

IQBAL AND MODERN ERA

PROCEEDINGS OF
AN INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
GENT, BELGIUM, 18-19 NOVEMBER, 1997

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IQBAL ACADEMY PAKISTAN

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WELCOME ADDRESS

Prof. Urbain Vermeulen

Yours Excellency the Ambassador of Pakistan,
Distinguished Guests, Dear Students,
Ladies & Gentlemen,

After a not that long period of preparations we are here assembled for the awaited international symposium on Iqbal and the modern era. Not only European lecturers will take the floor here but Pakistani scholars and researchers as well.

During two days we will go into the work and thought of Sir Muhammad Iqbal who died nearly sixty years ago but whose views and ideas still have a tremendous impact not only in the Indian subcontinent but also in the Muslim world as a whole and even far beyond. As a poet and a thinker he tried to alert his fellow Muslims to the values of their culture and the greatness of their history. It was his aim to awaken in the Muslims mind the sense of their identity and their place in the concert of peoples and in the evolution of humanity.

Iqbal strived for combining what was for him true Islam with the modernism of European thought he got acquainted with in Cambridge and Germany, especially *Munchen*, where he obtained his doctorate with a thesis dissertation which became very famous entitled *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*. His reformist view of Islam emphasized obedience to the law of Islam, self control of the individual and acknowledging the role of the vice-gerant of God. His thought was greatly indebted to Jalal uddin Rumi, Friederich Nietzsche and Henri Bergson. It is not here the place ofcourse to lecture on Iqbal but it is, I think, not unprofitable

for the numerous students who attend this colloquium to introduce Iqbal very generally. When we look at the programme we notice that the work and way of thinking of Iqbal are dealt with in a variety of ways. So we hope that Iqbal from the scientific point of view will be studied as he deserves rightly. Another consideration to point is that most of us are here as friends. I see here colleagues I know already more than ten or even fifteen years. Some of them I saw for the first time in Pakistan especially in Lahore and Karachi. I am thankful that I meet them again here in Flanders.

That this colloquium can happen here in Ghent is made possible by the Embassy of Pakistan in Belgium and especially by His Excellency the Ambassador and by Mr Hassan Javed who was extremely caring for the practical side of the organisation of this conference. There is also the Belgian Ambassador in Islamabad who contributed to a trouble free passage from Pakistan to Belgium. We may not forget the manager and staff of the University institution 't Pand and the Ibis hotel. Last but not least I thank you all dear students, ladies and gentlemen on behalf of the academic authorities of the University of Ghent for your attendance here hoping that you and we will benefit from the scholarly visions and scientifically experience of the colleagues who came not only from nearby but also from the European countries and the homeland of Iqbal. I hope to the same extent that you will discover that in the so-called "republic of letters," friendship and honesty are a must for progress in debate, discussion and dialogue.

I have now for ending, the pleasure and the honour to ask His Excellency Mr. Riaz Mohammad Khan, Ambassador of Pakistan, without whose efforts this initiative and colloquium could not happen to take the floor.

OPENING REMARKS

Mr. Riaz Mohammad Khan

Professor Vermeulen, Distinguished Guests,

I consider it an honour to be invited to this distinguished gathering of scholars participating in the Conference on “Iqbal and modern era” jointly organised by the Iqbal Foundation Europe and the Embassy of Pakistan in Brussels. This Conference is part of the Fiftieth anniversary celebrations of Pakistan’s independence. We are grateful to the University of Gent for providing this splendid venue for the seminar. We are also indebted to Professor Vermeulen who worked hard to give shape to the seminar, and I deeply appreciate his contribution. I welcome and thank the eminent scholars who have accepted our invitation to participate in this Conference. We feel happy and fortunate to have with us Prof. Annemarie Schimmel who is widely revered in Pakistan as a Sufi and a great scholar and authority on Iqbal.

Early this year, I had consulted Professor Vermeulen about a possible theme for the Conference. “Iqbal and modern era” appeared to be appropriate for a variety of reasons, especially because Pakistan is struggling ever more intensely to address the issues of modernity and the modern era, as it crosses a symbolic mile-stone in its independent life this year. I am sure, the seminar will add to our understanding of where Iqbal stands in this struggle.

Distinguished guests,

I am neither a scholar nor a student of Iqbal, and have been privileged to speak to you by virtue of my representing

the Embassy. However, like many Pakistanis, I live in a cultural environment imbued with a popular view of Iqbal as a poet and a philosopher and as the founder of the idea of Pakistan. There is little disagreement about the splendor, the power and the superb artistry of Iqbal's poetry which is not the theme of this seminar. The theme focuses on Iqbal's contribution as a thinker and its relevance to our times. Again, I draw upon my experience with the common place and popular view only to raise a few questions from a Pakistani perspective. I would limit my remarks to these few questions since I am not sufficiently well-versed with Iqbal's works to offer a comment.

Most scholarly works describe Iqbal as a major Muslim intellectual and a modernist reformer of Islam of this century. Yet, the popular view often invokes his authority to attack intellect, reject the West and extol Muslim past, a mix that sustains a certain degree of anti-rational and anti-modernity sentiment in the Pakistani society. The "orthodox" ulema resort to Iqbal to reinforce their argument for restoration of the society to an idealised but impractical view of Islamist past. The question arises whether this confusion represents a regression in understanding Iqbal and a perversion of his intellectual legacy or whether it is inbuilt in Iqbal's philosophical works and prodigious poetry. Is there a need to separate his philosophical works from his poetry which is, by definition, unsuitable for structured and rigorous philosophical thought.

Iqbal has urged *Ijtihad* as a central principle of Islam and a means to ensure equilibrium between eternal principles and possibilities of change. He justifies reinterpretation of legal principles in Islam in the light of realities of experience. The popular view admits Iqbal's emphasis on *Ijtihad*, but remains devoid of any notion of its scope and parameters. The question arises whether Iqbal provides a set of principles to govern *Ijtihad* which can be applied to a range of serious contemporary issues such as rights of women and minorities and individual freedoms. And, if so, whether the conclusions

will be consistent with the modern view of such rights and freedoms, similar to the conclusion in the well-known defence by Iqbal of Turkey's decision to abolish Khilafat and his well argued endorsement of the republican form of government.

There is, also, the question of how we assess Iqbal's influence on intellectual discourse in the Pakistani society, and the manner and extent to which the intellectual evolution and orientation of the society are removed from Iqbal's message and thought. Similarly, we may ask whether the recent movements of fundamentalist, radical or militant Islam are in sync with Iqbal's idea of Muslim renaissance and awakening.

I have raised these few questions from the view point of a person with only a modest interest in Iqbal. Nonetheless, there are profound questions to be addressed about Iqbal's work and our times. Finally, I am tempted to say perhaps there has been a failure to continue and build on Iqbal's modernist Islamic legacy. Our scholars have a responsibility to reverse this failure as well as to supply ideas to enable our society to handle present day issues and challenges. Iqbal is relevant to our times especially to Pakistan where Islamic spirituality needs to be fused with Iqbal's emphasis on "realities of experience" and "logic of facts" of the modern era.

ENCYCLOPAEDIC BIBLIOGRAPHY OF IQBAL PROJECT

Prof. Winand Callewaert

Read by Dr. Daniel De Smet

It is with intense regret that I cannot be present at this International Symposium. I wanted to meet all of you and hear your interesting papers. Several of you have been, right from the beginning in 1989, inspiring forces in the endeavour of the Iqbal Foundation Europe.

First of all I should like to report that at long last the Foundation has a firm footing. With the University of Leuven as its base, an *Agreement for Collaboration with Universities* has been started. This implies that the members representing universities to collaborate on this project should also be members of the Iqbal Foundation. With this Agreement, the Iqbal Foundation Europe in Belgium can receive donations which may be considered for tax-exemption.

