order to seek confirmation of his views he tries to draw support from the findings of zoologists.

Freud in this connection refers to Wilhelm Fliess who put forth the view that every organism has a specified, fixed lease of life, after the expiry of which it meets its death. His observation on this view is that external circumstances of various kinds, that exercise their influence on the organism, may prolong or shorten it. He then refers to the writings of Weismann who introduced in them the concept of the division of living substance into mortal and immortal parts. The mortal part is the 'soma' and the immortal part is the germ-cells: the former—body in the narrower sense—alone is subject to death whereas the latter is potentially immortal. Germ-cells, under certain favorable conditions, have

the capacity to develop into a new individual.

In the views of Wiesman, Freud finds the confirmation of his own thesis. The distinction between 'soma' and the, 'germ-cells', carries a deep significance for him. One part of the living organism is mortal but the other part is immortal because it helps to perpetuate the species. However, Freud's subject of study is not the living substance itself but the forces operating in it. Therefore he follows the researches of Wiesman further. He simply gets inspiration from the latter towards his own concept of the two instincts, the Eros and the Thanatos:

We may pause for a moment over this pre-eminently dualistic view of instinctual life. According to E. Hering's theory, two kinds of processes are constantly at work in living substance, operating in contrary directions, one constructive or assimilatory and the other destructive or dissimilatory. May we venture to recognize in these two directions taken by the vital processes the activity of our two instinctual impulses, the life instincts and the death instincts? There is something else, at any rate, that we cannot remain blind to. We have unwittingly steered our course into the harbor of Schopenhauer's philosophy. For him death is the 'true result, and to that extent the purpose, of life'.<sup>16</sup>

Freud felt the need of the instinct of death as an hypothesis due to the fact that, after the first world war, he happened to examine many patients who suffered from war neurosis and reported that during dreams they very often saw the spectacles of the ruins of war, of the dead bodies scattered here and there and of terrifying explosive sounds which paralyzed their nervous system. Moreover, Freud developed a feeling that the nations who are fighting war do get—maybe unconsciously—some kind of satisfaction by large-scale massacre and devastation.<sup>17</sup> He also discovered that some of his patients had an unconscious fascination for the diseases which afflicted them and liked to stick to them. In the face of such experiences Freud's earlier hypothesis that the unconscious is governed only by the pleasure principle appeared to lose its ground. That 'the unconscious desires more and more of pleasure and less and less of pain' cannot justify that consolation which individuals as well as



nations sometimes derive from devastation, massacre and carnage. So in 1920 Freud wrote his *Beyond The Pleasure Principle* in which he formally used the term 'Thanatos', *i.e.*, the death instinct: opposed to it are the sex- and ego-instincts, which come under the life-instinct. Death instinct is there in every living being as an inherent tendency to return to the non-living, inorganic state.

Thanatos, which draws an organism towards his own death, sometimes assumes violent and even murderous stances: instinct of dying transforms itself into the desire to kill.<sup>18</sup> On this hypothesis he explains the phenomena of masochism and sadism. Against the context of death instinct Freud prepared the warp and woof of his entire social philosophy and on that score it was possible for him to answer many questions which he could not answer in terms of the 'pleasure principle'.

Freud's thesis regarding death instinct has been criticized on many counts—and of course not entirely unjustifiably—but it cannot be denied that it was a novel approach towards an understanding of the nature of death and of various problems generated by the prospect of this phenomenon.

Incidentally, Freud's pronouncement regarding the instincts of life and death brings him very close to Dialectical Materialism, whose thesis is that primacy belongs to matter which, due to its inherent dialectics, keeps moving to higher and higher levels of existence. One of the basic dictums of Dialectical Materialism is the 'Unity of Opposites.' This is in contradistinction to the Aristotelian principle that two contradictories cannot be true of an object simultaneously. A person cannot be honest and non-honest at the same time. A rose cannot be red and non-red at the same time. And so on. Known as the law of non-contradiction it is one of the basic laws of thought in Aristotelian Logic. In logic and in scientific thinking this law may be valid, rather indispensable; but as to the non-logical functions of mind it becomes inoperative. While dreaming, for example, and during an intensive emotional waking state we are at home with contradictions. Man's spiritual as well as emotional phases of life cannot, in general, be appreciated and evaluated in terms of the

law of non-contradiction. Similarly, even in the external nature also there are some phenomena wherein contradictions become mutually united in one. Take, for instance, the material atom wherein the positive and negative discharges of electricity become one.

Dialectical Materialists talk of two kinds of contradictions—logical contradictions and dialectical contradictions. As to the former, they agree with Aristotle that in the realm of logical thinking the principle of the Unity of Opposites does not hold but, as to the latter, Aristotelian logic, with its principle of non-contradiction, fails and so in order to understand them and deal with them we need another kind of logic— the dialectical logic. This logic does not replace that of Aristotle but only complements it: it has as its subject-matter those facts which Aristotelian logic does not appreciate and explain. The contradiction between life and death is one such dialectical contradiction. Just as a person may sometimes exhibit the attitudes of love and hate at the same time, just as a mental patient may be a sadist and a masochist at the same time or just as an atom is the positive as well as the negative discharge of electricity at the same time, so in a living organism two contradictory operations of life and death perpetually continue peacefully together. Every moment a number of cells die out and at the same moment new cells are born. The organism dies and is born every moment. These simultaneous processes of decay and growth of cells are what the zoologists call assimilation and dissimilation. Freud hypothesized his twin instincts of life and death on the very basis of these two activities.

As is evident from above, like Freud the Dialectical Materialists too refuse to regard the event of death as something which overtakes a living organism incidentally as if it were an imposition from without; it is rather very much within the organism as a continuous process and a persistent tendency throughout its tenure of existence. Till the maturation of youth, the tendency to live predominates but with the inception of old age the tendency to die takes over. Mutual struggle between life and death for getting mastery over each other is in fact the very

ground of the existence of an organism. According to Freud, the death instinct pushes the organism towards annihilation but, when some calamity or mishap threatens it from without, the life instinct makes an all-out effort to defend it. In this concept we find an echo of one of the essential principles of Dialectical Materialism known as 'identity in difference'.

## V

As we go through, the history of philosophy we find that in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C. of Greece and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries B.C. of Rome the problem of death occupied basic importance. But, with the advent of Christianity and the popular appeal of its teachings, scholars stopped taking interest in the philosophical discussion of this problem. It appeared as if the emphasis on the immortality of soul contained in these teachings had given the final verdict as regards the status of death and various attendant issues. During the Middle Ages, when religion stood reduced to a hand-maid of philosophy, the thinkers—if at all they encountered this problem—would deal with it only theologically, and avoid answering any fundamental questions about it. After Renaissance, philosophers—perhaps as a reaction to the Medieval spirit—had a tendency to deny an independent, substantial existence to the human soul and hence the factuality of its life hereafter. With these thinkers the problem assumed a new direction; they began to discuss as to how one can overcome the fear of the inevitable death. Anyway, parallel to them there was a small class of thinkers who did make the status of soul and its immortality as the subject-matter of their deliberations. Thus there were two groups among the modern philosophers: firstly, there were those who somehow or other, made immortality the central concept of their philosophies; Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Camus and some others belong to this group. Secondly, there were those who denied outright any sort of life after death; Bertrand Russell and the Logical Positivists, in principle, opposed metaphysics and denied the validity of any eschatological concepts whatever. Bertrand Russell does not believe at all in a spiritual substance over and above the nervous

system and hence for him the question of the immortality of soul simply does not arise.<sup>19</sup> As to the 19<sup>th</sup> century physical sciences, their naturalistic stance, in general, which inspired the movement of Logical Positivism, tended to leave no scope for any beyond-the-world truths which a person may conceive and dilate upon.

One criticism that is levelled against researches on the problem of death is that it is a futile endeavour and amounts to nothing but waste of time and energy. The thinkers, it is argued, should rather grapple with the living problems relevant to the human situation—social, psychological, economic and others and try to solve them. The answer to this criticism is that death itself is a very important problem relating to the human situation. Man's attitude towards death is an essential contributing factor towards the formation of his personality. In the subjectivity of man there is an element of basic anxiety which is an object of study both for the existentialists and the psychologists; some philosophers regard fear of death as the cause of this anxiety. For this reason understanding of the problem of death in all its dimensions amounts to the unveiling of a grand truth about the human situation. Besides, unlike natural sciences where events are explained in terms of their mechanical causation, man's personality has to be appraised from a teleological point of view. In order to have a thorough appreciation of what a man is we have to peep into his future and understand his desires, aspirations and ideals—and who can deny that his death is his irresistible expectation, a part and parcel of his future state of affairs! Existentialist thinkers go to the extent of saying that it is only by having an encounter with death and only by truly accepting it as an irrefutable truth that man can become capable of authentic existence. Not simply in case of individuals, in the case of nations also if we have to define their character and their collective temper we must already know about their attitude towards death as also towards the hereafter. The truth is that without serious contemplation over the nature and significance of death true understanding of life itself is not possible.

Another class of critics say that death is not at all a problem of philosophy. 'Extermination of the organism' comes within the

scope of the subject-matter of biology and the fear of death is the problem for psychology to deal with. At the face of it the criticism appears to be valid; but as we undertake a closer examination, this is not entirely so. 'Fear of death' as well as 'resurrection' (consequent upon the event of death) have certain dimensions and refer to certain subsidiary issues which are neither biological nor psychological in character. For instance, take the case of Amoeba, a unicellular organism. Its method of breeding or reproduction is that it divides itself into two parts and each part becomes an independent unicellular organism. Freud refers to a research conducted by an American biologist Woodruff, "experimenting with a ciliate infusorian, the 'slipper animalcule', which reproduces by fission into two individuals persisted until the 3029<sup>th</sup> generation (at which point he broke off the experiment), isolating one of the part products on each occasion and placing it in fresh water. This remote descendent of the first slipper animalcule was just as lively as its ancestor and showed no signs of ageing or degeneration".<sup>20</sup> This example shows that the annihilation of the organism, reproduction and immortality etc. are the problems which transcend the scope of biology and imply certain theoretical discussions which only philosophers can undertake. Similarly the prospect of death as well as the fear of death etc. have social and moral implications, as pointed out above, which none but a philosopher can survey and discuss.

Traditionally, we know, 'death', fear of death as well as life after death were the problems dealt with only by religion: in the doctrinal structures of almost all the religions of the world, faith in immortality is found as one of the essential components although there have been differences among them as to the exact nature of the life-hereafter. Sometimes the convictions of the men of religion in regard to certain details 'appeared' to come into conflict with commonsense and with reason and logic. It was on such occasions that they became a matter of serious concern for the philosophers. Insofar as the rational understanding of these details is concerned, in modern times philosophers have taken over from the theologians and the men of religion.

Herman Feifel,<sup>21</sup> author of the well-known *Meaning of Death*, says that howsoever different may be the philosophers' views about death, at least three recurring matters-of-fact are clearly recognizable.

- a. In much of American thought we find a tendency to avoid an encounter with death. The fact, however, is that one cannot truly comprehend life and live it fully unless he understands death in the right perspective. Effects of the idea of death are tracable on individuals as well as on societies.
- b. It is understandable that our science-conscious culture is capable of recognizing only those experiences which are within the bounds of space and time. It does not equip us with the requisite parameters for understanding research into the phenomenon of death which stands for the cessation of all experience.
- c. Beyond, and other than, the ordinary modes of research, we need a method of study that would suit the nature of the problem and be also reliable. Given such a method, investigation into the problem of death and dying can enhance our understanding of the individual's behavior and yield an additional entryway to an analysis of cultures.<sup>22</sup>

Feifel appears to be clear in his conviction that ordinary scientific methods are not useful towards the discovery of the nature of death. He obliquely admits in this connection the need of a parapsychological approach. Presently, we do not propose to discuss this approach in all its depth alongwith the results achieved by it. This we shall do in the next chapter. In the meantime, we shall describe some of the observations which were made 'within the spatio-temporal bounds'.

Psychologists and sociologists have prepared a number of reports which comprise experiences and personal impressions of people while at the threshold of their deaths. From among those who are declared dead by doctors, some regain consciousness for a short while or, in some cases, conscious life is revived through the techniques of artificial respiration. On the basis of the experiences reported by such people a number of results have

been derived. Wheeler, the well-known author of *Life After Death*, has cited many such reports. Reports by himself and by many others, whom he has quoted regarding the near-death experiences, are loaded with eloquent confirmations of the matter-of-factness of the life hereafter.<sup>23</sup>

It can be objected here that the information gathered by Wheeler and others comprises, in fact, the experiences and impressions of living people howsoever close to death they may be. So to say that they throw light on the exact nature of death (not to speak of the exact nature of the life after death!) is not correct.

The objection has a lot of justification but it is not entirely valid. From the scientific and logical point of view no line of demarcation can be drawn between life and death. There may be some persons who are psychically dead *i.e.* they have lost consciousness) but biologically alive (*i.e.* they are still breathing). On the contrary, sometimes it so happens that a person falls into a death swoon *i.e.* he has all the symptoms of a dead man and his near ones start preparing for his last rites but he suddenly regains consciousness. The biologists tell us that when a person dies all of his bodily functions do not stop immediately: collapse of the total organism is a gradual process. For example, after death has occurred, the nails and hair of the person continue growing for many weeks. Just as the process of growth continues for sometime after death, so the process of dying starts sometime before he is declared clinically dead. Thus the observations and experiences of a person during his last breaths may, with some justification, be called the observations of his own death. Anyway, to say that such experiences are totally useless for scientific purposes is incorrect:

The first striking feature of these reports of being dead is in the nature of the experience and its apparent uniformity. Being dead appears as an experience of unqualified bliss, a genuine liberation from life. There seem to be no exceptions. No one wanted to return to life. Second, it did not seem to matter who the person was in social life. The experience of death, as always happy and devoid of fear, was reported by a variety of people. They included mountain climbers who fell, lower class males shot in city slums,

upper class women entering clinical death (no breathing, no blood pressure), and children as well as old people. In short the consistent reports of a benign, if not indeed a blissful, experience of being dead, are significant because they came from people from all walks of life, in several societies.<sup>24</sup>

Here a question arises: why, how and in what way is the 'unqualified bliss', or the 'spiritual happiness', talked of by the sociologists, different from the 'dread' of the existential thinkers? In answer, it is pertinent to point out that for the existential thinkers 'dread' occurs when a person contemplates over his own prospective death *i.e.* on the total negation of his being. The feeling of nonentity or nothingness is for them the result of an intellectual act whereas the experiences whose reports the sociologists gathered from different persons were near-death experiences of these persons themselves.

Sociologists have discovered that the phenomenon of death is, in general, immediately preceded by three kinds of feelings or attitudes. This discovery of theirs is also based on the reports of the first-hand, near-death experiences of persons. There are:

- i. Resistance
- ii. Panoramic review of past life
- iii. Transcendence

These three attitudes sometimes occur one after the other in that order, sometimes the order is changed and sometimes one or two of these may not occur at all.

Closer to death, the impulsive desire is to hold on and stick to life. Towards that end both body and mind exercise their potentials to the maximum and sometimes are able to put up extraordinary feats. Psychologists term it a biological response of the organism to the death that is imminent and fast approaching.

Secondly, the dying person goes through a quick synoptic survey of various events of the entire life that he has gone through. Usually these do not include the painful experiences; mostly the pleasant and the delightful ones are reviewed by him. Famous psychologists Noyes and Kletti are of the opinion that this reminiscence of the pleasant past makes it easier for him to accept his unavoidable end and it also saves his personality from



being disintegrated and dispersed due to the great upheaval of shock that death certainly is.<sup>25</sup>

The feeling of transcendence is a sort of spiritual-cum-religious feeling. Some persons going through the last breaths of their lives feel as if, having passed through a long, dark tunnel, they have reached a pleasant, open place or as if there is a sharp brightness spread all around them; and so on. What is important in such experiences is their in-built assurance that they will continue to retain their personal identity. Sociologists make a mention of another kind of experience, technically known as the 'out-of-body experience' (OOBE). Some patients who fall into a deep swoon and are certified to be dead by the doctors suddenly regain breathing and consciousness. Such persons sometimes report that after they were declared clinically dead they had an impression that they were, as it were, floating over the roof and that the doctors were busy in their efforts to save their lives. The experiences of such persons, without exception, have one thing in common: they do not wish to come back to life: they in fact desire that the doctors give up their efforts and let them die. Most of such persons reported that they heard the hospital staff talking to one another. This, incidentally, tends to indicate that the last sensation that becomes extinct at death is the hearing sensation.<sup>26</sup>

From these reported incidents the following facts transpire:

- a. Death is a pleasant liberation.
- b. This liberation comprises a break-through from social bondages—and particularly it is a deliverance from that uncertain state of affairs, which a person faced before his death, regarding his destiny.
- c. Reports of near-death experiences are infected with difficulties of communication. Ordinary language appears to be inadequate because the phenomena described belong to a different world.<sup>27</sup>

## Chapter II

# Problem of Immortality and its Doctrines

Problem of immortality was recognized—though casually—by many thinkers even in the pre-Socratic period of the history of Western philosophy. Plato was the thinker who for the first time formally discussed it in quite some detail in his *Republic*, specially in the dialogue ‘Phaedo’. Much earlier, it had always been the central problem of concern in a number of major religions of the world.

We have seen in the previous chapter that whatever attitude is adopted towards death it registers a deep influence not only on the personal lives of individuals but also on the collective behaviour of societies and nations. Now the concept of, and attitude towards, death is naturally relevant to the life hereafter. Of course, if one thinks that death is the ‘end’ of life in the total and absolute sense of the term, then he will deny any sort of life subsequent to the event of death. If, on the other hand, he upholds the view of the continuation of life in some form even after ‘death’ then he may be a believer in the doctrine of immortality; although, in the latter case, there are various concepts regarding the nature and mode of this immortal existence, as we shall presently see. However, there is one patent truth: whether one denies immortality or affirms it and affirms it in one form or the other, every one of these convictions generates a specific whole philosophy of life. We shall have many occasions to refer to this truth in the sequel.

The word ‘mortal’ is derived from the Latin *mortalis* which

means 'one who is bound to die'. The opposite of 'mortal' is 'immortal' which would mean 'one who is not bound to die'. So 'immortality' is a doctrine according to which the human person ultimately remains unaffected by the shock of death. Immortality is of two kinds:

- a. *Temporal immortality* which means that after death man lives on as an individual for an infinite period of time.
- b. *Eternity* which means that after physical death, soul ascends to the timeless heights and is absorbed in the unity of the Ultimate Reality.

The concept of 'immortality' is generally made to refer to the life 'after' death only but sometimes it is used to imply the life 'before' birth also. The latter was particularly the view of those who uphold the doctrine of Transmigration of Souls.<sup>1</sup>

The term 'immortality', as it is generally used in philosophical discussions, was well-defined by Kant thus:

The immortality of the soul means the infinitely prolonged existence and personality of one and the same rational being.<sup>2</sup>

From this definition by Kant it is evident that immortality implies two things:

Firstly, the person, as a conscious and rational being, will maintain his identity.

Secondly, this being will continue to live after death, for all times.

This definition, as is evident, does not admit of *collective immortality of the human race* but of the human individual *qua* individual. Nor does it leave any room for the view that the human personality will get lost into the Ultimate Reality and by virtue of this attain everlasting existence. In both these cases the individuality of man would get obliterated so that there is left no question of its continuance as such or of the continued maintenance of its identity.

In mythology, in particular, and in world literature, in general, we find many characters who had been able to win eternal life in the above sense. Famous story of a search for the fabulous fountain known as *Ab-e-Hayât* is symbolic of man's desire for such a life. Central character of R. Haggard's well-

known novel *She* is a woman who happens to become aware of the secret that in a deep cave inside the earth there is a column of fire which keeps moving to and fro, the characteristic of this fire being that if any living being enters into it, he, instead of being reduced to ashes, becomes immortal. The woman, somehow or other, reaches this cave and succeeds in having the fire bath. Consequently, she lives for centuries. If it is said that the doctrine of immortality of soul was the very foundation of the ancient Egyptian civilization, it will not be incorrect. Ancient Egyptians believed that after a man dies his soul goes to the nether regions of the world where the god Osiris gives it the recompense for the deeds, good and bad, performed by it in the world therebefore. But the soul must ultimately come back to the body earlier left by it. Due to this belief, the Egyptians used to mummify the bodies of their dear ones.<sup>3</sup> About three hundred years B.C. great pyramids were built as mausoleums for kings. Mummified dead bodies of the kings in strong, durable coffins alongwith some money, golden jewellery and utensils etc. of daily use were placed in these mausoleums so that when souls came back they would find their bodies safe; and in the presence of wealth would not face any financial difficulties.

Various doctrines about soul and its immortality grew out of different basic experiences of men. The primitive man, as Plessner points out, lived in 'circles', in an 'eternal present'; therefore for him the concept of death as total annihilation was impossible. 'The world which is conceived cyclically knows death only as an organic phenomenon.' In a cycle the chain does not break and everything continues to be by virtue of the law of return. Perhaps this is the reason that circularity and circumambulation (for instance, going round the *ka'ba*) are considered to be perfection symbols. Concept of death as total annihilation was developed in some quarters, according to Plessner, when lineal concept of time replaced its circular concept.<sup>4</sup>

Besides, for the primitive man his dream experiences were extremely unusual and thoroughly mysterious; however, they were a unique state of his own consciousness in which the past

and the future almost converged in his present and gave him the impression as if he had plunged into the 'ocean of eternity'. In the dreamy state usual modes of appreciation and ordinary spatio-temporal standards that characterize a waking consciousness become irrelevant. The dreamer finds himself in a place at one moment and the very next moment he finds himself in a place thousands of miles away. He becomes absolutely free from the requirements of his bodily existence so much so that he can witness his own funeral rites and ceremonies. He feels assured that, besides the normal everyday level of his being, he has another level of existence also at which, getting a deliverance from bodily confines, he can travel far and wide and within almost no time. From this the primitive man developed the concept of a disembodied existence and of his 'spiritual double', born together, and living together, with him. He also felt that his near and dear ones who had died, had not been reduced to total nothingness but rather lived on elsewhere because he usually met them in his dreams and conversed with them. Moreover, from the observation of an another person meeting his death, he got the hint that some element of his being left him, the element in the presence of which he lived, moved, and performed all kinds of activities. He named it 'soul' which does not die with the death of its body, survives and continues to enjoy its life.

Some critics are of the opinion that, because almost all concepts of immortality held by the primitive people and societies were the outcome of their superstitious doctrine of animism *i.e.* the view that human beings have spirits, they should be rejected as unrealistic and worthless. However, this criticism is not justified. Such views may not be very valuable in themselves: they may even be incorrect; but they do have their historical importance which cannot be denied.<sup>5</sup> In fact the different doctrines regarding the immortality of man that have been held during various periods of the evolution of human thought have all grown out of their respective climates of opinion and the world-views that were fashionable during those periods. So all doctrines are significant and important in their own spatio-temporal settings. Really, the very fact that the problem of

immortality has been a living problem in every period of history right from the earliest times speaks eloquently for its paramount momentousness. That some kind of life hereafter has been held on to by all great religions and all great philosophies is a sufficiently solid ground on which it cannot be easily falsified.

From the universality of faith in immortality, some agnostics conclude that it is a kind of wish-fulfilment having nothing to do with the objective state of affairs and thus they try to belittle the importance of the problem about it. A virtuous man who has had sufferings and miseries in this life naturally desires that there be a life hereafter where he may get happiness, a due reward for his good deeds. One who loves his relatives and friends will like to be in their company in the life hereafter too. Similarly for a student who has an unlimited thirst for knowledge and an artist who seeks the fullest realization of his potentialities the limited time of this life is too short: they need a new world and in fact an unending time-span wherein they have unlimited possibilities of creativity, evolution and growth.<sup>6</sup>

As an answer to this criticism one can say: alright! to have faith in immortality is the natural inclination of man and also the projected consummation of his desires; but this does not deny—nor of course does it affirm!—that there will actually be an immortal life awaiting him in the hereafter.

Anyway, before we undertake a sympathetic survey as well as a critical appraisal of the philosophers' arguments for immortality, let us give an account of the arguments that have formally been levelled against it.

## II

Many linguistic philosophers of modern times regard the concept of 'immortality of the human soul' or 'life after death' as self-contradictory, absurd and meaningless. They would not argue on the basis of any facts of experience but on the basis of the very analysis of the concepts involved. If someone claims that he has drawn a circular square, we can forthwith declare him to be a liar without having to undertake an observation of what he has actually drawn. We know what a circle is and we know what a

square is; on the basis of our knowledge of the definitions of these concepts we conclude that a circular square is impossible. The philosophers of language maintain that if we know, and stick to, the connotations of 'person' and 'personal identity', we shall find the continuation of man's individuality into a world hereafter as a meaningless thesis. Antony Flew, for instance, is a strong upholder of this view. He says that persons are those whom we meet,<sup>7</sup> with whom we may converse. They are the ones who can be seen, touched and so on. The so-called persons conceived to be the ones who will enjoy the life hereafter are not such persons. We cannot meet them, etc. Further, Flew raises objections to the English word 'survive' as it is sometimes said about a person entering into immortal existence that he has 'survived' death. Lexically, survive means to outlive, to be left alive when others have died. Now when it is said that Mr. X has died and, at the same time, that 'Mr. X has survived death', the two propositions will be mutually inconsistent; and so, taken together, will be an impossible phenomenon, and the argument will be fallacious. He says if we have a look at the meanings of the words 'death', 'survive', 'life', 'person' etc. in the Standard Oxford Dictionary we shall never be in a position to validate the perpetuation of a man's personality and continuation of his life in the hereafter. Death means annihilation of life, cessation of the vital force in man. To hold that life or the vital force is retained after a man has died and gone is logically untenable and linguistically gratuitous.

Wittgenstein, another linguistic philosopher, too maintains that 'life after death' is a phrase without any meaning. The way we use the words 'alive' and 'dead' leaves no scope for any kind of life after a person has met the death experience. Maybe, it is a plant, a tree or any organism—when it dies, it entirely loses its life-force and its power of growth and development. After the total dissipation of life, life still continues!—this can only be offered as a claim, he says, 'when language goes on holiday.'<sup>9</sup> Nor can we say—as, for instance, is the view of 'Allama Iqbal—that life from here to there is one continuity, a perpetual process, and death is simply an event that happens during this process. Death, says

Wittgenstein, is not an occurrence during our life because *ex hypothesi* we are not alive so as to have an experience of the occurrent character of our death.<sup>10</sup> When I say I am feeling pain I am referring to an event of my life. When I say Mr X has died, once again this is an event which I experience. But I cannot at all have a 'living' experience of my own death.

Some philosophers have rejected immortality on grounds other than the linguistic ones. Their most commonly repeated argument is based on the fact that our consciousness is intimately related to, or rather dependent upon, our nervous system. The consciousness is nowhere to be found except in living and active organic bodies. As the result of a head injury the shock, that the nervous system receives, disturbs or even dissipates consciousness temporarily or, in some cases, permanently. Similarly, intoxicating drugs and anaesthetic medicines affect consciousness. Different intoxicants affect mind and consciousness differently. Some of them affect the man so much that he even loses his sense of identity. Encephalitis Lethargica, which is the technical name for a brain inflammation, transforms a good person into a morally bad man and the deficiency of iodine in food transforms an intelligent person into an imbecile.<sup>11</sup> There being such a close relationship between the nervous system and in fact the whole bodily organism, on the one hand, and moral and psychological consciousness, on the other, there is no possibility of the existence of the latter after the dissolution of the former.

Influence of certain stupefying medicines and intoxicating drugs apart, it is considered to be an established fact that man, during his life-time, does not continue to be the same man throughout—neither physically nor mentally. There is a constant process of the deterioration and decadence of his bodily cells and the formation of new cells in their place. Every moment it is a new body. Similarly, our mental attitudes and states of consciousness are in a perpetual flux. So no possibility of the resurrection of the *same* man as met his death earlier. Writes Bertrand Russell:

We think and feel and act, but there is not, in addition to thoughts



and feelings and actions, a bare entity, the mind or the soul which does or suffers these occurrences. The mental continuity of a person is a continuity of habit and memory: there was yesterday one person whose feelings I can remember and that person I regard as myself of yesterday; but in fact, myself of yesterday was only certain mental occurrences which are now remembered, and are regarded as part of the person who now recollects them. All that constitutes a person is a series of experiences connected by memory and by certain similarities of the sort we call habit. If, therefore, we are to believe that a person survives death, we must believe that the memories and habits which constitute the person will continue to be exhibited in a new set of occurrences. No one can prove that this will not happen. But it is easy to see that it is very unlikely.<sup>12</sup>

Russell further points out that every individual has got a characteristic mental personality in whose constitution his living traditions of the past, his present climate of opinion and his hereditary inclinations—all play a very great part. Besides, it has certain acquired traits also. Both of these inherited and acquired parts of a personality are, as shown above, bound with, and conditioned by, the characteristics of certain bodily—specially brainal—structures.<sup>13</sup> So, as body disintegrates at death, mental personality fails to retain its identity: it too disintegrates. According to Russell, it is not the rational arguments but emotions that are the ground of our faith in a future life, the most important of these emotions being the fear of death. Another emotion is the admiration of the importance and excellence of man. In order to overcome his fear of death man has devised the concept of the life hereafter and in order to satisfy his sentiment of self-regard he is not prepared to accept death as an absolute annihilation but rather the gateway to a new life.<sup>14</sup>

The view that the mind of man is conditioned by his nervous system is allegedly further supported by the observed fact that in the evolutionary process of various species, the development of intelligence correlates with the development of the structure of the brain. The more advanced is the brain in a particular species the more advanced is his intelligence. This correlation we specially find in the human organism. From childhood to youth

his nervous system goes through a process of gradual development; there is a corresponding development in his mental capabilities also. With the decline of youthful vigour towards old age decrepitude there occurs a gradual decline of mental acumen and agility also.

There is another argument against the immortality of human soul. It is said that the characteristic feature of human mind is thought. Now thought *qua* thought, an inherent activity of the mind, as psychologists tell us, is silent speech; and, when it acquires spatio-temporal determination *i.e.* when it is expressed in words, it is verbal speech: speech in either case it is. So, thought and speech are two ways of describing the same phenomenon. Now when at death all physical powers including the power to speak suffer dissipation, thought and thus mind and consciousness too must stop functioning. Consequently, there can be no conscious life after death.

C.D. Brood, in his *The Mind and its Place in Nature* has pointed out that there are at least two difficulties that we may encounter if we try to hold on to the doctrine of immortality.<sup>15</sup> One difficulty relates to the apparently haphazard way in which men come to life and die out. Some children are given birth to thoughtlessly and by mistake. Some live only for a few minutes or hours and then die. Still, some unwanted children are killed immediately after their birth. The claim to permanence for human creatures whose this-worldly lives begin and end in these trivial ways, he says, is quite ridiculous. The second difficulty relates to the evolutionary continuity between human and animal species. The bodies of both of them begin, and cease, to be animated by minds through similar physical and physiological causes. No doubt, minds of men are qualitatively superior to those of animals in general but the most primitive men could hardly differ appreciably from the highest animals in so far as their respective mental endowments are concerned. Now if man is believed to survive the death of his body why do higher animals not have a similar claim. If the right to survive is thus granted to men then why not to chimpanzees, monkeys and cats and, still further, why not to lice and earwigs!

Besides the above, there are some other alleged difficulties and anomalies which are referred to in connection with one's faith in immortality as a valid concept. Stated briefly, they are:

- a. When we talk of the resurrection of a person we in fact express our conviction that his personal identity will be retained beyond his visible death. But the identity of a person depends on, rather comprises, his social relations and environmental contacts. Suppose a resident of Moscow dies and then is resurrected; for the continuation of his identity it would be necessary that his before-death material and social context is also recreated. It is only then that he will be able to have the conviction that it is *his* resurrection.
- b. Even if at all it is admitted that somehow or other every person will be resurrected along with his entire social and environmental perspective, the further question arises that, when different persons belonging to different lands and different periods of human history—like Prophet Noah, Socrates, Changez Khan, Hitler, Einstein—are revived after death, how can their respective perspectives be recreated simultaneously at one place.
- c. If it is said in response to the above two difficulties that after death, not bodies but souls and minds only will be revived, then the problem will be: is it possible for the minds to have a disembodied existence? Even if yes, what about the meaninglessness of the concept of personal identity without a characteristic material reference.

### III

We have described in the above section various arguments that have been advanced, or that can possibly be advanced, against the possibility of the immortality of human soul. At their face value these arguments carry a strong appeal and appear to be logically sound also. Anyway, in regard to such problems, there is always a room for counter arguments. This exercise has been undertaken by some advocates of the life hereafter who, while building up their own case, have critically examined the above class of arguments and tried to expose their weaknesses and

defects.

Let us take the linguistic philosophers first and undertake an appraisal of the objections raised by them. It was under the influence of Wittgenstein, we know, that philosophy took a new turn which has been described as the 'linguistic turn'. Prior to this movement of 'philosophy in a new key', the philosophers used to deal with the questions of metaphysical nature relating to the character of the universe—and, unfortunately, arrived at no definite answers. The Anglo-American philosophers have shifted their very ground of operation. Instead of studying nature they choose to study language which, according to them, mirrors the physical as well as the metaphysical phenomena it describes. For instance, tree is an empirical object which grows on the ground, which can be seen, touched etc. The English word 'tree' represents this empirical reality. When we read or hear this word the picture of the object of experience for which it stands comes to our mind. So if a philosopher studies the behaviour of language—of words, propositions and arguments—he will in fact be studying the nature and character of the universe itself. Thus the basic question which the linguistic philosophers pose to themselves is: under what conditions does a proposition have meaning *i.e.* what is the criterion of its meaningfulness. They divide propositions, in general, into three categories:

- a. Empirical propositions;
- b. Logico-mathematical propositions; and
- c. Metaphysical propositions

The empirical propositions are meaningful, because they are grounded in sense-experience. Logico-mathematical propositions are meaningful because they are tautological in character. Besides these two kinds, all other propositions are metaphysical in nature and have no cognitive significance. They bring out the meaninglessness of such propositions by pointing out that they suffer from self-contradictions; they violate the basic law of logical thinking, *viz.* the Law of Non-contradiction *i.e.* two contradictories cannot be true at the same time. We have already seen that it is on this very score that Analytical/Linguistic philosophers reject the notion of 'surviving death' or of 'life after

death' as meaningless concepts.

Now if we look at this linguistic stance from the point of view of Aristotelian logic, it appears to be valid because according to Aristotle a valid piece of logical thinking necessarily requires that it should be self-consistent: self-contradiction would invalidate it outright. But all thinking and all consciousness is not strictly logical in nature. Some forms of consciousness have their horizons which ordinary logic is incapable to encompass; for example, the force and effectiveness of poetic expressions sometimes thrives on self-contradictory feelings and emotions. The poets communicate with their audience through similes and metaphors which of course do not abide by any neat and clean rules of logical thinking. Dreams are most haphazard in nature but Freud finds in them symbols of a whole world of sense and meaning. On the same score, the language used in describing, and arguing about, the life hereafter may not be the ordinary language of our every-day life here and now and thus it may not be proper to evaluate it by the rules and regulations put forth by the linguistic philosophers.

As to those opponents of immortality who base their argument on the thesis that thought is (silent) speech or that it is equivalent to some kind of observable behaviour or that it comprises molecular acts of the brain tissues, Paulson<sup>16</sup> and some other thinkers have proved that they are seriously mistaken. These thinkers have misinterpreted such mental functions as thought, consciousness, feeling, desire imagination, memory, ideation etc. and have given them a meaning which is entirely alien to their real nature and significance. Being acts of the mind they can be known through introspection or self-knowledge only. Self-knowledge never discovers that mental acts are the same as glandular secretions, muscular contractions or chemical changes of some particular kind. Mental acts and physical acts, specially the act of speech, cannot be mutually identified without playing havoc with language as we ordinarily use it. Speech is only a mode of expressing our thoughts and ideas. No surgeon, who opens the head of a person, can see in his brain his ideals, his desires and aspirations. Some persons successfully conceal their

emotions from others as they do not permit the usual concomitant physical changes to take place. Similarly, some actors on the stage pose with their physical appearance that they are, for example, angry although they do not have any real emotion of anger. All these instances speak eloquently for the fact that no doubt when mind acts there are usually accompanying visible physical changes but they cannot be regarded as synonymous with each other.

The view of Bertrand Russell that man's mental personality is grounded in his nervous system is not correct. There is no doubt that anaesthetic and narcotic drugs influence mental attitudes; but to say that all mental attitudes are created by glandular secretions and changes in the nervous system is incorrect. The nervous system of a mad man whose mental personality has been deformed, may be normal and intact *i.e.* his madness may be entirely psychic. Those patients who lose the balance of their mind due to some sudden shock or mental stress are advised psycho-analytical treatment. Thus it is, in general, possible that there may be a psychically diseased person whose nervous system, glandular secretions etc. are functioning normally. He may only be suffering from the dilapidation of his mental health or the dispersion of his ego or I-amness.

Further, Russell is not entirely right when he says that the concept of the life hereafter is the creation of man's fear of death. This view is not borne out by facts of observation and experience. Also, we have seen in the last chapter that the man of ancient times did not harbour any fear of death as such; he rather feared that unseen being (—and tried to appease him—) who showed off his anger by afflicting men with death, disease, unforeseen havocs, mysterious calamities etc. Similarly, the sentiment of self-regard or self-importance is not an appropriate premise from which faith in immortality would necessarily follow. At the most what follows here is a 'strong wish' that man may somehow survive his physical death in this world!

There is no doubt that some physical and physiological causes have sound and far-reaching effects on mind and consciousness but to say that they are mutually identical or that

they are two aspects of the same phenomenon is not at all correct. Some anaesthetics, narcotics or some head injuries temporarily suspend consciousness. In such states all physical responses which necessitate consciousness too die out. A person waking up from sleep can remember his dream experiences *i.e.* the experiences at a level of consciousness which is not the usual and the ordinary level; but a person who loses usual consciousness as a result of a sudden shock or an accident cannot recall his mental occurrences during this time, when he recovers from that shock: in fact he forgets even those incidents of his normal conscious life that took place immediately before that accident. Similarly, most of the people do not remember the incidents of the earliest years of their childhood. Even if they do so the memory is so dim and hazy that it cannot be helpful in formulating a concept of their personalities. Thus memory, which Russell regards as the ground of one's personal identity, becomes inoperative in many cases; but this does not really affect the certitude of our own personal identity and continuity. From all this it can be validly concluded that mental acts, which are supposed to be chained together by the cementing force of memory cannot be entirely reduced to nervous and glandular changes: mind is rather a higher, independent and transcendent faculty, sometimes inaccessible to bodily changes. Kant called this faculty the 'synthetic unity of apperception' which transforms memory and perceptions into organized knowledge.

Also, the equation that is supposed to be present in different species of animals and human beings between the development of their nervous systems, on the one hand, and the development of their intelligence, on the other, does not imply that intelligence is dependent upon, and conditioned by, the physiology of the nervous system. Sometimes the will of a man which is a purely mental act becomes instrumental towards the re-organization of his nervous system at a higher and better level. A musician voluntarily carries on his professional practice as a result of which he is able to create in himself certain changes of physiological nature relevant to his technical expertise. Similarly, Hindu ascetics and saints, for example, deliberately and by their strong will

power, carry out strenuous physical practices as a consequence of which they tone up their entire nervous system so that they can very much enhance their bodily capabilities and make immense use of their physical powers.

According to materialists, in general, consciousness is an epiphenomenon of the body. If an organ or a part of it develops some abnormality, it necessarily affects the related mental behavior. If the frontal lobe of the brain, for instance, is cut off, it destroys man's power of decision. Deficiency of iodine in the body makes a child weak in intelligence. And so on. This may be a strong argument in support of material causation. But an equally strong argument can also be given in favor of mental causation: If body affects mind and mental behaviour, mind too affects body. A particular set of psychical factors can render the person sexually impotent. Similarly, there are some forms of psychological disorders which tend to make the individual deaf, dumb or blind. Also, it is a matter of common knowledge that pleasant/unpleasant mental states of a woman during her pregnancy or sucking period variously affect her physiological functions. As a results of anaesthetics and narcotics as well as serious head injuries, traces of consciousness sometimes become extinct despite the fact that bodily functions like respiration, circulation of blood etc. continue to be normal. In view of all these facts which are obvious and above board, why is it not possible that, when usual bodily functions are temporarily suspended or even permanently stopped, consciousness perpetually gives us reminders throughout our lives regarding its authority, overlordship and its self-existent, independent character. So, we should have absolutely no reservations as regards the conviction that, after the phenomenon of physical death of a person has occurred, his mind will continue to retain itself as an independent substance. Our lack of sure knowledge as to how exactly it will be the case is no good ground at all for the repudiation altogether of this conviction.

As a proof for the primacy of mind, a group of evolutionist thinkers have cited the evidence of the claim that sometimes a particular desire or need in a living organism ultimately causes



required bodily changes. If we closely examine the process of organic evolution there appears to be a lot of truth in this. Some living bodies continue for a period of time to feel a particular deficiency in their bodies and harbour the need to make it up; consequently, with the passage of time, they actually do develop an organ which tends to remove that deficiency. This point of view is technically known as 'hypophenomenalism'. Schopenhauer is one of the upholders of this view. According to it, in general, the organs which contribute to the efficient mechanics of the body are really the objectification of the inherent wants and desires of the parallel mental forces. Particularly, the constitution and strict use of the nervous system is the embodiment of those diverse mental functions which continue to persist at some level or the other in the human organism.<sup>17</sup>

Viewed against the perspective of Dialectical Materialism, consciousness appears to be that stage of evolution where quantity has changed into quality. In other words, though man's mind and consciousness is a stage during the evolution of matter yet, qualitatively, it has become so distinct from matter that, as material factors cause mental events, mind also exercises its influences on its material environments. Even if we hold that this change is total *i.e.* mind acquires the level of subsistence without the involvement of any material reference at all that would not be an impossible state of affairs.

The two objections raised by C.D. Broad, as stated above, he himself has implicitly answered. As to the first one he asserts that there is no logical relationship of entailment between 'this (mind or the child) is caused by the careless or criminal action of a human being' and 'so this is the kind of thing or being whose existence is transitory'. Similarly, answering the second objection he says that on the basis of the very characteristics which distinguish man from bugs, flies and mosquitoes the former deserves immortality whereas the latter do not.<sup>18</sup>

Difficulties of the concept of immortality which relate to the continuance beyond this world, of personal identity and of an individual's environmental contacts etc., to the simultaneous

assemblage in the hereafter of all human beings, who have had their lives during different periods of time and at different places and to the possibility of disembodied existence—all of them are due to our habit to the effect that we try to understand and evaluate the prospective facts of the ‘other world’ with reference to the standards that we apply while appraising the facts of the world here and now. This is an illegitimate use of analogical reasoning. Everyone of us goes through the experience of dreaming during which our consciousness is operative at a level which is entirely different from that of our ordinary spatio-temporal consciousness. During the dream experience itself, it is considered to be normal seeing together people belonging to different times and places, finding various cultures and civilizations juxtaposed and having face-to-face meetings with our near and dear ones who are no more living. If thus our consciousness delivers itself from the ordinarily operative spatio-temporal settings in this world why shall it not be possible for it to have a more or less similar experience in the world to come. Against the context of an entirely metamorphosed space-time perspective which we are supposed to encounter in the world hereafter, the above objections lose their meaningfulness.

Having rejected almost all the objections that can possibly be raised against immortality we shall next turn to the evidence and to the arguments that have positively been presented in favor of it. Incidentally, the latter, as we shall presently see, appear, in general, to be more convincing than the former.

However, before we do so, let us pause for a moment and appraise what can be called the natural tendency of the human mind that has usually been in favour of the negative stance. When ancient Arabs, as the Qur’ān tells us, saw the decomposed bodies, skulls and bones of the dead, they regarded it an impossibility that they would ever be revived: resurrection for them was a far-fetched notion and a concept totally devoid of significance. This would in fact be the immediate, impulsive response of most of the laymen when the problem is posed to them. This is because of the fact that man is naturalist and materialist by his congenital temperament. For him only that is real which he can see, touch,

hear—of which he can have experience of some kind. This attitude appeared to be formally confirmed by the naturalism of 19<sup>th</sup> century science, according to which every thing that happens in the universe—including the working of the human organism, evolution of life and various functions of mind and consciousness—is bound by mechanical cause-effect nexus that are objectively present in it and that can be discovered independently by human reason. As a consequence, we see that psychological research, in particular, fixed its entire focus on the physiological explanations of the so-called mental as well as spiritual phenomena. Very soon, however, it was discovered that physiological psychology, with its mechanical, deterministic models, was incapable to comprehend the whole variety of mental operations. One very important such operation relates to the teleological character of mind. Understanding of man's behaviour primarily amounts to the understanding of his aims, ideals and objectives. Thus physiology had ultimately to restrict itself to bodily functions alone.

As we undertake a close study of the history of philosophy we find that there are many thinkers according to whom matter is not what it appears to be—a solid, perceivable something existing in a void, as it were. When Plato, Berkeley, Hegel and other idealists seek to explain the so-called material world they point out logical contradictions in the commonsense notion of materiality. For Berkeley what is considered to be a material substance is just an idea—a subjectivity, pure and simple. For Bergson, the universe comprises motion, of which there are two kinds: the upward and the downward. Matter is the downward motion whereas life is the upward motion. Material bodies and their various organs are simply instruments in the onward journey of life and consciousness. Al-Ghazali in his autobiographical account of the search for truth given in *Al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl* started with his conviction about the veracity of sensory knowledge of the world but soon discovered that reason sometimes renders it dubious and then intuition/mystic experience, and more so, revelation, he said, finds that rational knowledge too does not deliver the final truth. Einstein's theory

of Relativity revolutionized the whole concept of matter. So all these avenues of thought tend to discredit our ordinary concept of the external world. In this very world there is the veritable existence of soul or consciousness too which we confirm, in the last analysis, on the authority of our subjective experience alone. In the history of philosophical thought many arguments have been given against its disembodied, immortal existence which have the semblance of a forceful appeal and appear to be convincing but they cannot stand critical scrutiny.