The Agreement is as follows:

“The following is agreed

1. The parties enter into an association for collaboration, called Iqbal Foundation Europe.
2. The purpose of the Iqbal Foundation Europe is to organise annual meetings in order to discuss the research about Iqbal and to spread knowledge about Iqbal and his cultural background to the general public, to compile a descriptive bibliography about Iqbal. In order to promote research about Muhammad Iqbal and the cultural and religious

environment in which he flourished and produced his visionary poetry, the *Bibliography Project* aims at compiling all titles of books and articles of Iqbal, and their translations in non-Arabic scripts, secondly, all titles of books and articles about Iqbal in non-Arabic scripts. if funding can be made available, the project would in a second stage aim at bringing together in one place as many publications as possible listed in the Bibliography.

And the last point of the Agreement says:

3. Parties agree that the office of the Iqbal Foundation Europe will be in Leuven, Blijde Inkomstraat 21, and that the Secretary, Prof. Winand Callewaert will be given a report of the accounts each year, as they are given to him by the different members participating in the project”.

End of the Agreement

The second point I want to put before you is the progress report in the *Bibliography Project*.

First I would like to thank the persons who have helped to bring about this project. At the end of the eighties it was my friend Mr. Toheed, now ambassador in Singapore, who kept pushing me, but I am very grateful to him. I should also like to thank His Excellency, ambassador Riaz Mohammad Khan, and his predecessors for never failing to encourage us. For her encouragement about the academic need of the Bibliography, I owe my gratitude to Prof. Annemarie Schimmel, and Dr Saeed Durrani, of the Iqbal Academy, UK, has been a pleasant company right from the beginning as well as a very inspiring force. Last but not least I should mention a very important pushing but again gentle force: Mr. Syed Hasan Javed, of the Pakistan embassy in Brussels. We should thank him for finding the budget to make this project, and the present colloquium possible.

Iqbalia have been prepared now for almost 100 years, and scores of books and hundreds of articles in periodicals- and many more articles in newspapers- have been produced

during this time. They deal with different aspects of Muhammad Iqbal: as a person, as a poet, as a philosopher or as a political thinker. *Iqbalia* started to appear already during Iqbal's lifetime, when attempts were made to arrange and classify Iqbal's thought and work, and to evaluate his importance as one of the major philosophers of our times.

It has been a long time indeed since Zulfikar Ali Khan, with *A Voice from the East* (1922) published the first ever book about Iqbal, containing a more or less systematic view on the man and his work.

More than half a century ago Bashir Ahmad Dars *Study in Iqbal's Philosophy* appeared (in 1944). In this work- for the first time- the philosophical views and thoughts of Iqbal were treated, exhaustively and in a scientific way. Dars' aim was to explain generally the philosophical aspects of Iqbal's re-interpretation of the message of Islam, in the context of a contemporary situation. This is still the aim of many researchers from all over the world today. Since Iqbal is now considered to be not only a *philosopher of Islam*, but rather a *philosopher of mankind*, the scope of *Iqbalia* has broadened dramatically- and interest in Iqbal and his thoughts among non-Persian and non-Urdu speakers has increased very much.

Not only books about Iqbal have appeared: also bibliographies have been compiled. I refer especially to the excellent *A Bibliography of Articles on Iqbal* (1900-1977) by Malik Mueen Nawaz Azhar, published in Lahore in 1977 (this includes also many articles in newspapers published in Pakistan).

I should also mention the *Analytical Catalogue of Books on Allama Mohammad Iqbal* (1877-1977), by Abdul Hafeez Akhtar, published by the government of Pakistan in 1978.

There are several more short bibliographies and in fact in many books authors try to give some sort of bibliography. No major bibliography has been produced for the last twenty years, and no effort has been made to include- as much as

possible- all the publications published outside Pakistan, that means in European languages.

For the Bibliography project in Leuven we have so far consulted all the books available to us, several internet connections to libraries all over the world, and I have personally consulted the Van Pelt Library in Philadelphia and the Library of the university of Washington, in Seattle.

It is our goal to be as exhaustive and complete as possible and we have now (Nov.1997) a database of nearly 1,500 records, of books, journal articles, essays and Ph.D. theses. But that is far from complete and when it will be completed, the Bibliography of Iqbal of the end of this millennium will not only be a handy tool for research: it will also be a grand tribute to Mohammad Iqbal.

It is our aim to catalogue all the material under appropriate headings and keywords, and to provide abstracts of all the major contributions to *iqbalia* over the last 100 years, in order to enable future researchers and students to find their way in the load of material available.

Depending on only the title of an article is a poor tool in research. Even if many superfluous papers and articles have been published on Iqbal, we discovered that sometimes a small contribution contains very valuable information.

The databank we are currently handling is composed of material taken from bibliographies from all over the world, with input mainly from the on-line services of the major university libraries. However, there remains an urgent need to consult as many private collections as we possibly can, for a great deal of our input data appears to be either rare or not widely distributed. Many organisations with frequent output on Iqbal are indeed working for a readership of a select few. A researcher might well want to set sail on that vast ocean of *iqbalia* too.

As far as possible we also aim at giving a brief abstract of the major articles and books.

Every item is catalogued under a series of keywords, ranging from

general, over biography, to poetic style, the kind of poetic style, modern Pakistani politics, Nietzsche ad Kant

Our keyword systems is arranged according to the tree-system, which means that under each heading (for instance: *philosophy*) we get different sub-titles, such as: *comparative > European thought > Nietzsche > Theory of Superman*, and so on.

Besides this, indexes will be made available according to author, language, and date.

As mentioned in the Agreement between universities, the third aim of the Iqbal Foundation Europe- or is this only a dream?- would be to make available in one place the most important works and- if necessary in photocopy- the articles about Iqbal. Now they are scattered all over the globe.

To conclude, I appeal to all of you present here, especially those working in European languages other than English, to send us all the bibliographic information they have. Especially titles published after 1990 are most welcome.

As our closing date is end of February 1998, we would be very much obliged if that information could be sent to us soon. All courtesy will be acknowledged.

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IQBAL AND CLASSICAL ISLAMIC TRADITIONS

Prof. Annemarie Schimmel

Your Excellency, Ladies & Gentlemen,

Let me begin my very brief talk with a little anecdote. Last May I wrote to a Pakistani friend in Los Angeles that I had just been delivering some Arabic lectures on Iqbal in Syria and in Morocco. He replied to this remark by writing: "Oh, we are very grateful to you that you are doing some missionary work among the Arabs!"

I think this remark, strange as it may sound, was not very much off the mark because it is wellknown that Iqbal-famous and beloved as he is in the subcontinent and in Iran-has never caught the imagination and the interest of the Arabis people to a major extent. Yet, when I listened to the paper about the bibliography that is in the process of being compiled I very much regretted that there are apparently no Arabic works or works by Arabic authors in this bibliography. After all, Iqbal often professed his strong love for Arabic culture, the culture of that part of the world where Islam appeared first. Many of you know his famous verse in which he says: "It behoves you to go back to Arabia- all too long did you gather roses from the gardens of Persia and have seen the spring of India and Iran- now taste again a bit of the desert-heat." We should not neglect this aspect of Iqbal, and I am going to return to it somewhat later.

When we listened to the talk of His Excellency we could see that he- as most of us- is very concerned about the role

Iqbal has to play in the development of a modern society. This is, after all, the chief theme of our meeting, and many of you are certainly aware of long discussions concerning Iqbal's 'modernity' and 'old fashioned' aspects of his thought. I remember very well- and many of you who have been working on Iqbal will remember it as well- what an outcry rose in Pakistan and in part also among the Indian Muslims when one became aware that Wilfred Cantwell Smith in his book *Islam in Modern India* (1947) offered his analysis of Iqbal: in two chapters, one of them called 'Iqbal the Progressive', the other one 'Iqbal the Reactionary'. The second one was sometimes suppressed in later studies or in references to Cantwell Smith's book, or else harshly criticised. Some of you- perhaps only those who read German like my friend Christoph Bürgel- will also remember the reaction of some German orientalists to Iqbal's *Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought* when this book appeared in 1930. G. Kampffmeyer in Berlin wrote a very positive assessment of Iqbal's new approach to Islamic philosophy and Islamic culture while Rudi Paret published a critical review, accusing Iqbal of mixing traditional Islamic ideas with modern European ones. He was one of those who never understood that Iqbal was not a theoretical philosopher as was e.g. Kant; rather that he was what I would call a 'poetical philosopher', a man who had a vision which he tried to express in the vocabulary of both classical Islam, including Sufism, and of the post-enlightenment West. Such a combination seemed very strange not only to Rudi Paret but also to some other critics, and it was a recurring problem: Who was the 'real' Iqbal? Was he a philosopher? Was he a poet? Was he primarily a political thinker? During the last four decades I had many discussions with Javid Iqbal, the poet's son- discussions in which I was defending Iqbal's poetical aspect (for that is closest to my heart) while Javid constantly claimed that everything his father said had a political background or at least a political motive.

I think this discussion will continue for years to come, and in this conference we have quite a few different viewpoints to be discussed. Just before I was leaving Germany to attend this meeting I received the latest issue of the *Journal of Pakistan and Middle Eastern Studies*, edited by Hafeez Malik, the well-known authority on Iqbal's political thought. Here, I came upon a remark that would be worthy of a major discussion. Hafeez Malik, quoting an article by Javid Iqbal that appeared last spring in an American journal, says rightly "that for Iqbal the dynamic movement in the shari'ah and *kalam* was at the heart of his wishes". This points to a dynamism which he had inherited, so to speak, from European thinkers like Bergson and which he wanted to apply to the very structures of Islamic theology and jurisprudence. It was a great loss that he passed away before he could commit to paper his ideas about his new interpretation of the shari'ah. Hafeez Malik, taking his cue from Javid Iqbal, points out that this dynamic movement was certainly something very important, yet "his conservative and tradition-bound critics claimed that this dynamic movement was certainly something very important, yet "his conservative and tradition-bound critics claimed that there are many thoughts and views expressed in his lectures the interpretation of which conflicts with the collective convictions of the Sunnis." And then comes a quote from no less a scholar than Syed Sulayman Nadwi who, incidentally, was Iqbal's friend. He wrote that 'it would have been better if these lectures were not published.' This is quite an exitigin remark, especially as it comes from a person with whom Iqbal worked for many years and whom he often asked about the interpretation of theological problems. However, we have to take this remark seriously, and we are grateful to Hafeez Malik for drawing our attention to this sentence, because this criticism is one of the reasons why Iqbal never became as popular with the Arabs as he was with the Indian and the Pakistanis and, to a certain extent, with many Iranians after

Ali Shariati had based his thoughts on Iqbalian ideas. Personally, I think that it would be very important to emphasise Iqbal's love for the Arabic tradition and his understanding of classical Arabic- he was aware, as I said at the beginning, that the beautiful scented gardens of Iran and the "butterfly- like imagination of the Persians (as he writes in his doctoral thesis on the *Development of Metaphysics in Persia*) should be supplemented by the strong aspects of desert heat".

Iqbal's *Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* was translated into Arabic in 1955 but is still banned in Saudi Arabia. Other translations of his work into Arabic- such as the *Jawidnamah* (1974) - had no major impact on the Arab world. Earlier Abdul Wahhab Azzam had some of Iqbal's poetry into Arabic poetry, just as he has translated parts of the poetry of Iqbal great spiritual leader, Maulana Jalaladdin Rumi. Some of the poetical renderings of Iqbal's poetry were even sung by the famous Egyptian singer Umm Kulthum and thus introduced the poet's voice to the art loving Arabs. Lately, however, a growing interest in Iqbal's work and his contributions to Islamic civilisation can be observed among the Arabs, and to my great surprise just three weeks ago I discovered several Arabic articles about him in a Yemeni cultural magazine, issued by the University of Sanaa. That is the reason why I would like to see Arabic books and articles on Iqbal in the bibliography for we may come across quite a different interpretation of Iqbal through the eyes of the Arab Muslims!

And yet, one can understand very well why it was so difficult for Arabs to understand Iqbal's thought and his way of using images and symbols, especially in his Persian and Urdu poetry. To translate Iqbal into Arabic required much time and energy because the way of thinking in Persian and Persianate poetry is quite different from the aesthetics of Arabic poetry, and expressions tinged my mystical ideas, using the time-honoured language of Persian Sufi poetry is hard to understand let alone to be poetically rendered into

Arabic. In addition to the sheer linguistic and poetical difficulties the point raised by Javid Iqbal and Hafeez Malik makes a proper appreciation not easy as Iqbal's interpretation of Islam is something novel, inspired both by European thought and by the great mystical thinkers of Iran.

By "European thought" I think not think only of Iqbal's knowledge of Western philosophy, which he studied in Cambridge under the guidance of his teacher McTaggart, nor do I think exclusively of the influence Nietzsche and Goethe had on him (a topic discussed all too often by scholars who had only a superficial knowledge of German)- rather, I would like to emphasize the fact that Iqbal's thought was very much in tune with the trends in European and in particular German philosophy in the 1910s and the 1920s. A very good example is his discussion, in the *Six Lectures*, of the development of *Khudi*. When *Khudi*, the innermost human self, has survived the shock of corporeal death it will develop into new forms, will discover new possibilities of growth in the spiritual realm - provided it was strong enough not to fall back into matter. Finally, so Iqbal claims, "once the journey to God is completed the journey in God begins". This is an idea that was elaborated by the major mystical poets such as Fariaddin Attar (d.1221) but which is also found in Goethe's thought as it appears among German philosophers of the 1920s, such as Lotze and Scholz. Of special interest in this connection is the book of the Swedish Lutheran bishop Tor Andrae (incidentally the author of a fine biography of the Prophet Muhammad and another most important study about the veneration of the Prophet in Islamic thought). In his book 'The Last Things' Tor Andrae mentions ideas that expresses Iqbal expressed in his *Lectures*, that is: if eternal life is *real* life it cannot be a static duration in eternity but involved also suffering, feeling, enjoying, and never ending growing. Andrae's ideas could not have been known to Iqbal when he wrote the famous sentence in the *Lectures* that "Heaven is no holiday". This sentence runs, of course, counter to the

classical Islamic tradition that everyone has to die and, after the last judgement, is going to see what will happen to him or her according to his actions. For Iqbal, however, immortality was not something given but rather something human beings have to strive for; they may be blessed with eternal life if they have strengthened their *khudi*, their innermost Self, to the largest possible extent. This alone would make Iqbal suspect in the eyes of orthodox Sunni and Shi'i theologians, and it is certainly one reason for the aversion of parts of the more "fundamentalist" - mainly Arab-Muslims to him. How could he, not even properly trained in a traditional madrasa, dare utter such seemingly impious ideas? This is one aspect of the problem. But also there is something else. All of you who have read Iqbal's "Speeches and Statements" will probably remember that the last statement he made in early March 1938, that is six weeks before his death in April 21, 1938, consists of a letter to Husain Ahmad Madani of Deoband in which he defends his own ideas about the difference of *umma* and *millat*. The very last sentence of this letter is a quotation from the great Persian poet Khaqani (d.1199), who warns the Muslims lest they put the *dagh*, the branding mark of Greek philosophy on the arabic-born noble steed of "religion". Iqbal was never fond of Greek- and that is for him Neo-Platonic- Philosophy, and his attitude that Islam, being a dynamic religion, is far cry from Greek philosophy remained almost unchanged to the very end of his life. It is this aversion that made him select the powerful verse of the Persian master poet Khaqani who wrote at a time that the struggle between the philosophers, that is the Muslim Aristotelians such as Averroes, and the tradition-bound Muslim was still going on in the Islamic world. For the image of Islam as manifested in the shape of a powerful horse, however, we have to look at one of Iqbal's letters. In 1931 he was invited to a meeting of the Society of Muslim Young Men (the Muslim counterpart of the YMCA in Christian countries) in Calcutta. Excusing himself from the long journey he told his young friends of a strange dream. "I saw

that angels came riding on black horses and I interpreted this dream that the powers of the Muslims will be revived, because the horses are the spirit of Islam and the spirit of the Arabs.” This fits in with Khaqani’s symbol: the strong steed of Islam should not be appropriated by Greek philosophy, rather, Islamic culture should develop according to its own dynamics. We know that it was not the well-trimmed gardens of Shiraz that he loved most, nor was it the complaining nightingale that was his favourite soul-bird, rather, the wild tulip in the desert is, in his imagery, more important than the rose, and the daring falcon represents the Muslim’s strong soul better than the tender singing-bird: this kind of images express the dynamic spirit of Islam best— and this leads the reader back to Khaqani’s strong horses who storm through the desert, carrying with them the message of victory...