#### IV

Usually, three kinds of arguments are offered in favour of the immortality of man: metaphysical, moral and empirical. In the metaphysical arguments immortality is, in general, derived from the simple, unchangeable and indestructible character of soul. Moral argument seeks to establish that life hereafter is necessary so that appropriate atonement may possibly be made for both good and bad works done in this world. Empirical mode of reasoning derives from the statements of those persons who claim to have had an approach to, and a dialogue with, the souls of the dead. In this connection researches in the field of parapsychology are generally quoted as evidence.

C.D. Broad in his *The Mind and its Place in Nature* has referred to two additional sources of certitude about immortality.<sup>19</sup> One of them is the 'revelations of the prophets' or even the inspirations of the mystics who receive a direct information as regards the veracity of this concept. The other one is the source of knowledge known as the authority of those who have attained an expertise in the relevant branch of scholarship.

As regards the apocalyptic claims of the 'elitist few' which, broadly speaking, include both the sources of certitude given by C. D. Broad, we have obviously no direct method to see for ourselves the veracity of the claims that they put forth. Consequently, we cannot meet them on their own grounds. We simply *may* or *may not* submit to their testimony and evidence. The 'knowledgeable ones', it is sometimes argued, are not simply the prophets and the mystics. A person may even say that, as he

himself has not been able to acquire, for example, Plato's level of intellectual acumen, he can safely affirm the existence of a World of Ideas on the latter's authority. Similarly, I regard space and time as relative on the authority of Einstein who discovered this fact on the basis of his specialized researches; or I regard earth as globular and not plain as it ordinarily appears because experts in the field of earth sciences have confirmed this. On the same analogy, it may be observed, there is no inappropriateness in subscribing to immortality in agreement with the views of some renowned thinkers.

The above argument is not valid. Scientists and philosophers—unlike prophets—may ordinarily be met on their own grounds. If Plato's reasoning is recognized as 'authoritative', another great philosopher—say, Kant or Hegel—may offer a parallel reasoning which seeks to prove a thesis opposed to that of Plato. In the realm of science and philosophy there is in principle no bar against anyone to acquire a particular 'authoritative' status, provided he undertakes a sufficient amount of intellectual labour etc. But such a bar is present in case of prophets who have an exclusive, unshakable religious source for the revelations that they receive.

## V

During our account of the metaphysical arguments for immortality, we shall dilate on the views of three great thinkers *viz.* Plato, Aristotle and McTaggart—not because there is none besides them who belongs to this class of arguers but due to the simple fact that the former two adequately represent the ancient times whereas the latter has been chosen as a representative of modern times.

Plato, by common consent, was the first notable thinker who formally made the problem of immortality a subject of his examination.<sup>20</sup> In the history of philosophy he is known as an idealist. Ideas or concepts, which were for Socrates epistemic tools only, were granted by Plato a phenomenal, objective status with a veritable subsistence in a super-sensory world. With the help of his 'Allegory of the Cave' he sought to establish that these

ideas are beyond our normal understanding: the ideas that are conceived by our individual minds are simply hazy imprints or reflections of those of the World of Ideas. The philosophical system of Plato is dualistic in nature. On the one hand, there is the world of reality which has the characteristics of absolute perfection and eternity, and, on the other hand, there is our material spatio-temporal world of becoming, movement and change. The latter is not entirely unreal because it has a participation in it of the former: it is an amalgamation of the real and the unreal. Matter by itself is unreal. It assumes reality when it gets on it the imprint of the ideas of the real world. Thus everything existing in our world has two aspects: one, material and unreal, and the other, real and rational.

Likewise, human personality too has two facets—the soul or spirit and the material body. Soul, being related to the real world, has the qualities of indestructibility, eternity and permanence which are the characteristic features of the World of Ideas as such. As to its inherent nature it is a substance entirely independent of any extraneous reference. However, it has been attached to the body or, we can say, it has been imprisoned into the bodily cage. Consequently, it does not get annihilated when the body disintegrates at death but rather, getting deliverance from the present space-time universe, it continues its existence then in the realm of eternity. Plato would not agree with those who argue that the relationship of the soul with its body is analogous to that of the melody with the strings of a musical instrument.<sup>21</sup> Melody depends for its existence on the musical instrument whereas soul has its own independent existence and the death of the body does not affect it. Moreover, the melody has no influence on the instrument which generates it whereas the soul, we know, has a recognizable control over the functions of the body.

Plato's views in regard to the immortality of the human soul are mostly found in his dialogue 'Phaedo'. In this dialogue Plato describes the spectacle of the last moments of the life of Socrates before his death. Against this context Plato has philosophised in some detail about soul and its immortality. The problem has also

been dealt with by him in some other dialogues like 'Republic', 'Phaedrus' and 'Laws'.

For Plato, soul and intellect are the same. Now as soul or intellect belongs to the World of Ideas, like the ideas it too is imperishable and eternal. Secondly, all knowledge basically is reminiscence or remembrance. Whatever objects or individuals in this world a person knows have a necessary element of abstract universals or ideas in them. There is absolutely no knowledge of particulars without the prior knowledge of universals. When I know a man as a man, for example, I must already know what manhood is or what is the definition of man. Now the universals I do not discover through my experience here. I know nothing corresponding to them in the external world; I have knowledge of them already in my mind. This implies that my soul must have had an existence in the World of Ideas before it came into my terrestrial prison-house and in that world it must have had a knowledge of these ideas—honesty, whiteness, circularity, etc.—whose remembrance I now have by virtue of which my knowledge of particulars becomes possible. Now, if my soul has had an existence of its own *before* this world, it can have an existence of its own in the world *hereafter* also.

Thirdly, every thing has an essence, a reality without which it would not be what it is. For instance, the essence of fire is the quality to burn; if, suppose, it is deprived of this quality, it will not be fire then. The essence of soul is the quality 'to live'. To say that soul dies is to commit a contradiction in terms. Thus at death when body is annihilated, soul is not. It must continue to live: it is immortal.

Besides the above, Plato has put forth still another argument in his dialogue 'Phaedrus', later repeated in more detail in the 'Laws'. He says, movement is of two kinds. There is the movement which, in order to take place, requires an external mover, and there is the movement that is self-initiated and is inherent in the moving object. Movement of a ball, for example, belongs to the first kind. It will move only if it is moved by an external force. Its movement is not of its own: it is borrowed. There may be a series of such moving objects but, howso long

may be such a series, their movements will ultimately be indebted to a mover whose movement is its own and is not borrowed from elsewhere; this latter kind of mover is soul alone. That is why a body which moves of its own, we call the possessor of a soul—a living body. Self-movement of the soul implies that it is independent of any efficient cause *i.e.* it is uncreated. Now its being uncreated, in turn, logically requires that it be incorruptible and immortal too. Besides being alive mobility is also a necessary characteristic of the soul. Consequently soul is always in motion and so it never dies.

After Plato, his pupil Aristotle presented his own metaphysics in which there appears to have been no room for personal immortality. However, in some of his writings, we find stray indicators to the effect that according to him immortality does belong to the abstract intellect. As he did not formally discuss the concept of immortality his categorical opinion on this subject is not available to us. His well-known book *De Anima* contains a discussion on life and its evolution and development. The objective of this book, Aristotle says, is that research be undertaken regarding the nature and significance of soul as a principle of life.<sup>22</sup> With the help of observed facts, he concludes that soul is the form of a living body. In agreement with Plato, Aristotle too regards forms as the essence of objects; however, for him these forms do not subsist in some 'World of Ideas' beyond the world of physical objects but rather inhere in these very objects. This is the basic difference between the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle. Plato had conceived of two worlds—the world of ideas or universals and the material world of particular, existent objects. One is characterized by absolute perfection, eternity and changelessness and the other, by imperfection, temporality and movement. The latter he regarded as the reflection or the imperfect imprint of the former. This attempt which he made towards affecting mutual reconciliation and patch-up of the alleged polarity between the two worlds was regarded by Aristotle as unsatisfactory. For him there is no polarity as such between them. The forms are very much in the material world. If—as is admitted by Plato himself—the forms are



the essence of objects, they must be in the objects and not somewhere outside them. That is why it is said that Aristotle brought philosophy from the heavens down to the earth. Matter and form are no doubt two mutually disparate principles and so can be conceived as different from each other, but it does not mean that we can, as a matter of fact, disengage them. Form is not a substance: every substance is in fact a combination of form and matter.

The universe, according to Aristotle, is a grand evolutionary movement towards higher and higher forms (and, consequently, towards lesser and lesser of materiality). Matter moves because the higher form inherent in it pulls it towards itself so that it may be realized. The form of the tree is potentially present in the seed—in the capacity of a logical principle, as it were. The seed moves to realize it and, going through various stages of development, does ultimately actually realize it; *i.e.*, it becomes the perfect tree. In this entire process of growth the form itself remains static and immobile: it is only the matter that moves. Aristotle's famous doctrine of the Unmoved Mover is based on this very principle that the form itself does not move. Now something which is free from movement and change must be indestructible. So forms are eternal, according to him. This has two possible meanings. Firstly, it may mean that form or soul is a logical principle and so, being non-temporal, is eternal. For instance, the definition of a triangle that 'it is a three-sided figure' is non-temporal and so eternal. On the basis of this interpretation there is evidently left no scope for personal immortality. Secondly, some commentators—Alexander of Aphrodisias and Ibn Rushd among them— ascribing the doctrine of the eternity of Intellect to Aristotle have, however, tried to create the rationale for his alleged view of personal immortality. The words of Aristotle that served as the ground of this rationale are as follows:

Mind does not know at one time and not know at another time.

Only separated, however, is it what it really is. And this alone is immortal and perpetual.<sup>24</sup>

In recent past there has been at least one outstanding thinker who tried to prove immortality of the human soul on

metaphysical grounds. He is Dr. McTaggart. His basic thesis is that all metaphysical arguments have two aspects: an *a priori* aspect and an *a posteriori* or empirical aspect.<sup>25</sup>

The former consists in proving that any thing which had certain characteristics would necessarily be permanent. The latter consists in demonstrating that the human mind or soul does have such characteristics. Incidentally, most of the Muslim thinkers in their metaphysical arguments duly took care of both these aspects.

The metaphysical arguments as delineated above are so indissolubly relevant to the general metaphysical or religious standpoint of the thinkers who uphold them that the former cannot be truly appreciated without a sympathetic understanding of the latter. If one does not agree with the background which is furnished by this standpoint, the argument immediately loses its strength and its cogency. The metaphysical argument stands or falls with whether we subscribe to both its *a priori* and *a posteriori* aspects or we deny both, or, even anyone, of them.

## VI

Let us now appreciate and discuss the moral argument<sup>26</sup> for immortality. A moral judgement is a judgement of value and implies an 'ought'. Values are of two kinds. There are intrinsic values and there are extrinsic values. The former are expressed in statements like 'x is good', whereas the latter are expressed in statements like 'x is right'. Both these kinds of statement are, evidently, different from those which are naturalistic or existential in character, wherein we describe a matter of fact like 'x is circular' or 'x is made of wood' etc. Most of the thinkers are of the view that neither value judgements can be derived from existential judgements nor the other way round: 'is', cannot be derived from 'ought'; nor can 'ought' be derived from 'is'.

If the above is accepted, Kant's moral argument for the immortality of soul loses its ground. Kant was of the opinion that practical reason accepts the hypothesis of immortal existence for the reason that the demands of justice be adequately met. Being in this world we accept the moral principle that virtue ought to be

rewarded and vice ought to be punished. From this 'ought' state of affairs we derive as conclusion an existential state of affairs *i.e.* there will be a life hereafter in which the system of punishments and rewards will as a matter of fact be established. From 'This ought to be the case', it does not legitimately follow that 'this is the case'.

However, there are some philosophers who think otherwise; for them 'is' statements can be concluded from 'ought' statements. A. E. Taylor, in his famous book *The Faith of a Moralist*, has elaborated this point of view. He says that a value judgement can be the premise of a valid argument in which the conclusion is a statement of fact. Such an argument must, however, take the following necessarily into consideration:

- a. No valid logical argument is, of course, possible in which the premise or premises are *purely* evaluative in nature and the conclusion is *purely* factual.
- b. It is, however, not essential that an apparently evaluative statement is *purely* evaluative. It may really be a compound statement which has both moral and non-moral components with a synthetic relationship between the two. Some examples of such compound statements are:
  1. No action can acquire the status of a moral duty unless it is physically possible to perform it.
  2. No state of affairs can be declared good or evil unless it is accompanied by a state of consciousness.
  3. The level of the goodness of an action depends upon the amount of happiness that it produces.

In the first example a synthetic relation is described between a duty and its feasibility conditions; in the second example, it is between value and consciousness; and in the third example, between value and the psychological state of happiness. Out of these, the first one is correct, the second one is probable and the third one is incorrect. As an illustration of the first example let us take Kant's famous argument for freedom which runs as follows:

Every man must perform his duty  
 No man can perform his duty unless he is free  
 Therefore man is free

Here is the argument with mixed ethical premises and a factual judgement as the conclusion which does have a semblance of validity.

Now let us apply this principle to the moral arguments for the immortality of the human soul. There are in fact two such arguments.

The first argument revolves round the concept of 'duty'. It is generally said that if the human race is bound to be annihilated; and, particularly, if every individual person must necessarily be mortal then a number of actions which, by common consent, are considered as duties will not retain their status as such. Similarly, those actions which are forbidden against the context of a faith in the life hereafter will become commendable. If immortality is accepted, then that moral code of life will be desirable for men which is recommended by almost all great religions of the world. But, on the contrary, if a person believes that his physical death will be the end-all and be-all of everything, then he will adopt a strictly pragmatic attitude towards the so-called moral values and do whatever is of benefit to him in this world. Everyone working for the fulfilment of his personal, short-term, worldly desires would tend to create a chaos in society that would evidently be a state of affairs unacceptable to the good reason of man. Hence the validity—in fact, necessity—of faith in the life hereafter!

The above argument is not valid. In order to be moral it is after all not necessary that one should subscribe to immortal existence. To carry out the moral directive 'speak the truth', or 'be honest', or 'help those who are in distress' etc. it is not necessary that he shall have faith in the life hereafter. Similarly, man ought to abstain from all evils irrespective of the fact whether life is temporary or permanent. Epicurean attitude towards life is implausible in respect of its own nature whereas the moral teachings of world religions are plausible in respect of their own inherent character. The hypothesis that a man is mortal has no impact on his moral life. My conviction that I shall not live for ever cannot falsify the fact that some mental states are better than others. For example enjoyment of music is better than enjoyment over the agonies of others. Mortality or immortality!—

the measure of values remains the same.

The second argument is this. One who subscribes to faith in immortal existence may say: granted that the question of mortality/immortality does not affect the measure of values, after all the amount of value available in a temporary, limited span of existence in this world would be far smaller than the one possibly available in an everlasting existence.

This argument too is not satisfactory. Even if we admit that this finite world is lesser in value than the prospective world of the hereafter, it does not by itself establish that man must live for ever: the conclusion in order to be valid will need at least one more premise and that is 'the world here and now is not a thoroughly bad place to live': This additional premise will have to be independently established. It cannot of course be established on the basis of reason alone because that would require a comprehensive survey of the experiences of human beings extending to their entire past, present as well as future—and that is evidently impossible.

Due to the inaccessibility of reason in this respect, almost all religions of the world resort to a faithful conviction in the life hereafter. Anyway, the philosophers, due to the limitation of a rational approach, and not feeling at home with religious faith, sometimes take a recourse to observational evidence collected and laboratory experiments conducted by parapsychologists who claim to provide significant pointers to survival after death of the human soul. Let us now attend to this area of study for a while.

## VII

Dilating on the problem of immortality, David Hume writes in his *Essay on the Immortality of the Soul*: "By the mere light of reason, it seems difficult to prove the immortality of the soul. The arguments for it are commonly derived from metaphysical topics, or moral, or physical. But, in reality, it is the Gospel alone that has brought life and immortality to light"<sup>27</sup>.

But, as we have seen above, a philosopher's mind is not satisfied with a purely scriptural evidence and the ethico-metaphysical considerations: he continues his search for logical

arguments and for tangible experiential evidence, if available. Professor C.D. Broad is of the view that “if human survival can be rendered probable at all, this can be done only by empirical argument based on the phenomena which are treated by *Psychical Research*”.<sup>28</sup>

Spiritual experts claim that living persons can establish contacts with the souls of the dead and enter into conversation with them and the truth of the information thus gathered from the dead can be confirmed by alternative sources comprising living human beings. During the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century this hypothesis was put to strict scientific scrutiny and the Society for *Psychical Research* was established in London in 1882. Many renowned thinkers have been the presidents of this society; from among them are Henry Bergson, William James, Hans Driesch, Henry Sidgwick, F.C.S. Schiller, C.D. Broad, H.H. Price, William McDougall, Gardner Murphy, Franklin Prince, R.H. Thouless, Sir William Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Barrett, Lord Raleigh and Gilbert Murray. From a perusal of these names it is clear that the Society has been patronized not only by psychologists but also by physicists and philosophers. *Psychical Research* has been given the name *Parapsychology* in the United States.

According to Herbert B. Green-house evidence in favour of life after death is gathered from various sources like meeting with ghosts and with the souls of the dead through mediums, apparition of spirits, heavenly music, out-of-the-air voices, near-death observations, spectacles of the souls leaving their bodies, out-of-body experiences, automatic writings, penetration of evil spirits into human beings, etc.

The subject-matter of *psychical research* or *parapsychology* can be divided into two parts: extra-sensory perception or ESP and psychokinesis or PK. In ESP a man gets knowledge of objects without the intermediacy of his usual sense organs while in PK he influences his environments without any kind of movement of his body. Various forms of ESP are telepathy, clairvoyance and precognition whereas in PK it is not simply the physical environment that is affected but also the souls can be

summoned. This latter function is cited as a direct confirmation of the existence of the souls after their bodies die. Similarly, having been established through evidence that man's soul, mind or consciousness survives the death of the body, contact with it can be established through telepathy which has been confirmed as a mode of direct sensory communication between various minds of people in this world without the mediation of any material, bodily reference.

Here we do not have space enough to describe and analyse various phenomena of ESP and PK; anyway, mention of some of them will definitely be of interest to the readers as it will throw a lot of light on the subject. Late Dr. C.A. Qadir, in an article published in the Daily Pakistan Times dated July 10, 1983, reported one such event. A Punjab University vice-chancellor once went to America. He was a scientist by training and had an inquisitive mind. There he happened to visit a parapsychologist whom he asked to tell him about the well-being of his friends and relatives in Lahore. The parapsychologist arranged to establish a telepathic liaison with them through a medium. The medium immediately reported that the soul of the Vice-Chancellor's mother desired to contact his son. The Vice-Chancellor felt naturally disturbed as he had left his mother in Lahore as quite hale and healthy. So the medium was asked to check up once again but he insisted on his observation. The Vice-Chancellor asked the medium to himself contact the soul and find out the real state of affairs. When thus contacted the soul requested that the Vice-Chancellor be asked whether he did not have a sister (then deceased) of his mother whom he lovingly called his 'mother' and for whom he had arranged a collective prayer six months ago. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that this was the case.<sup>29</sup>

Society for Psychical Research has published a book comprising a number of researches and reports on the phenomena of extra-sensory perception, telepathy, psychokinesis, summoning of souls of the dead etc. One of these is a first-person account by a priest. He reports that in July, 1938 he reached Perthshire to take the charge of the church there. A

woman, Ann Simpson by name, of the Presbyterian sect came to see him. This woman had been anxious for the last many days to meet some priest. She told the priest that a woman named Maloy whom she knew and who had died some days ago had been coming to her in dreams for the last many nights and requesting her to meet some priest and ask him to pay three pounds and ten pennies to a person to whom she owed this amount but whose identity was not disclosed in the dreams. The priest undertook some investigation by himself in this connection. He found out that Maloy was a washer-woman by profession and that she used to buy various objects of her use from a particular grocer's shop in the town. The grocer was asked whether he knew any woman named Maloy who owed to him some amount of money. He replied in the affirmative and, after checking from his accounts book, he said that she owed to him exactly three pounds and ten pennies. The priest paid that amount to him. After some time Ann Simpson visited the priest and reported that Maloy never met her again in dream.<sup>30</sup>

Telepathy is of many kinds. A dead person may communicate with a living person through dream or through a medium. Sometimes, in order for telepathy to occur the two persons concerned should have mutually an intellectual and spiritual affinity but in some cases it is not essential. In fact the prescience of an event that is to happen in future to a particular person may occur in dream to another, entirely unrelated person or in imagination during waking life. To quote a classic and somewhat dramatic example:

A woman sitting by a lake sees the figure of a man running towards the lake and throwing himself in. A few days later a man commits suicide by throwing himself into this same lake. Presumably the explanation of the vision is that the man's thought while he was contemplating suicide had been telepathically projected onto the scene *via* the woman's mind.<sup>31</sup>

One interpretation of the telepathic phenomena is that though consciously and even sub-consciously minds of different persons are disparate and independent of one another, yet, in the deepest domains of the unconscious, they influence and also are



influenced by one another. Thus it is at the unconscious level that the transference of ideas from one mind to the other takes place. This does not mean that an idea goes out of one mind and then travels to another mind. What happens is “that the sender’s thought gives rise to a mental ‘echo’ in the mind of the receiver. This echo occurs at the unconscious level...(that is why) the version of it that rises into the receivers consciousness may be only fragmentary and may be distorted or symbolized in various ways, as in dreams”.<sup>32</sup>

Let us end up with a careful note. As regards the findings of parapsychology or of psychical research, it is sometimes claimed that they have attained the level of scientific truths. But, considered by strictly scientific standards, it appears to be a dubious claim. At least they have failed to give information about the ‘other world’ with a recognizable certitude. With the level of knowledge attained by this discipline till the present times, it is not possible to predict which are the new horizons—if there are any—of the truths of fact that await to be discovered by it. Unusual and supersensory events are recognized by all religions of the worlds; and suppose parapsychical researches are at all able to attain sometime in future, scientific credibility, that will simply amount to a corroboration of the religious concepts already in vogue. In that case the thesis put forth by Hume that the doctrine of the immortality of soul is primarily grounded in religious faith will stand confirmed.

### Chapter III

## General Structure of Iqbal's Philosophy

Every great thinker has a characteristic methodology and certain rules of procedure with the help of which he ultimately prepares the texture of his entire thought-system. Socrates for example, we know, adopted the unique 'Socratic method' which helped him to undertake and accomplish invaluable researches in regard to the acquisition of knowledge and also towards making the epistemic principles thus discovered the basis of his ethical views. Plato laid almost the entire emphasis on deductive reasoning whereas Aristotle made use of induction alongwith deduction. In modern times, Descartes is well-known for his 'method of doubt' which he employed for ultimately finding out the 'indubitable' as the foundation-stone for his philosophy to be built upon. Spinoza sought to erect his philosophical empire with the help of, what he called, the 'geometrical method'. Locke and other empiricists initiated the experiential method. Kant accepted transcendental ideas of pure reason as the regulative concepts for his philosophising. Hegel introduced his characteristic Dialectical Method. The feature common among all these philosophers is that they, somehow or other, recognize the importance of thought in the formulation of their views. However, there have been some philosophers who do not regard thought and logical reasoning as indispensable; they rather adopt a non-logical, athoughtful method as their mode of knowledge. This mode of knowledge, with most of them, is intuition; so their method is intuitional. Bergson is the chief exponent of this class of

philosophers. Though Iqbal too belongs to this tradition, yet he is of the opinion that reason can, of course, guide us to some extent. Sense and reason both are allies of intuition but insofar as the ultimate access to the absolute reality is concerned it is for him the prerogative of intuition alone.

In modern thought, Kant is the philosopher who positively and with confidence declared that human reason cannot at all comprehend the ultimate reality, the Reality as such. Reason, he says, depends for its operation on the categories of understanding which are entirely subjective. Same is the case with the forms of intuition without which our so-called knowledge of the external world is not possible. So rational and perceptual forms of knowledge both are subjective in the last analysis. It is impossible for man to come out of this groove of subjectivity and know reality. The thing-in-itself for him is unknowable.

Centuries before Kant, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali too, passing through an excruciating phase of doubts and uncertainties, had come to the same conclusion that man's intellect, in its independent capacity, cannot have an access to the ultimate reality. But, unlike Kant, Ghazali did not rest content with this incapacitated state of intellect or reason: he continued his search for some supra-rational method which might be able to lead him to the reality. He ultimately found this method in intuition—the mystic or religious experience. This is how Iqbal compares the positions of Kant and Ghazali:

Ghazali's mission was almost apostolic like that of Kant in Germany of the eighteenth century. In Germany rationalism appeared as an ally of religion, but soon realized that the dogmatic side of religion was incapable of demonstration. The only course open to her was to eliminate dogma from the sacred record. With the elimination of dogma came the utilitarian view of morality, and thus rationalism completed the reign of unbelief. Such was the state of theological thought in Germany when Kant appeared. His *Critique of Pure Reason* revealed the limitations of human reason and reduced the whole work of the rationalists to a heap of ruins. And justly has he been described as God's greatest gift to his country. Ghazali's philosophical scepticism which, however, went a little too far, virtually did the same kind of work in the world of Islam

in breaking the back of that proud but shallow rationalism which moved in the same direction as pre-Kantian rationalism in Germany. There is, however, one important difference between Ghazali and Kant, Kant consistently with his principles, could not affirm the possibility of knowledge of God. Ghazali, finding no hope in analytic thought, moved to mystic experience and there found an independent content for religion. In this way he succeeded in securing for religion the right to exist independently of science and metaphysics. But the revelation of the total infinite in mystic experience convinced him of the finitude and inconclusiveness of thought and drove him to draw a line of cleavage between thought and intuition.<sup>1</sup>

Iqbal agrees with both Ghazali and Kant as regards the finitude and limitedness of human reason. Robert Whitemore calls it an 'existentialist conviction that reality is ultimately inexpressible purely in terms of reason and science.'<sup>2</sup> From this, one should not at all develop the misunderstanding that Iqbal was opposed to rational knowledge. His objective in fact was simply to prove that science, by virtue of its inherent structure, is incapable to know the ultimate reality. He agrees with Kant that forms of perception, *i.e.* space and time, are subjective and so ordinary experience that is conditioned by these forms cannot reach the Absolute Real which, being absolute is non-spatial, non-temporal. But he refuses to be a party to Kant's agnosticism. He is of the opinion that there are kinds of experience higher than its ordinary kind and that, relevant to different levels of being encountered, natures of space and time also continue getting transformed: a stage of being may ultimately come where space and time in their ordinary meanings become absolutely irrelevant.<sup>3</sup>

The standpoint of Iqbal can be explained with the help of an example. Suppose you take a man, blind-folded, into a house with which he is already familiar and then ask him to get out of the house by the exit door. He will try to search for it by going through, and having a feel of, various rooms, corridors etc. this groping activity will of course provide some guidance for him but the real guidance will be provided by the concept of the geography of the house which he already has in his mind through

a remembrance of his past experience of the house. This concept is analogous to intuition whereas groping is like sense perception and rational analysis. Thus reason and perception do help the intuitive process but cannot themselves reach the goal: only intuition can help reach there.

It has been referred to above that space and time have various levels. 'Iraqi, in this connection, talks of three levels of space:

1. Space of material bodies
2. Space of non-material beings
3. Divine space

Space of the gross material bodies admits of roominess. In this space movement takes place which needs serial time. Bodies occupy their respective places and resist displacement. Then there is the space of subtle bodies like air and sound. In this space also bodies resist each other, and their movement likewise is measurable in terms of time, although their time is different from that of the gross material objects. The air in a tube must be displaced before new air can enter into it; and the time of sound waves is practically nothing as compared to the time of gross bodies. Finally, we have the space of light. The light of the sun instantly reaches the remotest corners of the earth. Thus in the velocity of light time is reduced almost to zero. We can say, therefore, that the space of light is different from the spaces of air and sound. There is, however, a more convincing argument. Light of a candle spreads in all directions in a room without displacing the air in the room; this shows that the space of light is more subtle than the space of air which has no entry into the space of light.<sup>4</sup>

Secondly, there is the space of non-material beings like angels. Though it is possible for these beings to pass through even solid stony walls, they cannot dispense with motion altogether. A higher level of spatial freedom is reached by the human soul which is neither at rest nor in motion.

Thus, passing through various stages, "we reach the Divine space which is absolutely free from all dimensions and constitutes the meeting point of all infinities".<sup>5</sup>

Iqbal appreciates 'Iraqi's attempt to analyse the concept of space that, in an age which had no idea of the theories and concepts of modern mathematics and physics, a cultured Muslim Sufi very capably tried to interpret his spiritual experience of time and space. Anyhow, Iqbal does not fully agree with 'Iraqi's views, partly because of his natural prejudice in favour of the traditional Aristotelian idea of a fixed universe.<sup>6</sup>

According to Iqbal, as said above, space is not an objective fact. Some animals live in a one-dimensional space; some in the two-dimensional space. Human beings live in a three-dimensional space-order. Just as there are one-, two- and three-dimensional spaces so there is a possibility of having more than three dimensions of space.

After 'Iraqi's concept of space, Iqbal passes on to his concept of time. According to 'Iraqi time too has various levels. The time of material bodies is conditioned by the sequence of days and nights: as long as one day does not pass away, the next day does not begin. Time of immaterial bodies is different from it. A full year of material bodies may not be more than one day for immaterial bodies. Rising higher and higher in the scale of immaterial beings we reach Divine time which is absolutely free from the quality of passage and succession. The eye of God can see all the visibles and His ear can hear all the audibles in one indivisible act of perception. Thus Divine time does not admit of any past or future: it is a single super-eternal 'now'. So, according to 'Iraqi, time, like space, too has different natures relevant to different levels of being. At the level of perception our time is purely spatial. We look at our movements in terms of 'now' and 'not-now'. These two terms almost mean the same as 'here' and 'not-here'. Thus we consider time on the analogy of a straight line some part of which we have already travelled (past) and some part we have yet to travel (future). If it is said that at this level there is no 'present' it will not be incorrect. When specifically determined, it will either be the 'immediate past' or the 'immediate future'. However, if we take an inward and closely sympathetic view of time, we discover a different picture. At this stage of appreciation the 'past' is not left behind but rather moves

alongwith, and operates in, the present; and the future is not a line already drawn out yet to be traversed: it is 'given' only in the sense that it is available in the present as an open possibility. Thus past, present and future converge on a single point. In the terminology of Bergson it is *élan vital*, pure duration, a movement without succession.

Iqbal, in his view of space and time, has been impressed to a great extent by Einstein's theory of Relativity; yet he does not regard it to be entirely satisfactory. For Iqbal, in the words of Dr. Raziuddin Siddiqi,

both time and space are relative and real but of the two time is of more basic importance. Though all objects are equally in space as well as in time, yet these two are mutually related as body is to mind: time is the mind of space. Iqbal is further of the view that Einstein's theory, in the capacity of a scientific hypothesis, seeks to explain the structure of object but throws no light on their nature. It should be kept in mind that the theory of Relativity disregards some such characteristics of time as veritably constitute a part of our experience. So, it is not valid to claim that the nature of time is exhausted by those characteristics which are assigned to it by the theory of Relativity: this theory, in general, takes into account only those aspects of nature which admit of mathematical treatment.<sup>7</sup>

As has been said above, Iqbal upholds the unique veracity and authenticity of a level of experience which is higher than its ordinary levels, which has its roots in the innermost depths of man's self and which is independent insofar as it refuses to be judged entirely by the yardsticks of reason and logic. It is 'intuition' or 'mystic experience' which compensates the limitations of both sense and intellect as modes of knowledge. Intuition has following characteristics according to Iqbal:

1. It is the immediate experience of the Ultimate Reality. In this respect, it is not a mysterious, abnormal or supernatural activity because in fact all experiences are instantaneous and immediate. Ordinary levels of experience (for instance, sense experience) have as their object the external world whereas mystic or intuitive experience has as its object the being of God. God is not a mathematical entity or a system of

concepts, thus having no reference to experience.

2. The second main characteristic is its unanalysable wholeness. In an ordinary experience a person receives innumerable sense-data out of which he selects, in accordance with his interest, those that fall into a particular order of space and time, and the perception of an object takes place. So when a perceiving person organizes the disorganized sense-data, he does so by virtue of a particular structure of his mind and his own subjective categories of understanding. On the contrary, when a Sufi adopts the way of the *qalb*, the way of religious or mystic experience—however vivid and rich that experience may be—thought in him is reduced to the minimum and such analysis with its processes of selection and rejection of various data is not possible. But this difference between the mystic state and the ordinary rational consciousness does not mean that the former is abnormal in nature. In fact the reality is the same in either case. Reason, by virtue of its own nature and character, analyses it into parts and undertakes a study of these parts in a departmental, scientific and logical way, whereas in the mystic state we have an encounter with the single unrealizable unity of reality in which the ordinary distinction between subject and object does not exist.
3. Third characteristic is that for the mystic the mystic state is a moment of proximity to, and intimate association with, a unique 'Other Self'. Reason, which is steeped in the habit of the acquisition of knowledge that would retain the distinction between the subject and the object of knowledge, cannot fully appreciate the kind of the knowledge of the Real which a mystic has. The mystic has a feeling that the Other Self has over-powered him and his own private personality has been momentarily suppressed. This is no illusion of subjectivity. There are many facts in our own ordinary life which cannot be known by rational perception: for example, my own mind and the minds of other persons. I know my own mind through inner reflection but I possess no sense for my knowledge of other minds. The only ground of my knowledge of another conscious being is the physical



movements and responses similar to my own from which I infer the existence of that being. However, this analogy operates covertly as, for all practical purposes, our knowledge of other minds is direct and immediate and leaves no room for doubt. Similarly, despite the subjacent fact that God does give responses to us as other human beings do, our knowledge of God as the Other Self is direct and immediate.

4. Fourth characteristic of mystic experience is its incommunicability. This is because it is a matter of inarticulate feeling untouched by discursive intellect. A mystic can put an interpretation on the content of his experience and describe it in the form of judgements but the content itself is absolutely incommunicable. Though mystic experience is essentially a kind of feeling, it has a cognitive element also and, because of this cognitive element, Iqbal says, it lends itself to the form of idea. Quoting from professor Hocking, Iqbal is of the view that feeling as such is indefinite and without any shape but, at the same time, it cannot be so blind as to have no idea of its own object. It is tendentious and has a direction and the direction implies some objective. It is because of this nature of feeling that, although religion starts with feeling, it ultimately strives for a metaphysics too. So there is an organic relationship between feeling and idea. "Inarticulate feeling", says Iqbal, "seeks to fulfil its destiny in idea, which, in its turn, tends to develop out of itself its own visible garment. It is no mere metaphor to say that idea and word both simultaneously emerge out of the womb of feeling".<sup>8</sup>
5. During mystic experience, the mystic's relationship with the world is temporarily withheld and he has a sense of the unreality of serial time, but this does not imply that he entirely breaks with the ordinary experience of the temporal world. Mystic experience continues for a very short duration; it very soon fades away though it leaves behind a deep sense of its authority. Neither the mystic nor the prophet remains permanently in the intuitive state: they must necessarily come

back from the realm of pure duration to the world of ordinary experience. However, this intuitive experience is the ideal of spiritual excellence for the mystic whereas for the prophet it is just the beginning of his long journey towards carrying out the divine mission entrusted to him.<sup>9</sup>

Intuition is the characteristic method of Iqbal, with the help of which he seeks to elaborate and interpret his own religious and philosophical views. A religion which is an insipid and lifeless system of beliefs and doctrines alongwith certain didactic precepts is like a body without soul. Pure, abstract reasoning as is carried on by theologians and the formulation of a code of morals with its dos and don'ts cannot satisfy man from within. At the same time, the total exteriorization of the religious method too is not by itself sufficient to know the Ultimate Reality, according to Iqbal:

(Philosophy) may finally end in... a frank admission of the incapacity of human reason to reach the Ultimate Reality. The essence of religion, on the other hand, is faith; and faith, like the bird, sees its 'trackless way' unattended by intellect which, in the words of the great mystic poet of Islam, 'only waylays the living heart of man and robs it of the invisible wealth of life that lies within. Yet it cannot be denied that faith is more than mere feeling. It has something like a cognitive content, and the existence of rival parties—scholastics and mystics—in the history of religion shows that idea is a vital element in religion...Indeed, in view of its function, religion stands in greater need of a rational foundation of its ultimate principles than even the dogmas of science. ...Nor is there any reason to suppose that thought and intuition are essentially opposed to each other. They spring from the same root and complement each other. The one grasps reality piecemeal, the other grasps it in its wholeness. The one fixes its gaze on the eternal, the other, on the temporal aspect of reality. The one is present enjoyment of the whole of reality, the other aims at traversing the whole by slowly specifying and closing up the various regions of the whole for exclusive observation. Both are in need of each other for mutual rejuvenation. Both seek vision of the same reality which reveals itself to them in accordance with their functions in life. In fact intuition, as Bergson rightly says, is only a higher kind of intellect.<sup>10</sup>

Form the above account it is clear that Iqbal does not regard intuition and intellect as totally divorced from, and opposed to, each other. Pure intuition is a nameless, indeterminate, and undirected feeling which is faced towards thought or concept; and thought, in turn, for the sake of its expression, carves out words, propositions and an entire logical structure. This is why, according to him, “the main purpose of the Qur’an is to awaken in man the higher consciousness of his manifold relations with God and the universe”.<sup>11</sup>

## II

In the beginning of the second chapter of his *Reconstruction*, entitled “The Philosophical Test of the Revelations of Religious Experience”, Iqbal has given a critical evaluation of the celebrated three arguments for the existence of God which were initiated by the scholastics of the medieval period. One of these is the Cosmological argument which is based on the principle of causality. There is a chain of causal relations in nature. An effect has a cause; that cause is itself the effect of another cause; and so on. In order to avoid an infinite regress, we must stop at a cause which is not the effect of any other cause, the cause which is Supreme and Final. the Uncaused Cause of everything, thus arrived at, is God. This argument is fallacious, according to Iqbal because

- i. To finish the series of effects and causes at a certain cause and to declare that cause as the Uncaused Cause violates the very law of causation on which the argument proceeds.
- ii. It renders the First Cause finite because it would necessarily exclude its effect which would thus apply a limitation to it.
- iii. It does not prove the first cause to be a necessary being because, generally, cause and effect in their mutual relationship are equally dependent on each other.
- iv. Necessity of existence is not the same as, nor is it derivable from, conceptual necessity which is the maximum that this argument can prove.

The Teleological argument is also ‘cosmological’ in nature in the broader sense of this term. It tries to scrutinize the effect with

a view to discover the 'character' of its cause. From the phenomena of harmony, order and systematic arrangements in nature it infers the existence of a conscious, intelligent Being with a purpose. Iqbal rejects this argument also because, at the most,

...it gives us a skilful external contriver working on a pre-existing, dead and intractable material, the elements of which are, by their own nature, incapable of orderly structures and combinations. 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 not 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.<sup>12</sup>

The Ontological argument, for Iqbal, is a little better and more significant from the philosophical point of view. According to this argument it is the very concept of God that necessarily implies His existence. We have in our mind, it is said, the concept of a perfect being. Now this being cannot be perfect if, despite having all the other positive attributes, it does not have the quality of existence also. Therefore, the perfect being necessarily exists. Hence the existence of God! Descartes formulated this argument somewhat differently: I have the idea of an infinitely Perfect Being in my mind. Who created this idea in my mind? It cannot be a finite being because a finite being cannot conceive the Infinite. Nor can it be the external nature because nature exhibits nothing but change and a changing object cannot produce the idea of the changeless which a perfect being should be. So the idea of Perfect Being has been created by the Perfect Being Himself, Who, because perfect, necessarily exists. However, this argument too is fallacious because it commits the fallacy of *petitio principii*.

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.<sup>13</sup>

We have seen above that Iqbal recognizes intuition as the most basic method of his philosophy but at the same time does not recommend that intellect should be totally renounced. We

have also seen that intuition, though essentially an indeterminate feeling, has a cognitive aspect also which translates this feeling into the categories of logical thought and into the form of judgements. So reality is known at two levels: at the level of intuition and at the level of intellect. The Ultimate Reality, Whose knowledge a Sufi claims to acquire through his 'perception of the heart', a philosopher or a scientist tries to approach through an intellectual exercise. The latter, however, if he confines himself to discursive intellect, gets entangled again and again into logical contradictions but thought or intellect has, according to Iqbal, a deeper movement also where it becomes identical with intuition. With this fact in view, it would not be useless to adopt a thoughtful approach to Reality.

Having rejected the traditional arguments for the existence of God as fallacious on various grounds, Iqbal adopts another way to God which too of course is paved and levelled by thought but, as we shall see, he would try to decipher the subjacent meaning of various discoveries made by it.

Descartes, by virtue of his famous maxim *cogito ergo sum* (I think therefore I am), had initiated a new tradition in the world of philosophy *i.e.* he made his own conscious experience the starting point of his philosophical investigations. A person's own conscious experience is so irrefutable a fact that he cannot possibly reject it or even have the slightest doubt about it. Later thinkers, for example the rationalist Leibniz as well as Locke and other empiricists and also specially the vitalist Bergson kept up this tradition. Iqbal too starts from the analysis of conscious experience and its interpretation. Having declared as erratic and illogical the arguments offered by the scholastics in order to establish the existence of God, he chooses to accept the axiomatic and self-evident truth of his own consciousness as his major premise: whatever inferences are validly drawn therefrom and whatever we know as a result of the logical analysis thereof will be as sure as this premise itself. Says Iqbal:

Experience, as unfolding itself in time, presents three main levels—the level of matter, the level of life, and the level of mind and consciousness—the subjects-matter of physics, biology and

psychology, respectively.<sup>14</sup>

When human experience takes place in time, and when man ultimately seeks to understand various facts of nature rationally and logically, he encounters three areas of existence or three 'scopes of study': firstly, 'lifeless matter' which is studied by the science of physics; secondly, 'life' which is the subject-matter of biology; and thirdly, 'mind and consciousness' which is studied by psychology. Iqbal tries to find out, explain and interpret and then mutually corroborate, the findings of these sciences in order to develop a picture of the nature of the Ultimate Reality.

Let us take physics first. Physics is an empirical science. It deals with those objects of which we can have sense experience. Its scope of study is the material world. There is no doubt that the physicists sometimes postulate imperceptible entities such as atoms but they are only compelled to do so because without these imperceptibles it would not be possible for them to adequately explain the facts of sense experience. Anyway, it is the facts of sense experience alone which, first and last, are recognised by physics as its subject-matter. Religious and aesthetic experiences, though important and undeniable components of the total range of human experience, are outside the scope of physics.

According to the traditional concept, matter is a static and a spatio-temporally bound something. We ascribe to objects around us the qualities of solidity and of a material base. This is a workable view insofar as our everyday life is concerned. But, when we undertake a critical analysis of our sensations which are a source of our knowledge of the material world, the real problem begins to take shape.

The concept of the material world among the philosophers, ever since the times of Aristotle, was that it is a finished product, independently situated in an absolute void. It was the philosopher Berkeley who for the first time criticized this commonplace notion of materiality. John Locke, before him, had made a distinction between the primary and secondary qualities of objects. He was of the opinion that the primary qualities like solidity, extension, figure, motion, rest, etc. are present in the

objects themselves; secondary qualities like colours, sounds, tastes and odours, etc., on the other hand, are the ones which are not objectively present in the objects, but are simply subjective impressions of the mind of the perceiver. Berkeley rejected this distinction between primary and secondary qualities: all qualities are equally subjective impressions. A thing is nothing but a sum of its perceived qualities and it is for this reason that he affirmed that 'to be is to be perceived'. Berkeley's rejection of the material substance lead later philosophers to think that matter may not be the solid, already given and independent something as we generally believe it to be because in that case the universe would be reduced to a determinate and finished product in which there would be no movement, no evolution. In modern times, Einstein's researches in physics have also discovered this concept of the universe to be unsound. His theory of relativity has made space and time relative, instead of absolute, concepts. Space or void is in fact a relationship between two bodies. Moon and earth, for example, are two heavenly bodies; their existence generates the empty space that is supposed to be there between them. If both of them disappear, the void between them will disappear also. "The unreality of space implies the unreality of fixed substances lying in it".<sup>15</sup>

Thus the traditional concept of the material world is proved to be false. In accordance with the Einsteinian physics "a piece of matter has become not a persistent thing but a system of inter-related events";<sup>16</sup> or, in the words of Prof. Whitehead, "a structure of events possessing the character of a continuous creative flow which thought cuts up into isolated immobilities out of whose mutual relations arise the concepts of space and time."<sup>17</sup> Prof. Whitehead further says that if the traditional concept of matter is accepted, one half of nature will become a dream and the other half just a conjecture.<sup>18</sup>

We have seen that the Newtonian concept of matter is not tenable. In fact the spatio-temporal moulds are framed by man himself in order to understand objects and events. The entire physical, temporal and spatial concepts of Newtonian physics were fashioned by his own subjacent ideas about the cosmos. For

some time in post-Newtonian history physics made use of these concepts. To some extent these concepts worked. But after all physicists were compelled by their own difficulties of understanding to reject the artificial polarization between mind and matter and undertake a thorough re-appraisal of the entire world-view. Is space really an infinite void in which objects move?, they asked. The philosopher Zeno of the Eleatic school of the Greeks answered in the negative and in support of his answer gave logical explanations which, as to their ingenuity, have kept the philosophers flabbergasted, wonder-struck ever since. Zeno's paradoxes in fact sought to bring into limelight the logical fallacies involved in our ordinary understanding of the concepts of space and time. In the arguments of Zeno the alleged conclusion that the arrow appearing to move does not really move and the Achilles appearing to overtake the tortoise does not really overtake it are actually due to the fact that we erroneously regard time to comprise innumerable individual moments and instants. Similarly, we regard space also as consisting of an infinite number of points. This was in ancient times the Pythagorean standpoint against whose perspective Zeno put forth his arguments to the effect that movement is not possible: a thing for example in order to move from one place to the other will have to traverse a series of points which are unlimited in number and this, in turn, will require for its eventualization an infinite number of moments of time. So it cannot move at all. Solution of the problem necessitates a basic change in this concept of space and time. It was the theory of Relativity put forth in modern times by Einstein which entirely metamorphosed the older concept of space and it was Bergson who revolutionized the traditional concept of time. Iqbal was in general impressed by both of them but at the same time criticized them also off and on. For instance, he says in his *Reconstruction*: "Looking...at the theory from the standpoint that I have taken in these Lectures, Einstein's Relativity presents one great difficulty *i.e.* the unreality of time".<sup>19</sup> A summary of Iqbal's point of view on this subject has been given by Dr. Khalifa 'Abdul Hakim which deserves to be quoted at some length:



Allama Iqbal says that as regards his standpoint in the *Lectures*, the Relativity of Einstein implies that time is unreal. He has reduced time to just a dimension of space as a consequence of which future becomes something already given, indubitably fixed like the past which is over, and now fixed for all times. According to Iqbal, on the other hand, it is a free creative movement which has no fixed futurity. Einstein does not comprehend fully the nature of time. Having strong prejudice for mathematics he simply disregards all the characteristics of time as experienced by us. Iqbal admits that we laymen who are not well-versed in higher mathematics cannot claim to understand Einstein's concept of time in all its details and without such understanding criticism against him would be unfair and ineffective. It is, however, obvious that Einstein's 'time', is different from what Bergson calls 'pure duration'. Nor is it a serial, sequential time in which the cause precedes the effect so that if the former is not, the latter cannot be. If mathematical time is serial time, then on the basis of the theory of Einstein it is possible, by a careful choice of the velocities of the observer and the system in which a given set of events is happening, to make the effect precede its cause. Time, as regarded by Einstein 'the fourth dimension of space', is no time at all. After this Iqbal refers to the view of the Russian thinker Ouspensky that time is different from the three dimensions but his time too has a spatial reference. According to him too time is not a creative movement and so different from space. He describes our time-sense as a misty and vague space-sense.<sup>20</sup>

Bergson, on the contrary, makes a distinction between serial time and pure duration. Dr. McTaggart did not recognize this distinction; therefore he regarded time as unreal. Though Iqbal granted legitimacy to the concept of 'space-time', he gave primacy to time: this shows the influence of Bergson on him. However, he differs from him in some respects as we shall see a little later in the account that follows.