It is one of Iqbal’s great contributions to Islamic thought that he reminded the Muslims once more of the dynamic aspects of their culture, difficult as it might have in an environment where most poetry still followed time-honoured rules and ideas from which to break away was difficult—hence the misunderstanding of his poetical message especially at the time when the *Asrar-i khudi* was published in 1915.

Another difficulty for many pious Muslims is to cope with Iqbal’s daring call for *ijtihad*. For him, *ijtihad* means to go back to the roots of Islamic civilisation and rather than to dwell upon the words to discover the spirit in which these words were uttered in order to see them in their historical context—and this dynamic spirit was revealed to him, as it was to Khaqani, under the symbol of strong black horses. However it would be wrong to stress only some aspects of the Arabic influence. His quotations from various medieval Persian poets show how deeply he was influenced by classical Persian poetry (even though we are aware of his aversion to the sweet and enchanting, hence “dangerous”, songs of Hafiz). He would have never written his Persian poetry unless he had been touched by the spirit of Maulana Rumi and other

Persian poets. A fact that is also often overlooked is how well he was acquainted with the poets of the so-called Indian style, a style that developed between the later 16th and the 19th century in India. This year we celebrate the 200th birthday of Mirza Ghalib of Delhi and become once more aware of the stylistic peculiarities of this great poet— my friend Dr. Natalia Prigarina has recently devoted a book to this important aspect of Indo-Muslim poetry. Iqbal himself, in his notebook *Stray Reflections* of 1910, has called Bedil and Ghalib among the most important sources of inspiration in his life and poetry; in Bedil it was a certain dynamism that attracted him despite the immense difficulties offered by the Persian text.

There are also other aspects of classical Persian poetry that influenced Iqbal but are often overlooked. Whosoever has studied his 'Javidnamah', the poet's great visionary journey through the spheres will remember the scene that our poet reaches Paradise in the company of his mentor Maulana Rumi to meet there some interesting people, as he had done in the different spheres he visited before reaching Paradise. One of those to appear there is Nasir-i Khusrau, the Ismaili philosopher-poet who died in Badakhshan in northern Afghanistan some years after 1072. Nasir's *Divan* you will see that it expresses some of Iqbal's dynamic attitude to life. As the *Divan* of Nasir-i Khusrau was published in Iran in 1928 it is very likely that Iqbal had access to the book and used images and ideas that fitted into his own worldview, and indeed, many of Iqbal's ideas are similar to those of Nasir Khusrau's— such as the well-measured combination of wisdom and love, of 'sword and pen' and many more. It would be useful for a specialist in Ismaili thought to draw some comparisons after a careful study of the 'Divan'. But we have also to confess that Nasir's great philosophical work, the *Jami' al-bikmatayn*, an attempt to bring together Greek philosophy and Islamic thought would have pleased Iqbal if he had lived to see Henry Corbin's edition which appeared about 10 years after his death.

However the emphasis that Nasir has laid on man's responsibility and that he, or his Self, determines, in a certain way, the future direction of his life, was certainly very close to Iqbal's way of thinking: "man has to write his actions on the paper of his soul". At the time that I read and translated Nasir-i Khusrau a few years ago it was always a pleasant surprise to discover the numerous similarities of his thought with that of Iqbal, and the combination of beautiful though difficult poetical images with high philosophical concepts is likewise common to both philosopher-poets.

There is still something else which may not be very popular. In the 'Javidnama' you find in the 'Sphere of Jupiter' the poems of three persons, burning like tulips in the fire of love. One is the martyr mystic Hallaj, executed in Baghdad in 922, the other one Tahira Qurrat ul-Ayn, the Babi poetess who was killed in Iran in 1852, and the third one is Ghalib, mentioned previously. In his doctoral dissertation of 1908, Iqbal had stressed, at the very end, the importance of the Babi movement, a movement that grew out of mystical Shia circles at the beginning of the 19th century but which was considered heretic by the Shia theologians and is still outlawed in Iran. Iqbal admired its dynamism and the tendency to preach the love of creation in general and of human beings in particular. I have dwelt upon this problem in an article which is going to be published in a book edited by Christoph Burgel. As Tahira's poetry became known in India in 1930 when her *Divan* was distributed to members of the Muslim intelligentsia Iqbal must have studied it before writing his 'Javidnama' where he inserted her most famous poem and included her among the martyrs of divine love. But it may well be that the paragraph about the Babai-Bahai religion as well as a few other remarks in the *Development of Metaphysics* were the reason for Iqbal's unwillingness to have the book translated into Urdu. He had certainly outgrown some of the ideas of his dissertation by 1930 but it is fascinating to observe how his stance in some cases has completely

changed. In his thesis he was still an admirer of Ibn Arabi's mystical philosophy while he was not that close to Maulana Rumi. In later times he turned violently against many aspects of Sufism- especially the currents that developed after Ibn Arabi's time but under his influence including the idea that "Everything is He". He claims that this kind of mysticism is contrary to the dynamic spirit of Islam and puts people asleep instead of awakening them to love and constant activity, while in Rumi he discovered the secrets of dynamic love and therefore took over many of his ideas as well as the traditional meter of his *Mathnawi* into his own didactic poetry. Again, his attitude toward Hallaj has changed by 180 degrees: the martyr mystic, seen in his thesis as a kind of Muslim Vedantist, whose saying *ana' l-haqq*, "I am the Absolute Truth" he, like many others, considered as the counterpart of the ahm brahmasmi, "I am the Brahma" of the Upanishads; but in later days, after reading Louis Massignon's books on Hallaj and discussing with him his own interpretation of Hallaj, he gave him a place in the 'Jupiter-Sphere' of the 'Javidnama' where he appears as a forerunner of Iqbal himself, because both of them, as our poet claims, have the same goal, that is, to awaken the spiritually dead to a new activity- Hallaj, so Iqbal says, is in a certain way similar to Israfil, the angel whose trumpet makes resurrection begin- and a resurrection is what the Muslims really need...

All these aspects of Iqbal's personality make it perhaps difficult to do justice to him if a person is only philosopher or politician or poet- the philosopher may find the use of the vocabulary confusing, the lack of "Kantian" clarity, while the poetry lover sometimes stumbles into difficult definitions or strange comparisons. I personally find exactly these contradictions (or whatever we may call them) fascinating, because they show that life is not something static; rather, it is constant change. The life of an individual as well as of a nation consists of permanent change, and it is not by accident that Iqbal reminds the Muslims of Sura 12 verse 13, where it is stated: "Verily God does not change the fate of a people

unless they change what is in themselves'. This, incidentally, was the favourite Quranic verse of almost all Muslim modernists and also of some mystics.

From this view point one has to look into the question: to what extent is Iqbal relevant to modern Muslims? Can we dub him as a fundamentalist, or should we look exclusively to some of his "mystical" ideas as they become clear in several verses? Or is the main thrust of his thought political? Or philosophical? Or even theological?

As I said at the very beginning, I, being neither a philosopher nor a political scientist but a person interested in poetry see him as a synthesiser, someone who really brought a new spirit into the world of Islam. It may be difficult to do him justice, especially when one has grown up in a different cultural environment, or when one looks at him with the eye of a philosopher, or of a hairsplitting analyst. For me Iqbal is the representative of what I would call creative love, a love that destroys many outdated traditional customs and thoughts but at the same time constantly builds something new; a love that teaches mankind to soar higher and higher through the spheres and thus to conquer the universe- as it was his ideal that he expressed in his *Javidnama*.

I offered you some scattered ideas, some stray reflections as it were, but since you wanted me to say a few words about my own feelings about Iqbal I thought I had to tell you what I personally feel and have been feeling ever since I first read some poetry from the "Payam-i-Mashriq" at the age of 18. If someone wants to contradict me, he is welcome to do so- that is part of life.

But I keep in mind Iqbal's great ode to the mosque of Cordoba which begins with these marvellous verses about the power of love which he finds expressed everywhere- in the Quran, in the Prophet, in Islamic culture; for it is love what really moves life, and moves us and hopefully will help us to assess Iqbal's role in the world and his role in the formation

and keeping up of Pakistani and, in general, Islamic culture; for, as he himself says

*If the formation of human beings is the work of poetry,
then, poetry is the heir to prophethood.*

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

To Prof. Annemarie Schimmel
Remarks from Mr. M Suheyl Umar:

I have only two, brief comments to make. The first is directed to the presentation about the project and the second offers a few observations with regard to the wonderful talk that Dr. Schimmel has just delivered. I was actively involved in the Iqbal Foundation project from the beginning, when the charter was being conceived and drafted. But for a variety of reasons, of which I can not into details here, we lost contact during the last three years. So when I received the news that this project is getting off eventually, it was obviously a very welcome news. The three aspects which have been presented just now, the bibliography of articles, the bibliography of books of Iqbal and on Iqbal and then, in the second phase, the collection of materials, is in the logical sequence. My first remark is that the project should have built itself on the foundation prepared by the previous scholars, from the stage to which the early scholars had already brought it to, not from scratch. The report mentioned that for the last 20 years there had been no bibliographical work published which is, I am afraid to say, not correct. Because in the last 20 years the most comprehensive and detailed bibliographical work has been published and even that has been updated to December 1996 and the man who is doing it i.e. the bibliography of books of Iqbal and on Iqbal in all the world languages, is sitting right here in this room, namely, Dr Rafiuddin Hashmi.

Now it is going to come out in two volumes, updated to December 1996. This is one example.

Secondly, we have many comprehensive bibliographies of articles on Iqbal and various other works published during the last two decades. Only before a week or so I received the first request for materials to be supplied from Pakistan which I immediately did but I couldn't bring it with me because it was the old back files of *Iqbal review* and *Iqbal*, the two main organs of Iqbal's studies published from two different organisations since 1960 onwards. Since they were almost 150 kgs, he would receive it in due course. If his Excellency could help us out with transport it would be a good idea. Another thing which I would like to mention is that there is a website (allamaiqbal.com) on Iqbal being hosted quite soon by the end of this year in connection with the Golden Jubilee celebration. This is the website of prepared by Iqbal Academy. It is a huge website giving all these materials.

My second remark is addressed to Madam Schimmel. Though I am in complete agreement with her on the point that Iqbal's appeal to the Arab sensitivity is rather limited, her remark has to be understood, I believe, in comparison to Pakistan and Persian. But still a large number of works, researches and studies, of whatever quality that may be, have appeared over the years in the Arab world at a steady pace. And these are indicators of an increasing interest or an influence. I only want to register the point that Iqbal's work, especially poetically works, are more wide spread in the Arab world in translation than could be surmised from the existing bibliographical surveys. Almost all of his poetical works have been translated into Arabic. And there is a fresh translation of *Reconstruction of Rreligious Thought in Islam* just two weeks ago which was sent to the Iqbal Academy for review because the translator was not comfortable with his English. And, your Excellency, there is another enthusiastic diplomat in Cairo who has taken up this project and there again I must pay my compliments to Toheed Ahmed. His initiative has again motivated them. Toheed Ahmed sitting back in Singapore.

(Annemarie Schimmel: This is excellent. Thank you for the good news.)

The second point relates to my topic of research which I have been doing for the last five years. It pertains to Ibn 'Arabi and Iqbal. You said Iqbal turned violently against Ibn 'Arabi and he criticised him for the inactivity of the Muslim peoples etc. and the lack of social responsibility and the lack of activism. To this my response is yes and no. Yes, in the sense that he was surely against these trends which were evident in his contemporary Muslim society. But to identify these with Ibn 'Arabi or his doctrine and philosophical position, it is difficult to assess. Because my study, whatever humble study I was able to do for the last five years, leads me to conclude three points: first, that Iqbal's objection when analysed with reference to Ibn 'Arabi's positions based and discerned from his *magnum opus* are not really directed against Ibn 'Arabi but to a received body of thought and paraxis which he deemed detrimental to his community. Second, there was a change vis-a-vis Ibn 'Arabi, as a change vis-a-vis Hallaj and various other figures, between 1910 and 1918 and then in 1930, the last decade, when he wrote the *Reconstruction*. In the *Reconstruction* he mentioned Ibn 'Arabi in the most glowing terms of tribute. And, thirdly a comparison of Ibn 'Arabi's doctrine with Iqbal is a subject which is almost unexplored with reference to Iqbal. My preliminary humble research reveals to me that contrary to the prevalent opinions and received wisdom on the subject, the influence of Ibn 'Arabi's doctrine is far more pervasive on Iqbal than can be seen on the surface.

Thank You.

MUHAMMAD IQBAL'S IDEA ABOUT THE POET'S ROLE IN SOCIETY

Prof. J. Christoph Burgel

Twenty years ago, the University of Bern celebrated the centenary of Iqbal organising four public lectures delivered by three eminent scholars from abroad and the present speaker. In my preface to the book containing these four lectures I confronted Iqbal, the outstanding Indo-Islamic poet-philosopher of this century with one of the greatest European poets of the same period, Gottfried Benn, pointing to the fundamental difference of their attitudes, the world view and their self-understanding. Actually, these two great minds represent two opposite outlooks on the poet's role in society, the poet's responsibility, outlooks, that existed, in principle, already in Greek society. We know, that Plato in his famous dialogue on the republic postulated a poetry in the service of the state, poets, who would not lie, not denigrate the deities nor the great heroes of history. Aristotle, on the other hand, discusses lying, or if you prefer, untruthfulness in poetry as a particular device for creating surprise in the reader or hearer, and praises Homer as the peerless master of such lying. These two views developed into the later, and much more pointed - difference between the so-called *l'art pour l'art* attitude represented by the French symbolists and many later poets in their wake on the one hand and by the literature engaged on the other. Gottfried Benn was an extreme representative of the *l'art pour l'art* standpoint, feeling himself responsible to

nothing but the artistic form. Iqbal always supported the opposite attitude.

Before taking a closer look on some of his poems dealing with this subject, it may not be out of place to briefly recall the history of the poet's role in Islam, for Iqbal's own position can only be fully understood with that background in mind.

The history of Arabic poetry dates back into pre-Islamic times. In the Bedouin tribal society of the Arabian peninsula poetry was one of the few major cultural achievements. Poets were not only the public speakers of their tribes defending their interests and attacking their opponents. In praising the virtues as embodied by their own tribe and decrying the vices projecting them in the enemy tribe, they were also the guardians of the public morals, the tribal ethics. No wonder, therefore, that the political influence of these poets constituted a power no tribe of any importance could afford to dispense with. When Islam began to be revealed, the existence of this highly esteemed pagan poetry created one of the major problems to be solved by prophet Muhammad. To be sure, his opponents used this weapon against Muhammad and against his message. So he flung a divine warning against them, contained in the last verses of Sura 26, which describe poets as people who follow their demons and are untruthful.