Now we pass on to the other levels of experience *i.e.* life and consciousness.

As to the claim regarding the primary importance of life, the name of Bergson, the vitalist, is of special importance in the history of philosophy. Traditionally, it was the opinion that movement and change—the obvious manifestations of life—are the

signs of deficiency and imperfection: the Supremely Perfect should be absolutely devoid of movement. In Plato's ideas, for example, there was no room for evolution or growth of any kind. Same is the case with the Pure Form, the Unmoved Mover, of Aristotle. It could produce movement in other objects, beings etc. but by itself it must be motionless. This tradition has been carried over to modern European thought also. Spinoza's Infinite Substance, for instance, is without movement. In general, majority of the thinkers, idealists as well as materialists have failed to recognize the primacy of life in the constitution of the universe.

In modern times, Bergson is the most prominent among those thinkers who rightly laid emphasis on the pivotal importance of life and regarded the ultimate reality not as static something but as essentially change and flux. For him the universe comprises two kinds of movements which are mutually contradictory: the upward movement and the downward movement. The former is life and the latter is matter. In order to appreciate what Bergson has really in view we must notice, to begin with, that here he identifies matter as well as life with pure movement. Normally, we have the habit of knowing moving objects like a running train or a flying bird and not movement as such. Conceptualization of the phenomenon of movement is very difficult and so very rare.

Matter is regarded by Bergson as movement because modern physics has explained material objects in terms of atoms which, in turn, are simply positive and negative discharges of electricity, simply various kinds of velocities, various rates of motion. Matter is downward motion because physics further tells us that according to Cantor's Law of Degradation of Energy matter is gradually dissipating and getting wasted. As the story of the emergence of the terrestrial sphere goes, when, to begin with, it separated from a massive heavenly body, it was a spherical burning-hot material which then started cooling down. Cooling of the earth is an indicator of the fact that the radiation of atoms gradually decreased. The truth of this phenomenon is borne out by the astronomers who are of the opinion that according to the

Law of Entropy our universe is slowly moving towards its end. Take the case of a drop of liquid ink which you throw in a glass of water. This drop will start spreading outward. In the centre the ink will be thicker whereas on the peripheries it will become dimmer and dimmer. On the same analogy, there were big atoms in the centre of the universe which with the passage of time continued breaking up into smaller and smaller atoms. Thus, radiation of the universe is becoming lesser every moment till a time will come when the sun will entirely cool down. On the authority of modern scientific researches, Bergson says that matter is pure movement because the material atom itself is movement: it is electricity itself. Diversity of objects is due to the number of electrons and protons in their constituent atoms. We can legitimately say that every material object can be explained in terms of velocities. Thus the basic truth of every material object is movement which because of its gradual dissipation and degradation is termed as the downward movement.

Now let us look at 'life'. It is the upward movement, according to Bergson. The energy, which, in the form of matter, is being dissipated and wasted, is being preserved in the activity which life is. Life, by the assimilation and conservation of energy, is able to scale higher and higher levels of its evolutionary process. A plant, when it grows, sucks with the help of its roots water, carbon, phosphorus and other minerals from the earth and receives heat from the sun with the help of its leaves etc. We can have in our intuitive experience a first-hand knowledge of this phenomenon. Direct awareness of my own self and personality is of course the surest knowledge possible. Bergson further raises the question as to what is the exact status of a living organism: are his birth and death two such extremes as can be called his beginning and end respectively; if so, are this beginning as well as this end absolute and real or just relative and phenomenal? From the biological point of view, he asserts that in any individual or person birth and death are not absolute but relative extremes. No individual comes into being *ex nihilo* –out of nothing, nor with his death does he enter into total nonentity. Before his birth, he exists in the form of his parents' genes and after his death he lives

on in the race he generates. Between these two events of birth and death he develops and matures as an independent individual. In other words, it is the same life current which a person receives from his forefathers, retains it for some time and then passes it onto his progeny. The person is an instrument, a vehicle through which the life-current passes on from one generation to the other. All individuals and species are to the life current as waves, water drops and bubbles are to a flowing river.

For the life-current or life-urge Bergson uses his special term *Élan Vital*. In itself this vital force is non-serial time, pure duration, an urge, a desire, a volition which is always active, creating newer and newer forms along the evolutionary path. Mathematical time comprises various instants and between these instants we suppose there are intervals which are non-temporal. To mutually separate two instants with the help of a non-temporal interval presents an erratic picture of reality. In fact human intellect, for its own practical convenience has broken up the non-divisible, pure duration into instants and moments, days and nights, months and years, centuries and epochs—and this is observably a camouflaged view of the real state of affairs. In order to grasp reality as such a person must, with the help of pure perception, acquire a sympathetic affinity with the vital force and develop in himself the feeling of the phenomenon of change and evolution. This will give the awareness that the past is not something which has been left behind nor is the future a line, already drawn, which is yet to be traversed. Bergson's concept of evolution is neither mechanical, so that it may be pushed from behind, nor teleological, so that it may be pulled from ahead. Both imply determinism and deprive life force of its essential indeterminateness and free creativity. Therefore, Bergson regards his creative evolution as purposeless and without any formally recognized sense of direction.<sup>21</sup>

“Since the beginning of the eighteenth century to the twenties of the twentieth,” B.A. Dar rightly observes, “Western thought was mainly romantic and vitalistic”.<sup>22</sup> Most of the thinkers during this period, as opposed to the earlier philosophers, had a tendency to regard life and volition as the

basic principle of the universe. Voluntarism, lexically, is the 'doctrine that the human will, or some force analogous to it, is the primary stuff of the universe.'<sup>23</sup> It is of four kinds; it may be psychological, moral, theological or metaphysical. Psychological voluntarism holds that in human personality 'will' plays the pivotal role: intellect, intelligence and emotions are secondary in importance. Among the upholders of this view the most well-known are Hobbes and Hume. From the point of view of moral voluntarism, man's will has the autonomous position for the solution of moral problems: intellect, conscience etc. are not at all the deciding factors in this regard; only that action is morally sound which is willed by man. Earliest formulation of this view we find in Protagoras' maxim 'man is the measure of everything.' In modern times, William James adopted it and in fact it is the basic, official thesis of the Pragmatic school of thought. Theological voluntarism upholds that Divine will presides over all the affairs of the world. Nothing happens but that which is willed by God as He is powerful over everything. So, not philosophical reasoning but understanding of the Divine will is the key to the solution of theological problems. This standpoint was adopted, among many others, by Augustine, William Ockham and Kant according to whom the source of all religio-moral directives is the will of God. Metaphysical voluntarism is that will is the basic constitutive principle of the universe. A prominent upholder of this view in modern times is Schopenhauer who says that the untiring creator of everything is the Blind Will which would take care of the species and not the individuals. We can also say as well that the universe is the embodiment of the Blind Will. It is blind because it lacks purpose and is in fact not in need of any intellectual base. Fichte, Nietzsche and Bergson are the supporters of metaphysical voluntarism and Iqbal was, with certain provisos-impressed by their philosophies. On return from Europe the first book of Iqbal that appeared was *Asrār-e-Khudi* which unmistakably shows the influence of fichte, Bergson and Nietzsche, says B.A. Dar... "But none of them is mentioned by name".<sup>24</sup> However, he does mention Rumi by name and asserts in unequivocal words that he has accepted his influence. B.A. Dar,

further says: "At the present stage of our knowledge about the development of Iqbal's thought it cannot be definitely asserted whether it was through a study of voluntarism as represented in the Western thought that he was able to discover Rumi or it was through Rumi that he came to appreciate these thinkers".<sup>25</sup> As we go through the contents of *Asrar-e-Khudi*, it is found to be correct that he assimilated into his thought here and there the views of these philosophers, without naming them; but so far as his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* is concerned he has time and again referred to their views, adopted them to some extent and also criticized them in certain respects.

The third level of existence in our realm of experience is that of consciousness which, according to Iqbal, "may be imagined as a deflection from life. Its function is to provide a luminous point in order to enlighten the forward rush of life. It is a case of tension, a state of self-concentration, by means of which life manages to shut out all memories and associations which have no bearing on a present action. It has no well-defined fringes; it shrinks and expands as the occasion demands. To describe it as an epiphenomenon of the processes of matter is to deny it as an independent activity and to deny it as an independent activity is to deny the validity of all knowledge which is only a systematized expression of consciousness. Thus consciousness is a variety of the purely spiritual principle of life which is not a substance but an organizing principle, a specific mode of behaviour essentially different from the behaviour of an externally worked machine. Since, however, we cannot conceive of a purely spiritual energy, except in association with a definite combination of sensible elements through which it reveals itself, we are apt to take this combination as the ultimate ground of spiritual energy."<sup>26</sup>

As regards his conviction about the primacy of life and consciousness, Iqbal quotes a number of verses from the Qur'an to the effect that conscious experience is that privileged state which throws light on the ultimate nature of existence and which brings us in contact with reality. On the analogy of our conscious experience, the universe, for Iqbal, is a free creative movement. It is not things-in-motion but rather movement in itself *i.e.*

movement pure and simple Universe is not a thing; it is an act which is divided up into visible segments by thought while intuition grasps it as an indivisible whole. It is a free creativity and an eternal, vital flow in which the present is made richer by the past and the future is there as an open possibility. So far Iqbal and Bergson mutually agree. However, on the sharp distinction made by Bergson between thought and the vital flow, Iqbal raises a note of dissension:

According to Bergson ...Reality is a free, unpredictable creative, vital impetus of the nature of volition which thought spatializes and views as a plurality of 'things'. A full criticism of this view cannot be undertaken here. Suffice it to say that the vitalism of Bergson ends in an insurmountable dualism of will and thought. This is really due to the partial view of intelligence that he takes. Intelligence, according to him, is a spatializing activity; it is shaped on matter alone, and has only mechanical categories at its disposal. But, as I pointed out in my first lecture, thought has a deeper movement also. While it appears to break up Reality into static segments, its real function is to synthesize the elements of experience by employing categories suitable to the various levels which experience presents. It is as much organic as life.<sup>27</sup>

Bergson, like other voluntarists, regards the free creativity of the forward rush of the vital impulse as wholly arbitrary and undirected by any immediate or remote purposes. Thought, according to him, is only an instrument devised in man by the vital impulse so that he can adequately understand, and deal with, his physical environments. It provides no help at all in the understanding of the ultimate reality in its capacity as an indivisible unity. Iqbal does not agree to this as he holds that thought rather is a necessary component of the ultimate reality. It is a fact that thought cannot function without purposes and goals; so the ultimate reality is not devoid of purposiveness. As purposes are essentially directed towards future, so in our conscious states both the past and the future remain operative. Iqbal, unlike Bergson, does not regard future as entirely undetermined. Bergson feared that admittance of purposes in life would bring determinism in it. Iqbal grants that there is no far off goal which pulls the movement of life towards itself: "Mental life

is teleological in the sense that, while there is no 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".<sup>28</sup>

Iqbal has proved the following facts as a result of his research into the three levels of experience.

- a. Matter is not a static, solid something but a system of inter-related events.
- b. Life is really volition, absolute movement, pure duration, a free creative flow.
- c. Consciousness is a reality of the purely spiritual principle of life.

On these three points Iqbal and Bergson mutually agree. Iqbal, however, further adds to them:

- d. Evolution of life is not blind and visionless: it is guided by purposes and goals.

Summarizing his views about the ultimate nature of reality: Iqbal says that it is a 'rationally directed creative life'.<sup>29</sup>

The Rationally Directed Creative Life or Will Iqbal calls an Ego. This may give us the impression that the nature of God has been fashioned after the nature of our own self, but this impression cannot be helped. "Since our conscious experience is the only point of departure for all knowledge", says Iqbal, "we cannot avoid the limitation of interpreting facts in the light of our own inner experience".<sup>30</sup>

### III

We have seen above on the basis of 'reasoning by analogy' that the Ultimate Reality is a Will that is free and creative, but unlike the views of Schopenhauer and Bergson it is not blind and irrational, according to Iqbal: it does have goals and objectives. These are not the so-called ideals external and far beyond, but rather a sort of inherent dynamics. As this will is free and creative it has no cause behind it and no well-defined ideals in front of it. Goals and ideals operate from within it and so do not at all violate its free creativity. This will, for its self-realization creates the universe and its entire paraphernalia.



“The so-called external world”, says M.M. Sharif, “with all its sensuous wealth including serial time and space and the so-called world of feelings, ideas and ideals ... (is) the creation of self. Following Fichte and Ward, Iqbal tells us that the self posits from itself the not-self for its own perfection. The sensible world is the self's own creation. All the beauties of nature are, therefore, the creatures of our own wills. Desires create them: not they, desires.”<sup>31</sup>

Iqbal's concept of God evolved through various stages. In the beginning, especially in his poetry of the earliest times, he conceived of Him as Eternal Beauty. But, when, later on, he began to formally philosophize about the nature of God, then, under the influence of Fichte, Nietzsche, Bergson, James Ward and, last but not least, Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi whom he thoroughly studied, he developed a concept of Him, as shown above, as a Free, Rationally Directed, Creative Will of Whom beauty is simply one of the attributes. In this concept the attribute which is of the most basic importance is His singularity and unity: conviction about oneness of God, for Iqbal, is not simply of academic significance; it grants to human individuals and nations unity of purpose and an impeccable confidence to act for their solidarity and integrity, “The more important regions of experience”, says Iqbal, “examined with an eye on a synthetic view, reveal, as the ultimate ground of all experience, a rationally directed creative will which we have found reasons to describe as an ego. In order to emphasize the individuality of the Ultimate Ego the Qur'an gives Him the proper name of Allah”.<sup>32</sup> According to Iqbal, the fact that in sūra *Ikbās* God has been described as ‘He begets not nor is He begotten’ is indicative of the emphasis that the Qur'an lays on the inviolable unity of God. “For the individuality to be perfect”, Iqbal quotes Bergson approvingly, “it would be necessary that no detached part of the organism could live separately. But then reproduction would be impossible. For what is reproduction but the building up of a new organism with a detached fragment of the old! Individuality, therefore, harbours its own enemy at home”. Iqbal continues:

In the light of this passage it is clear that the perfect individual,

closed off as an ego, peerless and unique, cannot be conceived as harbouring its own enemy at home. It must be conceived as superior to the antagonistic tendency of reproduction. This characteristic of the perfect ego is one of the most essential elements in the Qur'anic conception of God; and the Qur'an mentions it over and over again, not so much with a view to attack the current Christian conception as to accentuate its own view of a perfect individual.<sup>33</sup>

The Ultimate Reality is not static: it is characterized by movement and change—movement without succession, as in it the past is not left behind and the future is not yet to be lived. Further, outside the Ultimate Reality, nothing exists, not even absolute void—which may apply limit to it. It is infinite, but this infinity is intensive, not extensive. An extensive infinity is never absolute. It is only an intensive infinity that is so. God's infinity being intensive, He has unlimited and infinite possibilities of creation. When it is said that God is a free creative will and that His creative possibilities are unlimited, it implies that he is omnipotent.

Here a misunderstanding is likely to arise. It may be construed that God like natural objects of experience has the quality of movement over and above His being *qua* being. Ordinary conception of movement as from imperfection to perfection or, in general, from one state to the other in serial time cannot be attributed to God. We have already seen that the sequence view of time is exclusively relevant to the ordinary level of experience and to the discursive reason. In the non-sequential time or pure duration of the Ultimate Reality the change that is implied by movement is nothing but the constant act of creation or the eternal flow of energy. Problem of time has always been a living issue in Muslim theology and has been discussed in relation to the nature and behaviour of God. Muslim theologians' interest in the problem has, according to Iqbal, two grounds: (a) alternation of day and night has been described by the Qur'an as one of the signs of God; (b) the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) has mentioned *Dahr* (time) as one of the good names of God. The difficulty that theologians encounter while determining

the true nature of Divine time is partly due to the concept of time formulated by the Ash'arite school and also by Newton in the modern West.

God is omnipotent, free, creative will and the Qur'an also conceives Him as 'holding all goodness in His hands'. In view of the omnipotence and goodness of God, the problem arises: why is there evil in the world? There has of course been a controversy among the optimists and the pessimists as to whether there is at all any evil in the world or not. Iqbal is of the firm view that the fact of evil in the world cannot be denied and consequently the problem does have its significance. Anyway, he thinks, at our present stage of the knowledge of the world no final verdict can be pronounced regarding the apparent mutual contradiction between God's goodness and omnipotence, on the one hand, and the existence of evil, on the other. Teachings of the Qur'an on this subject, he in general is of the opinion, are melioristic in character, which implies that it is a growing universe and is animated by the hope of man's eventual victory over evil.

God is omniscient, all-knowing. However, His knowledge is unlike our knowledge which is discursive and is based on the duality of the subject and the object, the knower and the known. God, being all-inclusive, cannot be thought of as having a perspective like that of the finite egos. Iqbal also does not agree with the view of Jalaluddin Dawwani, Iraqi and Prof. Royce that God's knowledge is a single indivisible act of perception which makes Him aware of the entire sweep of history in an eternal 'now'. This view reduces Divine knowledge to a kind of passive omniscience. It suggests that occurrences in the universe are already fixed and determined and God simply becomes aware of them. God is in fact an organic whole and nothing confronts Him. He knows and at the same time is creative of the objects known. Knowledge and creation with him are one indivisible act. We have no word, Iqbal admits, to express the kind of knowledge which at the same time is also creative of its object.

Another prominent attribute of the Supreme Ego is 'eternity'. As regards mathematical time everything has a beginning and an end. But in the absolute Ego changes are not

serial and linear in character so that we may be able to point out that such and such a state begins at this points and ends at that. These changes in fact constitute an organic, undifferentiated unity. Time of the absolute Ego is pure duration with reference to which the question of a sequential flux does not arise at all. Measures of space and time which build up the structure of our experiential world are meaningless when applied to the Ultimate Reality which has neither a past behind it nor a future ahead of it. Its singular unity is like the organic unity of a germ in which the entire heredity of the past and all the possibilities of the future are present in an indivisible oneness. So the Supreme Ego is eternal in the sense of being timeless—without beginning and without end.

#### IV

A question of central importance remains to be settled. If the Absolute Ego is so transcendent and so unique a Oneness that He neither begets nor is he begotten, then how is a finite ego related to Him.<sup>34</sup> Basically, this question relates to the problem of creation/emanation. Finding out the exact nature of the mutual relationship among God, man and the universe has always been a matter of concern for the philosophers and the theologian. In general, the attempt has been to present an organized, well-knit concept of the universe such that in it the creator and the created, spirit and matter, the mental and the physical are not rendered mutually so alienated that they cannot be derived one from the other or explained in terms of each other. Plato's philosophy was directed towards this unitarian view when he declared the ordinary spatio-temporal world a reflection, imperfect though, of the World of Ideas. However, he could not satisfactorily solve the problem by similes and metaphors which he used in this regard. Aristotle too had to hypothesize the primordial principle of matter complementary to his 'pure form' for the comprehension of the universe as we encounter it. The solution that Plotinus proposed was that *creatio ex nihilo* is impossible and that there is no dualism between the Creator and His creation. For him only the One is real: all else are just emanations from His being. His

doctrine came to be known as 'Unity of Being'. Spinoza used the paradigm of geometrical method for the understanding of the process of creation. Just as from a geometrical definition its corollaries follow with logical necessity or just as in a logical argument conclusion follows from the premises, so the one and only one substance *i.e.* the Absolute Unity and Singularity that God is, has an infinite number of attributes, out of which incidentally we know only two: thought and extension. From the attributes logically follow various modes which comprise this world of ours. Leibniz gave us a doctrine of monads. There are degrees of monads in the universe. God is the Supreme Monad from Whom, what Leibniz terms, 'fulgurate' lower monads. This concept of fulguration reminds us of Plotinus' concept of 'emanation'. Iqbal has a comparable view of the act of the 'proceeding' of ordinary egos from the Supreme Ego *i.e.* God:

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 ego-hood. 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 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.<sup>35</sup>

Here, we have seen, Iqbal's word describing the emergence of lower egos from the Supreme Ego *i.e.* God, is 'proceed' in stead of 'fulgurate' or 'emanate'. All these worlds appear to have more or less similar connotations. However, Iqbal, particularly in his mature thought, was not favorably inclined towards pantheism; that is why he did not use the term 'emanation' with which the metaphysics of pantheism is specially associated. Though finite egos proceed from God yet after coming into being, they insist upon maintaining their independent status.

Iqbal uses the analogy of pearls. A pearl derives its existence from a drop of water; but after its coming into existence mutual duality of water and pearl comes to stay. The pearl derives its being from, and perpetually exists ever since in, water but does not in any case compromise its identity. From the point of view of pantheism the relationship between man and God is analogous to that between a drop of water and the ocean; so man ultimately loses himself into God and sacrifices his I-ness. Like his preceptor Rumi, Iqbal holds that man's ego even when he meets God, as in mystic experience or even when he is saturated in Divinity by the assimilation of His attributes, he is still able to say 'I am'. Iron assumes the qualities of fire when, put in the furnace, it becomes red hot but it remains iron; so man assuming the color of God does reflect Divinity but remains human all the time. True infinite, says Iqbal, does not exclude the finite but rather embraces it without effacing its finitude. Says Robert Whittmore:

In short, Iqbal's conception is not pantheism but panentheism, understanding by this latter "the doctrine that the world is not *identical with* God (pantheism), nor *separate from* God (deism), but *in* God who in His Divine nature transcends it.<sup>36</sup>

Most of the Iqbal scholars, in order to save Iqbal from the charge of pantheism, say that he lays more emphasis on the transcendence of God than on His immanence. This is a fact, no doubt, that Iqbal most often tries to avoid giving any impression of being a pantheist but when he dilates on the integration of the human ego he cannot help emphasizing what, in a broad sense, be termed 'immanence'. However, this immanence, it should hurriedly be pointed out, does not amount to a drop of water getting immersed in an ocean and thus a man getting annihilated in the being of God; Iqbal rather talks of the ocean accommodating itself into the drop of water, and thus of God being assimilated in man. On the individuality and uniqueness of the human ego he would not compromise at all. Individuality is the basic attribute of the Supreme Ego. How can the egos which proceed from the Supreme Individuality have the tendency to de-individualize themselves.

What is the exact nature of the human ego and what are its essential characteristics. In order to evolve his own point of view in this regard Iqbal refers to the Ash'arites, according to whom *nafs* or soul is either an extremely fine kind of matter or just an accident: so it is annihilated with the annihilation of the body at death. On the Doomsday, the Day of Resurrection, body and the *nafs* will be created anew. As to the Muslim *hukamā'*, Iqbal thinks that they were deeply influenced by Greek thought, and so they did not contemplate over the nature of the soul independently of the Greek view nor did they undertake any serious research into such an important phenomenon as human consciousness. Analysing Mansur's proclamation 'I am the Truth', Iqbal says:

The difficulty of modern students of religion is that this type of experience, though perhaps perfectly normal in its beginnings, points in its maturity, to unknown levels of consciousness.<sup>37</sup>

Ibn Khaldun was the first notable thinker who realized the importance of these levels and of undertaking a thorough critical appraisal of them. Modern psychological studies, he says, have unfortunately not made any really marked progress in this direction. Among the philosophers, it was F.H. Bradley who understood the importance of this problem in right perspective. In his *Appearance and Reality*, he discussed in detail the nature of self or ego. Despite the fact that his strictly logical reasoning led him to the conclusion that the ego is 'a mass of confusion', he had to admit that it must be 'in some sense real', 'in some sense an indubitable fact'.

Iqbal argues that the ever-changing mental states must have an axis, a pivotal point of reference. This pivot is the I-ness or ego which organically unites and accounts for, the inter-related states of mind:

The finite centre of experience, therefore, is real, even though its reality is too profound to be intellectualized. What then is the characteristic feature of the ego? The ego reveals itself as a unity of, what we call, mental states. Mental states do not exist in mutual isolation. They mean and involve one another. They exist as phases of a complex whole called mind.<sup>38</sup>

From the above quotation it is clear that ego is knowable

immediately through an internal perception or intuition. My assurance of my ego is greater than my assurance of anything else because it is not indirect and inferential but rather direct and immediate.

Unity of mental states is essentially different from the unity of material objects. As to our concepts, beliefs and doctrines, it cannot be said, as we can say of material objects, that one of them is towards the right or the left of the other. Similarly, constitutive parts of material objects can maintain their independent existence but diverse mental states have no meaning independently of the unity that ego is. Standards of space and time that are ordinarily applicable to material objects are not applicable to the ego. The ego in fact has the capacity to think of many 'times' and many 'spaces'. During our dream experience, for example, the space and time that we encounter are extremely unusual. Life of the ego is qualified by pure duration and when it expresses itself in the outside material world its time becomes mathematical: the indivisible, organic unity of change gets pulverized into instants and moments.

Another prominent characteristic of the unity of the ego is its essential privacy which also amounts to its uniqueness. In a syllogism, as I draw a conclusion from two premises taken together, it is necessary that both the premises as well as the conclusion must be my judgments all of them. If different persons propose them, it will not be an argument at all. If one person holds that 'All men are mortal' and another person holds that 'Socrates is a man', logically there is no licence for drawing the conclusion that "Socrates is mortal". Not only in logical thinking, in sensory and emotional states also, privacy and uniqueness of the ego is essential. My dentist cannot feel my tooth-ache: only I can feel it. Similarly, when I recognize a person, all my past memories relating to him are revived. My pain is my pain and my pleasure is entirely my pleasure. This consciousness of egoism or I-ness is so basic and so important that as regards my feelings and perceptions no one can be my proxy: no one can take my place. When there are various alternatives before me and I have to make a choice between



them, even my God cannot exercise this choice on my behalf. It is this intercourse, this bondage between various mental events that is the basis of a personal identity which we call the ego, the 'I'.

Iqbal does not agree to the point of view that soul or mind is an unchanging, independent substance which is the seat of all variations and changes. As regards any material object we think that it is an independent substance having, over and above, a number of attributes like weight, color, extension etc. On the same pattern we conceive the substantiality of the mind, mental states being various attributes of it. This reasoning by analogy is entirely fallacious, according to Iqbal. He says:

...even if we regard experiences as qualities we cannot discover how they inhere in the soul-substance. Thus we see that our conscious experience can give us no clue to the ego regarded as a soul-substance; for by hypothesis the soul-substance does not reveal itself in experience.<sup>39</sup>

Despite the above, Iqbal grants that conscious experience is after all the only way by which we reach the ego, if at all we can reach it. In this connection he refers to the psychologist William James, for whom consciousness is 'a stream of thought' which comprises various passing states, Every one of these conscious states is an indivisible unity which has the capacities of both knowledge and memory. Thus every new state is related to, and bound with, the previous state. It is this appropriation of the previous by the present and of the present by the future that is the ego, according to him. Iqbal terms this description of our mental life as 'extremely ingenious' but he does not regard it as truly representative of consciousness as I find it in myself. Consciousness is really something single, not bits of consciousness mutually reporting to one another, as envisaged in James' view. Moreover, this view of consciousness does not give any clue to the exact nature and character of the human ego. However, Iqbal says:

I do not mean to say that the ego is over and above the mutually penetrating multiplicity we call experience. Inner experience is the ego at work. We appreciate the ego itself in the act of perceiving,

judging and willing. The life of the ego is a kind of tension caused by the ego invading the environment and the environment invading the ego. The ego does not stand outside this arena of mutual invasion. It is present in it as a directive energy and is formed and disciplined by its own experience.<sup>40</sup>

For Iqbal, ego is a directive principle. Referring to the Qur'anic distinction between *Khalq* and *amr* he says that ego or personality is not an object created but an act. My feelings and perceptions which comprise my life depend upon and subserve a directive attitude and a guiding principle in me. To acquire knowledge of someone's personality we shall have to know about his desires and aspirations, his judgments and his will-attitudes.

Iqbal does not recognize any absolute distinction between mind and body. Descartes' mind-body dualism is gratuitous, according to him. The fact is that in any action performed both of them become one. When I take up a book from a table, it is my single, undividable act: it is impossible to differentiate in it between the share of the body and that of the mind. We have already seen that any material body is a system of events or acts; ego or soul too, being a system of experiences is a system of acts. The difference is that whereas ego is characterized by spontaneity, the acts comprising the body repeat themselves. The body is accumulated action or habit of the soul and therefore undetachable from it.

Self, ego or soul of man, to Iqbal, has two sides or two aspects which he calls (i) the efficient self and (ii) the appreciative self. The former is that which enters into a relationship with the ordinary world of space and time whereas the latter is the inner centre of experience and lives in pure duration. This distinction is more or less the same as drawn by Bergson between the social self of man and his individual self.

As to the destiny of his ego, man has two alternatives before him: either through perpetual effort and constant struggle he can consolidate and integrate it more and more, or through a life of lethargy and inaction cause its dissipation and disintegration. It is a well-integrated ego alone that earns for man his immortality. In the brief outline of his own philosophy, which Iqbal wrote in

response to Prof. Nicholson's desire, he specially refers to the relevance of a life of action to the development of personality:

Personality is a state of tension and can continue only if that state is maintained. If the state of tension is not maintained, relaxation will ensue. Since personality, or the state of tension, is the most valuable achievement of man, he should see that he does not revert to a state of relaxation.<sup>41</sup>

Iqbal is firmly of the opinion that for the maintenance of a continued existence of the ego and its evolution to higher and higher levels of excellence a perpetually active life is essential. On this score, he strongly criticises those philosophies which teach inactivity as the style of life and also label extinction of individuality as the moral-cum-spiritual goal of man: Plato's thought, Buddhism and Persian mysticism are specially targeted by him in this regard. He, instead, proposes to make the ego so strong that its integrity would not be disturbed even by the shock of death:

...if our activity is directed towards the maintenance of a state of tension, the shock of death is not likely to affect it. After death there may be an interval of relaxation as the Koran speaks of a *barzakh*, an intermediate state, which will last till the Day of Resurrection. Only those egos will survive this state of relaxation who have taken good care during the present life.<sup>42</sup>

Towards the integration of self '*ishq*' has a very important role to play:

The ego is fortified by love ('*ishq*'). This word is used in a very wide sense and means the desire to assimilate, to absorb. Its highest form is the creation of values and ideals and the endeavour to realize them. Love individualizes the lover as well as the beloved. The effort to realize the most unique individuality individualises the seeker and implies the individuality of the sought for nothing else would satisfy the nature of the seeker. As love fortifies the ego, asking (*su'āl*) weakens it. All that is achieved without personal effort comes under *su'āl*.<sup>43</sup>

The best example of this '*ishq*' is provided by the life of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) who was involved in a perpetual struggle for the realization of the highest ideals that he set before himself.

Iqbal describes three stages of the development of the human ego, viz, (i) obedience to Divine law, (ii) self-discipline and (iii) vicegerency of God.

This Divine vicegerency (*niyābat-i-Ilāhī*) is the third and the last stage of human development on earth. The *na'ib* (vicegerent) is the vicegerent of God on earth. He is the completest ego, the goal of humanity, the acme of life both in mind and body; in him the discord of our mental life becomes a harmony. This highest power is united in him with the highest knowledge. In this life, thought and action, instinct and reason, become one. He is the last fruit of the tree of humanity, and all the trials of a painful evolution are justified because he is to come at the end. He is the real ruler of mankind; his kingdom is the kingdom of God on earth. Out of the richness of his nature he lavishes the wealth of life on others and brings them nearer and nearer to himself. The more we advance in evolution the nearer we get to him... In approaching him we are raising ourselves in the scale of life. The development of humanity both in mind and body is a condition precedent to his birth. For the present he is a mere ideal; but the evolution of humanity is tending towards the production of an ideal race of more or less unique individuals who will become his fitting parents. Thus the kingdom of God on earth means the democracy of more or less unique individuals, presided over by the most unique individual possible on this earth. Nietzsche had a glimpse of this ideal race, but his atheism and aristocratic prejudices marred his whole conception.<sup>44</sup>

## Chapter IV

# Intellectual Background of Iqbal's Concept of Immortality

In this chapter we shall discuss those Western thinkers whose views about immortality have been specifically referred to, and critically examined, by Iqbal in the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of his *Reconstruction*. Besides, we shall mention those philosophers of the West also who appear to have indirectly influenced him and somehow contributed to his views. Nearer home, Iqbal has commented upon the doctrine of the Transmigration of Souls prevalent among the Hindus of the Sub-continent. We shall bring out the salient features of this doctrine too.

In the three sections that follow the views of Kant, William James and Nietzsche will be explained in some greater detail because Iqbal has taken special notice of them as a prelude to his own concept of immortality.

### I

Kant, in general, was dissatisfied with the philosophers' metaphysical arguments for immortality. In his *Critique of Pure Reason* he refers to Moses Mendelssohn and von Herder, specially to their metaphysical arguments with regard to which soul is a simple substance and so will remain unaffected by the calamitous shock of death; and also that the concept of immortality is natural—in fact, indispensable for man. According to Kant, both these arguments are weak. From the simplicity of soul, it cannot be derived that it is bound to continue for ever. Though soul does not have the extensive quality, yet it does have the intensive

quality which, as a result of gradual dissipation, may one day disappear altogether. Nor is the concept of immortality 'natural'. Kant observes that there is no similarity between the elevation of the individual to a more perfect state in the future life and what we observe in nature. Nature, we see, destroys the individuals although it preserves the species. So, on natural grounds, the claim for personal immortality cannot be substantiated.<sup>1</sup>

In this same book Kant gives an account of the limits and scope of human reason. Making a distinction between the phenomena and the noumena, the world of appearances and the world of reality, he insists that pure reason has an access to the former only; the real world is beyond its reach. Problems like the existence of God, human freedom and immortality that belong to the world of reality come under the purview of practical reason alone which has as its subject-matter not the realm of facts but the realm of moral matters. Morality is the basis on which alone the value-status of man and in fact of the entire universe is determined. Had pure reason been endowed with the power of understanding the Ultimate Reality, "God and eternity in their awful majesty would stand unceasingly before our eyes... Transgression of law would indeed be shunned". But this would mean that "most actions conforming to the law would be done from fear. The moral worth of actions, on which alone the worth of a person and even of the world depends in the eyes of supreme wisdom, would not exist at all".<sup>2</sup>

Towards the end of his *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant says:

Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and the more steadily we reflect on them: the starry heavens above and the moral law within... I see them before me and connect them directly with the consciousness of my existence.

According to Kant, 'the starry heavens are the object of study of the positive sciences and of the pure reason whereas the interior of man, his subjectivity, is the concern of his moral consciousness and it is the moral consciousness that grants value to a human person individually and to the entire universe. When I give a close consideration to the universe and its vast expanses, he says, I

have a feeling that the being of my own person has, as if, been consumed by it, but

...when I consider again, my worth as an intelligent being is raised to infinity through my personality. For then the moral law reveals to me a life independent of my animal nature and all the world of the senses, so far at least as follows from the fact that my being is designed to follow this law, which is not limited by the conditions and limits of this life but reaches to infinity.<sup>3</sup>

In *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant presented a preliminary form of his view of immortality. He says that immortality is a postulate of practical reason. In this world virtue and happiness do not happen to be in cohesion and harmony with each other. There are a number of people who perform bad actions but are not punished for them in this world and there are many of them who perform good actions but are not adequately rewarded here and now. Reason demands that man should necessarily get an equitable recompense for his deeds, both good and bad. In order to meet this rational requirement, we do need to have another world in which justice is done to everyone and, incidentally, we need to postulate the existence of God Who will see to it that this requirement is met. In his *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant puts up his argument a little differently. Here, as we have already seen, his larger emphasis is on the moral law or the moral principle within man. The moral law requires that man be duty-bound to achieve maximum perfection, the supreme good, which comprises the confluence of virtue and happiness. Now a duty, according to him, is not worth its name if it cannot possibly be carried out. The question is: how can man—the finite, limited being—meet this immense requirement of the moral law? With whatever small beginnings he has, how can he scale the unending series of higher and higher elevations of moral consummation? Obviously, says Kant, this would be possible only if, after death, man continues to live for an endless period of time.

As is quite clear from all this, Kant does not derive his doctrine of immortality from religious consciousness or from any blind belief. He is an upholder of reason, on the one hand, and has a dislike for mysticism, on the other. Consequently, he gives

to the moral law a place higher than religion. It is the moral law residing inside our being and not any religious precept coming 'from above' that tells us that we will be resurrected after our death in *this* world.

What will be the life hereafter like? The answer that Kant gives is:

At least, man has no ground for believing that a sudden change will take place. Rather, experience of his state on earth and the ordering of nature in general gives him clear proofs that his moral deterioration, with its inevitable punishments, as well as his moral improvement and the well-being resulting therefrom, will continue endlessly *i.e.* eternally.<sup>4</sup>

In an article 'The End of All Things', he further elaborates that eternity cannot be merely infinite continuation of time but rather a transcending of time.

It easily transpires from the account of Kant's position given above that for him the problem of the immortality of the human soul is peripheral in character: the central importance is that of the Moral Law. His concept of 'immortality' or, what he calls, 'future life' is peripheral as it is heavily dependent on his point of view that the universe is governed and presided over by a Being Who is not disconcerned with human values and that it is Moral Law alone which grants worth to man and the universe.

Iqbal does not totally reject Kant's argument but regards it insufficient. His objections against it are as follows:

- a. Immortality is a postulate of practical reason and we are bound to subscribe to it so that a harmony may be affected between the two mutually disparate concepts of virtue and happiness. The question that still remains unanswered is: why should the consummation of virtue and happiness require an infinite amount of time?<sup>5</sup>
- b. The second postulate of practical reason is the existence of an all-powerful God, Who will make the harmonious confluence between virtue and happiness possible. The question is how even an omnipotent God can bring together the phenomena which, by virtue of their very natures, are antithetical to each other.



- c. Those critics who are not satisfied with the argument of Kant may say, from the point of view of modern materialism that consciousness and all its states have a physical base. Moral consciousness too is likewise the product of brain and so will cease to exist with the cessation of the physiological functions at death.<sup>6</sup>

Mr. Muzaffar Hussain, a prolific writer on Iqbal, has, in one of his articles, brought out the basic difference between the points of view of Kant and Iqbal on the subject of immortality. He says:

...without undertaking a close examination of these questions the standpoint of 'Allama Iqbal cannot be understood in the right perspective. These questions in fact relate to the constitution of the universe of which various religious and philosophical schools of thought have different concepts; and these concepts have, corresponding to them, different points of view about the life-hereafter. For example, according to Christianity, man is born in this world with sinfulness as a part of his nature. And because he was turned out of the heavens and sent to the earth as a form of punishment for the 'original sin', this world cannot at all be favourable for his desires and aspirations. Consequently, he should live the life of a recluse and postpone the fulfilment of his desires to the next world. On the contrary, Islamic concept of the universe does not admit of this kind of attitude. It does not regard this world as unfavourable for the realization of man's ideals. As Iqbal says, Islam has a melioristic view about this world; that is to say, it admits of reformation and improvement. So, one should not think that in this process of improvement man's efforts cannot play a fruitful role and that the hope for the fulfilment of all good desires should be entirely attached to the world-hereafter. In fact, according to Islam, whatever consummation of the most supreme moral goals is attainable by man in the next world is dependent upon efforts that he makes for the promotion of good in the world here and now. Consequently, unlike Christianity, Islam does not recommend renunciation of the world contacts by man but rather invokes him to work hard for the reinforcement of the moral character of these contacts. It does not limit man's desires to the excellences of the next world but extends them to those of this world also. It gives good news of the achievement of

goods in both the worlds, *albeit* the perpetual achievement of goods in the eternal life that is yet to come requires that we in this world are involved in a constant, moral struggle which helps man's ego maintain its state of tension and achieve higher and higher levels of self-consciousness. It is a fully self-conscious ego—an ego which can truly say 'I am'—that alone is a fit candidate for immortality. According to 'Allama Iqbal, God, the *Hayy*, the *Qayyūm* is the God of the living human beings. He wants to make man a co-worker with Him in the realization of the grand objectives of the universe. Therefore for those who sacrifice their everything towards this realization He has in store a new lease of eternal life but for those soul-less creatures who have no infatuation for the ideals He has only displeasure and disgust. For Iqbal, human effort is a necessary condition for affecting a harmony between otherwise dissonant concepts of virtue and happiness.<sup>6</sup>

Although Iqbal regards Kant's moral argument as insufficient, he has perhaps been influenced—may be unconsciously—by Kant when the latter says that even after death man goes through an unending process of moral growth and development. As we shall see later on, Iqbal too does not regard ego's life after death as a state of inactivity and a stagnant bliss but rather a kind of life which will be characterized by ego's perpetual tension and his constant efforts.

Iqbal does not feel the need to affirm the supreme position of the Moral Law. Unlike Kant, he refuses to grant to the moral law a status higher than that of the human ego; in fact the former is there just to fulfil the inherent requirements of the latter. So human ego and not the moral law is the criterion of the moral worth of various actions: an action which contributes towards the integration of the ego is good and that which leads towards its disintegration is bad.

## II

Let us now have a brief survey of Iqbal's evaluation of William James' concept of immortality. William James in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, approvingly quotes the views of R.W. Trine that the central fact of the universe is the spirit of

infinite life and power that manifests itself in everything. This spirit is what we call God. It may be called by any other name like Kindly Light, Providence, the Over-Soul, Omnipotence etc. God alone fills the universe. There is nothing that is outside. He is the life of our life, our very life itself. We participate in the life of God. In essence the life of God and the life of man are the same: we are individualized spirits, whereas He is the Infinite Spirit. The two kinds of spirits mutually differ not in quality but in degree only. The grand objective of our life is to get a conscious realization of our oneness with the Infinite Life. In just the degree of realizing this consciousness and consequently of opening yourselves to the Divine inflow,

you will exchange dis-ease for ease, inharmony suffering and pain for abounding health and strength. To recognize our own divinity, and our intimate relation to the universal, is to attach the belts of our machinery to the power-house of the universe. One need remain in hell no longer than one chooses to; we can rise to any heaven we ourselves choose; and when we choose so to rise, all the higher powers of the universe combine to help us heavenward.<sup>7</sup>

Iqbal and William James, in spite of the differences between their respective philosophical points of view, mutually agree on the following:

- i. Both of them subscribe to a view of the universe which admits of multiplicity and movement and affirms man's individuality, initiative and capability for moral and spiritual growth.
- ii. Both of them are voluntarists and consider will as of basic importance in man. Mental life, according to them, harbours objectives and ideals and is not aimless.
- iii. Both of them hold that life, as well as the material universe are going through a process of evolution and growth.
- iv. Both of them emphasize the importance of sense experience for the discovery of truth.
- v. Both of them oppose determinism and uphold human freedom.

Iqbal's personal library contained a book by William James

entitled *Human Immortality*. In this book William James, in the light of his general philosophical standpoint, has tried to strongly refute an argument that is commonly put forth against the possibility of a life hereafter. It is based on the so-called scientific hypothesis that mind is the productive function of the brain. Materialism, that took its shape under the influence of Darwin, had in general made an attempt to explain all spiritual and mental acts in a materialistic terminology. This meant that when the physiological organism of man, including of course his brain, collapses, mind will also meet its end. Hence no immortality! For William James, the argument is erratic. To say that consciousness or soul is the productive function of the brain would amount to saying, for example, that steam is the productive function of the tea-pot or that light is the productive function of the electric current or that the electric power is the productive function of the water-fall or still that the seven colours, into which light breaks up when it is made to pass through a reflecting lense, are the productive function of the lense. In every one of these cases the former, William James is of the view, is rather the transmissive or the permissive function of the latter. The seven colours, for instance, are not produced by the lense but are only transmitted by it. On the same analogy, consciousness, he says, must be considered as simply the transmissive function of the brain: it only temporality makes use of the brain during the short span of man's earthly life. Consequently there is no necessity that consciousness must die with the death of the body.<sup>9</sup>

Iqbal does not agree with William James' mode of reasoning. His way of argument, he says, "suggests that our inner life is due to the operation in us of a kind of transcendental mechanism of consciousness somehow choosing a physical medium for a short period of sport". It "does not give us any assurance of the continuance of the content of our actual experience". This view, he says, is similar to that of Ibn Rushd insofar as it too does not admit of personal immortality. It is just a metaphysical argument presented in an apparently scientific language.<sup>10</sup>

### III

After the account of William James, Iqbal undertakes a critical examination of Nietzsche's doctrine of Eternal Recurrence. Let us first explain what this doctrine is.