But on the other hand Muhammad took himself some poets into his service and entrusted them with satirising the enemies of Islam in their verses. "Mock at them", he is reported to have said, "for your satire will do them more harm than a hail of arrows in the dawn!" Thus, Muhammad instituted, as it were, the office of a poet in the service of Islam. Actually, the poets in Islamic times became the panegyrists of the caliph and, later on, with the disintegration of the Islamic empire, of the various courts. This, however, meant that rather than defending and propagating Islam, they defended and praised the glory of their respective patrons. It is true, that part of this court panegyric consisted in praising the patron as being the true and glorious protector of Islam;

but the praise was usually so overdone that it lost more and more of its credibility. Furthermore, these poets had ceased to be the voice of the people they used to be in the tribal society. They were now functionaries of the rulers, whom they would praise as incarnations of the ideal Islamic monarch, whereas in practice they supported the usually despotic government. Apart from this function, the poets usually indulged in very mundane pleasures; even the forbidden wine was praised, and some poets like Abu Nuwas did not refrain from elevating wine-drinking to something hardly less than a religious cult.

Thus, an independent religious poetry scarcely developed in Arabia. And when it developed in Persian and later on also in Turkish and Urdu, it did so in the framework of mystical thought, which became so predominant in Islam after the breakdown of the Abbasid caliphate and the Mongol invasion.

The ideal of mysticism was self-annihilation as precondition for the mystical union with God. Mystical poetry, however, was not restricted to this self-denying and world-despising attitude. According to the theory of the great mystical thinker Ibn Arabi, everything in the creation reflected divine realities. For the mystical poets, the whole phenomenal world turned into symbols, and they therefore felt free to use the language not only in love poetry but even of wine poetry for describing their love of God and their intoxication with the divine beauty as it manifested itself in a beautiful garden in spring or even a handsome boy in a Christian tavern serving the forbidden wine. Some poets used mystical language for secular purposes or created, like Hafiz, a graceful, refined play with various layers of meaning. Such poetry, even though it was not devoid of messages, was liable to the most contradictory interpretations, it seemed totally non-committal, in short, it resembled, and still resembles what could be called a Persian *l'art pour l'art*.

On the other hand, it became customary among Persian poets to adopt the role of a divinely inspired, almost prophet-like orator, guarding arcane knowledge and speaking of it in an allusive way comprehensible only for a small number of initiated.

Poetry did not fulfil the role prophet Muhammad had envisaged for it. Or at least, this is, how Iqbal felt about it, when he started to ponder over the situation of the Muslim community in which he lived and about his own role as a poet in that society. He was, particularly after his sojourns in Europe, deeply concerned about the reasons for the Islamic stagnation, the state of immobility, lethargy and decay he noticed in Muslim countries. The root of all this he found to lie in a wrong concept of man, and in a wrong world-view both propagated in the name of Islam, but in reality against its original message. These two strong concepts were the ideal of self-annihilation and the depreciation of active life. He found some of the greatest Oriental poets guilty of propagating these wrong concepts, with an attitude of hedonism, as he perceived and reproached it particularly in the poetry of the great Hafiz.

Iqbal was aware of the enormous influence that could be exercised by means of poetry in the whole Muslim world. So he decided to put his own gift at the service of his religion, to use all his poetic capacity for the propagation of the true Islamic message, the true Islamic ideal of self-realisation not through enjoyment of life, but through the inner glow of religious enthusiasm and divine vision. This, however, meant fighting against a time-honoured centuries-old tradition, it meant also to establish a new ethos of poetry, and to criticise the predominant one. No wonder, therefore, that this concern is one of the recurrent motifs throughout the poetical oeuvre of Muhammad Iqbal. Already his first collection of poems in Urdu, published in 1912 and entitled *Bang-i Dara*, "The Ringing of the Caravan Bell", contains a number of poems dealing with this topic such as *Sha'ir*, *Rat aur sha'ir*, and particularly the long and magnificent poem

Sham' aur sha'ir. All the later collections, some of them in Urdu, some in Persian comprise further poems concerned with the poet's task, particularly the last Urdu collection entitled *Zarb-i Kalim* or "The Blow of Moses", published in 1937, one year before the death of Iqbal.

His poems on poetry can be divided into various groups.

1. Poems in which Iqbal speaks about himself and his own poetical message, such as 'Ashiq-i harja'-i, Zuhd-u-rindi, Nasihat, Apne shi'r se etc.
2. Poems which sing the praise of other great poets such as the Persian poets Khaqani, Rumi, Bedil, 'Urfi, the Urdu poets Hali and Ghalib, the European poets Shakespeare and Goethe.
3. Poems dealing with the poet in general, such as the already mentioned Sha'ir aur rat, Sham' aur sha'ir, and many other poems of later periods, in particular Surud-i halal, Surud-i haram, and Shi'r-i 'ajam.
4. Poems dealing with the fine arts in general such as Adabiyat, Din-u-hunar, Takhliq, Ijad-i ma'ani, all of which form part of the chapter on Literature and the Fine Arts in the collection *Zarb-i Kalim*.
5. Chapters in the long didactic poems such as the chapter "Concerning the True Nature of Poetry and the Reform of Islamic Literature" which is the eighth chapter of the "Secrets of the Self", and some passages in the *Javednameh* such as "Epiphany of Sarosh" and "Departure for the Valley of Yarmaghid".
6. Isolated verses in various poems, especially in many of Iqbal's ghazals in Urdu as well as in Persian.

The ideas expressed in these poems and passages might be called Iqbal's philosophy of poetry. They may be summarised in four main points.

1. Poetry is inspired by beauty and love.
2. The poet creates a new word by his imagination

3. The poet is an intellectual, even spiritual leader of his society and should be aware of his responsibility.
4. Poetry is a kind of prophecy.

Let me now quote some verses in order to illustrate these four ideas and briefly discuss some of its aspects.

Beauty is the creator of desire's springtide,
 Desire is nourished by the display of Beauty.
 'Tis in the poet's breast that Beauty unveils,
 'Tis from his Sinai that Beauty's beams arise.
 By his look the fair is made fairer,
 Through his enchantments Nature is more beloved.
 From his lips the nightingale hath learned her song,
 And his rouge hath brightened the cheek of the rose.

....

Sea and land are hidden within his water and clay.
 A hundred new worlds are concealed in his heart.

....

His witchery makes Life develop itself
 And become self-questioning and impatient.

From *The Secrets of the Self*, Nicholson's
 Translation 61-63

The idea that poetry is inspired by beauty and love is in itself not very original, even though at present, it rather sounds like some dark recollection of a remote past. Further, we should be careful not to misunderstand the true meaning of these two notions in Iqbal's poetry. For, for him, beauty in the phenomenal world always means the reflection of divine beauty, pointing to the creator who manifests Himself in His creation. Similarly, the notion of "love" in Iqbal's poetry has not the trivial meaning of nowadays, but is tinged by the mystical, ultimately Neoplatonic tradition, according to which love is enrooted in the soul's yearning for its heavenly homeland, a yearning that is felt not only by man but by everything created from stone to star. And it is this yearning which is the source of life and motion. In man this love has such a force, such a dynamics that the influence of his psychic energy pervades the cosmos. Man should help the

creator in completing his still uncompleted creation. And the poet, by virtue of the particular strength of his imagination, should arouse these capacities in man, should give the example of building new worlds. In his poem on the great poet Ghalib he remarks:

From the paradise of your imagination nature has its
spring,
From the seeds of your thoughts the world sprouts up
green.

DK 26

I need hardly emphasise that this is a metaphorical expression of hopes that rather concern man's life on earth, or to be more exact, the future of the Islamic countries.

It is here, that the poet's role in society comes in. Time and again, Iqbal expressed his criticism of poets who, in his view, had indulged in the *l'art pour l'art* attitude, neglecting their public responsibility, and pointed to the negative influence of such poetry on the society. What these poets had, in particular, failed to praise and to preach was the importance of the human Self, the khudi. Thus, Iqbal criticised the traditional Persian poetry because,

though graceful and well-tuned,
it does not sharpen the sword of the Self.

Shi'r-i ajam, ZK 128

Where the self has slackened through slavery,
the Persian tune is no good for the people.

Sha'ir, ZK 127

As for the Indian poets, he reproached them even more severely e.g. in the following verse:

Their phantasy buries love and ecstasy,
their dark thoughts dig the grave for the people.

Hunarvaran-i Hind ZK 128

The poet's song should be like a breeze for the garden of the society, filling it with new life. Thus in a poem on the fine arts Iqbal asked:

Be it the song of the poet or the melody of the bard,

If it makes the garden wither what is the good of the breeze?

Funun-i latifeh, ZK 118

And in the poem "Illicit Song" he stated categorically:

If a song conveys the message of death,
I deem harp, reed-pipe, and rehab to be illicit.

Sarod-i haram, ZK 126

In the above-mentioned chapter from the *Secrets of the Self* the hymn on the true poet is followed by a lampoon on the false one:

His kiss robs the rose of freshness,
He takes away from the nightingale's heart the joy of flying.

The sinews are relaxed by his opium,
Thou payest for his song with thy life.

....

His melodies steal firmness from thy heart,

His magic persuades thee that death is life.

He takes from thy soul the desire of existence etc.

Nicholson's Translation 64-65

True poetry must convey the message of life, not of death, eternal life and eternal death, that is. Such a song will not be sweet or flattering; it will be bitter, but wholesome. In one of his Persian ghazals Iqbal prays God, again using the garden metaphor:

Make, that my bitter song be accepted in the garden!

Sometimes, poison helps as an antidote.

BF 65 (II 44)

Actually, Iqbal felt, at least sometimes, quite confident about the efficacy of his own poetry. In the opening ghazal of the collection "The Wing of Gabriel" he addresses God:

O wonder! My morning songs
kindle the fire that is concealed in your clay!

Meaning the clay of men

And in another ghazal he states:

My song has aroused the educated and the non-educated
to life:

I gave them the taste for the fiery potion!

BJ II, 54

This brings us to our last aspect: the poet as prophet, or, to be more exact: quasi prophet, for in Islam, it would be heresy to claim to be a prophet after Muhammad. Nevertheless, Iqbal uses metaphors, expressing a similar idea. Thus, he compares himself with a camel driver and a caravan guide, a metaphor that has often been used for the prophet Muhammad. He calls the poet the heart in the body of the community, and he expressly states:

If the purpose of poetry is the fashioning of men,
poetry can be called the heir of prophecy.

The impact of Iqbal's poetry was, in fact, enormous. And it has not diminished during the half a century that elapsed since he passed away. Many have followed, and many still will follow his invitation:

*Let us search for it in the universe,
the new world, that is hidden in my morning songs!*

BJ 68 (II, 48)

Thus it may be said that Iqbal went back to the poet's function envisaged by the prophet Muhammad and revived and refined it by his own convincing example. Whether or not we share Iqbal's belief, his example is impressive and has, I believe, something to teach about the poet's, and in particular the great, influential poet's - responsibility, so often forgotten in the societies of our days. Or at least I can see few examples in contemporary Western literature for that kind of poetry of which Iqbal says in his poem *Sha'ir* which, as I believe, belongs among his most beautiful poems:

A poetry that springs from the heart
is the recipe of Eternal Life for the people of Earth

BD 211

Didactic poetry is often weak poetry. Iqbal's poetry, however, is, particularly in his earlier period, very powerful.

IQBAL'S CONCEPTS OF NATIONALISM AND PATRIOTISM

Jan Marek

The Golden Jubilee of Pakistan is a suitable opportunity to review how much of the Iqbalian concepts of democracy, nationalism and patriotism has been encompassed in the practical politics of the new state and to what extent his ideas are alive today.

Iqbal died almost 60 years ago, two years before the Pakistan Resolution was adopted in Lahore and nine years before Pakistan came into being. Yet he remains perennially relevant.

The problem of nationalism attracted much of his attention throughout his life. It is a well known fact that in the initial stage of his poetical activity Iqbal was a partisan of Indian nationalism. In many poems he wrote before his trip to Europe, he thought that his motherland, India, was superior to other countries, but at the same time he was very tolerant. He inculcated communal harmony stressing that religion did not preach hatred (*mazhab nahin sikhata apas men bair rakhna*) and that everybody living in India was an Indian and India was his homeland (*Hindi hain ham rutan hai Hindostan hamara*). The Greeks, Egyptians and Romans have disappeared but the civilisation of India was still flourishing.¹

¹ Iqbal, M., *Bang-e-Dara*, p. 82

His "Indian Song" was loved as a national anthem by thousands of all communities in India.²

The phase of Iqbal's nationalist poetry did not last long. In 1908 he returned from Europe and his views on nationalism had totally changed. His growing antipathy to European nationalism consisted in its separatist and dividing nature based on race and history. He was convinced that the territorial aspects of nationalism proved harmful to the interests of humanity and that the territorially bound nations equipped with sovereignty tended to unleash war, start aggression and cause international anarchy, whereas the belief in the sovereignty of God ensured peace and harmony in the affairs of humanity.

His criticism of nationalism was based on moral, spiritual and political factors. He felt that nationalistic doctrines lacked moral and spiritual basis and that politics which were not governed by moral principles were detrimental to human existence. In his opinion, homeland (*rutan*) in Europe was wrongly given the status of deity, started to be worshipped as a modern god and meant an end to religion.³ But not only that, he believed that the nationalist doctrine was a source of perpetual conflicts among people and condemned it, because it had divided mankind and led to war.

Iqbal realised that the social and political organisation of Islam could not be based on kinship and territory and that the expressions *qawmiyat* (nationality) and *rutaniamat* (patriotism) were alien to Muslim political thought. The meaning of the word *qaum* (nation), according to him, was originally different: it meant kinship, the only form of social organisation known in Arabia at the time of the Prophet.⁴

In his *Javidnamah* he has expressed the opinion that by inculcating the spirit of nationalism among Muslims, the West

² Smith, W.C., *Modern Islam in India*, Lahore 1947, p. 114

³ *In taza khudaon men bara sab se rutan hai, jo pairaban us ka hai, ruh mazhab ka kafan hai. Bang i Dara*, p. 173.

⁴ Cf. Hassan, P.F., *The Political Philosophy of Iqbal*, Lahore 1970, pp. 186-187

has indulged in deception. Because nationalism breeds nothing but dissension, the Muslims should try to rise above their local ties of being Syrians, Palestinians or Iraqis (*be-guzar az Sham o Filastin o Iraq*). In a letter to Professor R. A. Nicholson Iqbal explained his point of view on this matter thus: ⁵

Since I find that the idea of nationality based on race or territory is making headway in the world of Islam, and since I fear that the Muslims, losing sight of their own ideal of a universal humanity, are being lured by the idea of a territorial nationality, I feel it is my duty as a Muslim and a lover of all mankind, to remind them of their true function in the evolution of mankind. Tribal or national organisations on the lines of race or territory are only temporary phases in the unfoldment and upbringing of collective life, and as such I have no quarrel with them. But I condemn them in the strongest possible terms when they are regarded as the ultimate expression of the life of mankind

Elsewhere, he has tried to examine the concepts of *qawm*, *millat* and *ummat* from the Quranic point of view. He wrote: "*Qawm* means a party of men, and this party came into being in a thousand places and in a thousand forms upon the basis of tribes, race, colour, language, land and ethical code. *Millat*, on the contrary, will carve out of the different parties a new and common party. In other words, *millat* or *ummat* embraces nations but cannot be merged in them."⁶

Iqbal never had a clear concept of the difference between the religious and the national community. Although he tried to distinguish between the concepts of *qawm* (national community) and *millat* (religious community), he was not always consistent in this respect. In the political sense, he considered the Muslims of British India to be a nation. In his famous presidential address at the Muslim League session in

⁵ *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, ed. S. A. Vahid, Lahore, 1964, pp. 98-99

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

Allahabad in 1930 he stated: "The Muslims of India are the only people who can fully be described as a nation in the modern sense of the word."⁷

This definition of the Muslims of India as a separate nation did not mean that Iqbal acknowledged the complete coincidence of national and religious community. He stressed that in other countries where Muslims did not constitute a minority, as they did in India, they were able to achieve a greater progress by developing along national, i.e. territorial lines. In his opinion it also did not mean that any other religious community constituted a nation, e.g. the Hindus, in his words, were not a nation, although this was what they were striving for.⁸

Iqbal rejected nationalism in the secular sense but advocated Muslim nationalism based on the Islamic principle of the unity of God. He supposed nationality to be a spiritual sentiment of unity which could not be induced by a common territory, historical traditions, ethnic affinities, social institutions, language or customs, but only by the principle of unity of God which implied in itself the unity of mankind. He recognized the importance of material factors for the shaping of national sentiment but insisted these factors alone were not able to engender a feeling of unity and solidarity among people.