Friedrich Nietzsche belongs to the period of history which witnessed for Europe political stability and domination as well as immense economic progress. Various European countries had established a number of colonies in Africa and Asia whose resources were being grabbed by the Europeans who became immensely rich through this process of exploitation. This, supported by the Industrial Revolution, accelerated in Europe the pace of 'development' and 'progress', in the mundane sense of these terms. The system of values that this state of prosperity generated sometimes came into direct conflict with the traditional value-structure of religion and ethics. Nietzsche's writings are replete with direct as well as indirect references to this state of imbalance and contradiction between the old and the new, between the traditional and the modernist. Rejecting the old values as obsolete, he became totally disgusted with them and sought to discover his ideals in the possibilities of the future.

Nietzsche appears to be influenced by Schopenhauer and Darwin. Like Schopenhauer he holds that 'will' is the basic principle of the universe but he does not like his pessimism. Similarly, he regards Darwin's evolutionary process as an indubitable truth but he does not agree with him when he says that evolution takes place on the basis of mechanical adjustment with the environments. According to Nietzsche, the basic role is played by the vital instinct. Even the instinct to know comes under it. It is this instinct which, in order to promote life, carves out, according to him, illusions of mythology, religion and ethics.

The main objective of Nietzsche was to overcome the pessimism of Schopenhauer. Various physical diseases that afflicted Nietzsche, his disgust with old values, problems generated by the fast moving social world—all made his life a great burden for him. Not less than three times he attempted to commit suicide. He developed the point of view that art is a fascinating illusion which life evolves for its own maintenance.

Consequently, he tried to find out the satisfaction and peace of his soul in 'Greek Tragedy'. Tragedy to him is the name of tolerating the stark realities of cruel nature in the form of a beautiful, charming make-belief. Science too is called an 'interesting illusion' which replaces the fascinating illusion of art. All search for knowledge and truth is just a means to let life continue growing and evolving or to make its burden bearable.

Later, Nietzsche became totally disgusted with knowledge and science. He began to feel that the exalted heights of knowledge were ice-covered regions in which he could not breathe. Now life for him does not remain just the will to live; it becomes the 'will to power'. 'Will to power' is that active force of the universe which during its journey forward assumes various forms. Nutrition and procreation are the earliest and the simplest forms in which the 'will to power' asserts itself. In the onward journey it finally attains its relative perfection in man. It is only relative perfection because it is hoped that in future supreme perfection of the 'will to power' will be possible of realization in the Superman, towards the emergence of whom, in fact, the entire process of evolution is directed. Nietzsche, in his characterization of the Superman, has assigned so elevated and dignified a position to him that in the face of his existence no room is left for God or any other supernatural being. This has earned for Nietzsche the epithet of a 'great humanist'.

Evolution of the soul of man has historically three stages or levels of existence. These are the stages of 'the camel', 'the lion' and 'the human child', metaphorically speaking. At the stage of 'the camel', it must carry out certain dos and don'ts, certain commandments and prohibitions which are imposed upon it from without, with patience and perseverance. After getting transcendence from this state of subjugation and helplessness, the human soul is elevated to the stage of 'the lion' where he acts with freedom and where his own will becomes the rule of law. However, despite this freedom, he cannot create new values for himself. To realize this objective it rises to the level of 'the child'. Child symbolizes both innocence and oblivion. Human soul at this level transcends the earlier stages and by virtue of its

innocence is capable to start *ab initio* and become creative of a new life and a new system of values. So Nietzsche's standpoint is that man, by getting mastery over his animal instincts, can acquire higher creative powers. This unique status of the human individual as creative of fresh values is not his birth-right: its attainment is possible only after a great amount of labour and hard work. One who has been able to attain it in the fullest possible sense is the Superman. According to Nietzsche the Superman has appeared in the past many times and he will continue to appear in future also. This is the celebrated 'Doctrine of Eternal Recurrence'.

According to Nietzsche the ultimate constituents of the universe are infinitely small atoms, the centers of energy, which are limited in number and also there is no dissipation of energy in the universe. These atoms perpetually combine and recombine to create various objects. As infinite time has passed since the emergence of the universe, all possible combinations must not have only been exhausted but must have rather occurred again and again. The Superman which is the one such rare combination must too have appeared a number of times in the past and will appear many times in future also. One can object to this and say: will not the repeated appearance of the Superman make life unbearable? Nietzsche's answer would be that the life of the Superman is so comprehensive and creative that there is no harm in his periodic return. In fact 'Superman' and the phenomenon of eternal recurrence are indispensable to each other. Only he can hope for his return in the world time and again who happens to be the model of excellence and the acme of the evolutionary process. Those whose lives are charged with ignominy, lowliness and dishonor would not at all desire to live this life once again. Instead of desiring to recur in the world, they are hopeful of a life after death which will possibly make up for the failings and disappointments with which they live in this world.

According to Nietzsche only the Superman can truly bear the burden of life. So he is not simply his ideal but rather an inviolable necessity. Concept of the Superman is for him also a remedy of the pessimism of Schopenhauer. The ideal of life does

not lie elsewhere; it is life—a better life—itself. So our attitude towards life should not amount to its negation but rather to the fullest recognition and positive affirmation of it.

Nietzsche does not regard himself as the sole author of the 'Doctrine of Eternal Recurrence' as, he admits, there were traces of this doctrine in Heraclitus and in the Stoics. Besides, in many thinkers of modern times there are implicit references to it. We find it in Heine, Hoelderlin, Louis Blanqui, Guyau and, somewhat vaguely, in Spencer and Byron. Anyway, it is an undeniable truth that Nietzsche was the first to declare 'recurrence' not as a mere possibility but as a certainty—as a law of the universe. He even tried to establish this law scientifically and studied towards that end mathematics, astronomy, physics and biology but could not fully succeed on that ground. However, this doctrine took complete possession of him and it became the cornerstone of his philosophy. Forcefully, he says:

Everything goes, everything returns; eternally rolls the wheel of existence. Everything dies, everything blossoms forth again; eternally runs the year of existence.... All things return eternally and we ourselves have already been numberless times, and all things with us.<sup>11</sup>

Nietzsche regards 'will to power' as the basic element of the universe and its 'eternal moving force'; so there is no mutual contradiction between the two central theses of his philosophy: the 'will to power' and the 'eternal recurrence'.

It has been mentioned above that Nietzsche was born at a time when, due to the Industrial Revolution and the consequent abundance of material wealth, peace and equilibrium between moral and religious values, on the one hand, and the socio-political situation, on the other, had been seriously disturbed. The traditional structure of beliefs and doctrines was on its way to total collapse and at this critical juncture life appeared to have lost its meaningfulness. In this nihilistic climate of opinion Nietzsche's doctrine of Eternal Recurrence was an attempt towards the affirmation of life and also an answer to the problem of death against the context of a godless universe. Nietzsche was not a 'philosopher' in the traditional sense of this term as he did



not construct a systematic, organic structure of metaphysics. Many aspects of his thought are mutually inconsistent; similarly, his views about death and immortality suffer from logical defects in some of their details. In a universe characterized by constant change he seeks to affirm and establish his own being as a veritable reality, a peaceful opportunity amidst perpetual flux. Death sometimes appears to him a loving embrace as it relieves him from the burden of existence and the anguish of being but sometimes he looks at it as an enemy and hates it and, to sidetrack it, takes refuge in the doctrine of Eternal Recurrence. Death becomes bearable for him as the concept of Eternal Recurrence augurs for a new life in the form of the Superman: Between your last moment of consciousness and the first ray of the dawn of your new life no time will elapse—as a flash of lightning will space go by, even though living creatures think it a billion of years and are not even able to reckon it. Timelessness and immediate rebirth are compatible, once the intellect is eliminated.<sup>12</sup>

We have seen in the first chapter above that for the ancient man time was cyclic in nature; so death and resurrection were quite understandable events for him. But the modern Western thinkers conceive time as linear; so they look askance at the doctrine of Eternal Recurrence and raise objections to it as for them it is nothing but an unhappy return to the ancient ways of looking at things. Some critics, as we shall presently see, have even accused Nietzsche of reviving in a new key the Hindus' doctrine of the transmigration of souls.

After a critical appraisal of the views of Kant and William James, Iqbal undertakes a review of Nietzsche's doctrine of Eternal Recurrence. According to Iqbal, it was the power of the idea itself rather than its logical demonstration that appealed to Nietzsche. The idea incidentally occurred to many other minds at the same time. Germs of it are found, for instance, in Herbert Spencer. The idea came to Nietzsche with a *coupe* in the form of a revelation. Says Iqbal:

It was really the power of the idea rather than its logical demonstration that appealed to this modern prophet. This, in itself, is some evidence of the fact that positive views of ultimate things are the work rather of Inspiration than Metaphysics. However, Nietzsche has given his doctrine the form of a reasoned out theory, and as such, I think, we are entitled to examine it.<sup>13</sup>

The discussion over Nietzsche's doctrine as carried out in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* derives mostly from the book *The Problem of Immortality* written by R.A. Tsanoff. A copy of this book that has been discovered in the personal library of Iqbal donated to the Islamia College, Civil Lines, Lahore, contains his remarks here and there in the form of marginal notes. At the end of the relevant chapter (p.178) following comments have been given.

1. Wrong view of energy
2. Wrong view of time—circular or straight
3. Wrong view of Infinity—infinite process must be periodic
4. Nietzsche inconsistent—Eternal aspirations and Eternal Recurrence inconsistent
5. Fatalism of the worst type.

As we observe closely the entire criticism that Iqbal has leveled against Nietzsche in his *Reconstruction* is an elaboration of these points. Iqbal describes Nietzsche's doctrine of Eternal Recurrence as follows:

The doctrine proceeds on the assumption that the quantity of energy in the universe is constant and consequently finite. Space is only a subjective form; there is no meaning in saying that the world is in space in the sense that it is situated in an absolute empty void. In his view of time, however, Nietzsche parts company with Kant and Schopenhauer. Time is not a subjective form; it is a real and infinite process which can be conceived only as 'periodic'. Thus it is clear that there can be no dissipation of energy in an infinite empty space. The centers of this energy are limited in number, and their combinations perfectly calculable. There is no beginning or end of this ever-active energy, no equilibrium, no first or last change. Since time is infinite all possible combinations of energy-centers have already been exhausted. There is no new happening in the universe; whatever

happens now has happened before an infinite number of times, and will continue to happen an infinite number of times in the future.<sup>14</sup>

Criticizing this doctrine, he says:

Such is Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence. It is only a more rigid kind of mechanism, based not on an ascertained fact but only on a working hypothesis of science. Nor does Nietzsche seriously grapple with the question of time. He takes it objectively and regards it merely as an infinite series of events returning to itself over and over again. Now time, regarded as a perpetual, circular movement, makes immortality absolutely intolerable. Nietzsche himself feels this and describes his doctrine not as one of immortality but rather as a view of life which would make immortality endurable. And what makes immortality bearable, according to Nietzsche? It is the expectation that a recurrence of the combination of energy-centers which constitute my personal existence is a necessary factor in the birth of the ideal combination which he calls 'superman'. But the superman has been an infinite number of times before. His birth is inevitable; how can the prospect give me any aspiration? We can aspire only for what is absolutely new, and the absolutely new is unthinkable on Nietzsche's view which is nothing more than a fatalism worse than the one summed up in the word *qismat*. Such a doctrine, far from keying up the human organism for the fight of life, tends to destroy its action-tendencies and relaxes the tension of the ego.<sup>15</sup>

We have seen in the third chapter above that, according to Iqbal, the Ultimate Reality is a free creative will. As regards time also he has a specific view of his own which is not at all in harmony with Nietzsche's concept of time. In general, he is not prepared to accept any system of thought which seeks to violate the free creativity of life. Consequently, the hypothesis of Eternal Recurrence as such can in no way be acceptable to Iqbal.

#### IV

As Nietzsche's doctrine of Eternal Recurrence has great resemblance to the doctrine of transmigration of souls and as Iqbal—despite having a soft corner for Nietzsche regarding some of his views—has severely criticized the former, it appears to be necessary that the latter also be sympathetically understood and

closely examined: this will bring to limelight some other aspects also of the problem under discussion.

Doctrine of the 'transmigration of souls' is variously known as 'reincarnation', 'rebirth', 'palingenesis' and 'metempsychosis'.<sup>16</sup> According to it, the soul that survives the death of the physical organism continues to migrate from one body to the other. So, incidentally, the doctrine subscribes not only to life after death but also to life before death. The soul thus continues its journey onwards endlessly. However, sometimes, it is believed that the soul retains itself for a few generations and then suddenly the journey stops and it becomes extinct: for example, Buddhism subscribes to transmigration of souls but denies everlasting existence to them.

Transmigration, with slight differences in minor details here and there, is traceable as a part of the doctrinal systems of a number of religions. We find it in the Orphic religion of the Greeks, Platonic eschatology, views of some Christian theologians, some African religious sects etc., but its most obvious pronouncement is available in Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism and Buddhism. How, and exactly from what source, did this doctrine happen to be incorporated in these religions we know nothing for certain. One view is that in South Asia it had been in vogue since pre-historic times. Later on, it was formally declared in the *Upanishads*. However, one thing is unequivocally evident: this doctrine very much fascinated the Western mind. Famous novelist Rider Haggard made it the central theme of some of his stories. Similarly there are clearly audible echos of this doctrine beautifully woven into the metaphysical systems of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Mctaggart.

In Hindu Vedāntic philosophy the conception of *karma* and re-incarnation has the pivotal significance: views of immortality subscribed to by most of the Indian religions are only different forms of this conception. According to *Advaita Vedānta*, the ultimate reality is pure, undifferentiated consciousness which is absolutely without any quality, including the quality of personal identity. Technically, it is *Brahman*. The creative power of *Brahman* expresses itself in the form of *māyā* which is the universe. As *māyā*

is not self-subsistent and independent by itself—being dependent on the *Brahman*—so it is unreal. The infinite, eternal consciousness becomes associated with *māyā* to constitute a plurality of finite, mortal units which are known as *jīvātman*s or *jīvas*. These are the souls. Being the product of *māyā*, the unreality, the existence of the souls is a kind of illusion, the illusion grounded in their separateness from the Infinite Consciousness. In Vedantism the difference between *Brahman* and *Jīvātman*s is entrained with the help of a simile. *Brahman* is like space and the *jīvātman*s, the individual souls, are like the spaces bounded in jars. These souls, alienating themselves from the *Brahman*, assume the semblance of independent existents. When however, the jars are broken, the bounded space within them becomes a part and parcel of the Absolute Space. Absolute Reality is the cosmic consciousness which the *māyā*, by a process of the confinement of this consciousness into an infinite number of jars—the symbols of darkness and ignorance—diversifies into *jīvātman*s. When, due to the enlightenment of the *nirvāna*, walls of ignorance and illusion ultimately crumble down, the *jīvatman*s get immersed into, and become one with, the *Brahman*, the undifferentiable, indivisible organic wholeness which knows of no specifications and determinations. This view has great resemblance with the views of the Greek school of Neo-Platonism and Gnosticism and with the theology of Paul Tillich.<sup>17</sup> Anyway, as regards *Karma* and re-incarnation it has a specific aspect also: those *ātman*s which, deluded by the *māyā*, stand separated and cut off from their source, continue their journey through various births and rebirths so that they ultimately get rid of this delusion of separation and become one with the Oneness that *Brahman* is. Although the psycho-physical ego—as ‘you’ and ‘me’—is a man or a woman, the *ātman* or soul is neither male nor female: it has germs of both. When these germs are embodied in various proportions, they constitute masculinity and femininity.<sup>18</sup> When the soul travels through various psycho-physical egos, normally it does not have any remembrance of its previous births but there are depths of the soul in which the entire past is preserved. The soul uses bodies of different births as instruments, at various stages, for its

onward journey. They are like a number of sheaths successively enclosing the blade of a sword: all these sheaths must ultimately be discarded to set the blade free. In Hindu *vedānt* there are three such principal bodies or sheaths: the gross body (*sthūla sarīra*), the subtle body (*sūkṣma sarīra or līnga sarīra*) and the causal body (*kāraṇa sarīra*). In order to understand the logic of rebirth we may combine the last two into one and call it the subtle body and then concentrate on its relationship with the gross body.

The gross body is the physical organism that begins to be formed at conception and begins to disintegrate at death. It is, however, survived by the subtle body which is transferred to another physical body at its incarnation. The term 'subtle body' should not be construed as a rarefied form of the material body. The subtle body or the *līnga sarīra* is not a body at all: it neither occupies space nor does it have any shape or size. In the ordinary terminology it may be described as a 'mental' rather than a 'physical' entity. It is the psychical part of the psycho-physical organism.

*Līnga sarīra* is the locus of all moral, spiritual and aesthetic modifications and moods that characterize the life of an individual. It is the seat of all those mental attitudes which a person adopts during his life-time. Performing virtuous actions again and again and performing vicious actions as a matter of habit develop into two respective attitudes of the human nature. When a gross body is annihilated at death, these attitudes are not affected by this annihilation. These attitudes and modifications are known as *Samskāras* (impressions) in Vedantic terminology.

It must be interesting to point out here that Prof. C.D. Broad, who prefers the experiential view as regards the conviction about immortality, is of the opinion<sup>19</sup> that every person has a 'psychic factor' in his personality. This 'psychic factor' continues to retain its identity for some time after the death of man like the fragrance of a flower which continues to be felt for a while after the flower has withered. When, according to Broad, a liaison is sought to be established with the soul of a dead person through a 'medium', it is really this 'psychic factor' that is contacted. However, he says, the existence of this factor is not

permanent. Like the fragrance of the withered flower it gets annihilated in due course of time.

Doctrine of the Transmigration of Souls has a broader reference than the views of C.D. Broad would imply. According to this doctrine, *samskāra*, the mental attitude, departs from the gross body after its death and goes to the womb of a mother where another gross body is beginning to take its shape. Thus this new organism, besides inheriting elements from its ancestors, also assimilates the subtle body or *linga sarīra* which has been linked to it.

In Nietzsche's doctrine of Eternal Recurrence as well as in the doctrine of the Transmigration of Souls, as delineated here, individuality of man is conceived to remain intact. However, from the point of view of Nietzsche, as we have seen, the entire furniture of the universe—from a speck of dust on the earth to what is highest in the heavens—is in eternal rotation: whatever goes by recurs with all its specifications and it continues to recur again and again endlessly, whereas according to the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, the material world and the whole environmental perspective remains by and large the same: only various births and rebirths of living organisms take place. If during one birth a person lives a life of abasement and humiliation he can expect that, as the result of good deeds done by him, he will be carefree, contented and happy in the next birth; but in Nietzsche's eternal recurrence this cannot be expected.

Relevance of 'good deeds' and of the concept of *linga sarīra* or the subtle body can be easily traced for the thought-system of Iqbal also insofar as he too regards good actions as a necessary condition for the integration of the human ego; but on the whole the idea of the transmigration of souls with its entire set of implications, as worked out above, is alien to Iqbal's point of view. For Iqbal, moral evolution of the ego is ascendant rather than horizontal in nature. Its ideals and objectives take shape from within itself. Its movement is not mechanistically propelled from behind; it is free and creative. In it the past is not left behind but is rather assimilated in the present and the future

exists as an open possibility. In the onward journey of the ego, death is only a stage beyond which it will continue its march onward, all the time retaining its individuality and personal identity. It has no possibility of merging itself into the unity of the Ultimate Real, *albeit* it may reflect His effulgence more and more. Also, in Iqbal's concept of the ego there is no room for its life before birth: it has a beginning in time and did not pre-exist its emergence in the present spatio-temporal order. Once having emerged, however, it becomes a fit candidate for immortality. According to transmigration, the soul of man continues traversing not a linear but a circular course of birth-death-rebirth and so on and when it ultimately gets rid of this course it becomes one with the supreme spirit just as a drop of water falling into the ocean becomes one with it. Doctrine of the Transmigration of Souls, as we have seen, is based on the cyclic concept of time which, in general, was the thought-fashion of the man of ancient times.

## V

Philosophy of Dr. McTaggart is a specific interpretation and elaboration of Hegelian idealism. According to him, the ultimate reality is spiritual and comprises individual minds: there is no room in it for time, space and material objects. After Berkeley's fashion, he tries to prove that whatever we perceive is nothing but minds and what these minds contain. It is from an erratic appreciation of this fact that our ordinary view of the external world is derived.

McTaggart holds that though time is unreal yet in a special sense we can talk of the immortality of man. He wrote a book entitled *Some Dogmas of Religion* which is specially addressed to those who are not well-versed in the jargon of philosophical discourse and its refined sophistications. In easy, non-technical language it deals with some problems which are of basic significance in religion and philosophy. One of the chapters of the book is captioned 'Human Immortality' which, according to C.D. Broad, is the most important of all the chapters. McTaggart got prepared a number of copies of this chapter and despatched



them to those whose near and dear ones had lost their lives in war during 1914–1918 or who had become untraceable. His objective was to condole the dead and to sympathise with the survivors. Later on, he gave a philosophical exposition of his views on this subject in his well-known book *Nature of Existence*. He writes:

An existent being was to be called immortal if it was a self which had an endless existence in future time. Taking immortality strictly in this sense, no self could be really immortal since no self is really in time. But selves, though not in time, appear in time. For the use of the word 'immortality' has been determined largely by practical considerations, and if it is as true to say that my future existence will be endless as it is to say that I have lived through the last twenty four hours, it would, I think, be in accordance with the general usage to say that I am immortal.<sup>20</sup>

According to McTaggart the phenomenon of life hereafter is natural like as it is natural to repent after committing a crime! However, selves or minds, he says, cannot be said to be capable of everlasting existence; They will in fact be capable of 'eternal' existence: category of successional time cannot be ascribed to them. Reality is timeless so the selves or egos too will continue to be sustained timelessly.

As regards the furnishing of proof for the eternity of man, McTaggart does not evince any interest in the findings of psychical research or parapsychology; he rather banks on purely metaphysical reasoning. He thinks that even if parapsychology claims to have established the possibility of life after death it will remain an hypothesis and there will always be an ample room left for the formulation of counter-hypotheses. In his book, referred to above, McTaggart firmly holds that all the arguments against immortality that have been posed from the point of view of commonsense or from the platform of positive sciences are defective in one way or the other. On the grounds of faith in the eternal existence of man after his physical death, he conjectures that man might also have lived prior to his birth in this world. So, in *Nature of Existence*, the chapter that follows 'Human Immortality' is 'Pre-existence and Post-existence'. In this latter

chapter he has undertaken a detailed discussion to establish that a soul travels through various incarnations. In any new incarnation the memory of the previous one/ones is not present. However, this erasure of memory, he says, does not make life meaningless. The phenomenon of the loss of memory is a normal and ordinary happening even during a single life-span of a person: we forget so many events of our past life, sometimes only temporarily and sometimes even permanently. McTaggart tries to bring out the truthfulness of successive births on the basis of some truths of our ordinary experience. For example two persons fall in love with each other on their very first confrontation, indicating thereby that they have already lived together for sometime during their previous birth/births. Similarly, some persons, we see, have a natural, in-born capability for carrying out some work or for the pursuit of some art like painting, oratory, composing poetry and so on, whereas those who do not have that capability would sometimes labour hard and still not attain the desired capability.

Iqbal was a student of McTaggart at Cambridge and had studied his philosophy in depth. However, he could never agree to his teacher's view that time is unreal. His criticism of this view is available in the second chapter of his *Reconstruction*:

Time, according to Doctor McTaggart is unreal because every event is past, present and future. Queen Anne's death, for instance, is past to us; it was present to her contemporaries and future to William III. Thus the event of Anne's death combines characteristics which are incompatible with each other. It is obvious that the argument proceeds on the assumption that the serial nature of time is final. If we regard past, present and future as essential to time, then we picture time as a straight line, part of which we have travelled and left behind, and part yet lies untravelled before us. This is taking time, not as a living creative movement, but as a static absolute, holding the ordered multiplicity of fully shaped cosmic events, revealed serially, like the pictures of a film, to the outside observer. We can indeed say that Queen Anne's death was future to William III, if this event is regarded as already fully shaped, and lying in the future, waiting for its happening. But a future event, as Broad justly points out, cannot be characterized as an event. Before the death of Anne the

event of her death did not exist at all.<sup>21</sup>

Despite this criticism, Iqbal admits that time is a mystery and it is not easy to solve this mystery. "Personally", he says, "I am inclined to think that time is an essential element in reality. But real time is not serial time to which the distinction of past, present and future is essential; it is pure duration, i.e. change without succession, which McTaggart's argument does not touch".<sup>22</sup>

Thus for Iqbal time is real whereas for McTaggart it is unreal and illusory. As McTaggart's concept of the eternity of man depends on the unreality of time, Iqbal does not accept it. Besides, there is no room in Iqbal's concept of immortality for man's pre-existence and, in general for the cycle of births, deaths and rebirths.

God does not figure in the thought-system of McTaggart. Beyond, and over and above, the individual selves and minds, he says, there is neither a necessity nor any need to posit a Divine Being Who would encompass, and preside over, all of them. Moreover, he ultimately lands himself into a deterministic outlook towards the universe, *albeit* he holds at the same time that determinism is not conformable with the deliverance of moral responsibilities. According to Iqbal, on the other hand, God as the Absolute Mind and the Great I Am encompasses all the egos which proceed from Him and the evolutionary process that characterizes the entire universe is a free, creative movement.

## VI

James Ward has been known as the upholder of spiritual pluralism. His philosophy is in fact a new interpretation of the thought of Leibniz; however, he does not subscribe to Leibniz's pre-established harmony nor does he regard monads, the spiritual units, as windowless and so incapable of mutual interaction. Both of them were scientists and were aware of the requirements of a scientific outlook and tried to adopt it in their respective points of view.

Philosophy of James Ward is available in his two well-known books *Naturalism and Agnosticism* and *Realm of Ends*. These are in

fact two series of lectures delivered by him at the Aberdeen University and the St. Andrews University, respectively. In *Naturalism and Agnosticism* he critically examined that philosophy of science which was presented by Huxley and Spencer in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the *Realm of Ends*, he gave a positive enunciation of his own system of thought which can be termed 'teleological theism' and which is built up, like that of Leibniz, on the basis of a sort of panpsychic pluralism. Thought of James Ward was in fact an attempt to rejuvenate the old naturalist-cum-spiritualist point of view which was fast losing its ground. Irrespective of the merits and demerits of this point of views James Ward's approach has a freshness of its own because of which he has earned a respectable place in the philosophy of history. Specially, as a consequence of his analysis of human mind he developed a sort of genetic psychology but his researches in the field of psychology were soon overshadowed by ever-growing, more and more popular psychoanalysis and scientific and experimental psychology.

According to James Ward, life after death is in fact a continuation of the consciousness of the present life. We cannot conceive that the life hereafter will be absolutely a new creation. We rather wish that beyond this world there should be a continuity of the life of every individual. The idea of a life which is unrelated to the present life will be absolutely insipid and uninteresting. Continuation of consciousness necessitates retention of the memory of the past as well as a feel of personal identity. The question arises that, when at death the physical body of a person gets annihilated, how can his soul survive as an independent existent? James Ward says that in this regard the example of the development of genes or that of embryo in the womb of a mother is the best. We see that the soul appears in the garb of a germ and then evolves alongwith the body onto higher and higher levels of organismic existence. If the soul can work such wonders within the walls of the body, when freed from the body it will prove to be still more effectively operative. As to how will the soul organize itself in the absence of the ordinary bodily structure which it has shed off at death, we cannot say anything for certain. Anyway, we have no reasons to affirm that the

present organization of the soul is the only kind of organization that is possible. What is really of basic importance is to hypothesize that the rapport of the soul with the world at large that is presently effective can be established in some other way also.

After death, the soul will enter a new, unseen, immortal world. However, in between this world and the next one there will be a period of rumination and reflection. This period will not be charged with an efficient, active life: it will be the domain of inwardness of consideration and pondering and of recollection.

The name of James Ward's book *Realm of Ends* is indicative. For him this world is teleological in nature and is characterized by goals and objectives. It is not simply an effulgence and disclosure of the Absolute Divine Being; every living, conscious being in the world has an individual, personal status of its own and every being is an end in itself.

Iqbal has many things in common with James Ward.<sup>23</sup> Both of them, for example, hold that the Ultimate Reality is spiritual and that the individual minds enjoy a specific status in it; both of them oppose Leibniz's windowless monads and affirm interaction between them; Both of them think that man can establish rapport with God through an intense love for Him; and so on. In the thought of James Ward the concept of the ruminative period between death and resurrection also comes very close to the interpretation that Iqbal puts on the concept of *barzakh*, on which a detailed discussion will be carried out later.

## VII

As Iqbal belongs to that school of thought according to which the Ultimate Reality is a sort of volition, it appears to be in place to also say something about the voluntarist Arthur Schopenhauer for the sake of providing a still more comprehensive picture of the context of Iqbal's concept of immortality.

Schopenhauer wrote *The World as Will and Idea*. The very title of the book is expressive of the characteristic nature of his philosophy. In the beginning of this book he tries to bring out

that the universe is my idea. It is the basic condition of my conscious experience and as such it carries no subject-object distinctions. Schopenhauer refutes both subjectivism and materialism. The Ultimate Reality, according to him, is a purposeless, blind and impulsive will. To the word 'will' he gives a far wider connotation than its ordinary lexical meaning. It expresses itself differently in different spheres of existence. In the realm of physical nature, for example, it is visible in the form of gravitational pull etc. Its most sophisticated manifestation is the 'will to live' among human beings.

'Will to live' is essentially one but there is a multiplicity of its manifestations. Like Kant he regarded the spatio-temporal world as phenomenal in nature—the world of appearances, pure and simple: Reality belongs to 'Will' that underlies it as the grand, all-pervasive unitary principle.

Schopenhauer is of the view that psychologically, every man believes that he will survive death and enjoy an everlasting existence. In other words, he has the conviction that there is an element in his person which is not affected by the phenomenon of physical extinction and which is immortal. "There is little occasion to conclude that, because organized life has ceased, the force which hitherto actuated it has also become nothing".<sup>24</sup> This is like inferring the death of the spinner from the stopping of the spinning wheel. But exactly what is this immortal element. This is certainly not 'consciousness or soul, according to him, because consciousness is simply an instrument which the 'will-to-live' has devised for the furtherance of its own objectives and goals.

Schopenhauer's concept of immortality is grounded in his denial of 'creation out of nothing'. When a child is born, he does not come into being from absolute nothingness: it did have its pre-existence in some other form, at least in the form of the species to which it belongs. Now if an object or a being does not come out of not-being it cannot finally disappear into not-being either. In order to prove immortality, Schopenhauer, besides the indestructibility of the species, sometimes also makes reference to the Law of Preservation of Matter. Absolute indestructibility of matter as such guarantees the immortality of man in particular. It

should, however, hurriedly be pointed out that Schopenhauer does not uphold personal immortality. He says that, if it is held that after death I shall be resurrected with my personal identity being intact, then I will have to hold on to the 'foolish' thesis that dogs, monkeys, elephants and even bugs and flies etc. will also be revived in their individual capacities: the line of argument can hardly be different in these two cases.

Thus, according Schopenhauer, perpetuation of life onto the 'world hereafter' concerns not the individuals and persons but only forms and species. The Ultimate Reality is one Blind Will which, when it manifests itself in the world of appearances, becomes numerous species and forms. These forms, like the 'ideas' of Plato, are immobile and motionless. 'Will to Live' preserves forms and cares not at all for individuals. The individuals are like the innumerable drops of water in a waterfall. These drops are perpetually coming into being and disappearing, making room for the new ones: there is movement in them. But the bow that this waterfall is—irresponsive to this flux—sustains its majestic permanence and identity. Similarly, every species remains independent of, and uninfluenced by, its individual members who come and go, who are born and meet their death. Men who come and go are like the drops of water whereas human beings as a species are like the waterfall.

An individual has no absolute beginning and no absolute end. In other words, we cannot say that on birth he comes out of a void, a total nothingness, and on death he becomes an absolute nonentity. The fact is that he is a continuation of his progenitors and his progeny are his continuation. He inherits a number of personality traits which his own descendants, in turn, inherit from him. In this sense exactly there is no creation *ex nihilo* and no passing on into sheer nothingness. A cat, says Schopenhauer, that is playing in the corridor exactly at this time may thus be declared as the same cat that played here three hundred years ago. If it is a folly to hold this, it would be a greater folly to believe that the present cat is entirely different in nature and different in habitual traits from the cat of three hundred years ago. The present cat is the same as the old one by virtue of its species; otherwise, like the

ephemeral drops in a waterfall it is subject to extermination.

It has already been said above that Schopenhauer was influenced by the metaphysics of Kant. Kant, we know, had made a distinction between the noumenal world and the phenomenal world—the world of reality and the world of appearances. The noumenal world or the thing-in-itself was, according to him, beyond the reach of human knowledge. However, according to Nietzsche it is knowable because it is nothing else but 'will-to-live'. Like Kant, he regards time as a form of sense perception; therefore it is inapplicable to the noumenal world. Now the concept of death is temporal in nature as it is the end of an individual in time. As the noumenal world is beyond time, the event of death has no relevance in its context. Thus various forms or species of the will-to-live know no death and so are immortal.

Iqbal agrees with Schopenhauer insofar as the former too believes that the ultimate reality is will and that it can be known; but he does not regard this will as blind. Further, Iqbal holds that individuals are the outcome of this creative will of God but after they come into being they retain and maintain their individuality and become capable of personal immortality. Schopenhauer's view of immortality, on the other hand, is like Budha's concept of *nirvāna* which envisages that the individual ultimately sheds off his identity and becomes one with the Ultimate Reality.



## Chapter V

# Intellectual Background of Iqbal's Concept of Immortality (contd.)

In the last chapter above we had an occasion to survey that intellectual background of Iqbal's concept of immortality which was furnished with reference to some Western thinkers. In the present chapter we shall take an account of those positive as well as negative impressions on his views which emerged specially from the Eastern sources. There is no doubt that Iqbal, as already shown, was deeply influenced by Bergson, William James, Nietzsche and others; but this too is no less patent a fact that, in the formation of his views, Qur'anic teachings as well as speculations of Muslim thinkers, particularly of Jalaluddin Rumi, had a great—maybe, in fact a greater—role to play. So in the account that follows we shall take up the Islamic/Muslim point of view which Iqbal duly recognized and to which he made copious references. Thus, having had an elaborate understanding of both Western and Eastern sources, we shall be in a position to comprehend and appreciate Iqbal's own standpoint in the correct perspective.

### I

The mode of reasoning, that we have followed so far in regard to the problem of life after death, cannot be faithfully continued, as we shall presently see, in the realm of Islamic theological thought that is obviously grounded in the Qur'anic

teachings. The Qur'an makes a classification of its verses into the *mubkamāt* (the firm) and the *mutashābihāt* (the allegorical). The former are those whose meanings are indisputably and unambiguously clear: they are, in general, the ones which are directly relevant to the practical life of man. The latter, on the other hand, are those which have all the possibility of being interpreted in more ways than one: their unequivocally single meaning is beyond the grasp of man. Consequently, man has no alternative but to be silent about them, in the last analysis. He may go along for a while in tracing their significance but very soon must stop any further hair-splitting and scrutinization.

Insofar as the contents of the Qur'an are concerned all of its eschatological and metaphysical descriptions are considered to belong to the class of allegorical verses, the *mutashābihāt*. It is thus quite natural that there would always remain an element of uncertainty and vagueness regarding these concepts. The Qur'an requires of its readers a firm faith in them and at the most simply a working comprehension of them so as to see that their day-to-day lives stand attuned to, and harmonized with, the metaphysical vision of the Qur'an: this is obviously over and above its plain, direct socio-moral teachings—its commandments and prohibitions.

Due to the reasons, referred to above, the Qur'an, instead of undertaking a metaphysical discourse on the genesis, nature and destiny of the human soul has by and large tried to restrict itself to its moral connotation. For its salvation of the soul is a more important problem to be dilated on than its theoretical and conceptual nature. Soul and its immortality is not a theory or a concept which, according to the Islamic teachings, would need to be elaborated and explained by virtue of its own right; it is rather a basic fact which is to be accepted and in which we have just to repose our faith.

Question arises that in view of the allegorical descriptions of the nature of the life hereafter, what is the rationale and where is the necessity of our faith in it. The answer that the Qur'an would give is that in order to have a faithful acceptance of such realities, the *mubkamāt* are an adequate foundation to which a reference

should invariably be made. One, who has a firm conviction in the *mubkamāt*, will proceed towards the understanding of supra-sensuous realities but will go only to that extent to which the Qur'an wants and permits him to go. The Arabs, who were the direct addressees of the Qur'an, too, we know, confined the use of reason and argument to the solutions of the problems of every day life and understanding of various moral maxims etc. and in whatever case they thought human reason stands incapacitated, they would consign it to the esoteric plan of God and His good will.<sup>1</sup>

It is by now clear that we do not find in the Qur'an the concepts of 'immortality' and of the 'life hereafter' in the same way as, for example, we find them in the philosophies of Plato, Nietzsche or Schopenhauer. I mean to say, we cannot talk—in the way in which we have talked in the case of some Western thinkers—of the Qur'anic 'doctrine' of immortality. The Qur'an does not have any such doctrine or theory. You may peruse the whole of it and you may peruse it again and again; you will not be able to make up a comprehensive, consolidated picture of, or a systematic philosophy about, it. Instead, various eschatological 'phenomena' have been described differently in different contexts, suiting different occasions, and even in accordance with the different mental levels of various addressees. However, what the Qur'an is very clear about is that an assent to 'resurrection' and allied matters, communicated to us in revelations, is the basic article of faith without which no one can enter into the fold of Islam. This is known as the doctrine of *tafwid* which means that as regards those fact which are beyond the reach of sense perception and reason we should not insist on reasoning and be involved in unnecessary subtleties but should rather accept our helplessness and inability to have an access to them.<sup>2</sup>

During the course of its descriptions of man's creation, his worldly life, his death and his resurrection the Qur'an uses two terms most frequently: *rūb* and *nafs*. These have, however, been used variously in different perspectives. It is necessary to understand these various meanings so as to find out ultimately as to what exactly is the essential character of human personality.

Different meanings that the Qur'an assigns to *rūb*, besides its connotation as a principle of life, or the different contexts in which this word is used are roughly as follows:

1. *Rūb* in the sense of blowing or 'breathing into':  
He began the creation of man with clay; then made his progeny from a quintessence of the nature of a fluid despised; then He fashioned him in due proportion and breathed into him something of His spirit (*rūb*)... (32:8)

And Mary, the daughter of Imran who guarded her chastity; and we breathed into her body of our spirit (*rūb*)... (66:12)

2. *Rūb* in the sense of *wahy*  
Raised high above ranks (He is) the Lord of the Throne. By His command doth He send the spirit (of inspiration) (*rūb*) to any of his servants he pleases... (40-15)

It is not fitting for a man that Allah should speak to him except by inspiration or from behind a veil or by sending of a messenger...and thus have We, by Our command, sent inspiration (*rūb*)... (42: 51-52)

3. *Rūb* in the sense of Jibrāiel  
The angels and the Spirit (*rūb*) (generally understood as Jibrāiel) ascend unto Him in a day, the measure whereof is (as) fifty thousand years (70:14)

The Day that the Spirit (*rūb*) (*i.e.* Jibrāiel) and the angels will stand forth in ranks. None shall speak except any who is permitted by Allah, Most Gracious... (78:38)

4. *Rūb* in the sense of angel.  
...Then We sent to her (Maryam) Our angel (*rūb*) and he appeared before her as a man in all respects. (19:17)
5. *Rūb* in the sense of *Rūb al-Quds*  
To Jesus, the son of Mary, We gave clear signs and strengthened him with the holy spirit (*Rūb al-Quds*) (generally, commentators of the Qur'an identify this holy spirit with Jibrāiel...but, according to the Christians it is the holy ghost, one of the trinity of godheads) (21:253)

Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) a messenger of

Allah and His Word which He bestowed on Mary and a Spirit (*rūb*) proceeding from Him. (4:171)

6. *Rūb* in the sense of prophethood

He doth sent down His angels with inspiration (*rūb*) of His command to such of his servants as he pleaseth... (16:2)

7. *Rūb* in the sense of human soul

When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My spirit (*rūb*) fall ye down in obeisance unto him (15:29)

According to this last sense, *rūb* is the reflection of Divine attributes infused into the human body. God's breathing of His *rūb* into man, of course, does not mean that any part of the Divine Being was deposited in him. Some commentators call the human soul *nūr e yazdāni* (a Divine spark) which is the ground and base of his spiritual perfections and the *raison de etre* of his ultimate encounter with God provided he saves it from degeneration: otherwise his body is reduced to a gloomy dungeon with darkness all over.

The other term which has been used by the Qur'an in connection with death, immortality and salvation is *nafs*. Various derivatives of *nafs* have different meanings in the Arabic language. The Qur'an almost invariably uses it as equivalent to man—in fact to a particular aspect of the human person. In general, wherever in the Qur'an the word *nafs*, without qualification, is used, its reference is not specifically to the spiritual character of man but rather either to man as such or to that aspect of man which has 'urges' and 'desires' in the mundane sense of these terms. Using Aristotle's terminology we can regard it as the appetitive self of man.

However, a detailed study of the Qur'an brings out the following facts about the *nafs* of man:

1. *Nafs* harbours evil desires.

It is We Who created man and We know what dark suggestions his *nafs* makes to him: for We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein (50:16)

2. In the last analysis, *nafs* has both good and evil tendencies.

By the *nafs* and the proportion and order given to it and its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right. Truly he succeeds that

purifies it and he fails that corrupts it. (91:7–10)

3. The Qur'an refers to three stages in the moral-cum-spiritual development of the *nafs*.
  - a. *Nafs e Ammārah* i.e. the *nafs* that commands the performance of evil actions.  
The human *nafs* is certainly prone to evil, unless my Lord do Bestow His mercy (12:53)
  - b. *Nafs e Lawwāmah* i.e. the *nafs* that reproaches over the performance of evil actions.  
And I do call to witness the self-reproaching *nafs*... (75:2–4)
  - c. *Nafs e Mutma'innah* i.e. the satisfied *nafs*  
O (thou) *nafs* in (complete) rest and satisfaction come back thou to thy Lord—well-pleased (thyself) and well-pleasing unto Him (87:27–28)

From the above account it is clear that the terms *nafs* and *ruh* both of them have been used by the Qur'an differently in different contexts but mutually they are the same at least in the sense that each one of them stands for the human individual *albeit* they may specially emphasize different levels, states and aspects of his being. Broadly speaking, as shown above, *nafs* is considered to be that aspect of man which is subject to worldly desires, instigations and temptations and has the possibility of being swayed by Satanic suggestions, whereas *ruh* basically is considered to be the bearer of Divine attributes as it was God's own *ruh* that He had infused into man. However, the Qur'an does not always keep up this distinction. What it consistently emphasises and what should be of concern to us in the present context is the moral connotation of these concepts because immortality, in connection with which they both are directly or indirectly generally referred to, is a moral problem. Immortality is not a metaphysical or philosophical problem for the Qur'an; so we need not go into details about various discussions and hair-splitting distinctions that have been carried on by the Muslim theologians, philosophers and Qur'an commentators regarding the respective meanings of *nafs*, *ruh* and other allied concepts belonging to their family.

Qur'an is unequivocally clear in its affirmation that every

living being—every *nafs*, every *ruh*—on this earth is bound to meet death: no one, rather nothing, persists here for all times: there is no god but He. Everything (that exists) will perish except His own face (28:88) But death is of course not the absolute and permanent end of human life. After death all human beings will be raised once again.

The idea of resurrection was not something new for the Arabs, the first direct addressees of the Qur'an. What is, however, distinct with the Qu'anic point of view is that it puts basic emphasis on the phenomenon of Judgement when rewards and punishments will be apportioned to human beings as reparations for the good/evil actions performed by them in this world. It is this aspect of Qur'anic eschatology with which the pre-Islamic Arabs were not at home: why so many moral prohibitions and deterrents for the sake of a comfortable living in the world to come!<sup>3</sup>

Man will be resurrected after death but during the period between death and resurrection also he enjoys some form of living existence. In this perpetual living, however, man is not alone. Besides him, there are angels, jinns and also satans of whom *Iblis* or *Shaitan* is the leader. Out of these, angels and some jinns represent the forces of goodness whereas some of the jinns as well as satans, those of evil. The soul of man, which, as said above, is likely to respond positively to the instigations of *nafs e ammarah*, is also morally threatened by the temptations, doubts and distractions worked by satans.

Between the death of a person and his resurrection on the Day of Judgement is a period of time, technically known as '*barzakab*', which literally means a bar, an impediment, an interception or hindrance between two things.<sup>4</sup> In this sense, the Qur'an has used the word at two places:

...“In order that I may work righteousness in the things I neglected”—“By no means! It is but a word he says”—Before them is a partition (*barzakab*) till the day they are raised up. (23:100)

He has let free the two bodies of flowing water meeting together. Between them is a barrier (*barzakab*) which they do not transgress.

(55:19–20)

The first one of these verses emphasizes that those once dead cannot come back to this world because the *barzakh* stops them from doing so. They will remain suspended in that state till that time when they will be raised for the Grand Judgement. For this intervening period, the Qur'an also uses the term *qabr* (grave).

Then He causeth him to die and putteth him in his grave (*qabr*).

Then, when it is His will, He will raise him up (again) (80:81–82)

About resurrection it is said that on that day, the dead will be raised from their *qubūr* (singular: *qabr*) (22:7). So the Qur'an appears to use *barzakh* and *qabr* interchangeably.

From the above-quoted verse (23:100) it is evident that during their sojourn in *barzakh* the individuals will enjoy an amount of sensibility, particularly a moral consciousness. The desire of some of them to be sent back to this world implies that they will have a painful awareness of the failings of their lives theretofore and also a feel, an inkling, of the terrible punishment that awaits them. So, in a way, the process of the award of punishments and rewards will commence during the *barzakh* period itself. We meet in Muslim theological literature such terms as capaciousness or narrowness of the grave, torments of the grave (*'adhāb e qabr*) and so on. According to a saying of the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) recorded by Abū Huraira, for a pious man in the grave a door towards heaven is opened from which he starts receiving its favours and comforts; and for a wicked man, a door towards hell is opened from which he starts receiving its scorching heat and all sorts of discomforts.<sup>5</sup> It should not be concluded from all this that for those who die by drowning, who are burnt away, who are eaten by wild animals, and so on, and are not deposited in graves there will be no torments or comforts of the grave. 'Grave' is only symbolic. All persons who meet their death—in whatever way it occurs to them—will surely receive their shares of rewards or punishments during their respite in *barzakh*. The Qur'an too mentions rewards/punishments meted out to the dead before their resurrection for the final Judgement. It says:

In front of the fire will they be brought morning and evening; and



(the sentence will be) on the Day that Judgement will be established: cast ye the people of Pharaoh into the severest penalty. (40:46)

In this verse the pangs of *barzakh* and of the Doomsday have been referred to separately. Also, as to the martyrs *i.e.* those who sacrifice their lives in the way of God, it has specifically been prohibited that they be considered dead: They continue to live and are provided sustenance by God (2:154)

A question arises here. How long will be the duration of *barzakh*? The recognised position of the Qur'an in general regarding all eschatological matters is that their real nature cannot be known by the epistemic modes ordinarily available to us here and now (32:17) because spatio-temporal measures of the next world will be entirely different from those of this world. So no categorical answer to the above-raised question can be given. Anyway, after that intervening period is over an individual will be raised on the Doomsday with full sensibility, consciousness and understanding. Compared to that, the *barzakh* period may be called that of semi-consciousness. What is important is the event of his resurrection, as to after how long, he will not be clearly aware of. The Qur'an says:

On that Day the hour (of Reckoning) will be established, the transgressors will swear that they tarried not but an hour (although they might have died thousands of years ago!): thus were they used to be deluded (30:55)

At another place it says:

The trumpet shall be sounded, when behold! from the sepulchers (men) will rush forth to their Lord! They will say: Ah! woe unto us! Who raised us up from our beds of repose?... (36:51-52)

meaning to say, they will feel as if they were half-asleep and were suddenly and unexpectedly aroused from that state of slumber. It should be remembered here that this will be the state of the heretics. On the contrary, those who have led a better moral and spiritual life will have a better status in *barzakh*. There are a number of the sayings of the Holy Prophet according to which souls of the faithful roam about freely, live in God's company, are elevated from graves after forty days to some higher, more

elevated place.<sup>6</sup> And so on.

The Day when all human beings will be resurrected has been called in the Holy Qur'an by various names, the most well-known being *Yaum al-Qiyamah*, the Day of Raising (it has occurred seventy times); *Yaum al-Akhir*, the Last Day (it has occurred twenty six times); *Al-Akhirah*, the Hereafter (it has occurred more than hundred time); *Yaum al-Din*, the Day of Requit, (it has occurred thirteen times); *Yaum al-Fasl*, the Day of Sorting Out (it has occurred six times); and *Yaum al-Hisab*, the Day of Account (it has occurred five times). Besides, there are certain names which occur once or twice only, for example *Yaum al-Fath*, the Day of Decision, *Yaum al-Talaq*, the Day of Mutual Meeting, *Yaum al-Jam'*, the Day of Gathering, *Yaum al-Kbulud*, the Day of Eternal Life, *Yaum al-Kburij*, the Day of Coming out (of the graves), *Yaum al-Ba'th*, the Day of Resurrection, *Yaum al-Hasrah*, the Day of Repentance, *Yaum al-Tanad*, the Day of Mutual Calling, *Yaum al-Azifah*, the Day Drawing Near, *Yaum al-Taghabun*, the Day of Mutual Loss and Gain. Some other words without the prefix *Yaum* have also occurred once or twice: *Al-Ghāshiyah*, the Overwhelming Event, *Al-Hāqqah*, the Sure Reality, *Al-Wāqī'ah*, the Event Inevitable, *Al-Qari'ah*, the Noisy, the Clamorous.

A close consideration of all the names of the Day of Resurrection mentioned above indicate that it will be a day of great upheaval, destructive of the old system to which we have got accustomed while living in this world and a prelude, an anticipation of a new order. Following are some of the quotations from the Holy Qur'an which explain this dual role of the Great Event:

He questions: "When is the Day of Resurrection?" At length, when the sight is dazed, and the moon is buried in darkness, and the sun and moon are joined together—that Day will man say: "Where is the refuge?" by no means! No place of safety! Before thy Lord (alone) that Day will be the place of rest. That Day will man be told (all) that he put forward, and all that he put back. Nay, man will be evidence against himself, even though he were to put his excuses (75:6–15)

Assuredly, what ye are promised must come to pass. Then when the stars become dim; when the heaven is cleft asunder; when the mountains are scattered (to the winds) as dust (77:7–10)

Verily the Day of Sorting out is a thing appointed—the Day that the Trumpet shall be sounded, and ye shall come forth in crowds; and the heavens shall be opened as if there were doors, and the mountains shall vanish, as if they were a mirage (78:17–20)

The Day whereon they will issue from their sepulchres in sudden haste as if they were rushing to a goalpost (fixed for them)—Their eyes lowered in dejection—ignominy covering them all over: such is the Day the which they are promised. (70:43–44)

When the earth is shaken to its (utmost) convulsion, and the earth throws up its burden (from within), and man cries (distressed) 'what is the matter with it?' On that day will it declare its tidings: for that thy Lord will have given it inspiration. On that day will men proceed in companies sorted out to be shown the deeds that they (had done). Then shall anyone, who has done an atom's weight of good, see it! and anyone who has done an atom's weight of evil, see it (99:1–8)

The event of resurrection will occur as a result of the blowing of a bugle or a trumpet. This will be done by the angel *Isrāfeel* who, with the bugle in mouth and looking towards God, waiting for orders from Him, is ever ready for the performance of this duty. The trumpet will be blown three times. The first blowing—known as *Nafkhat al-Far'*—will strike with terror everyone in the heavens and the earth. On the second blowing—known as *Nafkhat al-Sa'q*—every living creature will swoon into death. Now when none will be alive except Allah, the Living, the Self-Subsistent, the earth itself will be metamorphosed. It will be made even and flat like a chess-board so that no ups and downs remain in it. Then the last bugle will be blown and all human beings will be resurrected from the respective places on which they had fallen dead. This is *Nafkhat, al-Qiyām li Rabb al-'Ālamin*.

Life hereafter will evidently have two forms. Either it will be a life in *Jannah* or one in *Dozakh*, the former being a recompense

for good deeds and the latter, for bad deeds. *Jannah* literally means something which is concealed and hidden away from eyes. A garden is likewise called *Jannah* in Arabic because therein the ground is hidden under trees and plants etc. The conveniences and blessings of *Jannah* or heaven mentioned in the Qur'an are hidden not only from our physical eyes but even from the grasp of our imagination. We have no space here to go into very many details about the nature as well as contents of heaven. However, we very briefly refer below to a few of its aspects, as described in the Qur'an:

The Eternal Garden (25:15)

The Garden of Bliss (31:8)

Gardens of Eternity will they enter: Therein will they be adorned with bracelets of gold and pearls and their garments there will be of silk. And they will say: Praise be to Allah, Who has removed from us (all) sorrow; for our Lord is indeed Oft-forgiving, ready to appreciate (service), Who has, out of His bounty settled us in a home that will last: no toil nor sense of weariness shall touch us therein. (35:33–35)

Therein shall ye have all that your souls shall desire; Therein shall ye have all that ye ask for. (41:31)

The Companions of the Fire will call to the Companions of Paradise: "Pour down to us water or anything that Allah doth provide for your sustenance". They will say: "Both these things hath Allah forbidden to those who rejected Him. (7:50)

(Heaven will be) a bounty from thy Lord! That will be the supreme achievement. (44:57)

But it is for those who fear their Lord that lofty mansions, one above another, have been built... (39:20)

...Their light will run forward before them and by their right hands, while they say: "Our Lord, perfect our light for us... (66:8)  
The concept of heaven as it transpires from the Qur'anic

verses cited above and the others of their kind is that it is a place for good people to live in, where every desire of theirs will be fulfilled. Consequently, their very much natural desire for the achievement of higher and higher levels of perfection and for continuing making progress will necessarily also be fulfilled. In other words, heaven will not be a place for holidaying and rejoicing, one where all positive activities will be entirely suspended; rather its residents will actively move on in their spiritual journey. However, this spiritual journey will cause no distress, fatigue and languor. The entire atmosphere will be marked by happiness with its supreme goal being the beatific vision of God. There will be no malice there, no grudge, no jealousy and no absurdities of any kind.

'*Dozakh*' has been mentioned in the Qur'an with seven different names. Its name *Jahannam* has occurred the maximum number of times so that one gets the impression that this is its proper name. It literally means 'very deep'; for instance *bi'r<sup>m</sup> jahannam<sup>m</sup>* means 'a very deep well'. Another similar word is *Al-Hāviya*—occurring only once—which means so deep a place that its bottom is unfathomable. Four names of *Dozakh* are somehow exclusively related to fire and to the burning of fire. *Jabeem* is derived from *jahm* which means the flame of fire; *Sa'eer* is derived for *sa'r* which means to ignite fire; *Saqar* means that which burns or scorches; *Lazā'* means the pure flame of fire. Another name of *Dozakh* '*Hutamah*' has been mentioned in the Qur'an twice. It too means 'intense fire' but in one of the verses (57:20) it has been used for the leaves of trees which fall down after having dried up and—symbolically— for the pangs of grief and sorrow that afflict the heart of man. Some commentators of the Qur'an are of the opinion that these seven names of *Dozakh* are its seven ranks where different classes of infidels and sinners entering into it will be placed. For some others, they simply refer to various states of punishment to be meted out to them.

In general, it may be said, *Dozakh* is a place where sinners will be made to burn in a massive fire. In the history of Muslim thought there has been a controversy whether this burning phenomenon will be physical or, symbolically understood,

spiritual only. We shall dilate on this problem in the next chapter. Maulana Hanif Nadvi, a modern Muslim religious scholar, is, however, of the opinion that “This is just a verbal quibble. It is settled and confirmed”, he says, “that after death all human beings will present themselves before God and every action of theirs, whether big or small, will be weighed with justice and that requisite recompense will be meted out to them. Further, it is also settled that this recompense can take place in either of the forms in regard to the moral nature of actions performed. Either God will be happy with the doers of these actions and grant them immense bounties and favours—this is *Jannat*, or he will be unhappy with them and persecute them with dire punishment—this is *Doḡakb*. Granting all this, the question as to what will be the nature of *Jannat* and *Doḡakb* and of men’s placement in them is not very important. A reward, after all, is a reward and a punishment is after all a punishment!”<sup>7</sup>

According to *āyāt* 78:21–23 revealed during the early period of prophethood, punishment will be awarded to the people of hell for *abqāb* and an *haqāb* (pl. *abqāb*) means a ‘span of eighty years and, alternatively, also a ‘span of many years’ –a ‘span of time’, anyway. In his *Lughāt al-Qur’an* ‘Abdur Rashid Na‘māni says:<sup>8</sup>

*Abqāb* means innumerable epochs or ages. *Haqūb* means an epoch whereas *haqb*, a prescribed time-period of the epochs; but as to how long this period will be the language experts differ: some say it is eighty years, for others, seventy or three hundred years or forty years and still for some others, thirty thousand years. From among the earliest Qur’an commentators Imām Qatādah has clearly submitted that *abqāb* just means a continuous period of time’.

*Mu‘taḡzilites* as well as the *Khamārij* are of the opinion that those who enter hell will never come out of it. Ibn ‘Arabi is also of this opinion. On the other hand, the *Ashā‘ira*, a number of other theological schools and many renowned religious scholars of olden times mutually agree that those sinners who have had faith in their hearts will not continue to live in the hell forever—in fact those of them in whose case God wills otherwise, will be exempted from even entering into it. The Qur’an says:

Allah forgiveth not (the sin of) joining other gods with Him; but He forgiveth whom He pleaseth other sins than this... (4:116)

Here it is clearly mentioned that, excepting polytheism, all sins (according to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad—even those over which the sinner has not even expressed his repentance to God) are forgivable. On the authority of this verse, some 'ulemā' have given the verdict that the punishment of hell will be raised sooner or later for every individual placed in it. Such dignified companions of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) as 'Umar Khattāb, 'Abdullah b. 'Umar b. al-'Ās and Ibn Mas'ood were the upholders of this point of view. Some ahādith are also quoted in support of this view. It has been reported from the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) that a time will come when *Jahannam* will be without any habitation and there will be a rattling noise of its doors. According to one point of view, *Jahannam* is not a prison-house but a curative place, a sort of hospital. Syed Sulaimān Nadvi says that its objective is that a person who has lead an undesirable life should get busy here effacing the consequential stigmas registered on his personality; and, as soon as he is able to do that, he, with the grace of God, will be allowed to get out from there and enter paradise. According to an *hadith* in *Sahih Bukhāri* when the inmates of hell are purified of the effects of sinfulness they will be duly permitted to enter paradise.<sup>9</sup> Iqbal too holds this view and regards hell as not 'a pit of everlasting torture' but rather 'a corrective experience'. We shall have an occasion to elaborate Iqbal's point of view in some detail in the next chapter.

Life hereafter, according to the Qur'anic text, does not comprise paradise and hell only: it has a third stage also which it calls *A'rāf*. *Urf* means an elevated place. Forehead of a horse, because of its elevated character, is known as '*urf al-fars*' and the crest of a cock is likewise known as, '*urf al-dik*'. In *sūrah A'rāf*, during a recorded conversation between the people of hell and the people of paradise there is a reference to a third class of people, *i.e.* the people of A'rāf:

Between them shall be a veil and on the heights (*a'rāf*) will be men who would know everyone by his marks: they will call out to the Companions of the Garden, "Peace be on you": they will not have

entered heaven but they will have an assurance (thereof) (7:46)

The above verse has been interpreted in various ways. According to T. Andre, the people of *A'raf* will in fact be the people of heaven itself: only they will be at the highest stage of it.<sup>19</sup> The author of *Lisān al-'Arab* has quoted an opinion, according to which the people of *A'raf* are in fact the prophets of God.<sup>11</sup> Ibn Hareer has recorded<sup>12</sup> four interpretations of the 'people of *A'raf*' which are mutually diverse in their connotations: Firstly, they are the people whose virtues and vices will be equal in measure. Secondly, they are group of theologians and religio-legal experts who will have the occasion to observe both heaven and hell from the heights of *A'raf* so that they have a direct, first-hand information about the consequences of both good and bad deeds. Thirdly, they are the people who will have had participated in a *jihād* (religious war) without the permission of their parents. Fourthly, they are the class of angels.

The last two of the above views appear to be irrational at the very face of them. The first two are, however, worthy of consideration. According to Amin Ahsan Islāhi,<sup>13</sup> the second of these is correct whereas, according to Maulana Maudoodi, people of *A'raf* are those the virtuous aspect of whose life will not be strong enough to earn for them entry into heaven, nor will its vicious aspect be strong enough to justifiably make them enter hell. Consequently, they will be at a place intermediate between heaven and hell.<sup>14</sup>

If the general tenor of the Qu'anic teachings is held in view, this last interpretation appears to be reasonable. If either side of the balance outweighs, the person concerned will go either to the heaven or to the hell; so it is logical that, if both are even, a place between them should be his fate. Besides, if we regard hell as a reform house—as Iqbal thinks—in that case too it is appropriate that those, who have completed the tenure of their punishment in the hell, must be kept for some time in a mid-way house before they go to the heaven. The last words in the verse quoted above 'they will not have entered (heaven) *but they will have an assurance (thereof)*' indicates that they will be placed here only for the transitional period. The verse also indicates that they cannot be



considered as the class of religious scholars and prophets as it is said that they will be here not as deserving of, but only as candidates for, placement in the heaven. It is also possible that the sinners, other than the polytheists, may be placed here for some time after they have been forgiven by God.

As a complement to the above account it may cursorily be pointed out that, although the Qur'an has laid very great emphasis on the life hereafter as one of the basic articles of faith, it talks of man's life herebefore also: The Qur'an says:

When thy Lord drew forth from the children of Adam from their loins—their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): “Am I not your Lord?” they said: “yea! We do testify!” (this), lest ye should say on the Day of Judgement:” Of this we were never mindful.” (7:172)

This verse shows that before the human beings began to emerge in this world, the entire human race, endowed with intellect and consciousness was created by God and made to present themselves to Him, Who took a confirmation from them of His Lordship. This was the first creation of human beings who, after taking the pledge of His Lordship, entered into nothingness, later on to appear gradually on this spatio-temporal stage to play their respective roles.<sup>15</sup>

## II

Iqbal has discussed the problem of the life hereafter or of the immortality of the human ego in the fourth chapter of his *Reconstruction*. Before he elaborates his own point of view in this regard, he briefly explains and rejects, from among the Muslim thinkers, Ibn Rushd's concept of immortality. Let us describe below what this concept is.

Ibn Rushd, Latin 'Averroes', was born in Cordova. His forefathers were known for their deep knowledge of *fiqh* and his father and grandfather held the office of the chief Justice of Andalus. He himself was a judge in the court at Seville. He got his early education in the Mālikite way. Ibn Tufail, the renowned philosopher, was his elder contemporary and it was through his good offices that Ibn Rushd had an access to the court of Abū

Yūsuf who entrusted him with the task of translating Aristotle's philosophical works. Later, however, he got displeased with him on some matter, and exiled him. Anyway, one year before his death, he was forgiven and once again made his favourite.

Ibn Rushd is recognised by scholars and researchers as a very capable interpreter of Aristotle. The books written by him were included in the courses of studies in the European educational institutions for many hundred years. Before him Ghazali had tried to strike a death blow against Greek philosophy as imitated by Fārābi and Ibn Sina, in his celebrated *Tabāfat al-Falāsifa*. Ibn Rushd made a concerted effort to resuscitate it in *Tabāfat al-Tabāfa* by meeting his adversary on the latter's own ground in regard to all the allegations he had levelled against the Philosophers. Among the thinkers who popularized the views of Ibn Rushd in the West are Roger Bacon of Britain, Michael Scot of Scotland, philosopher-priest St. Thomas Aquinas of Italy and the well-known Jewish philosopher Mūsa bin Maimoon.

In *Tabāfat al-Falāsifa*, out of the twenty problems discussed, Ghazali pinpointed three in regard to which the philosophers' views, according to him, were thoroughly un-Islamic and positively heretical. These views were

- a. The world is eternal
- b. God does not know the particulars as such
- c. There will be no bodily resurrection

The mode of explanation, logical hair-splitting, and philosophical interpretation which the Muslim philosophers adopted to arrive at these doctrines would mean, for one thing, according to Ghazali, that the prophets deliberately concealed the basic truths of religion from the common people and this would be a serious allegation against them.

On the contrary, Ibn Rushd is of the opinion that the Qur'an upholds the use of philosophical thinking. In support of this he refers to the insistent Qur'anic directive that one must contemplate over the phenomena of nature which are the *āyāt*, literally, the significant pointers to His existence and to His wisdom displayed in the entire scheme of things. This amounts to a recommendation to adopt the philosophical point of view.

Going one step further, he argues, that as the best specimen of philosophical thinking is available in Greek philosophy so the Qur'an in fact, desires that one should philosophise in the ancient Greek tradition. If we find any discrepancy between the Qur'anic descriptions and the philosophical conclusions, we should try to find out the intrinsic, essential meanings of the former: such meanings cannot at all be at variance with what philosophical thinking independently discovers. Search for such hidden meanings is known as *Ta'wil* or allegorical interpretation. Granting to the philosophers the right to exercise *ta'wil* was the basic objective of the religio-philosophical thought of Ibn Rushd for the realization of which he wrote his *Fasl al-Maqal*.<sup>16</sup> *Ta'wil* for him is the essence of religion and with the help of it alone we can harmonize the views of Aristotle with the Qur'anic teachings. In his own words, *Ta'wil* is the "extension of the significance of our expression from the real significance to the metaphorical significance, without thereby going beyond the standard metaphorical practice of the Arabs."<sup>17</sup>

Coming over to the problem of life hereafter, Ibn Rushd is of the view that the relationship of the soul with a body is that of form with matter. Thus he does not subscribe to the existence of souls as separate entities and, consequently, to the immortality of the so-called individual souls. De O'Leary writes:

But Ibn Rushd differs from his predecessors in his treatment of the passive intellect, the *'aql hayyūlani*, which is the seat of latent and potential faculties upon which the Agent operates. In all the earlier systems this passive intellect was regarded as purely individual and as operated on by the emanation of the Universal Agent, but Ibn Rushd regarded the passive intellect also as but a portion of a universal soul and as individual only in so far as temporarily occupying an individual body. Even the passive powers are part of a universal force animating the whole of nature. This is the doctrine of *panpsychism*, which exercised so strong an attraction for many of the mediaeval scholastics, and has its adherents at the present day.

Ibn Rushd does not, in general, hold on to the substantiality of the human soul which retains its individuality and identity even after death:

Ibn Rushd regards Alexander of Aphrodisias as mistaken in supposing that the passive intellect is a mere disposition; it is in us, but belongs to something outside; it is not engendered, it is incorruptible, and so in a sense resembles the Agent Intellect. This doctrine is the very opposite to what is commonly described as materialism, which represents the mind as merely a form of energy produced by the activity of the neural functions. The activity of brain and nerves, according to Ibn Rushd, is due to the presence of an external force; not only, as Aristotle teaches, at least according to Alexander of Aphrodisias' interpretation, is the highest faculty of the reason due to the operation of the external one Agent Intellect, but the passive intellect on which this agent acts is itself part of a great universal soul, which is the one source of all life and the reservoir to which the soul returns when the transitory experience of what we call life is finished.<sup>18</sup>

In his *Tabaḥḥat* Ibn Rushd, on some occasions, does speak of the immortality of individual souls when they depart from those who are dead and assume the status of pneumatic bodies and begin to reside somewhere in the sphere of the moon.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, he also upholds the existence of jinns in some form. Anyway, what he expressly denies is the resurrection of physical bodies.

It must be noted here that, though Ibn Rushd talks of the immortality of souls or of the assumption of pneumatic bodies by these souls, yet most of the commentators of medieval times think that, as regards his philosophical standpoint as a whole, he subscribes to the immortality not of the individual souls but of the collectivity of all human beings or of the World-Soul or of the Active Intellect. This meant at the most perpetual continuance of the human race. Muhammad Lutfi Jumma, explaining the views of Ibn Rushd, writes:

...immortality of the Active Intellect is the perpetuation of humanity and of human civilization. ...Ibn Rushd invariably emphasized upon the unity of souls. According to him Intellect has a substantial existence of its own which is independent of human individuals.<sup>20</sup>

Ibn Rushd was very much impressed by Aristotle and it is under his influence that he considers man as comprising both *nafs* and *rūb*. *Nafs* he regards as his sensory and appetitive aspect, his individual intellect, whereas *rūb* is his universal intellect.

Sensations imply individualization, so the individual intellect, conditioned by sensation as it is, is likely to be annihilated because sensations stop being operative with the death of the body. However, the universal intellect survives the physical death of man and, having an independent and substantial status of its own, is capable of immortality. It belongs to a level of being which, besides being eternal, is uncompounded and universal. Thus the universal intellect remains unaffected by the decay of the body to which it temporarily belonged. Thus God has endowed the perishable human individual with the capability to propagate its species so that he may be satisfied that his class or kind will live for ever.<sup>21</sup>

We have already undertaken a detailed survey of the terms *nafs* and *ruh*. In varying contexts, the Qur'an has used both these terms a number of times but nowhere does it appear to establish a duality between them. However, many Muslim thinkers did commit the error of interpretation in this regard. Says Iqbal:

(Ibn Rushd) drew a distinction between sense and intelligence probably because of the expressions *nafs* and *ruh* in the Qur'an. These expressions, apparently suggesting a conflict between two opposing principles in man, have misled many a thinker in Islam. However, if Ibn Rushd's dualism was based on the Qur'an, then I am afraid he was mistaken; for the word *nafs* does not seem to have been used in the Qur'an in any technical sense of the kind imagined by Muslim theologians. Intelligence according to Ibn Rushd, is not a form of the body; it belongs to a different order of being, and transcends individuality. It is, therefore, one, universal and eternal.<sup>22</sup>

According to Iqbal, Ibn Rushd was not justified in making a substantial distinction between *nafs* and *ruh* as the Qur'an views man as an indivisible organic whole. This singular whole may have of course different aspects of it like the ones which the Qur'an terms as *nafs e ammarah*, *nafs e lanwāmah* and *nafs e mutma'innah*.

Iqbal's second objection is that Ibn Rushd has been able to prove not individual immortality but rather the continuation of human race. This so evidently means that,

Since unitary intellect transcends individuality, its appearance as so

many unities in the multiplicity of human persons is a mere illusion. The eternal unity of intellect may mean, as Renan thinks, the everlastingness of humanity and civilization; it does not surely mean personal immortality.<sup>23</sup>

The third objection of Iqbal against Ibn Rushd is that his “view looks like William James’ suggestion of a transcendental mechanism of consciousness which operates on a physical medium for a while, and then gives it up in pure sport”.<sup>24</sup>

### III

Jalaluddin Rumi (1207–1273), the Maula-e-Rum, is not only the greatest sufi poet of the Muslim world but also, as regards the depth and comprehensiveness of his thought, he is one of the best in the mystic literature of the entire world. He was born in the city of *Balkh*. As this city was in the Persian domain and Rumi wrote in the Persian language the modern Iranian scholars and poets regard him the Iranian national. Later on, his family settled in Anatolia which was a Turkish province—earlier a part of the Roman empire (hence Jalaluddin *Rumi*)—so Turks claimed that he belonged to them. Besides, as his genealogy goes back to Hazrat Abu Bakr, the Arabs do have a justification for calling him an Arab.

Rumi got his early education from his father Sheikh Baha’uddin. Later on, he was put under the supervision of one of his very close disciples, Burhānuddin by name. In those days, though Balkh was known for its excellence in academics and scholarship, yet due to the Tartar invaders the government of khwārizm Shah there was put in danger and people started migrating to safer places. Sheikh Bahā’uddin, after performing Hajj in 1220 A.D., went to Rome and stayed at various places there; and then, on the invitation of the Saljuq governor ‘Ala’uddin Kaiqubad I (1219–1236), he permanently settled in the capital of his kingdom Qūniyah. In 1230, the year of the death of Bahā’uddin, the responsibility to teach and give lessons came upon the shoulders of Rumi. Alongwith teaching, he also used to issue juridical verdicts and he was recognized as a capable jurist.

Buha’uddin gave to Rumi lessons in mystic theory and

practice for nine years but this long period of instruction did not register any recognizable impact on the personality of Rumi. However, in 1245 there occurred an incident which metamorphosed his personality and created a revolution in his life. It is reported that one day, as Rumi was giving a lesson to his students, a stranger with a shabby appearance, dirty clothes and dishevelled hair came and sat in his class. Silently, he listened with rapt attention to the eloquent religious discourse of Rumi. After the discourse was over, he went over to Rumi and, referring to the books placed near him, asked him, "What is this?" "This is what you do not understand" was the ironic reply. The stranger then threw the books into a cistern of water nearby. Rumi was naturally disturbed over this. After some time he brought out the books from water: they were completely dry. Rumi surprisingly asked, "What is this?" He replied, "This is what you do not understand. With devotion and love Rumi embraced him. This person was Shamsuddin Tabrizi. This is one story. According to another version, the meeting between Rumi and Shams Tabrizi had nothing miraculous about it: the extraordinary element was exaggeratively introduced into it, maybe by some devotees of Shams Tabrizi. For example, Shibli records that Sipah Salār who spent forty years in close contact with Rumi relates his meeting with Shams in a simple ordinary account without giving it any legendary touch.<sup>25</sup>

Whatever be the story about the meeting of Rumi with Shams Tabrizi, it remains a patent historical fact that after this meeting Rumi was an entirely changed man. He left teaching, went into seclusion and started practising austerity and mysticism. His love and infatuation for Shams became so intense that the family members of Rumi became jealous of him. Due to this attitude of theirs he got irritated and left the place. However, Rumi and his family were successful in appeasing his anger and in bringing him back and Rumi got him married with one of his slave-girls. However, after some time he was annoyed once again—this time more seriously—and left never to be found again despite all efforts. According to another version, he was murdered by Rumi's son.

Rumi was deeply grieved by the separation of Shams Tabrizi. However, this vacuum in his spiritual life was overcome to some extent by his association with Salahuddin Zarkub and, after his death, with Hisamuddin. It was on the persuasion by Hisamuddin that he started his *Mathnavi* which took him six to seven years to complete. It has been recorded that, when the poetic inspiration occurred to him, he would speak out verses after verses and sometimes this process would continue throughout the night. Afterwards, when these verses were recited to him he made improvements in them here and there. Rumi authored three books: *Mathnavi*, *Divān Shams Tabrizī* (which comprises fifty thousand verses) and *Fih ma Fih*. The last one is in prose: in it Rumi has disclosed secrets of mystic knowledge to his disciple Mu'inuddin Parvana.

Rumi was an erudite scholar and genius of his times. The fact that the man of his calibre was captivated by Shams Tabrizi's personality sufficiently proves that Shams possessed extraordinary psychological and spiritual capabilities. After meeting with him the total mental change that Rumi experienced made him transcend the narrow straits of intellect and enter the boundless, unfathomable realms that mystic experience discovers.

However, Rumi's greatness lies in the fact that, despite his access to, and actually benefiting from, religious experience, he did not reject intellect as a mode of knowledge. On occasions when he uses pure logical reasoning he appears to rival the stature of great thinkers like Socrates and Plato. By and large, we find in him a happy blend of both. In his great poetic work, the *magnum opus Mathnavi*, he has not only struck a compromise between 'aql and 'ishq but has also welded various contradictions of individual and social life into a creative synthesis. No facts of experience, whether they are within man or without him, are alien to him. He was not a religious bigot: he recognized in fact the basic truths of all religions and to that extent considered all religions as one. As to God, the veracity of His existence is not the conclusion of insipid, dry and dreary logical arguments—which are of course useful in a mundane frame of reference; rather He is a living reality to be known through direct personal experience.



Khalifa 'Abdul Hakim says that Rumi "surveyed and imbibed the rationalistic outlook of Hellenism, sifting the grain from the chaff, separating the kernel from the husk. As a Muslim he was an heir to the spiritual wealth bequeathed to humanity by the glorious line of great prophets from Abraham to Muhammad (peace be upon them). We find in him the sturdy ethics of the Israelite prophets, the dynamic view of the life of Islam and the all-pervading love of Jesus."<sup>26</sup>

Jalaluddin Rumi is popularly known as *Maulvi Ma'navi*, meaning to say, Doctor of Meaning. His disciples and followers are known as the *Maulvi'a* or *Jalali'ah* sect. He recommended to his devotees dancing in the state of absorption when sacred music is played to them; however, they are allowed to attend dance and song party only after they have disciplined themselves by a prescribed set of rules and regulations. Dancing is performed at the beat of drum and the play of a flute. It has a specific form. The disciples place their hands on their chests and go round in a circle. A characteristic cloak and a turban are a mark of their identity. However, close-mindedness, blind conformation and prejudice, which were opposed by Rumi, have, with the passage of time, unfortunately infected the so-called *Maulvi'a* sect founded by him.

Maulana Rumi can safely be called a religious philosopher and among the Muslim thinkers he occupies a respectable place with a standpoint specifically his own. He did not write any independent book on ethics, philosophy or theology; nor did he attempt to construct a theoretical or even a mystical system of metaphysics. So if a person tries to discover in his poetical and prose works the kind of philosophy that, for example, we find in Farabi or Ibn Sina, he will surely be disappointed. Alongwith the Qur'anic teachings which constitute the subjacent current of his thought, he accepts the influence from Hellenism and other thought traditions that formed the climate of opinion which he inhaled. Despite all this, his thought is not eclectic in nature. The 'climate of opinion' is so much absorbed and synthesized in his 'local weather' that, in the last analysis, we can call his thought recognizably his own.

In Rumi the essential nature of the universe is spiritual. From the Ultimate Ego, the Supreme Soul or Spirit, that God is, multiplicity of egos proceeds. God is one. The manifoldness of individual souls does not affect His unity. Leibniz, many centuries ago, had propounded a similar doctrine of Panpsychism. Rumi has explained the Qur'anic distinction between *'alam e amr* and *'alam e khalq* thus: individual souls are originally related to the former; it is when they appear in the phenomenal world that they assume the determination and individuation characteristic of the latter. If the phenomenal aspect of the human soul is thought away for a moment, it is as eternal and uncreated as God is. The relationship between God and man, between the Ultimate Spirit and the human soul is not of chronological sequence but of logical sequence. God is before man and the universe just as premises in an argument are before the conclusion or just as the definition of a concept is prior to the corollaries that necessarily follow from that concept.<sup>27</sup> In the *'alam e amr* the individual souls of human beings subsist in the Divine unity as the lights of so many lamps subsist in one another. Every lamp is distinct from every other lamp but the lights emanating from them are fused undifferentiatedly together into one light. Rumi compares human soul with a flute whose pierced body emits laments of separation. *Mathnawi* in fact begins with a description of the pangs of separation.

کز نیستان تا مرا بیریده اند

از نفیرم مرد و زن نالیده اند

(Saying, ever since I was parted from the reed-bed, my  
lament hath caused man and woman to moan)

After separation from the Unbounded, the eternal human souls roam about crying and lamenting. Memory of their eternal abode keeps them perpetually restless. This intense desire of return to the original and the attraction being exercised by the eternal abode is *'ishq*.<sup>28</sup>

Now the question arises: what will be the fate of the human

soul after death. Will it be obliterated in the unity of God after its 'return to the Original or will it retain its identity in some form. Problem of immortality has always been of basic importance in both philosophy and religion, as we have already seen, and the solution of this problem is hampered by great many difficulties.

In mysticism this problem becomes still more complicated. In mysticism, the real and the apparent are considered to be the two aspects of the same Being. The Being as such is one and indivisible but in the world of appearance it is exhibited in multiplicity and manifoldness of objects and individuals. The individuality of an individual is due to those determinations and characterizations which occur as a consequence of the amalgamation of truth with non-truth and of reality with its appearances. Whatever is there in the world of appearances, the world of space and time, is—in the capacity of its independent existence—subject to extinction, according to the Qur'an. If it is held that after the physical death of man his soul will become a part and parcel of the oneness of God, as a drop of water entering into the ocean becomes one with it, no difficulty arises. Serious difficulty arises when the question of 'personal identity' is posed which, undoubtedly is the basic thesis of the Qur'anic teachings. The real problem is: How to reconcile personal immortality with the unitarian concept of Reality. Rumi exposes the problem thus:

کل شئی هالک جز وجه او  
چوں نه دروجه او هستی مجو  
پر که اندر وجه ما باشد فنا  
کل شئی هالک نبود جزا  
زانکه در الالاست وازلا گذشت  
پر که درالاست از فانی نه گشت

[Everything is perishing except His face: unless thou art in

His face (essence), do not seek to exist.

When anyone has passed away (from himself) in My face (essence), (the words) 'everything is perishing' are not applicable (to Him), Because He is in 'except', He has transcended 'not' (nonentity): whosoever is in 'except' has not passed away (perished)].

Difficulty attendant upon man's destiny consists in regarding individuality as a defect and at the same time holding on to personal immortality. Rumi's point of view, as delineated here, is that the finite, limited self of man can, without compromising its individuality, develop, evolve and progress in the being of God. When the finite self meets the Divine Self, the former is coloured, as it were, by the colour of the latter. '*Ālam e amr* is different from '*ālam e khalq*. Objects and beings in the '*ālam e khalq* are necessarily limited and finite. This limitation and finitude is a kind of obstacle: only by breaking through it an approach to the '*ālam e amr* is possible. Eradication of the determinations of the phenomenal world (*fanā*') is necessarily required for the achievement of participation in the life of God (*baqā*'). Says Rumi:

قرب نے بالا نہ پستی رفتن است  
 قرب حق از جس ہستی رستن است  
 نیست را چہ جائے بالا است و زیر  
 نیست را نے زودونے دوراست و دیر

[To be nigh (unto God) is not to go up and down: to be nigh unto God is to escape from the prison of existence. What room hath non-existence for 'up' and 'down'. Non-existence hath no 'soon' or 'far' or 'late'].

Elsewhere he says:

چوں بدو زندہ شدی آن خود وے است  
 وحدت محض است آن شرکت کرے است  
 شرح ایں در آئینہ اعمال جو  
 کہ نیابی فہم آن از گفت و گو

[When thou hast become living through Him, that (which thou has become) is in sooth He: it is absolute unity: how is it co-partnership?

Seek the explanation of this in the mirror of (devotional) works, for thou wilt not gain the understanding of it from speech and discourse].

If the journey from *'ālam e amr* to *'ālam e khalq* is interpreted as the human soul getting eternalized by becoming one with the Supreme, Eternal being no logical difficulty arises. Most of the Sufis would agree to this interpretation and it would be easily comprehensible even by the laymen. The real problem arises as and when it is held that the souls become one with the Supreme Being and at the same time retain their individuality. This is what Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi holds. For him souls retain their individuality even while they subsist in the Divine Being. This is the view which marks him out from most of the mystics and philosophers of religion. Iqbal, in regard to his stand-point regarding the destiny of man was deeply influenced by this view.

In the writings of Muslim mysticism there is a mention of two kinds of states *sukr* and *sahw*. When a mystic, after going through various stages of the sacred path, meets God, he is either in the one or in the other of these states. *Sukr* means intoxication, suspension of senses, due to the intensity of longing for God, the Beloved. *Sahw* is the retention of sensory awareness even at the height of God-consciousness. Some mystics like Bayazid Bistami regard *sukr* and some like Junaid Baghdadi regard *sahw* as the prized position and there are still some others like Mansur Hallaj who are of the opinion that both of these being equally states of man's consciousness are factors detracting him from the acquisition of the Divine: man cannot realize this ideal unless he totally gets lost in the divine Being; *i.e.*, annihilates himself in Him. This is the doctrine of *fanā'* which, it is sometimes said, came into vogue among the Muslims under the influence of Budha's view of *nirvāna*.<sup>29</sup> 'Ali Hijveri opposed this doctrine in very strong words.

It is this doctrine of *fanā'* that we find in Rumi also. However, he has presented it with such an intelligent skill and gnostic prudence that it cannot be easily subjected to criticism. He in fact does not equate *fanā'* with total annihilation of the self of man but rather simply with its moral and spiritual transformation. He says that when the fire of love flares up it makes one set of the qualities of the lover disappear and causes another set of them to take place. For an elaborate comprehension of this point it is necessary to acquire an understanding of his views about evolution.

According to Rumi, the fact is that the emergence of the universe as well as its destined end—both are the Divine secrets: we can have no exact knowledge of them. However, in general, we can say that prior to their appearance in this spatio-temporal world, in the *'ālam e amr* all the souls—in their undifferentiated capacity—were present in the unity of the Divine Being:

منبسط بودیم ویک جوہر ہمہ  
 بے سرو بے پا بدیم آن سر ہمہ  
 یک گہر بودیم ہمچوں آفتاب  
 بے گرہ بودیم وصافی ہمچو  
 آب  
 چوں بصورت آمد آن نور سرہ  
 شد عدد چوں سائہ ہائے کنگرہ  
 کنگرہ ویراں کنید از منجیق  
 تار دو فرق از میان این فریق

[Simple were we and all one substance; we were all without head and without foot yonder. We were one substance, like the sun; we were knotless and pure, like water. When the goodly light took form, it became (many in) number like the shadows of a battlement. Raise ye the battlement with the *manjaniq* (mangonel), that

difference may vanish from amidst this company (of shadows)]

At that primordial stage the souls had no mould or frame, no limbs and no distinctions of male and female, very much analogous to the light of the sun which is one and singular besides the extensiveness of the sun and the multiplicity of its rays or to the oneness of the ocean in which unlimited number of water drops are united without there being any visible links that unite them. As the Divine lustre of the souls emerged into the *'alam e khalq* or the world of forms then due to the veil of forms an impression of multiplicity was created. One, journeying on the spiritual path towards the Real, must try to remove the veil of forms so as to realize the primordial truth that there are no individual souls distinct from one another.

Having separated from their Divine source the individual souls remain all the time restless and impatient and harbour a perpetual desire to get rid of the pangs of separation. This restlessness alongwith the strong attitude to once again meet God is called by Rumi *'ishq*. This natural attitude is found in the entire universe; even in the so-called material objects which are generally considered to be lifeless but they are not so.

According to Rumi, when the Qur'an says that whatever is there in the heavens and the earth is singing the praise of God, it means that *'ishq* is not simply the defining characteristic of human souls but in fact of the entire furniture of the universe: *'ishq* is the grand law of nature:

ہست ہر جزوے زعالم جفت خواہ  
 راست ہمچون کہربا و برگ کاه  
 آسمان گوید زمیں را مرحبا  
 باتوم چوں آہن و آہن ربا

[Every particle of the universe is desiring its mate just like amber and the blade of straw.

Heaven says to the earth, 'welcome! To thee I am (in the same relation) as the iron and the magnet]

Further,

گفت سائل چوں بماند این  
 خاکدان  
 درمیاں این محیط آسمان  
 ہمچو قندیلے معلق در ہوا  
 نے بر اسفل می رود نے برعلا  
 آن حکیمش گفت کز جذب سما  
 از جہات شش بماند اندر ہوا  
 چوں ز مقناطیس قبہ ریختہ  
 درمیاں ماند آہنے آویختہ

[Some one asked him how this earth remains, in the midst of this surrounding expanse of sky, Suspended in the air like a lamp, moving neither to the bottom nor to the top.

The philosopher said to him, "It remains in the air because of the attraction exerted by the sky from (all) six directions.

(The sky is) like a vault moulded (made) of lodestone: (the earth like) a suspended piece of iron remains in the middle."].

According to Rumi, *'ishq* is a cosmic force, a dynamic principle which is operative from the lowest levels of the evolutionary process to its most advanced stages. When a seed is sown in the ground all the mineral matters around are attracted towards it—like the anxious lovers seeking closest affinities with their beloveds—and are duly absorbed and assimilated in it. If there had been no such mutual allurements, the seed would remain as it is. The minerals, that thus annihilate themselves in pursuance of their desire to grow and evolve, are in fact not annihilated but rather they move to the next stage of evolution.



Similarly, plants getting absorbed into an animal organism do nothing but acquire a superior status. It is due to this ever-active dynamic force of *'ishq* that the universe is evolving towards higher and high levels of existence and onwards to God, the Ultimate Being, Himself. "Towards thy Lord is the final limit", says the Qur'an. As no being can actually become God, this evolutionary process will go on endlessly. For a being, to get annihilated due to the *'ishq* of the higher amounts to assimilating the qualities of the higher and thus 'becoming' the higher itself.

According to Rumi the whole universe is a kind of organism, whose entire paraphernalia comprises the multiplicity of various limbs, organs and muscles—all welded together into a living unity. In this organism every lower class of existents passionately desires to get absorbed into the higher.

نان مرده چوں حریف جان شود  
 زنده گردد نان و عین آن شود  
 هیزم تیره حریف نار شد  
 تیرگی رفت و همه انوار شد

[When lifeless bread is companioned with life, the bread becomes living and is turned into the substance of that (life).  
 Dark faggots become the companions of fire: the darkness departed, and all was turned into light]

But the higher existent, in turn, does not at all obliterate the identity of the lower one. The flame of a candle appears to lose its meaning and significance in the scorching heat and light of the sun, but really this is not so. If a piece of cloth or paper comes into contact with it, it will still be burnt. Iqbal, using this analogy of Rumi, while enumerating the characteristics of mystic experience, says:

The third point to note is that to the mystic, the mystic state is a moment of intimate association with a Unique Other Self, transcending, encompassing...the private personality of the subject of experience.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, having become one with God, man sheds off his phenomenal existence but lives in Him as an individual and lives anew.

ہستی ات درہست آن ہستی  
نواز  
ہم چومس در کیمیا اندر گداز

[Melt away your existence, as (copper melts away) in the elixir, in the being of Him Who fosters (and sustains) existence.]

Elsewhere, Rumi says:

رنگ آہن محو رنگ آتش است  
ز آتشی می لافد وخامش وش است  
چون بسرخی گشت ہمچو زرکاں  
پس انا النارست لافش بے زباں  
شد ز رنگ و طبع آتش محتشم  
گوید او من آتشم من آتشم  
آتشم من گر تراشک است وطن  
آزمو کن دست را بر من بزن  
آتشم من گرتراشد مشتبه  
روئے خود برروئے من یکدم بنہ  
آدمی چون نورگیرد از خدا  
ہست مسجود ملائک ز اجتبا  
آتشی چه آہنی چه لب بہ بند  
ریش تشبیہ و مشبہ را مخند

[The colour of the iron is naughted in colour of the fire: it (the iron) boasts of (its) fieriness, though (actually) it is like one who keeps silence.

When it has become like gold of the mine in redness, then it has become glorified by the colour and nature of the fire: it says, "I am the fire, I am the fire.

I am the fire; if thou have doubt and suspicion, make trial, put thy hand upon me. I am the fire; if it seem dubious to thee, lay thy face upon my face for one moment."

When man receives light from God, he is worshipped by the angels because of his being chosen (by God).

Also, (he is) worshipped by that one whose spirit, like the angel, has been freed from contumacy and doubt.

What fire? What iron? Close your lips: do not laugh at the beard of the assimilator's simile.]

Talking of the various stages of evolution, Rumi says:

آمده اول به اقلیم جماد  
وزجمادی در نباتی اوفتاد  
سالها اندر نباتی عمر کرد  
وزجمادی یاد ناورد از نبرد  
وزنباتی چون به حیوانی او فتاد  
نامدش حال نباتی پیچ یاد  
جز هما میلے کہ دارد سوئے آن  
خاصه در وقت بهار ضمیران  
ہمچو میل کو دکان با مادران  
سر میل خود نداند درلبان  
ہمچنین اقلیم تا اقلیم رفت  
تاشد اکنون عاقل و دانا و رقت

[First he came into the clime (world) of inorganic things, and

from the state of inorganic things he passed into the vegetable state.

(Many) years he lived in the vegetable state and did not remember the inorganic state because of the opposition (between them);

And when he passed from the vegetable into the animal state, the vegetable state was not remembered by him at all,

Save only for the inclination which he has towards that (state), especially in the season of spring and sweet herbs—

Like the inclination of babes towards their mothers: it (the babe) does not know the secret of its desire for being suckled;

Thus did he advance from clime to clime (from one world of being to another), till he has now become intelligent and wise and mighty.]

In order to appreciate Rumi's metaphysics it is necessary to understand the concepts of *fanā'* and *baqā'* which, according to him, work as cosmic principles throughout the process of evolution: that which is stationed at one level of existence is invariably pushed to the next level by the motive force of '*ishq*'. Departing from the absolute state of primordially, soul, the bearer of the title of 'best of creation' was relegated down to the state of the 'lowliest of the low'. It is this 'lowliest of the low' which is the realm of matter. It took the soul millions of years to come out of this material state. In the form of matter, the soul was like particles of dust moving here and there involuntarily. The next stage is that of plants where these particles get organized with regard to a purpose which is growth and development. Next is the stage of animals where, besides growth, there also emerges the capacity for voluntary activity and movement in space. Next is the stage of human beings. In this process of evolution the higher emerges as a result of the extinction of the lower. This is the law of *baqā'* through *fanā'*. As I have known this law, says Rumi, why should I have any fear of my own *fanā'* or death. The deaths that have occurred earlier than me did not end up in any loss but rather in positive gain. So will be the result of my death. After having been delivered of my gross body I will feel light and subtle. Journeying from grossness

to subtlety will make me like angels, immaculately dignified and pure. But that will not be my final destiny as life is a continuous process onwards. Beyond the angelic state what exactly will be my state of existence I cannot simply imagine, but as to its being a fact I have absolutely no doubt. After that I shall reach a state to which categories of spatial, temporal or even of intellectual existence will not at all apply. The term opposed to existence is non-existence; so let us call it the state of non-existence. Rumi calls Ultimate Reality as non-existent because human thought and his categories of logic can possibly have no access to it. This is the '*ālam e amr*' where all souls subsist in the form of an undifferentiated unity. Giving an analogy, he says:

دہ چراغ ار حاضر آید در مکان  
 ہر یکے باشد بصورت غیرآں  
 فرق نتوان کرد نور ہر یکے  
 چوں بنورش روئے آوے بے شکے

[if ten lamps are present in (one) place, each differs in form from another:

To distinguish without any doubt the light of each, when you turn your face towards their lights, is impossible.]

However, it is only as a consequence of descent from '*ālam e amr*' to '*ālam e khalq*' that the unity disintegrates and its dispersion into individuals and objects takes place. Here they go through intense pangs of separation and, guided by the dynamic force of '*ishq*', as shown above, continue their journey upwards to '*fana*' in the being of God and the consequent '*baqā*' with Him. Rumi prays:

اے خدا جان را تو بنما آن مقام  
 کہ درو بے حرف سے روید کلام  
 تاکہ سازد جان پاک از سر قدم  
 سوئے عرصہ دور پہنائے عدم

[O God, do thus reveal to the soul that place where speech is  
growing without letters,  
That the pure soul may make of its head a foot (fly headlong)  
towards the far-stretching expanse of non-existence]

Rumi is a voluntarist. For him the Ultimate Reality is will  
(*'ālam e amr*—literally, 'the world of command') and the existent  
world of ours is its incarnation or embodiment:

باده در جوشش گدائے جوش ماست  
چرخ در گردش گدائے پوش ماست  
باده از ما مست شد نے ما ازو  
قالب از ما هست شد نے ما ازو

[Wine in ferment is a beggar suing for our ferment; Heaven  
in revolution is a beggar suing for our consciousness.  
Wine became intoxicated with us, not we with it; the body  
came into being from us, not we from it.]

We have seen in the above account that Rumi looks at the  
problem of death and life-after-death in the light of his concept  
of evolution and his characteristic doctrine of '*ishq: fanā*' is the  
harbinger of *baqā*'; death is the herald of resurrection. As  
opposed to the common view of the sufis that the height of  
man's perfection is to obliterate his identity in the being of God,  
Rumi has stood for continued maintenance of personal identity.  
This stance of Rumi deeply impressed Iqbal. Whatever Iqbal has  
written on the nature of human ego and his future state of affairs  
is an echo of Rumi's concept of *fanā*' and *baqā*'. A reader of Iqbal  
feels that, insofar as his positive attitude towards voluntarism is  
concerned, he was in good company of Nietzsche, Schopenhauer,  
Bergson, William James and others among Western thinkers  
while on his way to the unfathomable depths of the thought-  
structure of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi. However, it was none else  
than Rumi whom he was proud to follow and with whom he was  
in the closest possible affinity insofar as the points of view of

both these thinkers regarding the nature of man and his destiny are concerned.

## Chapter VI

# Iqbal's Concept of Immortality

Problem of 'life after death' or of 'immortality of the human soul' is one which, even such a great Western thinker as David Hume had to admit, can be solved not on the basis of reason and argument but only on the basis of faith.<sup>1</sup> Iqbal too says that personally his own conviction regarding life in the 'hereafter' did not grow out of philosophical speculation; rather, it was occasioned by a state of living faith untouched by analysis. He writes:

The cast of my emotional life is such that I could not have lived a single moment without a strong faith in the immortality of human consciousness. This faith has come to me from the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him). Every atom of me is brimming with gratitude to him.<sup>2</sup>

At another place, talking on the same subject, he says:

...In this connection a number of matters are outside the purview of human reason. Certitude with regard to these matters is not the product of philosophisation: it comes from elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

Basic faithful conviction apart, Iqbal would not, in principle, oppose an academic discussion of this problem at the rational plane, specially insofar as some of its details are concerned.

We have already seen in the third chapter above that Iqbal has his own characteristic point of view about the respective functions of reason and intuition towards the discovery of the real and also about their mutual relationship. Unlike most of the intuitionists, he does not disparage reason but rather considers it useful and even necessary within certain limits. Reason for him has the licence—conditional though— to survey the truths



revealed by intuition and to determine relations between the truth-unities discovered by intuitive experience:

In order to find out the nature of relationship between the unities (of intuition), reason goes from one unity to the next and then to the next and then to the next and so on and it reviews the relations that hold among these unities. The function of reason is simply to provide an invocation for the comprehension of unities. It can simply deliberate over the mutual relations of the parts of the unity—the smaller unities we may call them: It cannot perceive unity as such. To know or to 'have a sense of' unity is not its function. When our intuition grasps a unity, reason must have already left us, although we may not be knowing that this has happened. Reason shows the path that leads towards the destination but does not accompany us all the way to the destination.<sup>4</sup>

From the above it is clear that as an intuitive truth the doctrine of the immortality of the human soul must have been of an organic concern as regards the spiritual and emotional aspect of Iqbal's life. However, despite this, the doctrine and its related issues did occupy his intellect also. He seriously continued to think about them and to evolve logical relations among various intuitive truths relevant to this doctrine.

In Iqbal's *Stray Reflections*, collected and compiled by Dr. Jāved Iqbal, we find a long piece of writing on the subject of personal immortality. This was most probably written very early—when his own philosophy had not matured and taken its final shape. It will not be very improper if we call this statement a road-map or a work-plan of his philosophy by which he is known today. *Secrets of the Self, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* and other writings of the later period of his life are the details of this work-plan. We quote below the relevant part of the statement [It should be noted that Iqbal had not yet devised the term ego (*khudi*) with its characteristic meanings. He used the term personality (*shakhsīyyat*) instead]:

Personality being the dearest possession of man must be looked upon as the ultimate good. It must work as a standard to test the worth of our actions. That is good which has a tendency to give us the sense of personality; that is bad which has a tendency to

suppress and ultimately dissolve personality. By adopting a mode of life calculated to strengthen personality we are really fighting against death—a shock which may dissolve the arrangement of forces we call personality. Personal immortality then lies in our own hands. It requires an effort to secure the immortality of the person. The idea I have dropped here has far-reaching consequences. I wish I could have time to discuss the comparative values of Islam, Buddhism and Christianity from the standpoint of this idea; but unfortunately I am too busy to work out the details.<sup>5</sup>

Afterwards, when Iqbal got the time and the opportunity and he wrote *Asrar e khudi* and *The Reconstruction*, he dilated on this problem at a more strictly formal and intellectual level.

In the last two chapters above we have tried to identify those thinkers/ movements/ points of view that positively or negatively furnished the philosophical background of Iqbal's doctrine of immortality. Views of some of the thinkers were critically examined and rejected by him, from some thinkers he drew inspiration, and still from some of them he was positively influenced. This entire exercise of 'acceptance-rejection' stood ultimately organically assimilated with the main current of his philosophical thought according to which ultimate reality is a rationally directed creative will and according to which reason is incapable of leading to the goal but it does of course illuminate those avenues that lead to it.

Chapter No. 4 of *The Reconstruction* deals with the nature of the human ego, its freedom and immortality. The last of these concepts is elaborated and discussed against the perspective of the first two. However, before giving characteristically his own view of immortality, Iqbal undertakes a critical evaluation of some of the other views in this regard which are available in the history of religious and philosophic thought. A quick survey of this evaluation we have already undertaken. In the account that follows we shall first of all present an outline of Iqbal's point of view and then give its details, explaining at the same time some of the technical terms as they were used and understood by him.

## I

Iqbal has presented his concept of immortality in the last section of the fourth chapter of his *Reconstruction*. To begin with, he refers to the Qur'anic teachings on the subject. Concept of life after death as enunciated by the Qur'an, he says, is, to some extent, ethical and, to some extent, biological. From the moral point of view the life here and the life hereafter have a continuity of purpose: they have the same objective, *i.e.* welfare, prosperity and salvation of man; but:

...the Qur'an makes in this connection certain statements of a biological nature which we cannot understand without a deeper insight into the nature of life.<sup>6</sup>

In other words, the Qur'an makes certain statements about various stages of man's process of creation and of his state of affairs after death which appear to have a purely biological connotation. "Resurrection", says Iqbal, "...is a universal phenomenon of life; in some sense, true even of birds and animals."<sup>7</sup>

Before proceeding further, Iqbal regards it necessary to categorically state those points which the Qur'an regards as clear and irrefutably established. These points are three and can be laid down as follows:

1. Ego has a beginning in time, and did not pre-exist its emergence in the spatio-temporal order.
2. There is no possibility for man to return to this earth.
3. Man's ego is finite. This finitude is not a misfortune but rather a matter of honour and pride for him because a finite ego, through stabilizing and integrating itself more and more, can reach that level of authenticity where he can have the pleasant vision of the Divine splendour—retaining at the same time his own full self-possession in the capacity of an individual person.

The Qur'an is very clear when it says that on the Day of Judgement everyone will meet God as an individual person. He will not only retain his individuality at this meeting but will also accept the responsibility of good and bad actions earlier performed by him during his earthly life. Catastrophic upheaval of that Day will destroy everything but it will not disturb the

poise and peace of those whose egos stand fully integrated through faith and good actions. The verse 'his eye turned not aside, nor did it wander' (53:17) refers to the fact that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) retained self-composure and was not agitated at all by any restlessness or anxiety when he had a vision of God in His unveiled sublimity. The following couplet addressed to him throws light on this phenomenon

موسیٰ زبوش رفت بیک جلوه

صفات

توعین ذات می نگری در تبسمی

[Moses lost his consciousness at a single manifestation of Divine attributes. You smilingly saw the very essence of God.]

This phenomenon is impossible of realization for pantheistic sufism according to which, when the finite encounters the Infinite, the former cannot retain his individuality. Iqbal thinks:

This difficulty is based on a misunderstanding of the true nature of the Infinite. 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.<sup>8</sup>

For Iqbal, I, as a finite ego, am distinct from the Infinite Ego (God) yet intimately related to Him, the One on Whom I depend for my very life and sustenance.

In order to understand the Qur'anic standpoint regarding the character of man's life-hereafter, the above-mentioned three points need to be sympathetically and closely understood.

It is open to man from the Qur'anic point of view, says Iqbal, to belong to the meaning of the universe and become immortal.<sup>9</sup> It does not appear to be possible, he says, that God Who has elevated man from the state of a petty sperm to the level of the 'best of moulds', will discard him as a useless object and make the event of death reduce him to absolute nothingness:

“It is highly improbable that a thing whose evolution has taken millions of years should be thrown away as a thing of no use.”<sup>10</sup> Just as a man starting his career from an abject sperm becomes a full-grown personality, so it is quite possible that after the so-called ‘death’ this process of growth and evolution will continue. This worldly life is a kind of opportunity for man to integrate his personality and to prepare himself for perpetuating his journey onto the other world. “Truly he succeeds who purifies it (*i.e.* the soul or self) and he fails who corrupts it” (91:9), says the Qur’an. Death is the first test of the integration that a personality has attained. “There are no pleasure-giving and pain-giving acts”, says Iqbal, “there are only ego-sustaining and ego-dissolving acts”. From this point of view, personal immortality is not the right of man; he is only a candidate for it. In other words he can achieve it only by constant effort and hard labour. A well-integrated ego outlives the shock of death. Death, in fact, is for it a gateway to *Barzakh* where it is made to attune itself to the new spatio-temporal order that it is going to encounter. For Iqbal, life of the ego is not conditional upon the material body as we have it now. The material body is just an instrument for it. Helmholtz had proved that nervous excitations take some time to reach consciousness. This shows that consciousness has a status over and above our visible acts and that the view that we have formed of space and time depends on our physiological structure *i.e.* on the material acts that we perform:

(Thus) if the ego survives the dissolution of this structure, a change in our attitude towards time and space seems perfectly natural.<sup>11</sup>

Iqbal is of the view that such changes (*i.e.* changes relevant to the natures of space and time) are not strange and unfamiliar for man. During dreams, for example, our consciousness behaves extraordinarily and the usual measures of space and time are entirely changed. Similarly, when one is about to meet death his memory is immensely sharpened. So, life after death is not an event which is ‘unnaturally’ perpetrated from without; it is rather a stage in the evolution of mind and consciousness itself. In his support Iqbal refers to the general Qu’anic mode of argument

that a God who created man out of nothing will make him travel from stage to stage; He will change his form and will recreate him in the form of which he is not aware.

From the Qur'anic mention of the first emergence of man Iqbal's attention is directed towards the phenomenon of biological evolution and, contrary to the Muslim orthodox belief, he is of the view that man has evolved out of lower animals. He thinks that this is in consonance with the Qur'anic teachings also. It is the pointers in this direction, provided by the Qur'an, that "did in fact open a new vista to Muslim philosophers".<sup>12</sup> Jāhiz was the Muslim philosopher who "hinted at the changes in animal life caused by migrations and environment generally".<sup>13</sup> The views of Jāhiz were elaborated and enlarged by the Brethren of Purity. Later on, "Ibn Maskawaih...was the first Muslim thinker to give a clear and in many respects thoroughly modern theory of the origin of man."<sup>14</sup> "The theory of evolution, however, has," for Iqbal" brought despair and anxiety, instead of hope and enthusiasm for life to the modern world". The reason is that it has been supposed without any supporting reasons that the stage at which man has arrived after millions of years of the evolutionary process is the last stage and "that death, regarded as a biological event, has no constructive meaning".<sup>15</sup>

Iqbal talks of Rumi's concept of evolution. Hundreds of years before Charles Darwin, Rumi, while tracing the genealogy of man, had mentioned various stages of evolution as minerals, plants, animals and men. However, unlike Darwin, he did not regard that the evolutionary process stopped at reaching the stage of manhood. He conceives that the process of development and growth continues and is in fact unending in view of the Qur'anic verse 'And to thy Lord is the final goal.' In order to negate the impact of the pessimism of modern materialism Iqbal thinks that "the world of to-day needs a Rumi to create an attitude of hope and to kindle the fire of enthusiasm for life".<sup>16</sup>

One problem that has agitated the minds of the Muslim scholars, philosophers and even the Qur'an-commentators is as to whether man's resurrection will be bodily or purely spiritual in nature. Shah Waliullah thinks that for the life-hereafter some

form of bodily structure—whether gross or rarefied in any degree—in which soul may inhere, is essential. As to exactly what kind of that body will be is a question which cannot be answered unequivocally. In whatever way we may conceive it now it is quite possible that it will not exactly suit the spatio-temporal environments—about which too of course we know nothing—of the world to come. According to the Qur'anic point of view, we are simply required to have a firm faith that death is the gateway to a new life and that resurrection is an indubitable fact.

Iqbal holds that heaven and hell are states, not localities, as, for instance, the Qur'an says that the fire of hell is not kindled by any external fuel but is rather that "which mounts above the hearts" (104:6). Thus hell is the 'painful realization of one's failure as a man'. And heaven is the 'joy of triumph over the forces of disintegration';<sup>17</sup> however, it will not be a pleasure-house for its residents who will be on a holiday there. It too will rather be a *dār al-'amal*, a place for action wherein the desire to be nearer and nearer God and to receive more and more of his refugence will keep men always up and doing.

This is the summary account of Iqbal's concept of immortality. Let us now detail it out in the section that follows.

## II

Before we go into the details of Iqbal's concept of immortality it is necessary to determine the specific and distinct meanings of the two cognate terms 'eternity' and 'immortality', which are sometimes carelessly used interchangeably.

'Eternity' is derived from the Latin *aeternus*, a contraction of *aeviternus* which, in turn, is derived from *aevum*. *Aevum* has the same root as the words 'ever' and 'aye'. In Greek the corresponding adjectives are obviously connected with the notion of everlasting existence. This is the first ever sense of 'eternal', and to this day it has been used as such. However, in some philosophical discussions a new term 'sempiternal' has been used for the everlasting existent, the term eternity being reserved for timelessness: the eternal is that to which time does not apply *i.e.* for which 'time' in the serial sense is not relevant.<sup>18</sup> Propositions

of mathematics and logic are timeless in this sense; for example, 'two added to two is equal to four' or 'a triangle is a three-sided figure'. We cannot say 'two added to two *were* equal to four' or that 'a triangle *will be* a three-sided figure'. So we have two terms available for what is generally implied by 'everlasting'. One is 'eternal' and the other is 'sempiternal'. 'Eternal' is not measurable by serial time nor can we talk of its beginning or end. We can say that Plato's 'ideas' or Aristotle's 'pure forms' are eternal. We have already seen in the third chapter above that according to Iqbal, the Ultimate Reality is a Rationally Directed Creative Will to Whom the universe does not confront as another: He has no beginning and no end because these are temporal categories and so inapplicable to the Ultimate Reality. Time and space are both relative concepts as they arise from the mutual relations of various events which comprise our material world.<sup>19</sup> So God, the Ultimate Reality is, for Iqbal, eternal, devoid of all seriality and sequence with which we are conversant in our everyday life:

The time of gross bodies which arises from the revolution of the heavens is divisible into past, present and future; and its nature is such that as long as one day does not pass away, the succeeding day does not come. The time of immaterial beings is also serial in character, but its passage is such that a whole year in the time of gross bodies is not more than a day in the time of an immaterial being. Rising higher and higher in the scale of immaterial beings we reach Divine time—time which is absolutely free from the quality of passage, and consequently does not admit of divisibility, sequence and change. It is above eternity; it has neither beginning nor end. The eye of God sees all the visibles and His ear hears all the audibles in one indivisible act of perception. The priority of God is not due to the priority of time; on the other hand, the priority of time is due to God's priority. Thus Divine time is what the Qur'an describes as the 'Mother of Books' in which the whole of history, freed from the net of causal sequence, is gathered up in a single super-eternal now.<sup>20</sup>

According to Iqbal, The epithet 'eternal' can be applied, of all beings, to the Ultimate Reality or the Divine Being alone.

During the scholastic period, the term for 'everlasting' was sempiternal *i.e.* a being which has a beginning but no end. In the



flow of Divine life we as human beings, says Iqbal, have a beginning in time: "Like pearls do we live and move and have our being in the perpetual flow of Divine life".<sup>21</sup> The flow of Divine life is eternal and the human ego which is like a pearl in it—although it is not affected by the shock of death—did have a starting point, to begin with. Externally, it lives in serial time (efficient self); but as to its internal, *i.e.*, real life it participates in eternity (appreciative self):

...the time of the Ultimate Ego is revealed as change without succession, *i.e.* an organic whole which appears atomic because of the creative movement of the ego. This is what Mir Dāmād and Mulla Bāqir mean when they say that time is born with the act of creation by which the ultimate ego realizes and measures, so to speak, the infinite wealth of his own undetermined creative possibilities. On the one hand, therefore, the ego lives in eternity, by which term I mean non-successional change; on the other, it lives in serial time, which I conceive as organically related to eternity in the sense that it is a measure of non-successional change. In this sense alone it is possible to understand the Qur'anic verse: To God belongs the alternation of day and night.<sup>22</sup>

From the above quotation it is very clear that 'eternity' can be attributed to the life of God alone which cannot be distributed into moments and instants and to which the words 'beginning' and 'end' do not apply.<sup>23</sup> The finite ego, although it has an interminable career in the future, cannot be called eternal because it does have a beginning in time. We shall call it sempiternal or, in the words of Iqbal, immortal.

That ego had no existence before its emergence in the present spatio-temporal world is, according to Iqbal, a fact confirmed by the Qur'an. But Iqbal does not seem to be correct here, particularly insofar as the orthodox interpretation of the Qur'an is concerned. The Qur'an refers to the first creation of man, his appearance in the present spatio-temporal world being his second creation. In the last chapter we have already seen that the Qur'an at least does not deny man's life herebefore. It says:

When thy Lord drew forth from the children of Adam, from their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): Am I not your Lord, they said: "Yea! We do testify! (this)

lest you should say on the Day of Judgement: Of this we were never mindful. (7:172)

What is clear from this verse is:

1. All human beings, before coming to this spatio-temporal world, have already had an existence.
2. On the Day of Covenant all human beings had a joint assembly, *i.e.*, human beings that were to be born in this world in various periods of history were *en masse* called upon to promise obedience to one God.
3. After making this promise, they all went into non-existence once again, to reappear later on in the present world of space and time, generation after generation.
4. A reminiscence, howsoever vague, of this grand, primordial Covenant is present in the mind of every individual person. If someone endeavours to scale higher and higher levels of moral and spiritual excellence he can make the traces of this remembrance conspicuous in him. If, on the contrary, he chooses the other path, he will throw this remembrance into the dark recesses of oblivion. So, on the Day of Judgement, the excuse of some persons that they did not remember that Covenant will not be accepted.

The first creation of human beings by God was of course temporary: its only objective was to elicit from them a confirmation and corroboration of His Lordship and His singular right to be worshipped. They were neither granted any opportunity nor a license to perform actions, good or bad. After the realization of this objective, all men went back to the *'alam e amr* or, in the words of Maulana Rumi, to *naistān e azāl* (primordial nothingness). When the soul comes from *'alam e amr* to the *'alam e khalq* it individualizes itself: it becomes an ego. "Every ego (as regards its nature as well as its destiny) is characteristically unique by virtue of its range, balance and effectiveness. Such a concept of ego is obviously opposed to, for example, Ibn Rushd's view of collective immortality and in general to the stance adopted by pantheism".<sup>24</sup>

We cannot say that Iqbal was unaware of this Qur'anic concept of the Primordial Covenant. What in fact, he wants to

emphasize is that the human self, prior to its existence in the present spatio-temporal world did not have any other regular existence as, for instance, is the standpoint of metempsychosists. This is borne out by Iqbal's emphatic rejection of the view of those<sup>25</sup> who once tried to derive the doctrine of transmigration of souls from 'Falsafa e gham', one of the poems of Iqbal in *Bang e Dara*.

Thus interpreted, Iqbal's view can justifiably be regarded as in conformity with the Qur'anic standpoint.

### III

Iqbal's view that man, after he has died, will in no case come back to this earth is thoroughly Qur'anic. The Qur'an says:

...Until, when death comes to one of them, he says: "O my Lord! Send me back (to life) in order that I may work righteousness in the things I neglected"—"By no means! it is but a word he says"—Before them is a partition till the Day they are raised up. (23:99–100)

Various descriptions of the Doomsday given in the Qur'an clearly indicate that on that Day the spatio-temporal arrangement which is operational in this world will be terminated forthwith and people will find themselves in an entirely new space and a new time:

He questions: when is the Day of Resurrection? At length, when the sight is dazed and the moon is buried in darkness and the sun and moon are joined together... (75:6–9)

When the sun is folded up; when the stars fall, losing their lustre; when the mountains vanish...when the oceans boil over with a swell (81:1–3, 6)

When the sky is cleft asunder, when the stars are scattered; when the oceans are suffered to burst forth; and when the graves are turned upside down (82:1–4)

When the earth is shaken to its (utmost) convulsion, and the earth throws up its burden (from within), And man cries (distressed) what the matter with it. On that day will it declare its tidings: for that thy Lord will have given it inspiration (99:1–5)

(It is) a Day whereon men will be like moths scattered about and the mountains will be like carded wool (101:4–5)

The above verses and many others of their category, sufficiently indicate that on the Doomsday there will be a total destruction of the present solar system. Our measures of space and time are conditioned by this system. So when this system is destroyed there will be no room left for the present earthly life of ours and for the spatio-temporal atmosphere to which we are habituated here. On that day the earth will be changed to a different earth, and so will be the heavens. (14:48)

The word that the Qur'an has most often used for life hereafter is *Al-Ākhirah* (The Last). It is opposed to *al-Awwal* (the First). So death is not an absolute end to man's life but rather a passage to the later—the second phase of—life:

Do you then see (the human seed) that you throw out. Is it you who create it or are We the creators. We have decreed death to be your common lot, and we are not to be frustrated from changing your forms and creating you (again) in (forms) that you know not. (56:58–61)

From these verses it transpires that just as from an abject sperm man's entire personality takes its shape and, despite changes, his identity is not disturbed, so after death too he will continue to retain his identity and be able to attain higher and higher levels of moral and spiritual excellence, although we cannot have a clear concept of that life here and now:

See how we have bestowed more on some than on others; but verily the Hereafter is more in rank and gradation and more in excellence. (17:21)

The better and superior life of the next world is, of course, dependent on the good actions that we perform in this world. (this phenomenon shall be elaborated later on). Thus the next world will be a continuity of this world. But there is no reversal, no coming back in life. A person who has attained youth cannot, for example, return to his childhood; nor can an old man return to his youth. The stage of life that is gone is gone for ever. Life ever moves forward and knows of no repetition. Like the

personal life of an individual, the situations, the circumstances too which he has already lived cannot be revived to be lived once again. So no coming back to this world after a person has died and started his life-journey in the world-hereafter.

#### IV

According to Iqbal, ego is finite and its finitude is not a misfortune. The universe too is finite for him despite the fact that it is unbounded. In order to understand the concepts 'finitude' and 'unboundedness' let us take an example. Suppose a bug is confined on a straight line so that it cannot move sideways nor can it move upwards and downwards. It can move only either forward or backward. As the line on which alone the bug can move has definite measurement and as it cannot go beyond the ends of that line, its entire world will be regarded as finite as well as bounded. Now suppose the bug is confined to the perimeter of a circle. In this case also it will be able to move only forward and backward; however, its movement will not be blocked by 'ends'. So it will keep on moving without ever confronting any barrier. The world of the bug will now be unbounded but since the perimeter has a definite measurable length, it will be finite at the same time.

The above examples relate to the concept of a universe which is one-dimensional. If you want to picturise to yourself a two-dimensional universe, you put the bug on the surface of a square. In this case the bug can move forward and backward and sideways but it cannot move off the surface. Now since the area of the surface is measurable, its world would be finite and since it cannot cross the edges of the square, it is bounded also.

In order to conceive a three-dimensional space we may suppose that the bug has been put inside a hollow ball. Here it, in addition to forward and backward and sideways, can go up and down also. Since the inside of the ball is measurable and also limited, so the movement of the bug will once again be finite as well as bounded.

Now, if we want to have the concept of a three-dimensional space which is finite and unbounded, we should picture to our-

self the bug living with a whole family of bugs in a space which does not have any physical boundaries. Suppose that every member of this family is very huge and massive; further, the family cannot disintegrate because of its gravitational attraction as a whole. Consequently, no bugs will be in a position to leave the family. Moreover the gravitational attraction is so strong that light rays will not be able to leave the mass of bugs either. Therefore whenever any bug will try to see in the direction of space beyond the group, its sight will curve back towards the group, always producing 'bugs in his eyes'. The bugs will not be aware of any physical barrier that applies a limit to their family. Thus the universe of the bugs will be finite but unbounded: finite, because the size of the group as a whole is finite; unbounded because outside their family there is no space which would bound them.<sup>26</sup>

Dr. Raziuddin Siddiqi, explaining Einstein's concept of space and time, in one of his articles, writes:

Observation, experience and all sorts of theorization confirm that our spatio-temporal world is not plain as has been hypothesized in Euclidean geometry. Geometry of the physical universe is, in fact, non-Euclidean in nature against whose context the well-known 'Pythagorean problem' loses its significance. As the geometry of Euclidean atmosphere is the geometry of plain surfaces, so the geometry of non-Euclidean space is that of curved surfaces. Bends and curves of space are now a confirmed scientific fact. Iqbal was aware of this truth of science and expressed it in some of his verses. For example:

کارواں تھک کر فضا کے پیچ و خم میں رہ گیا

(The caravan got tired and stuck up in the atmospheric mazes and perplexities)

A little later in this article, he observes:

...But, on the basis of his theory of Relativity, Einstein has not only proved that the universe is finite but has also explained as to how we can form the concept of a finite universe. If it is believed that the universe has a limit, our attention is immediately diverted to some sort of a boundary wall or a brink: This is because we already have in our mind the picture of a Euclidean universe which has a plain surface. On the contrary, take a globe, for example; its surface has no boundary. Any two points on this

surface have a definite distance between them but on it there is no margin or border. If we start journeying on this surface we shall never reach a point beyond which we cannot possibly go. So the surface of a globe is finite but unbounded... In the science of geography, while giving proofs for the globular nature of the earth, it is said that a person who sets off from any point on it and goes absolutely straight he will ultimately reach the point from which he earlier set off. However, he can go and go on indefinitely as long as he desires to do so. This is how we can conceive the finite but unbounded nature of the universe.<sup>27</sup>

Nature of the universe, as it takes its shape on the basis of Einstein's theory of relativity, is known as 'Relativistic Cosmology'. According to this theory, it is an established fact that the rays of light, travelling in a straight line, cannot go beyond the universe: they will be deflected by gravitational masses of various heavenly bodies. Just as a person starting his journey in a straight line from a particular point on the earth will ultimately reach back the same point, so a ray of light bending alongwith the volume of the universe will come back to its starting point. According to Einstein the volume of the universe is measurable. According to his own calculations the radius of the universe is 200,000,000,000,000,000,000 miles.<sup>28</sup>

Iqbal has accepted Einstein's concept of the universe, according to whom, as we have seen, "the universe...is not a kind of island in an infinite space; it is finite but boundless; beyond it there is no empty space."<sup>29</sup> Iqbal further observes that it is organically related to the being of God. It is to the Divine Self, he says, as character is to the human self. It is the *sumnat* (habit) of Allah, in the terminology of the Qur'an. Just as man is not entirely exhausted by his known character, so God transcends nature. Nature is a fleeting moment in the life of God. He being ever creative, nature is liable to growth and development. It is boundless because no limit to its extensiveness can be imposed from without. Its boundlessness is not external but internal *i.e.* due to the Immanent Self which sustains it. How rightly the Qur'an says: 'And verily unto thy Lord is the limit' (53:42). This gives a fresh spiritual meaning to the scientific study of nature. Knowledge of nature amounts to a knowledge of God's

behaviour. The physical scientist, dispassionately involved in his studies is virtually seeking a kind of intimacy with, and closeness to, the Supreme Ego: we can as well say that he is involved in an act of prayer or worship.<sup>30</sup>

Iqbal says that Divine life has no externally imposed limits. Its various phases are wholly determined from within. Its movement is not directed towards any external goals or ideals but rather towards the ones that are inherent in the movement of life itself. So the movement of the absolute Ego is creative rather than mechanical. Insofar as human egos are concerned they live like pearls and move and have their being in the flow of Divine life. They have a beginning in the spatio-temporal world. Thus they are finite and limited. Despite participating in Divine life they have a separate, independent finite existence. Consequently, as to the moral and spiritual ideal of man, Iqbal emphatically deviates from the old mystic tradition according to which man must annihilate his self into the Divine Ego, and holds that, retaining his individuality, he should rather assimilate the attributes of God into his own person. During our discussion of Rumi's thought we have already seen that in this connection he gives an example of fire's contact with iron. When a rusted, ugly iron piece is put in the fire, its rust and ugliness slowly disappear. In the fire, it gets so heated up that, like fire itself, it glows and spreads light. But its ironhood remains intact. Similarly, he gives the example of a candle *vis a vis* the sun. When the sun rises, in the face of its world-illuminating light, the glow of the burning candle gets so dim that one does not perceive it; but the burning candle continues to retain its existence so that when a cloth touches it, it would blaze up. Thus even after a man has assimilated into his person the attributes of God and has assumed His colour, his identity and individuality stands undisturbed.

In his views on *fanā'* (annihilation) and *baqā'* (continuance), Iqbal has followed Rumi. He does not advise the soldier of the moral ideal to get lost into the Supreme Ego just as a drop of water unrecognizably gets lost into the sea but rather to consolidate his ego more and more by imbibing the Divine qualities. On this score finite ego of man is relevant to, as well as



distinct from, the Infinite Ego. Though finite, it has infinite possibilities of growth and development. Iqbal has elaborated this theme in various ways throughout his Urdu and Persian poetical works. For instance:

پنچہ او پنچہ حق می شود  
 ماہ از انگشت او شق می شود  
 در خصومات جہاں گردد حکم  
 تابع فرمان او دارا و جم  
 (اسرار)

(خودی)

(His hand becomes God's hand. The moon is split by his fingers  
 He is the arbitrator in all the quarrels of the world. His command is obeyed by Darius and Jamshid)

کافر ہے تو ہے تابع تقدیر مسلمان  
 مومن ہے تو وہ آپ ہے تقدیر الہی  
 (بال)

(جبریل)

(A Muslim, who is slack in faith  
 Yields to what his fate ordains  
 Whereas a Muslim true and staunch  
 A hold on God's decrees attains)

ہر لحظہ ہے مومن کی نئی آن نئی شان  
 گفتار میں کردار میں اللہ کی برہان  
 قہاری و غفاری و قدوسی و جبروت  
 یہ چار عناصر ہوں تو بنتا ہے مسلمان  
 ہمسائہ جبریل امیں بندہ خاکی  
 ہے اس کا نشیمن نہ بخارا نہ بدخشان

یہ راز کسی کو نہیں معلوم کہ مومن  
قاری نظر آتا ہے حقیقت میں ہے قرآن  
(ضرب کلیم)

(A Muslim true gets grandeur new  
with moment's change and every hour:  
By words and deeds he gives a proof of Mighty God, His  
reach and power,  
To rout the foes, to grant them reprieve,  
Do pious deeds and show great might:  
Are four ingredients that make  
A Muslim Devout who shuns not fight,  
With Gabriel trusted and steadfast  
This Clay-born man has kinship close:  
A dwelling in some land or clime  
For himself Muslim never chose.  
This secret yet none has grasped  
That Muslim Scripture reads so sweet:  
Practicing rules by it prescribed,  
Becomes its pattern quite complete.)

And so on.

Iqbal opposes pantheistic mysticism for the simple reason that it implies the negation of the finiteness of the individual self. Identity and uniqueness of the self of man he would at no cost allow to be compromised. What he, instead, positively desires is its metamorphosis through the acquisition of Divine names. In this journey towards the realization of the Divine a stage of course arrives which, when expressed in words by its incumbent, gives to the novice or the layman an impression that the distinction between man and God has disappeared. 'انا الحق' (I am the Truth) is one of the ejaculations allegedly expressive of this situation. This is a very delicate phenomenon which is sometimes wrongly construed to imply incarnation of God. This is obviously unacceptable to orthodoxy. Such ideas in general undermine for a layman the institution of religion and the importance and

significance of prayer and worship.<sup>31</sup> 'انا الحق', for Iqbal, does not mean 'I am God': it rather means 'to the I-ness in me belongs the veritable truth'. In the first edition of his *Asrar e Khudi* we find a number of verses condemning the views of Hafiz Sheerazi, the well-known upholder of pantheistic mysticism.

The crux, the central thesis, of the entire philosophical thought of Iqbal is that the human ego has an independent, substantial existence of its own and that its finiteness is not a misfortune, because it has infinite possibilities of growth and development by absorbing in his person more and more of the attributes of God.<sup>32</sup> By Nietzsche, 'the modern prophet', he was impressed because he had shown 'immense enthusiasm for the future of man'; and Maulana Rumi he accepted as his preceptor and guide because he firmly stood for man's freedom, dignity and honour, his capability to be immortal and his infinite possibilities of spiritual growth.

## V

In order to fully understand Iqbal's concept of immortality in all its details and depth it is very necessary to keep in mind the three Qur'anic points of emphasis explained above. He is confident that his views on this subject are exactly in conformity with those propounded by the Qur'an. The Qur'an has time and again referred to the fact that man has his origin in a humble drop of sperm and then, going through various stages of development, has the capability to reach immense heights of nobility and excellence. Against the perspective of cosmic evolution, in general, it appears to be impossible that man, whose emergence has taken millions of years, will be thrown away at his death as a thing of no use. So it is likely that the process of evolution will continue although the nature of this continuance of life is relevant to the moral/immoral actions that we perform in this life. This shall be elaborated in the sequel.

Iqbal is basically an idealist but his idealism is not grounded in logical thought or in a system of mental abstractions. For him a philosophy comprising pure ideation and that which does not

take account of stark ground realities is an exercise in futility.

We have seen in the third chapter above entitled 'General Character of Iqbal's Metaphysical Thought' how, on the basis of an analyses of the latest developments in the natural sciences of physics, biology and psychology, Iqbal discovered the nature of the Ultimate Reality as a Rationally Directed Creative Will which he calls the Supreme Ego, the Great I Am. Maulana Rumi too, as we have seen in the last chapter, is of the opinion that God is essentially Will; when this Will translates itself into creation, multiplicity comes into being.

Iqbal is in good company of Rumi as a voluntarist. The self or ego of man, which is a unique individuality, registers different biological changes and goes through various evolutionary stages—all directed towards an approximation to the Real. For the realization of this supreme objective he has developed a particular bodily structure. Intellect too is a useful instrument during the course of this endeavour. It can, however, help us along to some extent only; beyond its prescribed limits, it is *'ishq* (love) which provides the required guidance. Intellect, the body and the entire bodily behaviour, all sub-serve the aims and objectives that the human ego seeks to realize:

پیکر هستی ز آثار خودیست  
 هر چه می بینی ز اسرار خودیست  
 خویشتن را چون خودی بیدار کرد  
 آشکارا عالم پندار کرد  
 (اسرار)

(خودی)

(The form of existence is an effect of the self. Whatever thou seest is a secret of the self. When the self awoke to consciousness it revealed the universe of thought).

That life and consciousness have primacy and precedence over matter is not the point of view of Iqbal alone. In the history of philosophy, both ancient and modern, we find many thinkers who hold this thesis and try to establish it with a variety of

arguments. Besides, there are some scientists too who, on the basis of their researches, have discovered that the essential nature of the universe is spiritual. Says Dr. Muhammad Rafiuddin:

From among the old scientists, Boyle (1627–1691) was the one who said that he was unable to understand how from the movable matter, *left by itself*, complete organic structures of animals and men and even—more originally—those material substances which act as spermatozoa for the living beings automatically come into being. As a solution to this enigmatic state he regarded it as indispensable that there be a mover-soul or a conscious agent. The nineteenth century scientist Lord Kelvin who, on the basis of his own researches, arrived at the positive conclusion that nature does have characteristics of consciousness and that it displays the marks of operation in it of a creative and guiding force. Philosophy, which, unlike the departmental and analytical approach of the sciences, tries to derive full benefit from man's intuitive faculty, also, in its search for truth, has in general emphasized that for the understanding of the behaviour of the universe it is necessary that central place in it be granted to consciousness... This has been the standpoint not only of the medieval philosophers but also of such great modern thinkers as Descartes, Spinoza, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Kant, Hegel, Fichte, Croche and Bergson. They have given different names to this Central agency as God, Soul, Absolute Reality, Absolute Idea, Will, Eternal Consciousness, Self-Consciousness, Vital Force etc.<sup>33</sup>

We have already seen that Iqbal, on the basis of the findings of natural sciences, has discovered that the Ultimate Reality is a Rationally Directed Creative Will. We find this idealism in his discussion of the problem of the immortality of the human ego as well. He refers to the researches of Hermann Helmholtz in order to bring out the substantial character of consciousness. Helmholtz had proved that nervous excitations take some time to reach consciousness. Our nervous system has two kinds of nerves, the sensory nerves and the motor nerves. When we will to do something, the former carry the requisite information to the mind and the latter carry what the mind orders to the relevant organ/organs of the human body. From all this it transpires, that mind or consciousness does not comprise feelings alone; it rather transcends them and has an independent, overlording existence

of its own. We saw in the second chapter that according to Bertrand Russell mind is just another name for various functions of the nervous system; so as the nervous system stops functioning mind too becomes defunct. We had countered this thesis by saying that in some cases, for instance, when a person suffers from a psychical disorder, his physiological and nervous system remains perfectly normal. In other words, there are purely psychical ailments which Russell's point of view would fail to explain. Helmholtz's findings confirm this criticism of Russell's point of view.<sup>34</sup>

However, content-wise our consciousness—particularly our ordinary consciousness of space and time—heavily draws upon the kind of nervous system that we have. So when this system is destroyed at the time of the physical death of man his consciousness will become functional and operative in some other spatio-temporal order. Anyway, it is not necessary according to Iqbal, that after death alone human ego's comprehension of, and attitude towards, space and time undergoes a change: this also happens during mystic experience, for example, when the mystic still retains his organic system. He also regards the Ascension of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) as such a change of character in the state of consciousness:

از شعور است این که گوئی نزد و

دور

چیست معراج انقلاب اندر شعور

(جاوید نامہ)

(The feeling of one thing being far, the other near, is a product only of our consciousness. And what is the *Mi'rāj*? It is a revolution in our consciousness)

An ordinary man is not, of course capable of this mystic or prophetic experience nor can he even have a clear idea of it but almost every one of us experiences an extraordinary level of consciousness during his dreams. During dreams usual spatio-temporal standards are entirely suspended. In the very presence

of the nervous system to which usual space-time concepts appear to belong, he, as it were, lives in quite another world.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, when a person is about to die his memory is immensely enhanced. We have already seen this in the first chapter above in regard to near-death experiences and the experiences of those who had been revived immediately after their death through artificial respiration. All these examples provide sufficient evidence for the point of view that consciousness is not entirely consequent upon the material antecedents, in general, and the functioning of the nervous system, in particular: it has rather an independent, self-subsistent and substantial existence of its own.

As to the phenomenon of resurrection, for Iqbal, it is not an event that befalls out-of-the way, arbitrarily and from without but one which is a stage-like other stages—in the development and growth of man. There are a number of Qur'anic verses which refer to this fact. For instance,

Man says: "What when I am dead, shall I then be raised up alive?"  
But does not man call to mind that We created him before out of nothing. (19:66–67)

It is We who have created you: why will you not witness the truth?  
Do ye then see?— The (human seed) that ye throw out—is it ye who create it or are We the creators? We have decreed death to be your common lot, and We are not to be frustrated from changing your forms and creating you (again) in forms that ye know not. And ye certainly know already the first form of creation: why then do ye not celebrate His praise (50: 57–62)

Alongwith the above there are many other verses too which call to attention the facts about the biological evolution of man. This is the reason that, when Muslims started pursuing various sciences, they did not remain oblivious to the study of natural history. Besides the motivation furnished by the Qur'an, Seyyed Hossein Nasr has referred to another fact about the Muslims' invocation to the carrying out of scientific researches. When they got involved in scientific, specially biological, studies, he says, the objective before them was not an analytical and qualitative study of nature but the discovery of the Ultimate Reality beyond the variety, multiplicity and flux of the universe, which is pregnant

with the marks and signs of that Reality.<sup>36</sup> So Muslims were motivated to study nature not only by a study of the Qur'an but also by their theological moorings.

## VI

Motivations for the study of nature apart, the consequences of the research-oriented intellectual efforts of the Muslims in this field were so important that their impact was felt for centuries. Iqbal in his lectures comprising *The Reconstruction* has made a brief reference to it. If, instead of delivering lectures he had written an independent book on the subject, he would have dilated on it in far greater detail. Stating with approval and appreciation the views of Jāhiz, Akhwān al-Safa, Ibn Maskawaih and Rumi on the subject of evolution, he has established that he himself regards biological researches very essential not simply academically but also from the point of view of theology and spiritualism. What did the Muslim thinkers really discover in this area of their studies and what really was the meaningfulness of these discoveries? These questions are extremely important and require elaborate answers. Anyway, in the following we shall appraise in some greater detail of what Iqbal gave a brief account only.

Historically speaking, Muslim thinkers started their scientific investigations into the nature and character of the universe during the very first century of the Hijra calendar and meticulously carried them on with a sense of religious devotion till the seventh century. After that the impact of these studies spread throughout the Latin-Christian world. No one can deny that the scientists like Albertus Magnus, Roger Bacon, Paracelsus and Agrippa owe for their thought to this tradition of Muslims' study of nature. During this entire period the Muslims during their study of biological facts took maximum benefit from the academic efforts of the Indians and the Persians and developed a well-organized and systematic body of knowledge in the name of the biology which (with the exception of Aristotle's biology) was more advanced than the outcome of any of the researches of the past in this field.<sup>37</sup>

As we have already seen, the attempt of the Muslim thinkers



was to elaborate and discover the basic truths about the cursory but eloquent references to facts contained in the Qur'an, to search for, and contemplate over, the *āyāt* or the signs of God within man and outside him in the external world and to discover the unity and Divine wisdom behind the visible multiplicity of the universe. Thus their journeying on the path of scientific thinking was inspired by purely spiritual and deeply religious motives.

Books on the science of natural history produced by the Muslim *bukamā'* are of various kinds. Firstly, there are the books written primarily from the historical point of view; for example, *Al-Tabari* and the writings of Ibn Maskawaih. Secondly, there are those which have the aspects of both history and science as their subject-matter, Third category of books are those which are basically books on geography but they also deal with biological problems; for example, the writings of Al-Idrisi. Biological discussions are also available in books which are cosmographical in character; The best example of this is Abu Yahya Qazvini's '*Ajā'ib al-Makblūqāt*. Its language is by and large mythological but in some cases facts have been explained directly with reference to observation and experiments.<sup>38</sup> Besides, the celebrated *Kalila Dimna*, Sa'di's *Gulistān* and *Bostān*, Firdausi's *Shāhnāmah*, Fariduddin Attar's *Mantiq al-Tair* are also worth-mentioning as in them moral and spiritual lessons have been brought home with the help of stories from the realms of botany and biology. Along with all these kinds of books there have been some epistles which comprise research material relating to zoology and natural history. Among these Ibn Wahshiyyah's book on Nabatean agriculture, Ibn 'Awwam's *Kitāb al-Falāḥab*, Al-Jāhiz's *Kitāb al-Hayawān* are of special interest because in them, side by side with propounding religious views, scientific methodology has also been employed.

Al-Jāhiz, the well-known *Mu'tazili* thinker, wrote *Kitāb al-Hayawān* in the 9<sup>th</sup> century A.D. This book not only occupies a unique position in the history of Arabic literature, it also specializes in the elaborate descriptions of animal life and of various kinds of animals with reference to various anecdotes and citations from religious literature: verses from Arabic poetry have

also been quoted here and there in support of his findings. Thus the sources of this comprise the Qur'an, the Hadith and the Arabic—particularly pre-Islamic Arabic—poetry. In the poetic treasure of the *jāhiliyya*, Jāhiz discovered such facts about animals on the basis of which he argued against the views of Greek thinkers. But, as it has been said above, the aim of zoological researches of Jāhiz was not purely academic in nature. He rather used to derive moral lessons therefrom. However, he incidentally did refer to those mutations that occur in the animals due to their migration from one place to the other.<sup>39</sup>

Besides Jāhiz, there are also many other Muslim thinkers of the medieval times who specialized in zoological studies. The most important work on this subject produced during this period was Kamal al-Din Damiri's *Hayāt al-Hayawān* wherein a discussion has been carried out on the instincts and general psychology of the animals and on their medicinal and spiritual benefits for human beings. Dāmīri has done the important work of alphabetically classifying the names of animals and exploring their characteristics and habits in the light of Aristotelian views. In this connection he—like Jāhiz—seeks confirmation of his explanations from the Qur'an, the Hadīth and the Arabic poetry.

Akhwān al-Safa accepted some indicators available in Al-Jahiz's *Kitāb al-Hayawān* as the basis of their further investigations and researches. According to Akhwan al-Safa there are three realms of existence in our universe: the realm of matter, the realm plants and the realm of animals (including human beings). In every one of these realms the principle of evolution operates. After the highest level of evolution in the first realm, the evolutionary process of the second realm starts; and so from the second to the third realm. This means that matter had existed long before plants and animals came into being. Among the animals those of the seas appeared prior to those of the lands and before the evolutionary process extended to human beings, all kinds of lower animals had spread throughout the terrestrial globe. Akhwān al-Safa talk of apes as the mediating and connecting link between lower animals, on the one hand, and human beings, on the other. The Akhwan subscribe not only to

biological evolution but also to spiritual and moral evolution. The soul of the child, going through gradual development, becomes ultimately like the purified soul of an angel. By the age of fifty years man is capable of being mature enough to establish a contact with the Active Intellect which capacity, in turn, qualifies him to frame regulations, principles and laws. This is the stage of the vicegerency of God.<sup>40</sup>

Ibn Maskawaih's theory of evolution is not very much different from that of the Akhwān al-Safa. According to Ibn Maskawaih the earliest form of existence is inorganic matter which comprises basic elements and lacks initiative to move and change. The next stage is that of plants and trees which are characterized by growth and development and have the capacity to respond to stimuli like sun-light, air and water. Bushes and wild grass are the earliest form of plant life. Next come the plants with trunks, branches, leaves and flowers etc. Still next are those which not only grow from healthy seeds but also need constant care during their process of growth. The last stage of this category of existence is the date-palm where sex distinction appears for the first time and so it is adjacent to the animal stage. The female palm does not bear fruit unless it has a contact with the male palm. From here begins the next higher level of existence *i.e.* the level of animal life. This level has the differential characteristics of sensory knowledge, appetite and movement. Creeping insects are the earliest form of life and so the nearest to the plants as like the plants, which are earth-rooted, they cling to the ground in the face of the smallest resistance. Next stage in the life of animals is that of those who exhibit more indeterminateness and a sharper sense of touch. Then gradually other senses also begin to appear. Alongwith this they acquire the capacity of reproduction and the preservation of their race. For safety and protection of their own selves they evolve horns, nails, teeth etc. Those who do not have these devices—and even to supplement these devices if they already have them—they develop the abilities to hide themselves, to run fast, to deceive and play tricks with their enemies. Some animals also acquire the ability to learn. In apes, the animal life appears to be in the most developed

form. They have great similarities with human beings. Like Akhwan al-Safa, Ibn Maskawaih too holds that the highest stage of inorganic matter is coral, that of the plants is male-palm and that of the animals is ape. And among human beings, the most advanced kind is that of the prophets in whom the existence comes to the fullest fruition: prophets symbolize no less than the realization of the Divine will.<sup>41</sup>

Biological views of the earliest Muslim *bukamā'* were no doubt basically inspired by religious, spiritual and moral motives but these views had scientific and experimental aspects as well. Al-Berūni, Akhwān al-Safa and many other Muslim researchers of their class were aware of the importance of fossils. They were aware of the fact that during other periods of the history of the earth flora and fauna of a different kind existed.<sup>42</sup>

As to the various stages of the evolutionary process, the philosophers and the mystics differ among themselves. The *Mashā'i* philosophers envisage, like Aristotle, the gradation of fixed spheres. The *Isbrāqi* philosophers connect, like Plato, the gradation of spheres with the conception of archetypes belonging to the transcendental World of Ideas. According to Ibn 'Arabi and his followers, the universe comprises the theophany of the Divine truth which is ever operative. Another school of thinkers<sup>43</sup> (Al-Jahiz, Akhwan al-Safa, Ibn Maskawaih, Jalal ud Din Rumi etc.) hold on to the continuous self-development of Being from stage to stage—a position very near to the modern theory of evolution. Iqbal, too, is a representative of this school of thought. We have seen in the last chapter that Rumi expresses his developmental point of view about the universe very beautifully in various verses of his *Mathnawi*. For the orthodox religionists the world here and now is the place for action (as opposed to the world hereafter as the place for recompense). For the theologians it furnishes a context against which people perform actions. Philosophers regard it as a part of the reality as such. For mystics it is a system of symbols whose comprehension is absolutely necessary for a knowledge of the process of evolution going on in it which has its ultimate ideal limit in the Divine Being. So, an understanding of the inherent character of the universe is the

spiritual need of a traveller on the mystic path. This is the reason why in the *Mathnawi* of Maulana Rumi spiritual and moral lessons have been derived from various descriptions of plants and animals. Iqbal follows this tradition as he not only regards evolution as an unending process towards higher and higher levels of existence but also, in many places of his poetic work, emphasizes the didactic character of the nature and behaviour of animals as well as plants.<sup>44</sup>

## VII

By now it is transparently clear that Iqbal like his predecessors Jāhiz, Ibn Maskawaih, Rumi and others, subscribes to a perpetual step-by-step evolutionary process going on in the universe. Matter he regards a colony of egos of a lower order out of which emerges the ego of a higher order when their association and interaction reach a certain degree of co-ordination. Emergence of man is thus the result of a long process of evolution initiating from the lowest state. "The fact that the higher emerges out of the lower", Iqbal adds a note of explanation, "does not rob the higher of its dignity and worth. It is not the origin of a thing that matters; it is the capacity, the significance and the final reach of the emergent that matters".<sup>45</sup> The following verses are expressive on this point:

دل من راز دان جسم و جان است  
 نه پنداری اجل بر من گراں است  
 چه غم گریک جهان گم شد ز  
 چشمم  
 هنوز اندر ضمیرم صد جهان است  
 (پیام)

(مشرق)

(My heart knows soul and body's mystery,  
 And so death is not frightening for me.  
 What if one world will vanish from before

My eyes? My mind has many worlds in store.)  
The following quatrain too is significant:

ز آب و گل خدا خوش پیکرے ساخت  
جہانے از ارم زیبا ترے ساخت  
ولے ساقی بآن آتش کہ دارد  
ز خاک من جہانے دیگرے ساخت  
(پیام)

(مشرق)

(With water and with earth God,  
Builder-wise made a world fairer than His paradise.  
But from my body, with the fire he owns, the Saqi has made a new  
world arise.)

Iqbal dismisses the objection that life, which emerges out of matter, will lose its status when it goes back to its source:

Even if we regard the basis of soul-life as purely physical, it by no means follows that the emergent can be resolved into what has conditioned its birth and growth.<sup>46</sup>

Thus in nature there is a grand evolutionary process of evolution going on with an ever-persistent forward push: after one level of existence comes another (higher) level of existence. Ego has only one melody whose note continues to rise higher and higher. The entire universe comprises egos of different orders. The measure of the stature of an ego is its relative capacity to say 'I am'. "It is the degree of the intuition of I-ness that determines the place of a thing in the scale of being:"

Indeed the evolution of life shows that, though in the beginning the mental is dominated by the physical, the mental as it grows in power, tends to dominate the physical and may eventually rise to a position of complete independence.<sup>47</sup>

If it is held that manhood is the final stage of biological evolution and that the stage-by-stage life-journey that has taken millions of years to reach him will suddenly end—once for all—with his death, that will necessarily generate despondency and pessimism among human beings and a paralysing effect on their

hopes, desires and aspirations. It is modern materialism which has declared life after-death an impossibility; it has raised a blind screen beyond man so that for him there is absolute darkness on the other side—a void, a nothingness, pure and simple. Iqbal says that this view “has brought despair and anxiety, instead of hope and enthusiasm for life, to the modern world. The reason”, he continues, “is to be found in the unwarranted modern assumption that man’s present structure, mental as well as physiological, is the last word in biological evolution and that death, regarded as a biological event, has no constructive meaning”.<sup>48</sup>

In Western thought, the philosopher Schopenhauer has been recognized as one of the greatest upholders of pessimism. We have already seen in the fourth chapter above that he subscribes to the racial *i.e.* the collective immortality of man and not his personal immortality. The individual as such is annihilated for ever. This lack of faith in the destiny of the human person most evidently leaves no scope for any enthusiasm, zeal and fervour in our present life. Nietzsche later tried to avoid this pessimistic hopelessness by generating a hope for the emergence of the Superman; but the mechanical repetition involved in his doctrine of Eternal Recurrence made immortality a loathsome rather than a desirable concept. Repeated appearance of the Superman robs life of its beauty and creative uniqueness, This is the subjacent reason why his ‘doctrine of hope’ could not give him the required peace of mind and, we know, he tried to commit suicide three times in his life. However, perhaps oblivious of the necessary negative implications of his point of view, his conscious attitude remained optimistic throughout and he intellectually engaged himself in a perpetual war against hopelessness and lethargic inactivity. It is this stance of Nietzsche that Iqbal liked very much as opposed to that of Schopenhauer. In one of the poems of his *Payām-e-Mashriq* entitled ‘Schopenhauer *na* Nietzsche’ he compares the views of these two thinkers with the help of a simile:

A bird while on its pleasure visit to the garden suffered a sharply pointed thorn pierced into its body. It became restless with pain. In that gloomy mood, the whole nature appeared to it ugly:

beautiful red spot on the tulip it saw as an innocent person's drop of blood and a blooming bud, nothing but a mirage, a delusion of spring. Hearing its laments a wood-pecker came to its rescue. With the help of his beak he pulled out the thorn from the body of the bird, consoled it and advised it never to lose hope, not to cry over afflictions but to face them bravely and struggle for their removal: good fortune is always born out of misfortunes and sorrows.

In this simile the attitude of the bird is that of Schopenhauer and the attitude of the wood-pecker is that of Nietzsche.

Schopenhauer finds nothing but afflictions and miseries in life: through the coloured spectacles of his pessimism the redness of a blooming rose would appear to him no better than the splashes of blood! On the contrary, Nietzsche is full of hope and persuades others to take life seriously, work hard and strive to progress. Iqbal admires Nietzsche for his activism and courage to be and is influenced by him to a great extent but he does not agree with his academic philosophy. That is why he says that his brain was heretic and his heart was full of faith. For him Nietzsche was like a person who, disturbed by the severity of thirst, went off in search of water and reached the brink of the river but his eyes could not see the spectacle of the running water and ultimately he died of the pangs of thirst. Iqbal says that had that Christian fanatic (Nietzsche) lived in his times he would have taught him the secrets of Divinity. Being dissatisfied with the philosophy of Nietzsche, he turned to Rumi, whom he discovered as his spiritual leader and guide. Rumi teaches him perpetual biological evolution and brings home and demonstrates to him the truth of personal immortality. Death for Rumi is the ripened fruit of life<sup>49</sup> and also the starting point of its new phase wherein the spiritual journey and the evolutionary process for greater and greater achievement of Divine light and grace continuously goes on. Maulana Shibli Nu'māni, describing Rumi's concept of human soul's survival of death, writes:

...Anyway when it has been established that man was an inorganic matter, to begin with, after the dissipation of matter he became vegetation and after the dissipation of vegetation, a living being, it does not appear to be impossible that after the disappearance of this state a still superior state will take place; it is this very state



which is the life of the Other World, of the Hereafter. Disappearance of something does not mean total annihilation. In fact, to be translated from the lower state to the higher one, it is necessary that the lower state be wiped out. The Maulana has described in detail how in order to scale the still unknown levels of progress death and destruction is indispensable.<sup>50</sup>

In this connection, let's look at the argument of Rumi himself given in his *Mathnavi*.

تو از آن روزی که در پست آمدی  
آتشی یا باد یا خاکی بدی  
گر بر آن حالت ترا بودے بقا  
کے رسیدے مرتر این ارتقا  
از مبدل ہستی اول نماند  
ہستی بہتر بجائے او نشانند  
ہمچنین تا صد ہزاراں پست ہا  
بعد یک دیگر دوم بہ از ابتدا  
این بقاها از فناها یافتے  
از فناش روچرا برتافتے  
ز آن فناها چہ زیان بودت کہ تا  
بر بقا چفسیدہ اے نافقا  
چوں دوم از اولینت بہتر است  
پس فنا جوو مبدل را پرست  
صد ہزاراں حشر دیدی اے غنود  
تاکنون پر لحظہ از بدو وجود  
از جمادی بے خبر سوئے نما  
وز نما سوئے حیات وابتلا

باز سوئے عقل و تمییزات خوش  
 باز سوئے خارج این پنچ و شش  
 در فناها این بقاها دیدہ  
 بر بقائے جسم چون چفسیدہ  
 تازہ می گیرد کمین را مے سپار  
 کہ ہر امسالت فزونست از سہ پار

[From the day when thou camest into existence, thou wert fire or air or earth.

If thou hadst remained in that condition, how should this (present) height have been reached by thee?

The Transmuter did not leave thee in thy first (state of) existence. He established a better (state of) existence in the place of that (former one);

And so on till (He gave thee) a hundred thousand states of existence, one after the other, the second (always) better than the beginning.

Regard (all change as derived) from the Transmuter, leave (ignore) the intermediaries, for by (regarding) the intermediaries thou wilt become far from their Origin.

Wherever the intermediaries increase, union (with the Origin) is removed: (in proportion as) the intermediaries are less, the delight of (attaining to) union is greater.

By knowing the intermediaries thy bewilderment (in God) is diminished: thy bewilderment gives thee admission to the (Divine) Presence.

Thou hast gained these (successive) lives from (successive) deaths: why hast thou averted thy face from dying in Him?

What loss was thine (what loss didst thou suffer) from those deaths, that thou hast experienced a hundred thousand resurrections at every moment from the beginning of thy existence until now:

From inanimateness (thou didst move) unconsciously towards (vegetal) growth and from vegetal growth towards (animal) life and tribulation;

Again, towards reason and goodly discernments; again,

towards (what lies) outside of these five (senses) and six (directions).

Take the new and surrender the old, for every "this year" of thine is superior to three "last years".]

Rumi's concept of *fana'* and *baqa'* as delineated above is, on the one hand, based on a close observation of the phenomenon of cosmic evolution and, on the other, is a very effective interpretation of the well-known mystic adage موتوا قبل ان تموتوا (die before you meet your death). According to this adage death is a sort of metamorphosis. It is not a distant event. It is in fact happening every moment and every moment a new creation is taking place. This view of Rumi is known as *tajaddud e amthal*<sup>51</sup> (renewal of archetypes). Shibli explains it thus:

Modern researches have proved that various cells of a body continue to die out and new cells continue taking their place so that after some time it is an entirely new body with no exact remnant of the previous body components. But as the dying cells are always immediately replaced, such an eventual death and disappearance of the whole body is not felt.<sup>52</sup>

Rumi Says:

پس ترا پر لحظه مرگ و رجعتی است  
مصطفیٰ فرمود دنیا ساعتی است  
پر نفس نومی شود دنیا و ما  
بے خبر از نو شدن اندر بقا  
عمر ہمچوں جوئے نو نومی رسد  
مستمرے می نماید در جسد  
شاخ آتش را بہ جنبانی بساز  
در نظر آتش نماید بس دراز

(Every instant, then, thou art dying and returning: Mustafa (peace be upon him) declared that this world is (but) a moment.

Our thought is an arrow (shot) from Him (*Hu*) into the air

(*hawa*): how should it stay in the air? It comes (back) to God.  
 Every moment the world is renewed, and we are unaware of  
 its being renewed whilst it remains (the same in appearance).  
 Life is ever arriving anew, like the stream, though in the body  
 it has the semblance of continuity.  
 From its swiftness it appears continuous, like the spark which  
 thou whirlest rapidly with thy hand.  
 If thou whirl a firebrand with dexterity, it appears to the sight  
 as a very long (line of) fire.)

This exactly is the case specially with the life of the human organism. Every moment the process of annihilation and survival, of death and resurrection, continues.<sup>53</sup> But this reshuffling and renewal is so quick that life, for all practical purposes, remains unshaken and perpetual. Surface of water in a flowing canal appears to be constant whereas in reality it is changing all the time. Similarly, if a burning stick is whirled round, it will create the appearance of a circle of fire whereas in reality it is the flame of the stick which is changing its position every moment.

Rumi's view of evolution and of *tajuddud-e-amthal*, as detailed out above, alleviates the fear of death understood as the phenomenon of total annihilation. Devastation and destruction caused by the World Wars had compelled the Western mind to think about death. The movement known as Existentialism came into being with a special attitude towards death. The Existentialists regarded death as an irresistible and irrefutable truth which registered the total end of life and existence. Against the background of this view they directed their entire attention to the present life of man: every person should try to make his life here and now more and more authentic. Anyway, regarding death as the final end of life implies hopelessness and despair. So the over-all tendency of Existentialism is towards pessimism.<sup>54</sup>

A question can be raised here. Does the Qur'an support the continuation of the evolutionary growth and development of human beings in the life hereafter also, The answer to this question that Iqbal gives is 'yes'. We have already seen in the fifth chapter above that in the heaven the process of evolution among

its residents will not stop because, even there, there will be higher and higher levels of excellence which they will have in view and which they will have a constant desire to achieve (Qur'an, 39:20). While going towards heaven, the faithful will find a refulgence moving on their right and in front of them and they will pray for its consummation (*Ibid*, 66:8). Further, it has been said that in the heaven all desires of the men of faith will be fulfilled; now naturally every person desires the fullest realization of his self and the registration of perpetual advance, evolution and progress; thus the environments will be agreeable for the fulfilment of this desire also. Anyhow, this evolutionary struggle in the life hereafter will not imply fatigue and distress but will rather ensure a complacent, refined spiritual happiness.

In case the above point of view about after-death is adopted by man the prospect of physical death, instead of producing blight and pessimism in him would fire him with a robust optimism— an ever alive determination to be more than he is. This is the message of Rumi wherein, Iqbal thinks, is the remedy for the spiritual ailments of the modern man. In Iqbal's own words:

The world of to-day needs a Rumi to create an attitude of hope and to kindle the fire of enthusiasm for life.<sup>55</sup>

The thought and message of Rumi exercised tremendous influence on the thought-structure of Iqbal. As we go through latter's poetic works we find time and again an echo of the views of the former:

ازان مرگ که می آید چه باک است  
خودی چون پخته شد از مرگ پاک  
است

(گلشن راز

جدید)

[Why fear that death which comes from without?  
For when the 'I' ripens into a self it has no danger of  
dissolution]

فرشتہ موت کا چھوتا ہے گو بدن  
تیرا  
ترے وجود کے مرکز سے دور رہتا ہے  
(ضرب)  
(کلیم)

[Death's angel may earthly frame contact  
But cannot harm your soul, in fact]

دلت می لرزد از اندیشه مرگ  
زیمش زرد مانند زیری  
بخود باز آ خودی را پخته تر گیر  
اگر گیری پس از مردن نمیری  
(پیام)

(شرق)

[Your heart quakes with the fear of death: you pale at the  
mere thought of it.  
Go and acquire a selfhood and hold fast to it. If you do this, you  
will not die when you expire]

موت تجدید مذاق زندگی کا نام ہے  
خواب کے پردے میں بیداری کا اک پیغام  
ہے  
جوہر انسان عدم سے آشنا ہوتا نہیں  
آنکھ سے غائب تو ہوتا ہے فنا ہوتا نہیں  
(بانگ)

(درا)

[Death is the name of the renewal of life's taste. Behind the  
veil of sleep it is a message of awakening.]

The essence of man does not become annihilated. He disappears but is not annihilated.]

From the above verses it is transparently clear that Iqbal, like Rumi, is of the opinion that *barzakh* and resurrection are different stages of the biological evolution of man and that this evolutionary process will continue well into the life-hereafter. In a lengthy poem in *Bāng-e-Darā* entitled 'Wālidā Marhūma Ki Yād Mein', Iqbal has very effectively expressed his attitude towards death and the hereafter.

### VIII

Now another question that Iqbal poses to himself! Shall man be resurrected with his previous bodily structure? This had been a hotly debated problem among the Muslim philosophers and theologians of medieval times.

It is but natural that, when a person conceives his own personality, of that conception his physical body is an indispensable part. For a layman particularly only that is real which is observable by him *i.e.* of which he can have sense experience. So when a man dies and total annihilation of his body takes place his 'resurrection' would be an unimaginable phenomenon. A branch whose flowers wither away can give birth to a number of new buds but cannot make the withered flower blossom once again. Similarly an organism with the help of its procreating cells can give birth to a number of organisms like itself but when it meets its own death it cannot be revived. The leaves that get dried up and fall down from the trees, the plants whose veins and fibers lose their capacity of sucking water and the animal and human organisms who once get deprived of the circulation of blood and the palpitation of heart—none of them are seen ever to come back to life. This is the 'truth' that man has discovered and confirmed by his observation spread over centuries. The Qur'an at many places refers to the views of those who denied raising of the dead:

What! When we die and become dust, (shall we live again).

That is (a sort of) return far (from our understanding) (50:3)

He says, who can give life to (dry) bones and decomposed ones (at that) (36:78)

And they say: "What is there but our life in this world? We shall die and we live, and nothing but time can destroy us. (45:24)

And so on.

The above verses are a candid description of the general attitude of an ordinary man of the world. Life does not appear to him a strange—not to speak of 'miraculous'—phenomenon because he himself is living it but regaining of life by one, after he has died, is impossible of realization for him because he has never experienced such an occurrence. Resurrection is certainly one of those articles of faith that Islam has emphasized the most. The line of Qur'anic argument in this connection can be traced from the following verses:

Do they not look at the sky above them? How we have made it and adorned it and there are no flaws in it. And the earth—we have spread it out, and set thereon mountains standing firm and produced therein every kind of beautiful growth (in pairs)—to be observed and commemorated by every devotee turning (to Allah). And we send down from the sky rain charged with blessing and we produce therewith gardens and grains for harvest, and tall (and stately) palm trees, with shoots of fruit stalks piled one over another—as sustenance for Allah's servants—and we give (new) life therewith to land that is dead: thus will be the resurrection. Before them was denied (the Hereafter) by the people of Noah, the companions of the Russ, the Thamūd, the 'Ād, Pharaoh, the brethren of Lūt, the companions of the Wood and the people of Tubba'; each one (of them) rejected the messengers and My warning was duly fulfilled (in them). Were we then weary with the first creation that they should be in confused doubt about a new creation (50:6–15)

See they not that Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth, has power to create the like of them (anew) (17:99)

It is He Who begins the (process of) creation; then repeats it; and for Him it is most easy (30:27)

And so on.



The impression that we get from the above verses is that life will be re-created in the decayed and rotten bones and that people will be raised from their graves with their original bodies. The creation of this impression was necessary because a concept of life without its physical embodiment is impossible of imagination. So the doubts of the Arabs, who were the direct addressees of the Qur'an, were not without justification. The Qur'an did not dispel their doubts regarding the reversibility of the bodily structure by saying that the resurrection will be only spiritual in nature because that would have been incomprehensible to their minds that were thoroughly steeped in naturalism. At one place, the Qur'an, avoiding the problem of embodied/disembodied resurrection, plainly says:

And they say: "What! When we lie, hidden and lost in the earth shall we indeed be in a creation renewed?" Nay! They deny the meeting with their Lord (32:10)

This verse implies that what is basically important from the Qur'anic point of view is that one should admit the fact of life hereafter and a return to God in order to face the grand accountability for his deeds and not as to whether it will be a bodily or a spiritual phenomenon.

The Qur'an nowhere clearly mentions that the dead will be raised with their previous bodies. On the other hand, there are some eloquent indicators to the effect that, structurally speaking, it will, in general, be an absolutely new creation:

One day the earth will be changed to a different earth, and so will be the heavens (14:48)

Transformation of both the heaven and the earth means the metamorphosis of the whole spatio-temporal order. Our present bodies have a suitability to the present system of space and time. So, obviously, when this system changes our present bodies will also become obsolete and outdated. According to another verse

Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like of them?—Yea, indeed! (36–81)

Here 'like of them' does not refer to the 'heaven and the earth' but to the human individuals. So it is implied that not the old body as such but a new one conforming to the new environments

will be created. "The fact is", says Maulana Shibli Nu'māni, "that we can understand those objects only whose precedents we have observed in this world: to answer all questions of the nature of what and how about a universe which is totally hidden from our eyes—even from our imagination—is almost impossible. At the most we can have only an analogical reasoning going from the known to the unknown world and employ similes and metaphors and this is what the teachings of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) have done."<sup>56</sup>

We have seen in the previous chapter that according to the Qu'anic metaphysics body and soul are two independent substances. It is the soul which is accountable for the voluntary actions preformed, bodily organs and limbs are only the instruments which the soul employs for the realization of its desires. Similarly, the effects of reward and punishment will come upon the soul and not the body. Consequently, whatever be the bodily garb, impact of both pleasure and pain on the soul will remain unaffected. Anyway, it is necessary that the bodily structure of human beings in the next world be essentially different from the one that they have in this world. Even in our everyday life here the bodies that we imagine or conceive or experience in our dreams are, despite their apparent nature, devoid of materiality. So from the fact that we shall be resurrected with bodies it is not to be concluded that we should understand those bodies on the pattern of our present bodies and then, having accepted that conclusion, try to solve various complexities and contradictions that are logically implied by this argument.<sup>57</sup> The Qur'an counters this reasoning by emphasizing that it will be a creation *de novo*:

They are in confused doubt about a New Creation (50:15)

They say: "What! When we are reduced to bones and dust should we really be raised (to be) a New Creation. (17:49)

...that ye shall (then) be raised in a New Creation (34:7)

Even as we produced the first creation shall we produce a

New One: a promise we have undertaken: truly shall we fulfil it. (21:104)

A further question is relevant here. On the one hand, the resurrected body, as has been shown above, will be different from the body of this world where we perform good and bad actions and, on the other, the Qur'an says that various limbs of the body in the hereafter will bear witness to the actions performed by men in this world. How can the limbs of one body represent the limbs of another body and speak on their behalf. Answer to this question is traceable from researches in the field of biology. It has been discovered that the process of creation and annihilation of cells continues throughout the life of an organism. It has been estimated that man has a new body after every seven years<sup>58</sup>—the time it takes for all the old cells of the body to be replaced by the new ones; but despite that there is a continuity of the self that cannot be denied. If a thief, for example, absconds for fear of punishment and is arrested after a few years, he cannot refer, as an excuse, to the biological phenomenon that in the meantime his hands and feet with the help of which he committed the crime have undergone a change, maybe, a total replacement. The fact is that his soul or mind, which willed the act of theft and employed the body for the carrying out of this will is the same as before; so the pain, that it could feel then through the bodily punishment, it can feel even now. Change of the body in no way violates the propriety of the relationship between a crime and the corresponding punishment. Moreover, a physical illness which affects a person may continue for a long time despite the replacement of cells in his body. The new cells, as if, inherit the illness from the cells which they replace. On this analogy, it is possible that the limbs of the new bodies in the hereafter carry the impressions of actions of the old bodies: the new body shall be the inheritor of the old body.<sup>59</sup>

There are indications in the Qur'an as well as in some *ahādith* to the effect that after death the soul begins receiving advance impressions of reward or punishment from heaven or hell respectively. This phenomenon, occurring at a time when the terrestrial frame of man has become one with earth, means that

the soul is on the process of carving out a new embodiment for itself. This is the fact to which Iqbal refers when he says that '*barzakh* is a state of consciousness characterized by a change in the ego's attitude towards time and space.' The new creation of man or resurrection will be a consummation of the process of embodiment carried on during the *barzakh* period.

The 'new creation', regarding its character, heavily draws upon the moral/immoral actions that a man performs. On the Doomsday, the scrolls containing the records of the deeds of men, it is said, will be spread before them (Qur'an, 17:30): "One who has done an atom's weight of good will see it and one who has done an atom's weight of evil will see it" (*Ibid*, 97-98). The Qur'an says that two recording angels have been assigned to every human individual who keep a complete account of his deeds. Elsewhere it talks of the 'guardian angels' who always accompany man; consequently, whatever man does in the broad-day light or during the darkness of the night, whatever he hides or reveals—all is known to God. From a deeper understanding of the concept of 'recording/guardian angels' it transpires that the process of the formation of man's inner being, his esoteric body (fashioned after his deeds) starts in this very world. It is this being which will receive advance token effects of rewards and punishments during the stay in *barzakh* and it is this being in its perfected form which will be raised on the Doomsday so that he will be completely at home with the 'new heaven' and the 'new earth'. Maulana Shibli Nu'māni says:<sup>60</sup>

Bodies that the souls will get for themselves in the next world, will really be the reflections of their deeds: they will have a conformability with each other, a mutual suitability. Fair and dark complexions of men in this world are irrelevant to their deeds but in that world they will be relevant. The Qur'an says: Some faces that day will be beaming, laughing, rejoicing; and other faces that day will be dust stained; blackness will cover them (80:38–41)

On the Day when some faces will be (lit up with) white, and some faces will be (in the gloom of) black; to those whose faces will be black, (will be said): did you reject faith after accepting it? Taste then the penalty for rejecting faith (3:106).

The problem as to whether resurrection will be physical or spiritual provoked a very heated discussion among the medieval thinkers.<sup>61</sup> Some of them, specially Fārābi and Ibn Sina, regarded it as spiritual; for Ghazālī, it was physical. He, in fact, declared the Philosophers heretic on that score. The controversy is irresolvable on purely rational grounds because it relates to a universe whose understanding is beyond the reach of our sense and intellect. However, Qu'anic verses in this regard being allegorical, we have a right to interpret these in the light of their concomitant circumstances, including other verses of the Qur'an on the subject and also the relevant facts of this world—particularly, the nature of man as a moral being. If, accepting the interpretation given by Shāh Waliullah, we are convinced that, on the Day of Judgment, man's soul will necessarily assume at least some kind of appearance—without determining as to what kind of appearance that will be—then neither there will be a need for Ghazālī to declare the Philosophers as heretics nor there will be any intellectual confusion about the problem.

For the understanding of Iqbal's view on this question his following points of emphasis must be taken into consideration:

1. The fact that evolutionary journey has continued for millions of years sufficiently indicates that death will not be the dead-end of man's life. "In view of the past history of man", says Iqbal, "it is highly improbable that his career should come to an end with the dissolution of his body".<sup>62</sup>
2. In order that the human ego must retain its identity in the hereafter, it would not be entirely inappropriate to speak of 'bodily substratums' and 'places'—at least of some form of experientable perspective.
3. After death human ego will assume a different appearance, whose character will depend on the deeds performed by him in this world.
4. In order to have faith in the life hereafter it is sufficient to admit that after death man will enter into the next phase of the evolutionary process. One should not waste his time and energy in further trying to find out whether that phase will imply a bodily or only a spiritual existence. "...Nor do we

gain any further insight into the nature of the second creation,” says Iqbal, “by associating it with some kind of body, however subtle it may be. The analogies of the Qur’an only suggest it as a fact, they are not meant to reveal its nature and character”.<sup>63</sup>

## IX

That after death a system of rewards and punishments is in store for man is a doctrine common among most of the religions of the world. It is generally believed that the ancient Egyptian civilization was the first to conceive life-hereafter for man along with the rewards and punishments to be meted out to him as a reparation for his good and bad deeds performed in this world. The Egyptians were of the view that the soul of man, after his death, goes to the nethermost regions where the god Osiris rewards or punishes him according as he has done good or bad deeds. Now as the Israelites had stayed in Egypt for a long time, it is natural to think that they must have inherited the concept of life hereafter and of a system of reparations from the Egyptians.<sup>64</sup> Besides the Egyptians, this doctrine was popular among the Babylonians and Zoroastrians. Many teachings of Jesus Christ have been widely tampered with but the concepts of the approach of the Kingdom of God and of the life after death have so consistently and repeatedly occurred in the Bible that they can safely be regarded as a part of his original teachings. According to the Bible when the Kingdom of God is established, prophet Jesus will sit on Judgment. Angels will stand commissioned to carry out his orders. Noble people will be placed in comfortable homes which are already prepared for such people whereas the ignoble ones will be delivered to the fire which is the destination of Satan and his associates.<sup>65</sup> In Indian religions this doctrine assumed the form of transmigration of souls. According to this view, man’s soul, after his death, gets an embodiment in accordance with his deeds. The soul which has many sins to its credit goes to hell where it must undergo the prescribed amount of punishment. When the account of sins has been cleared then in order to receive a reward for any good deeds that it may have performed it

is sent to the world of moon. A soul which is still assigned some job to perform in this world is sent back here through rain, wind or cloud where it wanders about in the forms of various animals, trees, etc. and thereby continues minimizing the burden of punishment. Consequently, after getting deliverance from the circle of births it goes to the most dignified and elevated heavenly world—to live in peace for ever.<sup>66</sup>

What is the exact nature of heaven and hell. Are they localities or simply the names of different mental/spiritual states. Muslim thinkers have offered different interpretations in this regard. Some are of the opinion that they are localities and in them rewards and punishments will be administered physically and will continue till eternity. Some others, particularly, Fārābī and Ibn Sina, think that they are not localities nor are the rewards and punishments to be meted out in them physical in character. The phenomena of the next world have been described by the Qur'an in terrestrial metaphors so as to make them easily understandable by laymen. According to Shāh Waliullah, both heaven and hell belong to *'alam e mithāl*. *'Alam e mithāl* is that level of existence where beliefs as well as actions, good and bad, on the one hand, and physical forms, on the other, mutually interchange; in other words, where bodies are metamorphosed into the mould of meanings and meanings are metamorphosed into the mould of bodies. This is the level where, according to Shāh Waliullah, goodness changes into heavenly fountains, shady trees, and canals of milk; and evil changes into the spinning flames of fire, scorching heat and torturous misfortunes".<sup>67</sup>

Whatever be the views about the exact nature of heaven and hell, the truth is that all these views must be conjectures more or less. With the modes of understanding available to us in this spatio-temporal world, the exact state of affairs in the world hereafter must retain an element of mystery about it. The earth will be changed into a new earth, says the Qur'an, and the skies, into new skies'. The laws of nature and the rules of behaviour that govern the present universe will be replaced by new ones. And so on. It will be a new creation altogether. Settlement of the accounts of good and bad deeds and the whole system of

remuneration will likewise be of the character which it is impossible for us to understand exactly. In order to give some idea of that life, the Qur'an uses terms and phrases which are familiar to us in our everyday discourse like 'pair of scales', 'record of deeds', 'shady trees', 'rivulets of milk and honey', 'flames of fire', 'pangs of physical burns' and so on. With the help of these, a layman can form a cursory view of the character of the life hereafter and a learned man or a philosopher, considering these terms as allegorical, could too have an informal access to the hidden meanings of the descriptions of heaven and hell. Direct addressees of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) were men of ordinary understanding, not capable of grasping the intricacies of esotericism. It was therefore necessary that all eschatological descriptions be garbed in naturalistic terms.

However, these description duly admit of non-sensuous, implied meanings also for the comprehension of the learned ones. As we closely study various verses of the Qur'an which give descriptions of heaven and hell we find that the Qur'an proposes to take its readers along from the sensuous, physical understanding of rewards and punishments gradually to the non-sensuous, spiritual one. That is how syed Ameer 'Ali explains this phenomenon:

The various chapters of the Koran which contain the ornate descriptions of paradise, whether figurative or literal, were delivered wholly or in part at Mecca. Probably in the infancy of his religious consciousness Mohammad (peace be upon him) himself believed in some or other of the traditions which floated around him. But with a wider awakening of the soul, a deeper communion with the creator of the universe, thoughts, which bore a material aspect at first, became spiritualized. The mind of the Teacher progressed not only with the march of time and the development of his religious consciousness, but also with the progress of his disciples in apprehending spiritual conceptions. Hence in the later *sūras* we observe a merging of the material in the spiritual, of the body in the soul. The gardens 'watered by rivers', perpetual shade, plenty and harmony, so agreeable to the famished denizen of the parched, shadeless and waterless desert, at perpetual discord with himself and all around him—these still form the groundwork of



beautiful imageries, but the happiness of the blessed is shown to consist in eternal peace and goodwill in the presence of their Creator.<sup>68</sup>

There are a number of Qur'anic verses and *abādith* which refer to the non-sensuous understanding of heaven and hell; for example, the Qur'an says:

No person knows what delights of the eye are kept hidden (in reserve) for them—as a reward for their (good) deeds (32:17)

It has been said that the greatest blessing available to the residents of heaven will be the vision of God. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) once said that the person dearest to God is one who will see the face of God. (*i.e.* experience His manifestation and effulgence), day and night. This will be a pleasure greater than all corporeal pleasures analogous to the waters of an ocean as compared to the one tiny drop of perspiration. Similarly, the fire of hell will not be like the fire of this world. There will be some trees there which will remain intact: it will scorch and burn up only the sinners. It will reach only to the feet of some sinners, with others it will go up to the waist while with still some others it will surmount to the throats. The Qur'an at many places speaks of the mental agonies of the hell-mates. They will grieve, regret and remorse. The severest punishment that will be meted out to them will be their deprivation of meeting with God. Look at the following verses:

(It is) the fire of (the wrath of) Allah kindled to a blaze which does mount (right) to the hearts. (104:11)

Thou shall see mankind as in a drunken riot; yet not drunk; but dreadful will be the wrath of Allah (22:2)

This day shall ye receive your reward—a penalty of shame, for that ye used to tell lies against Allah, and scornfully to reject of His signs (6:93)

Verily from (the light of) their Lord that day will they be veiled (83:15)

From a close perusal of these and other such verses it is eloquently clear that the real nature of the Hereafter is beyond

man's understanding. Material and sensuous descriptions conceal a lot behind them. Real pleasures of the heaven are far superior in kind to the material pleasures which the plain words of the Qur'an literally describe. Similarly, for those in hell far more painful than the so-called physical torments awaiting them will be their sad pensivity, bereavement and excruciating sorrow over their failings of the life therebefore. That is why Iqbal regards heaven and hell as states and not localities. Hell is "the painful realization of one's failure as a man. Heaven is the joy of triumph over the forces of disintegration"<sup>69</sup> *i.e.* the feeling that he has successfully lived his life on the earth and now is worthy of a meeting with God.

For Iqbal, hell is not a 'pit of everlasting torture' for the sinners. Having remained there in the state of suffering and anguish for a particular period of time they will be granted forgiveness and allowed to enter heaven. Various derivatives of the word *khulūd* that occur in the Qur'an relating to the residents of hell mean, for him, only a specific period of time and not everlastingness as they are generally understood to imply. In the Qur'an, for the residents of both heaven and hell, the terms *khulūd* (eternity) and *dawām* (perpetuity) have equally been used. But for the residents of heaven the adverb *abad<sup>m</sup>* (for ever) has been specifically added and so the will of God has been made express that, once having entered heaven, the faithful will never be deprived of it. On the other hand, for those entering hell the word *abad<sup>m</sup>* has not been specifically mentioned in many of the places: it has rather been said:

The fire be your dwelling place; you will dwell therein for ever, except as Allah willeth, for thy Lord is full of wisdom and knowledge (6:128)

This indicates that for those placed in hell it has been provided that by virtue of His wisdom and prudence, God will forgive them if He wishes. This is how Maulana Shibli explains the term *Khulūd*:

Here it should be clearly understood that *khulūd* has two meanings one is 'everlastingness' and the other is 'stay for a long time.' When any one of these meanings is to be accepted there must be

an appropriate context for it. Regarding the second meanings, the words *khawālid* and *khālidāt* are used in Arabic poetry as attributive words for mountains and for the stones of the Beduins' fire places because they remain intact for long limes. This implies that the word *khālidin* by itself may not mean everlastingness in the absence of the requisite context which alone would give it that meaning. This context is available in those *āyāt* in which people of heaven have been described as *khālidin*. There are about twenty *āyāt* in which this word has been assigned the meaning 'everlasting'. So regarding the people of heaven when even the word *khālidin* alone has been used it must be taken to stand for 'everlasting'. As opposed to this, when *khālidin* has been used for the people of hell, no such context is available; therefore it must be taken to imply that the sinners will remain in hell for a long time. That is why for the sinners who have faith in their hearts nowhere the adverb *abad<sup>m</sup>* has been used after *khālidin*. From among the 'faithful' sinners the greatest threat has been given to the one who would have illegitimately murdered another Muslim but even in regard to him *abad<sup>m</sup>* has not been used after *khālidin*. If a man kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is hell to abide therein. (4:93)<sup>70</sup>

For Iqbal, hell is meant to function as a corrective and reformative process in order to 'make a hardened ego once more sensitive to the living breeze of Divine Grace.'<sup>71</sup> It has been said of the sinners that they will continue to suffer in hell for many hundreds years. The word used for this is *ahqāb<sup>m</sup>* (sing: *haqab*) which, we have already seen in the last chapter, stands for a fixed period of time—maybe it comprises hundreds of years! Thus the concept of hell comes out to be not of an 'eternal pit of damnation' but of a kind of hospital. Once again quoting Shibli Nu'māni:

When a person grows careless about his bodily health and falls sick, it is generally said that nature has punished him in the form of the pangs of sickness. But this is not the correct interpretation of the phenomenon. The correct interpretation is that the body fights back the evil consequences that have been registered on it due to the careless and erratic acts of the individual. It is this fight back which is the 'sickness' and the hardship involved in this endeavour is what we know as the sufferings of sickness like

headache, stomach pain, muscular fatigue, sleeplessness etc. Same is the case with spiritual ailments which, in religious language, are known as sin and whose in-built consequence is called the '*adhab*'. This consequence takes place in the form of the fire of hell and its attendant hardships and afflictions. That would mean that man's soul or spirit is made busy in fighting back, and making reparation for, the ill consequences of the wrongdoings earlier perpetrated by it. As soon as it will be able to accomplish its remedial task it, by the grace of God, will come out of the state of agony and enter into the heaven which has been prepared for it.

From the above account it transpires that hell is not like a prison-house for the sick and the invalid. A sick man has to suffer various hardships even during his stay in the hospital like pain, fatigue, parched lips, inflammation of the body and so on; he is compelled to take bitter medicines and devour unpalatable food; if need be, he is operated upon and maybe some part of his body has to be cut apart. He has to undergo such agonies but all this 'affliction' and 'vexation' is not an end in itself nor is it a kind of revengeful activity on the part of the hospital administration: it, in fact, is directed to remove from his body the effects of his conscious or unconscious digression from the rules of good health and to make him physically sound once again.<sup>72</sup>

The Qur'an says:

Keepers of the heaven will say: "Peace be upon you! You have purified yourself. Enter you here to dwell therein (39:73)

This *āyat* refers to the fact that for a person's entry into the heaven it is necessary that he should have been purified of all sinful elements in him and thoroughly reformed; or, in the words of Iqbal, those egos who had grown insensitive and hardened like a stone, must have become capable of receiving the 'living breeze of Divine grace.' This has been expressed in an *hadith* also: "...till such time that their sins are shed off and they become pure and clear: then they will be permitted to enter heaven".

Iqbal is of the considered opinion that God is not vindictive at all. He writes: Hell..., as conceived by the Qur'an, is not a pit of everlasting torture inflicted by a revengeful God."<sup>73</sup> God of Judaism and Christianity appears to be revengeful insofar as He will punish the evil-doers because they disobeyed His commandments. On the contrary, God of the Qur'an is primarily

beneficent and merciful: Punishment in hell will not be directed towards impressing upon the evil-doers His supreme authority which they had chosen to violate: it will rather be the logical consequence of their own misdeeds. This is how Maulana Hanif Nadvi, a renowned modern Muslim religious thinker, interprets this phenomenon:

After performing a virtuous action we do not only feel a sort of spiritual happiness and after performing an evil action we do not simply suffer pangs of conscience: respective effects of both of these actions are also duly impressed upon our blood chemistry, our body cells and in fact upon our whole life. This means that every virtue carries its heaven all along with it which has in store for its doer pleasures of both body and soul and every vice carries its hell all along with it which has in store for its doer pangs and agonies of both body and soul. It is also a fact that virtues and vices done habitually ultimately shape two kinds of personalities with their distinct styles of life and modes of behaviour—in due course, formally settled and confirmed. These styles of life will obviously be attended upon by the consequences which the persons concerned have themselves earned: They cannot at all refuse to own these consequences, both desirable and undesirable! Talking in eschatological phrases, the heaven which will be granted to a man as his permanent place of residence and the hell in which a man will be thrown down—both will equally be the respective compulsive results of the two sets of actions performed and beliefs held. As regards their essential characters, heaven and hell may be spatial and phenomenal or, equally possibly, psychical and subjective.<sup>74</sup>

A confirmation of the above is available in a number of verses of the Holy Qur'an, some of which are as follows:

It is not Allah who hath wronged them, but they wrong themselves (3:117)

For Allah never harms those who serve Him (3:182)

And each soul will be paid out just what it has earned, without (favour or) injustice (3:25)

Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (The rule of) mercy (6:54)

Besides, there is a *hadith* recorded in *Sahih Bukhari*, according to

which God's graciousness overrides His anger. All these references sufficiently indicate that the God of Islam is not essentially retributive. Whatever punishment is accorded to men in the life hereafter will be the necessary consequence of their misdeeds performed in the world here and now. When people are raised on the Day of Judgement they will have the records of their actions before them. The sinful among them will have all sorts of regrets and frustrations. Veils will be removed and they will have their sights sharpened so that they clearly see for themselves what they have duly earned. The record of their deeds will be fastened on their necks. By this record they will be recognized and this is what will amount to be their fate or destiny. So, instead of fearing God's retaliation or His anger they will have to own their past deeds and be extremely regretful and ashamed about them. They will desire that they be sent back to the world so that they make amends for what they are ashamed about; but that will not be possible. The process of evolution is always a process onwards: there is no possibility for it to revert. In this state of affairs those egos which are hardened like stones or even more than that will not find themselves capable to continue their journey onwards. The Qur'an says:

Thenceforth were your hearts hardened: They became like a rock and even worse in hardness for among rocks there are some from which rivers gush forth; others there are which when split asunder send forth water; and others which sink for fear of Allah. And Allah is not unmindful of what ye do (2:74)

In this *āyat* reference is made to those stones in which, despite their gross materiality, there is a tendency to move, change and grow; but it has been said that the hearts of some men have grown even harder than the stones. Such 'rocky egos' will find themselves strangers and thoroughly incapacitated in the world hereafter. They will have excruciating pains of sorrow and grief and pinching feelings of their deprivations and failings. It is the fire of these feelings that will mount to their hearts. Such are the persons who in the magnificent journey towards the supreme goal of excellence will find themselves lagging behind; They are the kind of persons who, due to the hardening of their hearts as a

consequence of having no good deeds to their credit, will find themselves incapable of further growth and development. God Almighty will put these persons in hell not as a measure of retaliation or revenge but as a measure of His graciousness and benevolence. He will make them go through the sufferings of hell so that the hardness and insensitivity of their hearts is removed and they acquire the capability of re-assuming the process of evolution forward. Thus hell comprises going through—and ultimately coming out of—the pangs of sorrow over being cut off from the mainstream of the evolutionary process. Maulana Shibli Nu ‘māni says:

Horrors and frights of the Day of Judgement and of hell are in fact a blessing for the sinners just as hospitals in this world are a blessing for the sick. Had there been no hell, there would have been no way for the sinners to get purified and enter heaven, the abode of the purified and the immaculate alone. To God, the Kind, the Beneficent, it was not acceptable that these unfortunate ones be deprived of His favours for ever. So He provided for them the period of *barzakh* and prepared for them the fire of hell so that, having burnt up the filth deposited on their persons due to bad deeds, they become ‘purified as gold’ and then enter heaven—the abode which primordially and rightfully belongs to him.<sup>75</sup>

That hell is a healing device, a reformative and corrective process and so a special favour from God is a thesis that appears to be corroborated by the following verses of the Qur’an:

On you will be sent (O ye evil ones twain) a flame of fire (to burn) and a smoke (to choke). No defence will ye have. Then which of the favours of your Lord will ye deny? When the sky is rent asunder and it becomes red like ointment: then which of the favours of your Lord will ye deny? On that Day no question will be asked of man or jinn as to his sin: then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny? The sinners will be known by their marks: and they will be seized by their forelocks and their feet. Then which of the favours of your Lord will ye deny? This is the hell which the sinners deny. In its midst and in the midst of boiling hot water will they wander round. Then which of the favours of your Lord will ye deny? (55:35-45)

Hell’s being a Divine favour and blessing which cannot be

denied, appears to imply that its punishments are not an end in themselves but rather an arrangement made by a benevolent and loving God. When the sinners ultimately come out of it duly reformed and cleaned, evils of their personalities shed off, they will be placed in *a'raf* and after some time of stay there will be allowed to enter heaven.

Iqbal does not regard heaven as a house of pleasure, pure and simple, where there will be absolute suspension of all activity. Life is activity and it is 'one and continuous'<sup>76</sup> After once having emerged, it first completes its tenure in this world, then there is the period of *barzakh* and after that the unending span of the Hereafter begins. Like the two earlier phases, the last one is also characterized by activity of one form or the other: if in hell, man will labour hard for the acquisition once again of the capability of evolution and growth; if in heaven, he will march "always onward to receive ever fresh illuminations from an Infinite Reality which 'every moment appears in a new glory'."<sup>77</sup>

Iqbal regards the life of heaven as a sort of reward that a person wins after a lot of hard work and strenuous labour. When he actually gets this reward and acquires closeness to the Divine Being this felicitous state of affairs does not make him lethargic; it rather provides for an unlimited scope of activity for the exercise of his free choices and for his spiritual-cum-moral movement, growth and evolution. We have already seen in the last chapter that there are eloquent indicators in the Qur'anic descriptions of heaven to the effect that life there will not stop evolving. Thus, optimistic attitude involved in movement and action which is the ground of the doctrine of personal immortality will not be absent in the life of heaven. Pleasure of growth and development is an intrinsically desirable goal, a virtue in its own right. In this world this pleasure is conditioned by misery, fatigue and so many limitations, whereas in the heaven it will have unlimited possibilities and will be accompanied by delightful ease and complacency. "...The recipient of Divine illumination (in heaven)", says Iqbal, is not merely a passive recipient. Every act of a free ego creates a new situation, and thus offers further opportunities of creative unfolding."<sup>78</sup>





## Chapter VII

# Recapitulation and Some Concluding Remarks

As we recapitulate, a close study of those philosophers, in particular, whose concepts of death and after-death Iqbal has referred to and examined, and of the history of philosophy, in general, shows that the nature of the entire set of problems relating to the phenomenon of death very heavily depends on an individual's personal attitude towards life itself. So, he may adopt any methodology whatever that suits him for the alleviation of the horror of death! However, it is not necessary that a particular person's attitude towards death continues to be the same throughout all the phases of his life: it does undergo changes with the passage of time. One reason for this is that its nature is not barely conceptual and theoretical; it is rather existential and stems from the subjectivity of the person concerned. At various stages of his life and with different situations that he happens to encounter and different climates of opinion that he inhales, his philosophy of, and attitudes towards, the experience of death and what is to follow this experience is bound to change. So it can be safely concluded that no such solution relating to the problem of death and to the over-all destiny of man can be offered as would be irrefutably true and unequivocally valid.

We have also seen that in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> centuries B.C. in Rome and in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C. in Greece the problem had a great academic importance. Rather, if it is said that during these centuries this problem was the very crux of all philosophical thought, that will not be an exaggeration.<sup>1</sup> But, with the advent of

Christianity and its predominance, importance of the problem as such was fairly reduced. Concept of the 'other world' canonically proposed as a patent truth of faith gave a durable stamp of confirmation to the continuation of life from 'here' to the 'hereafter'. That is how the issue stood deprived of its debatable quality. Consequently, during the entire period of the Middle Ages, we do find theological discourses and a lot of sermonization on the nature of soul, on the ultimate rewards and punishments, on heaven and hell—but they all of them presuppose immortality as an established truth and do not take it as an open question. Renaissance, in due course, brought forth with it a strong reaction against this scholasticism and its entire mode of reasoning. Almost with a vengeance many thinkers developed the tendency to disregard immortality and any form of life after death. Anyhow, they got themselves busy with a new dimension of the problem: how to overcome the fear of death so that our present life, which is the only one that we have, be lived in the best possible way. This indifference to the problem of immortality, some historians of ideas are of the opinion, got a powerful boost from the logico-mathematical philosophy of Spinoza; and by the middle of the nineteenth century, when positive, natural sciences enjoyed an almost unshared suzerainty, this attitude of cold indifference took the form of absolute denial. This state of affairs continued well into the next century. Joseph Jacobs in an article 'The Dying of Death' published in the 'Fortnightly Review', London in 1899 wrote that "death as a motive is moribund... Death has lost its terror." "The twentieth century", observed another writer Fournier D'Albe in 1908, "is too busy to occupy itself much with the problems presented by death and what follows it... Death is all but dead as an overshadowing doom and an all-absorbing subject of controversy."<sup>2</sup> The very powerful movement of Analytical Philosophy, that held its sway in the Anglo-American world of the century that has just closed, had its own way to dismiss the problem of the 'survival of death'. With the help of an analysis of the language involved, they very conveniently relegated it to the realm of the non-sensical.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the above, there has been quite a recognizable section of great thinkers of the West who showed active interest in the problem as shown in the fourth chapter above. Particularly, during the end of the nineteenth/beginning of the twentieth century Bergson, William James and some others give it special importance. Following these thinkers much has been written on various aspects of the problem. “No age has produced so much literature on the problem of immortality as our own”, said Iqbal around 1928-29, “and this literature is continually growing”<sup>4</sup>. As an answer to the views of some thinkers like Bertrand Russell that death is not a necessary condition of the human situation and that all discussions about it are entirely gratuitous the continental Existential thinkers most forcefully asserted that it is, by all standards, a necessary condition of the situation as it is lived by man.

David Hume was right when he said that conviction regarding immortality is, in the last analysis, released and guaranteed by religion alone. Historically also, this problem has essentially belonged to religion: almost all religions of the world recommend faith in the recontinuation of human life after death—whether this new life is corporeal or non-corporeal, personal or impersonal. It only incidentally becomes a philosophical problem as rationalism sometimes tends to erode religious faith or every day observations raise certain questions as would render religious tenets uncanny and dubious. Faced with such a situation, philosophical thought can possibly take one of the two courses. Either it grows nihilistic and denies immortality with the help of logical arguments or it devises another set of arguments which would provide some sort of a reliable rational base to religion, in general, and a justification for its doctrine of immortality, in particular. As to which of these alternatives is adopted by a thinker depends upon his regular and formal philosophy of life as such. Some are pessimists by nature with a tendency to look towards the dark side of everything and some are optimists by nature having always the bright side of life in view. So immortality is a religious problem only masquerading as a philosophical issue in case we undertake to argue for or against it.

In the beginning of the last chapter, we have seen that Iqbal too, in a letter to Sir Akbar Haiderabadi, admitted that his conviction in immortality is primarily grounded in his religious faith; but he does not remain content with this position. He is fully aware of the resultant intellectual difficulties involved in it. That is why in *The Reconstruction* he has dilated on this subject in a philosophical manner. He is in fact of the opinion that religious beliefs and doctrines grounded in the Qur'an have opened up for the Muslims a number of avenues of thoughtful research. For instance, the Qur'an describes various stages of man's organic development in the womb of the mother. This description motivated the earliest Muslim thinkers to pursue scientific enquiries in the realm of biology. As a result of these enquiries they formulated the thesis of biological evolution with its various well-defined stages—more generally, the doctrine of cosmic evolution that characterizes the entire universe. The process of evolution from minerals to plants, from plants to animals, and from animals to human beings, to which the Muslims were led by their study of nature, sufficiently indicates for Iqbal that this process of growth and development will not stop at the physical death of man but will continue onwards in some form or the other.

A study of Rumi's thought gave Iqbal immense support and strength in his views. As he deliberated on the over-all meaning and message of the Qur'an from a fresh angle of vision he was convinced that the Qur'anic concept of immortality is not only moral but biological also and is firmly grounded in the dynamic character of the universe around us.

We have talked above of optimism and pessimism as the basal determining factors in a person's attitude towards immortality. Iqbal's mental growth, as we have seen in the previous chapters, indicates his in-built inclination towards optimism. By virtue of this subjacent character of his nature he accepts influence from some of the Eastern and Western thinkers whom he encounters, and rejects the views of some others. In order to remedy the loss of hope, depression and melancholy of the modern man, he particularly thinks, a Rumi with his

‘tremendous enthusiasm for the biological future of man’ is required who will fill the hearts of men with zeal and fervour.<sup>5</sup> Islam, he considers to be a religion that gives to man the message of courage and determination and persuades him to be always up and doing for the realization of ideals.

One thing that is common between the views of Iqbal, on the one hand, and the teachings of most of the world religions, on the other, is that immortality has been conceived to be conditional upon actions. Whether it is ancient Egyptian civilization or Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, or Islam—in all of them spiritual salvation/damnation and the whole state of affairs in the life hereafter has been regarded consequent upon the deeds that men perform in this world.<sup>6</sup> We have already seen in our study of Hindu philosophy that it gives the concept of a subtle body which has moral/spiritual actions as its base. C.D. Broad says a person’s psychic factor survives his death just as the fragrance of a flower persists for some time after the flower withers. What kind of actions constitute this ‘psychic factor’ he has not sufficiently explained but he regards it as an established fact that it is actions alone which constitute it. During our discussion of the Islamic concept of immortality we have seen that according to some thinkers good actions of a person result into the creation of his *wujūd e ma‘navi* (essential being) which is not affected by the phenomenon of death. Some writers of the Qur’anic exegesis are even of the opinion that the nature of the physical bodies that will be granted to individuals in the next world will be fashioned by the deeds themselves performed by them in this world.<sup>7</sup>

Iqbal too firmly upholds that immortality of a person is consequent upon his deeds. It is not his birth right: it is rather to be won by his strenuous efforts. He writes:

Life offers a scope for ego-activity, and death is the first test of the synthetic activity of the ego. There are no pleasure-giving and pain-giving acts; there are only ego-sustaining and ego-dissolving acts. It is the deed that prepares the ego for dissolution, or disciplines him for a future career. The principle of the ego-sustaining deed is respect for the ego in myself as well as in others.

Personal immortality, then, is not ours as of right; it is to be achieved by personal effort. Man is only a candidate for it.<sup>8</sup>

In other words it is only the well-integrated egos who deserve immortality.

Alongside the above standpoint of Iqbal, his declared view about the human ego is that it had a beginning in the past but has no end-point in the future, meaning to say that it is everlasting. Hell, a place for disintegrated egos, is for him a kind of reformatory only. The diseased souls, the lesser egos, will stay there only for some time, get reformed and then ultimately join the group of well-integrated egos in the heaven and so live there for ever:

Hell..., as conceived by the Qur'an, is not a pit of everlasting torture inflicted by a revengeful God; it is a corrective experience which may make a hardened ego once more sensitive to the living breeze of Divine Grace.<sup>9</sup>

Does not all this indicate a contradiction in the thought-system of Iqbal? On the one hand, he says, immortality is not the right of man because he is only a candidate for it; and, on the other hand, he is of the opinion that after going through the process of reformation in the hell all the sinners, the more or less weaker egos, will go to the heaven and thus become immortal like the well-integrated egos already residing there: Thus immortality becomes the right of everyone; only ways to reach the realm of immortality are different: either it is the direct way to the heaven or the indirect one that goes through the torments of hell.

However, if we keep in view Iqbal's thought system on the whole, this difficulty seems to be resolved and there appears to be no contradiction involved. According to Iqbal, as we know, ego is the essence of man which expresses itself in man's attitudes, ideals and decisions. We regard that person great and successful who, throughout his life, has consistently worked hard for the realization of higher ideals. History records with appreciation the exceptional talents and remarkable deeds of certain persons, strong in spirit, despite the fact that they were weak in body or were financially poor or belonged to not very well-known families etc. On the other hand, there have been

materially well-off and physically powerful and domineering persons who have earned nothing from their fellow human beings but hatred, contempt and disdain due to their undesirable acts. This latter class of people, when they cross certain limits in their madness to satisfy their infernal, animal desires, are punished, ostracized, and put behind bars as the society does not tolerate their presence among them. Similarly, there are persons who, despite their healthy physique, develop serious mental abnormalities which are dangerous for others. Their existence too is intolerable for the society. Although they are not hated, they are isolated and put in a mental hospital for cure. This confinement of a confirmed criminal and a serious, violent mental patient is because of the fact that their existence carries no positive meaning for the healthy growth of society. Such persons, despite the fact that they are physically alive, have suffered the dissipation of their real being, their ego, their personality. Essentially speaking, they are dead, if not worse than that. Ego being the real essence of man, if this essence is destroyed in an individual, there remains no difference between him and a gross material object. Says Iqbal:

بانگ اسرافیل ان کو زندہ کر سکتی نہیں  
روح سے تھا زندگی میں بھی تمہی جن کا بدن  
مر کے جی اٹھنا فقط آزاد مردوں کا ہے کام  
گرچہ ہر ذی روح کی منزل ہے آغوش لحد

(ارمغان حجاز)

(Him can't wake up the Israphel's horn. So void of soul body was his life's thorn. Would rise from graves the free man alone though each man's abode is the grave alone)

Against the perspective of the above, it is easy to see that Iqbal's concept of immortality is self-consistent. Though hell has been conceived as a reformatory process only and all will ultimately go to heaven, yet immortality remains conditional. In fact, life in hell will be no life worth the name: it will only be a painful process of softening opaque, hardened egos and making



them capable of receiving Divine illumination and grace. And the consummation of this process will not depend on the efforts of those egos themselves but on the mercy and beneficence of God.

As to the heaven, it is positively clear from the Qur'an that, once a person enters it, he will live there for ever, but as to hell it has not been mentioned that after sufficient punishment has been awarded to its mates they will all be allowed to leave it. Wisdom implied in this non-assurance regarding the limited period of stay in hell is that, if such assurance had been given, the concept of hell would not possibly play its role as an adequate deterrent for the evil-doers. Anyway, there are certain eloquent indicators which seek to confirm that punishment in hell will be for the sake of reforming those hearts which have become irresponsive to all good council—and the process of reformation, of course, needs a specified amount of time!

## II

As it has been said above more than once, Iqbal is an optimist philosopher. His optimism is not confined to this world alone: unlike most of the orthodox thinkers, it comprehensively extends to the life hereafter as well. Iqbal has a characteristic point of view from which he looks at the whole panorama of the emergence of the ego, its earthly career, and ultimately its continuation in the world hereafter. It is a story of the more and more self-realization of the ego, which through its continuous efforts may hope to attain the degree of integration that is required for its entry into heaven. It is quite understandable that the egos who fail to attain this degree of integration will be placed in hell so that they are made to go through a cleansing process therein, painful though, for their ultimate entry into the heavenly abode. The orthodox Muslims, on the other hand, as we all know do have all the optimism in regard to those who qualify to be the men of heaven and who will live therein for ever with all their desires fulfilled; but not at all in regard to the lesser egos for whom hell will be, what Iqbal calls, 'an eternal pit of damnation' from which deliverance will never be possible. Iqbal goes on to say that even in heaven hopefulness and optimism of its residents

will not have come to its fullest fruition as the truest I-amness of their egos will never be completely realized. Only God can truly say 'I am' because His I-amness is 'independent, elemental, absolute'. "That to thy Lord is the final Goal" (53:42), says the Qur'an. Now, as no one can actually become God, we can only approximate the Goal, that He is, more and more and this process will obviously never stop. The criterion of the level of perfection actually attained by a particular human ego is as to how genuinely he can say 'I am', *i.e.* how near, in the last analysis, is he to God. Look at the following verses put by Iqbal in the mouth of Rumi, which prescribe a graded test of the level of integration attained by an ego: The third and the last stage is very beautifully elucidative of Iqbal's own point of view delineated here:

زنده ئی یا مرده ئی یا جاں بلب  
 از سه شاید کن شهادت را طلب  
 شاید اول شعور خویشتن  
 خویش را دیدن بنور خویشتن  
 شاید ثانے شعور دیگری  
 خویش را دیدن بنور دیگری  
 شاید ثالث شعور ذات حق  
 خویش را دیدن بنور ذات حق  
 پیش این نور اربمانی استوار  
 حی و قائم چون خدا را خود  
 شمار

---

چیست معراج آرزوی شاهی

امتحانی روبروی شاپدی

[if you are living or dead or suspended between life and death, seek a confirmation of your state from three witnesses. First witness is your own consciousness. It is looking at yourself in the light of your own consciousness. Second witness is the consciousness of other. It is looking at yourself in the light of the consciousness of other. Third witness is the consciousness of God. It is looking at yourself with the consciousness of God. If you remain steadfast before this light consider yourself eternal and firm like God.]

- - -

[What is Ascension “?” It is a desire for a witness, a submitting to an evaluation before a witness]

From the above it adequately transpires that action which, according to Iqbal, is the fundamental principle of self-integration, is not only the hall-mark of earthly existence but it also characterizes the existence in the hereafter, specially, existence in heaven which, being qualified by growth, evolution and development, is action-oriented through and through. This is another point on which Iqbal parts company with the traditional, orthodox Muslim thinkers who would make a water-tight distinction between two terms *dār al-'amal* (place for action) and *dār al-jazā'* –the former being reserved for this world only, and the latter, for the world hereafter alone.

From Iqbal's emphasis on the corrective and reformatory nature of the punishments to be doled out to the evil-doers in the next world we can naturally derive a recommendation: punishments that are given in this world to those who transgress the limits of God and commit crimes should also be directed towards the well-being of the evil-doers. The old Mosaic principle of 'life for life, eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth and wounds equal for equal' has been improved in the Qur'an by adding: 'But if anyone remits the retaliation by way of charity, it would be an act of atonement for himself' (5:45). This proviso tends to make the Qur'anic view of punishment

reformatory. Iqbal is in favour of retribution and deterrence to the extent that they are necessary for the maintenance of a healthy society, but his overshadowing view is that human beings, when they go erratic, should be reformed and put on the track of character-building and ego-integration. Retribution and deterrence should not be taken as ends in themselves but only as means, whenever required. *Ihsān*, forgiveness and love which are the essential attributes of God should be reflected in human individuals and societies. This brings out Iqbal's position as a humanist rather than a strict orthodox religious scholar.

## References and Notes

### Chapter 1

1. *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, vol. II, p. 307
2. Robert Fulton, *Death and Identity*, p. ix
3. *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, vol. II, p. 307
4. G. Murdock, *Our Primitive Contemporaries*, p. 501
5. K. Longloh Parker, *The Euahlayi Tribe*, p. 98.
6. For further details on the subject see: Levy Bruhl, *Primitive Mentality*, pp. 37–38; *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. IV, pp 411–462.
7. See Jacques Choron, *Death and Western Thought*, pp. 16–17
8. *Ibid*
9. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, p. 34.
10. *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, vol. V, 'My Death', p. 416
11. 'Vitality of Death', *Journal of Existentialism*, vol. 5, p. 141.
12. *Ibid*, p. 142.
13. Here we shall not discuss the views of Freud put forth in his article 'Reflections on War and Death' (1915) wherein he made a person's attitude towards death conditional upon the sense of guilt in him. He observed in this article that man of the ancient times adopted an ambivalent position *vis a vis* the phenomenon of death. He regarded the death of his enemy as the total annihilation but not so insofar the death of his beloved ones was concerned. For the latter he conceived some sort of life hereafter. This ambivalence represented the self-contradictory and alogical desires present in man's unconscious. The ancient man desired—of course, unconsciously—to annihilate his enemy but as to himself and as to those whom, through love, he almost identified with himself, he desired that they perpetuate. This primordial attitude, we find, is also operative among children. They do not hesitate to wish the annihilation of those with whom they are angry or whom they consider to be their enemies. A

civilized, cultured, educated man of to-day, on the other hand, would hesitate to wish the death of even his harshest adversaries: this is due to the sense of guilt which has been inculcated in the modern man. According to Freud, conflicts and wars between various nations are the outcome of the appearance in them of the unconscious motives of the ancient, uncivilized human beings: this motivation has only been camouflaged by racial discriminations and economic considerations. This is how Freud theorized in 1915. Later, in 1920 he looked at the problem from another angle. On the basis of his observation of certain biological facts he came to the conclusion that every person has an inherent tendency to die. He called it the death instinct. This he explained in his book *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.

14. Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. pp. 32–33
15. *Ibid*, p. 33
16. *Ibid*, p. 43–44
17. Robert Bocoock, *Sigmund Freud*, p. 74
18. Robert Woodworth, *Contemporary Schools of Psychology*, p. 184.
19. Bertrand Russell, *Why I am not a Christian*, p. 70
20. Sigmund Freud, *op. cit.*, p.31
21. Symposium on the 'Psychology of Death' held in 1956 under the American Psychological Association was organised by Herman Feifel. A number of renowned scholars participated in this symposium and spoke on various aspects of the subject under discussion. They included Karl G. Jung, Paul Tillich, Walter Kaufmann, Fredrick J. Hoffman, Gardner Murphy, Herbert Marcuse, among many others. The book *Meaning of Death* that thus developed was divided into four parts. The first part comprises theoretical discussions on the problem of death; the second part deals with various stages through which the concept of death evolves in man; in the third part those articles are included which bring out concepts of death in various religions and civilizations; the fourth part deals with clinical and experimental studies. This comprehensive contribution of Herman Feifel as the editor was appreciated by the learned. After the appearance of this

book, the problem of death acquired special importance in the Western world and a lot of literature started coming out of the press in the form of books and research articles on various aspects of this problem.

22. Herman Feifel, *Meaning of Death*, p xv.
23. Martha Baum and Rainer C. Baum, *Growing Old*, p. 210
24. *Ibid*, pp 212–213
25. *Ibid*
26. *Ibid*, p. 213
27. *Ibid*, p. 214

## Chapter II

1. D. B. Runes, *Dictionary of Philosophy*, p. 142
2. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, cf. John Watson: *Selections from Kant*, p. 204.
3. Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, p. 36.  
For a detailed account of the ancient Egyptian concept regarding life after death see Sneath, *Religion and the Future Life*.
4. Refer to Jacques Choron, *Death and Western Thought*, p. 25
5. See *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol V, p. 172
6. For further details see C. J. Ducasse, *Nature, Mind and Death*, p. 447
7. See Antony Flew, *Body, Mind and Death*, p. 12
8. *Ibid*, p. 3
9. *Ibid*, p. 4
10. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*, p. 32
11. Bertrand Russell, *Why I am not a Christian*, p. 72
12. *Ibid*, pp. 70–71
13. *Ibid*, pp. 71–72
14. *Ibid*, pp. 70–71
15. C. D. Broad, *The Mind and its Place in Nature*, pp. 526–527
16. See C. J. Ducasse, *op. cit.*, p. 453
17. *Ibid*, p. 457
18. C. D. Broad, *op. cit.*, p. 527
19. *Ibid*, p. 481
20. John Hick, *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 97

21. R. S. Bluck, *Plato's Phaedo* (Eng. trans), E 85, C 91
22. Aristotle, *De Anima*, A 402
23. *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, vol. IV, p. 144
24. Aristotle, *op. cit.*, A 430
25. C. D. Broad, *op. cit.*, p. 485
26. For further studies on the Moral argument for immortality and Divine existence, see C. D. Broad, *op. cit.*, and A. E. Taylor, *The Faith of a Moralist*
27. David Hume, *Essay on the Immortality of the Soul*
28. C. D. Broad, *op. cit.*, p. 486
29. Prof. Dr. C. A. Qadir, 'We are Born to Die and We Die to be Born'— article published in the Daily Pakistan Times, July 10, 1983.
30. From among the Proceedings of Psychological Research Society this report has been taken from Geraldine Cummins, *Mind in Life and Death*, p. 69.
31. John Hick, *op. cit.*, p. 106
32. *Ibid*, p. 104

### Chapter III

1. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 4
2. Dr. Waheed Qureshi (ed.), *Selections from the 'Iqbal Review'*, p. 258
3. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 108
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 108–109
5. *Ibid*
6. *Ibid*
7. Dr. Raziuddin Siddiqui, *Iqbal ka Tasannur Zamān o Makān* (Urdu), p. 121
8. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 18
9. For Further details on Iqbal's view of mystic experience see 'Ishrat Hassan Enver, *Metaphysics of Iqbal*, pp. 10–33
10. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 2
11. *Ibid*, p. 7
12. *Ibid*, p. 24
13. *Ibid*, p. 25



14. *Ibid*, p. 26
15. Tshrat Hassan Enver, *op. cit.*, p. 60
16. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 28
17. *Ibid*, p. 28
18. *Ibid*, p. 27
19. *Ibid*, p. 31
20. Dr. Khalifa 'Abdul Hakim, *Fikr e Iqbal* (Urdu), pp. 625–626
21. For a detailed study of Bergson's philosophy, refer to Henry Bergson, *Creative Evolution*; C. E. M. Joad, *Guide to Modern Thought*; W. K. Wright, *A History of Modern Philosophy*
22. B. A. Dar, Iqbal and Post-Kantian Voluntarism, p, ii
23. D. B. Runes, *The Dictionary of Philosophy*, p. 333
24. B. A. Dar, *op. cit.*, p. 7
25. *Ibid*
26. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 33
27. *Ibid*, pp. 41–42
28. *Ibid*, pp 43–44
29. *Ibid*, p. 48
30. *Ibid*, p. 47
31. M. M. Sharif, Iqbal's 'Conception of God' in *Iqbal as a Thinker*, pp. 104–106
32. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 50
33. *Ibid*, pp 50–51
34. For further studies on Iqbal's concept of God-man relationship, see Naeem Ahmad, 'Anā' e Insāni aur Anā' e Kabir ka Ta'alluq—Iqbal ki Nazar mein' (Urdu) in *Aurāq*, Lahore, Sept–Oct., 1975
35. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 57
36. Dr. Waheed Qureshi, (ed.), *Selections from 'Iqbal Review'*, p. 265
37. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 77
38. *Ibid*, p. 79
39. *Ibid*, p. 81
40. *Ibid*, p. 82
41. Prof. Yusaf Saleem Chishti, *Sharh Asrar e Khudi* (Urdu), p. 10
42. *Ibid*, p. 13
43. *Ibid*, p. 14
44. *Ibid*, pp. 15–16

**Chapter IV**

1. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 372
2. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, pp. 247–248
3. *Ibid*, p. 258
4. *Vide* Jacques Choron, *Death and Western Thought*, p. 147
5. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 90
6. Syed ‘Abdullah (ed.), *Muta‘alliqāt e Khutbat e Iqbal* (Urdu), pp. 199–200
7. William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 99–100
8. For further details see B.A. Dar, *Iqbal and Post-Kantian Voluntarism*, p. 486
9. *Vide* Syed ‘Abdullah, *op. cit.*, p. 197
10. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, pp. 89, 90
11. Quoted by Jacques Choron, *op. cit.*, p. 202
12. *Ibid*, p. 204
13. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 91
14. *Ibid*
15. *Ibid*, p. 92
16. See *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, vol. 8, p. 123
17. John Hick, *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 112
18. *Ibid*, p. 114
19. C. D. Broad, *The Mind and its Place in Nature*, p. 536
20. McTaggart, *Nature of Existence*, p. 372
21. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, pp. 45–46
22. *Ibid*, p. 46
23. See B. A. Dar, *op. cit.*, p. 407
24. Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, p. 259

**Chapter V**

1. De Boer, *History of Philosophy in Islam*, p. 6
2. Abul Kalam Azad, *Tarjumān al-Qur’an* (Urdu), vol. I, p. 172
3. E. H. Sneath, *Religion and Future Life*, chap. XI
4. Maulana Hanif Nadvi, *Lisān al-Qur’an* (Urdu), p. 170
5. Ibn Qayyim, *Kitāb al-Rūh* (Urdu), p. 90
6. See *Ibid*, chap. XIV

7. Maulana Hanif Nadvi, *op. cit.*, pp. 387–388
8. ‘Abdul Rashid Nu‘mani, *Lughāt al-Qur’an* (Urdu), part I, p. 37
9. *Dā’ira Ma‘ārif Islāmiyya* (Urdu), vol. 7, p. 563
10. *Ibid*
11. *Ibid*
12. Amin Ahsan Islahi, *Tadabbur-e-Qur’an* (Urdu), vol. II, p. 643
13. *Ibid*
14. Abul A‘la Maududi, *Tafhim al-Qur’an* (Urdu), vol. II, p. 33, marginal note 34
15. For further studies on this subject, see Abul A‘la Maududi, *op. cit.*, vol II, pp. 95–97
16. For an account of the arguments of *Fasl al-Maqāl* see George F. Hourani, ‘Ibn Rushd’s Defence of Philosophy’ in *The World of Islam*, pp. 145 ff
17. *Ibid*, p. 146
18. De Lacy O’ Leary, *Arabic Thought and its Place in History*, pp. 256-258
19. Averroes, *Tabāfut al-Tabāfut*, vol. I, p. 358
20. Muhammad Lutfi Jumma, *Tārikh Falāsifa al-Islām*, Urdu trans. by Mir Valiuddin, p. 173
21. Syed Muhammad ‘Abdullah, *Mut‘alliqāt Khutbat Iqbal* (Urdu), p. 195
22. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 169
23. *Ibid*, pp. 169–170
24. *Ibid*, p. 170
25. M. M. Sharif (ed.), *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, vol. II, p. 824
26. *Dā’ira Ma‘ārif Islāmiyya* (Urdu), vol. p. 325
27. Khalifa ‘Abdul Hakim, *Hikmat e Rumi* (Urdu), p. 9
28. *Ibid*, p. 34
29. Khalifa ‘Abdul Hakim, *Metaphysics of Rumi*, p. 116
30. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 15
31. Khalifa ‘Abdul Hakim, *Hikmat e Rumi* (Urdu), p. 36

## Chapter VI

1. See above chapter II, p.

2. Letter addressed to Sir Akbar Hayderābādi, dated 13<sup>th</sup> June, 1937, *Zia Bar* of Govt. College Sargodha, vol. ix, p. 50
3. Syed Nazir Niazi, *Maktubat e Iqbal* (Urdu), p. 74
4. Muhammad Rafi'uddin, *Hikmat e Iqbal* (Urdu), p. II
5. Dr. Justice Jāved Iqbal (ed.), *Stray Reflections*, pp. 19–20
6. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 116
7. *Ibid*, p. 116
8. *Ibid*, p. 94
9. *Ibid*.
10. *Ibid*, p. 95
11. *Ibid*, pp. 95-96
12. *Ibid*, p. 96
13. *Ibid*.
14. *Ibid*.
15. *Ibid*, p. 97
16. *Ibid*.
17. *Ibid*, p. 98
18. *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, vol. III, pp. 64–65
19. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*,
20. *Ibid*, pp. 60–61
21. *Ibid*, pp. 57–58
22. *Ibid*, pp.61–62
23. For a detailed study of this subject see Na'eem Ahmad, 'Iqbal's Concept of Eternity' in the journal *Iqbal Review*, April 1977
24. Syed Muhammad 'Abdullah, *Muta'alliqāt Khutbat e Iqbal* (Urdu), p. 204
25. For Iqbal's allusion here see *Ibid*, p. 192
26. For further details on this issue refer to Na'eem Ahmad, *op. cit.*, pp. 11–13
27. Dr. Raziud Din Siddiqi, *Iqbal ka Tasannur e Zamān o Makān* (Urdu), pp. 115–117
28. Na'eem Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p. 13
29. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 31
30. *Ibid*, p. 73
31. Dr. Abullaith Siddiqi, *Iqbal aur Maslik e Tasannuf* (Urdu), p. 228

32. *Ibid*
33. Muhammad Rafi'uddin, *op. cit.*, pp. 82–83
34. Herman Von Helmholtz (1821–94) was the son of a German army officer and was educated so as to become an army doctor. However, he did not have any interest in medical education and in adopting the medical profession. In fact his interest lay in the study of physics and related subjects. He conducted many experiments in the fields of physics, physiology and psychology and specially undertook valuable researches in regard to audition, vision and reaction-time. In physiological psychology it had been a subject of heated discussion as to how long does it take to respond to various stimuli. Helmholtz was the first scientist to discover, as a result of his experiments on frogs that nervous excitation travels at the speed of 30 meters per second to reach consciousness. Later on, using human subjects for the same purpose, he faced difficulties. However, after him, a Dutch physiologist Donders continued with further experiments in this area and arrived at definite results regarding the conduction time of various sensations. From the researches of Helmholtz it transpires that, as a motor reaction to a nervous excitation takes some time to occur, mind or consciousness is proved to have an independent, translucent character. The proposition made by Iqbal that "...if this is so, our present physiological structure is at the bottom of our present view of time" is very meaningful and suggestive of new physiological and biological studies of time. It is a fact that quite useful research in this direction has already been started. See M. Saeed Sheikh (ed.), *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Ref. no. 58, p. 177.
35. See *Encyclopaedia of the Unexplained*, 'Dreams', pp. 76–78; also see 'Astral body', 'Astral plane', p. 37
36. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 'Natural History', chap. XVI in M. M. Sharif (ed.), *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, vol. II, p. 1316
37. *Ibid*, p. 1331
38. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Science and Civilization in Islam*, p. 107

39. See George Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science*, p. 597
40. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 'Natural History' in M. M. Sharif, *op. cit.*, p 1304
41. For an elaborate account of various stages of evolution given by Ibn Maskawaih, see Dr. Abdul Khaliq and Prof. Yusuf Shaidae, *Muslim Falsafa* (Urdu), p. 170
42. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *op. cit.*, p. 1331
43. *Ibid*
44. For example in *Asrar e Khudi* there is a Hikāyat e Almās o Zaghāl' and a 'Hikāyat e Tā'ir keh az Tishnagi Betāb būd'; in *Payam e Mashriq* there is a poem 'Schopenhauer aur Nietzsche' in which with reference to 'aik parinda' and 'hudhud' the mental attitudes of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche *i.e.* pessimism and optimism, respectively, have been depicted.
45. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 85
46. *Ibid*, p. 85
47. *Ibid*, p. 85
48. *Ibid*
49. The concept that death is the fruit of life is not unknown even in the West. From among the German poets Ruckert and then Rilke have dilated on this subject. See Anne Marie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, p. 276
50. Maulana Shibli Nu'mani, *Swānih Maulana Rumi* (Urdu), p. 137
51. At another place Rumi has explained the concept of *tajaddud e amthāl* thus: *tajaddud e amthāl* means that forms in the universe are perpetually undergoing change. One form disappears and another form takes its place but the self or substance remains the same As the new form is similar to the old form, for all practical purposes, the change is not recognizable and one has the impression that it is the same form continuing. (*Ibid*, p. 177)
52. *Ibid*, p. 176
53. From Rumi's view of the perpetual cycle of 'deaths and revivals' or 'deaths and resurrections' some persons have derived the impression that he subscribed to the doctrine of transmigration of souls. However, his concept of *tajaddud e*

*amthāl* has absolutely no semblance to the concept of transmigration. In transmigration the series of births is an outcome of the cyclic view of time whereas according to Rumi soul progresses and evolves in a linear fashion from the lower levels of existence to the higher ones. Rumi's *marḡ o raj'at* (death and revival) is rather analogous to the scientific fact of the process of annihilation of the old body cells in an organism and the emergence of new ones in their place. A clearer example we can take from the behaviour of cold-blooded animals who hibernate. In order to save themselves from the extremity of cold weather they shut themselves up in a comparatively warm place and keep lying there in a torpid state—almost in the state of death. As soon as the weather becomes favourable, traces of life re-emerge in them. Snakes too, we know, hibernate. They cast off their slough which grows useless during the hibernation period and put up a new skin. Modern space scientists are working on the possibilities of the hibernation of human beings so that after a long spell of journey in space they freshly reach the other planets. If this possibility is realized then the entire period of a person's journey in space will practically be the period of his death and, on reaching his destination he will, as if, start a new life. Thus the concepts of life and death, of *fanā'* and *baqā'* will assume meanings different from the ones that are usually ascribed to them.

54. Some thinkers of modern times subject Existentialism to a scathing criticism due its pessimistic stance. The counter view that thus took its shape is known as the 'Philosophy of the Living Spirit', for details see Fritz-Joachim Von Ritelen: *Contemporary German Philosophy and its Background*
55. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 97
56. Maulana Shibli Nu'mani, *Seerat al-Nabi*, vol. IV p. 665
57. *Ibid*, p. 666
58. See Carl P. Swanson, *The Cell*, p. 108
59. Maulana Shibli Nu'mani, *op. cit.*, p. 669
60. *Ibid*, p. 670
61. See Ghazali, *Tahāfat al-Falāsifa* and Ibn Rushd, *Tahāfat al-*

*Tabafat*—relevant chapters.

62. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 98
63. *Ibid*
64. Syed Ameer 'Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, pp. 189-190
65. *Ibid*, pp. 194-195
66. Maulana Shibli Nu'mani *op. cit.*, pp. 721–722
67. Maulana Hanif Nadvi, *Lisān al-Qur'an*, vol I, p. 388
68. Syed Ameer 'Ali, *op. cit.*, pp. 200–201
69. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 98
70. Maulana Shibli Nu'mani, *op. cit.*, p. 739
71. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 98
72. Maulana Shibli Nu'mani, *op. cit.*, pp. 721–722
73. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p.98
74. Maulana Hanīf Nadvi, *op. cit.*, 387
75. Maulana Shibli Nu'mani, *op. cit.*, p. 98
76. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p.98
77. *Ibid*
78. *Ibid*

## Chapter VII

1. Jacques Choron, *Death and Western Thought*, p. 265
2. *Ibid*, p. 269
3. J. F. Rosenberg, *Thinking Clearly About Death*, p. 215
4. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 89
5. *Ibid*, p. 147
6. As regards Judaism, Christianity and Islam, every one knows that they regard salvation dependent on good actions. Zoroastrianism too teaches the same. In Hinduism, the law of *Karma* has the basic significance in the process of the transmigration of souls and also for their ultimate liberation. For similar views of the ancient Egyptian religion, see Sneath, *Religion and Future Life*; for a study of Zoroastrian religion, see Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *Development of Metaphysics in Persia*.
7. Shah Waliullah, in his *Hujjatullah al-Bālighah*, says that on the Day of Resurrection individuals will be raised in



appropriately specific bodily forms. One who, during his earthly life was miserly in regard to the dissemination of knowledge will have reins of fire in his mouth (reins being the symbol of restraint). Similarly, one who acquired wealth illegitimately and tried to accumulate it endlessly will have the yoke of a bald snake round his neck. Rumi has given a comparable view of the nature of man. The self of man, according to him is like a jungle in which there are hogs and wolves, in which there is good as well as evil; meaning to say that it is a combination of all sorts of desirable as well as undesirable qualities:

بیشئه آمد وجود آدمی  
 پر حذر شوزی وجود ارزآن دمی  
 در وجود ما هزاران گرگ و خوک  
 صالح و ناصالح و خوب و خشوک

[The being of Man is a jungle: be on your guard against this being, if you are of that (Divine) Breath.

In our being there are thousands of wolves and hogs; (there is) goodly and ungoodly and fair and foul.]

Bad odour of the evil deeds which remained unsmelt and confined to the hearts of men will become evidently sensible on the Day of Judgment:

گند مخفی کان بدلها میر سید  
 گشت اندر حشر محسوس و پدید

[The hidden stench that was reaching (only) to people's hearts will become sensible and manifest at the Resurrection.)

Likewise, the envious will be raised in the form of wolves; and the greedy, the mean and the carrion-eaters, in the form of hogs:

زانکه حشر حاسدان روز گزند  
 بی گمان بر صورت گرگان کنند

حشر پر حرص خس مردار خور  
صورت خو کے بود روز شمار

[Because on the Day of Bale the envious will without doubt be (raised from the dead and) brought together (to Judgment) in the shape of wolves.

The resurrection of the greedy vile eater of carrion (unlawful food) will be in the shape of a hog on the Day of Reckoning.]

8. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 95
9. *Ibid*, p. 98

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## Translator's Note

Dr. Naeem Ahmad, the author, in his Preface, as translated above, has highlighted the importance—in fact the necessity—of producing more and more original Urdu literature on all sorts of scientific and philosophical subjects. He has expressed his desire that Urdu may achieve that academic status of excellence which English enjoys to-day or which Latin enjoyed in ancient times. Hence his decision to write on Iqbal's concept of immortality in the Urdu language despite the fact that it was easier for him to write in English for the reasons mentioned by him.

I perfectly share the feelings of the author regarding his long-term objectives. Despite that, I undertook to translate his book into English. This is because I have a short-term objective in view. Thought of Iqbal contained in his poetic, and particularly in his prose work, we know, has a vast background comprising the philosophies of both East and West and consequently has a lot of meaning and significance for both the worlds. Although the philosopher-poet is well-known in the East, specifically in South Asia, the bitter fact is that the Western English-speaking world knows comparatively very little of him. As his co-nationals it is our duty to introduce him abroad, specially in respect of those aspects of his philosophy which have great moral, social and spiritual significance for human individuals as well as societies. One such aspect relates to his view of immortality, as has rightly been emphasized by Dr. Naeem Ahmad. Despite the great importance of this problem, very little valuable material has been produced on it even in the Urdu language. I found Dr. Naeem Ahmad's book a work of great merit on the subject. I proposed to Mr. Muhammad Suheyl Umar, the very capable Director of the Iqbal Academy, that it be translated into English for purposes of

wider circulation and for the dissemination of the cultural benefits that its subject matter is pregnant with. He readily gave his assent to my proposal and asked me to do the job myself. I agreed. While carrying out the project, needless to say, I was in constant touch with Dr. Naeem Ahmad. Specially as regards editing, reviewing etc., wherever I considered it necessary, I duly obtained his consent. I am grateful to him for his perpetual, unfailing co-operation. My thanks are also due to Mr. Suheyl Umar who not only agreed to my proposal to get Dr. Naeem's book translated into English but also accepted the translated manuscript, on behalf of the Iqbal Academy, for publication.

**A.K.**