Iqbal attempted to prove that Islam constituted a religious community which could not be identified with any particular country. He also emphasized that the Indian Muslims did not want to be assimilated into a Hindu-dominated all-Indian nationalism, mainly because they were culturally different from the Hindus. Hence, he advocated the idea of cultural nationalism. By this theory he asserted that people may constitute a nation on the basis of their inwardly felt sharing of their religious, racial or linguistic values.

⁷ *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, p. 181.

⁸ Gordon-Polonskaya, L. R., "Ideology of Muslim Nationalism", in: *Iqbal, Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan*, ed. Hafeez Malik, New York 1971, pp.133-134.

Viewed from this perspective, Indian Muslims constituted a cultural nationality and the creation of an independent Muslim state would make it possible to guard their inner and natural needs. Therefore, the notion of cultural nationalism as applied to the case of a culturally defined Muslim nation was, in Iqbal's vision, not antithetical to Islam.⁹

Iqbal's cultural nationalism was used as an instrument to prevent the assimilation of a smaller Muslim minority into the Hindu majority and could be interpreted to mean the unwillingness of Muslim community to be ruled by a non-Muslim power. The theory of cultural nationalism can be understood as a desire to facilitate Iqbal's vision of the reform of the existing Muslim social and economic order. It was based on the practical necessity of acquiring a Muslim state which would enable the Indian Muslims to build up a society in accordance with the *shari'a*.

The proposed Muslim state in South Asia was to be spiritually connected with other Islamic states which were not united politically but formed in Iqbal's vision something like a League of Islamic nations. "God is slowly bringing home to us the truth", wrote Iqbal, "that Islam is neither nationalism nor imperialism but a League of Nations which recognizes artificial boundaries and racial distinctions for facility of reference only, and not for restricting the social horizon of its members." It would be in this League of Muslim countries that Indian Muslims would participate and contribute to the unity and stability of the Muslim world.¹⁰

Iqbal himself defined Muslim nationalism as the consciousness of a national religious community characteristic of the stage of the freedom movement of colonial people in his time. Recognizing the emergence of this consciousness, he endeavoured to substantiate the

⁹ Cf. Malik, Rizwan, "Allamah Muhammad Iqbal's Concept of Muslim Nationalism in India", in:

Newsletter, International Institute for Asian Studies 10, Leiden, 1996, p. 13.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

necessity of self-determination for the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent. In his well known statement at the above mentioned session of the Muslim League he said that the self-government within the British Empire or without it, and the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim state appeared to him to be the final destiny of the Muslims, at least of North-West India.¹¹

On the other hand, Iqbal justified territorial nationalism in the sense of patriotism. He recognized the usefulness and necessity of patriotism (*zeataniyat*) in the sense of love for one's country and asserted it should become a part of the faith of a Muslim. He admitted that love for one's birthplace was a noble sentiment and believed men should make sacrifices for its cause when the need arose.¹² In a letter to Jawaharlal Nehru he wrote: "Nationalism in the sense of love of one's country and even readiness to die for its honour is a part of the Muslim faith; it comes into conflict with Islam only when it begins to play the role of a political concept."¹³

On the practical side, however, we cannot find any concrete programme in Iqbal's theory of Muslim nationalism, except the fact that Iqbal firmly believed that the Muslims of the whole world belonged to one *millat*. Within that *millat* enough room was left, at least temporarily, for various geographical units to flourish, but at a later stage they were supposed to be merged in a universal, all-comprising Muslim *millat*. How will it be achieved and what will be the shape and form of the universal Muslim religious community, Iqbal did not envisage. He was not bothered by the practical details of his theory.¹⁴

His theory did not work smoothly. During his life it was nationalism of the European type which had captured the mind of Muslim politicians of South Asia rather than a

¹¹ Gordon-Polonskaya, L. R., *op. cit.*, p. 134.

¹² Cf. *Maqalat i Iqbal*, ed. S. A. Vahid, Lahore, 1963, p. 222.

¹³ *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, pp. 256-290.

¹⁴ Cf. Hassan, P.F.: *op. cit.*, p. 207.

universal *millat* of his imagination. And only 33 years after his death, the Land of the Pure (Pakistan) disintegrated exactly because of those reasons he had so strongly rejected.

Iqbal of course foresaw that secular and territorial nationalism of the European type would never be a healthy proposition. He warned the Muslims that if nationalism took root in their religious and political system, they would have to face two consequences: either it would be a prelude to atheism, or Islam would be reduced merely to a code of ethics and disappear as a mode of conduct in the Muslim society.¹⁵

Already in his Allahabad address of 1930 Iqbal stated that a separate state for Indian Muslims would be in the interests of both India and Islam. He observed that since each community had the right to free development according to its own cultural traditions, Muslim demands should not be viewed as reflecting any feeling of hostility towards Hindus. "The principle that each group is entitled to free development of its own lines" he stated, "is not inspired by any feeling of narrow communalism...A community which is inspired by a feeling of ill will towards other communities is low and ignoble. I entertain the highest respect for the customs, laws, religions and social institutions of other communities."¹⁶

In practical politics, the enunciation of Iqbal's objective was the genesis of the *two-nation theory* chalked out by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, when Iqbal's vision was adopted by the Muslim League session of Lahore in its Pakistan Resolution on 23 March 1940. For Iqbal, it would have meant the fulfilment of his dream. During his life Iqbal stressed that a separate homeland for South Asian Muslims was essential to a healthy development not only of Muslims, but of both the major communities in the South Asian subcontinent.

¹⁵ *Maqalat i Iqbal*, p. 226, quoted in Hassan, P. F., *op. cit.*, p. 208

¹⁶ *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, ed. L. A. Sherwani, Lahore, 1977, quoted in Rizwan Malik, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

Has the independent development of the homeland for South Asian Muslims been really healthy? The history of Pakistan does not answer this question as positively as Iqbal would have desired. After the creation of the new state for Indian Muslims in 1947 a question arose whether the two nations theory was still good enough to continue and to serve as a platform for the development of the new Pakistani nationalism, or if there was a necessity of adjusting it to the new circumstances. This theory which saw the main factors of nationhood in the common spiritual impulses sprouting from a common religion (in the case of Muslims mainly from the principle of the unity of God), could for some time serve the objectives of the newly born Pakistani nation.

Iqbal did not envisage that only a part of the Muslims from British India would come under the protection of the new Islamic state and that about a half of them would continue to live in the Indian Union. If the two nation theory was to remain valid, these Indian Muslims would have formed one and the same nation with the Muslims of Pakistan and there would have been two different nations (a majority of Muslims and a minority of Hindus) living in Pakistan side by side.

Therefore, some leading politicians including the late Prime Minister Husain S. Suhrawardi, demanded a reevaluation of the two nations theory, because they maintained that after the creation of Pakistan it had lost its importance for the South Asian Muslims. Suhrawardi attempted to modify Iqbal's interpretation of the basic concepts. He wrote: "There is a basic difference between the concept of *millat* (community of Islam) which has no geographical limits and does not know any boundaries, and between the concept of *qawm* (nation) which recognizes geographical boundaries and along with them certain special

features which mark the difference from the members of other nations.¹⁷

Those intellectuals who demanded the revision of Iqbal's concepts in the new circumstances, became known as defenders of *one nation theory*. Contrary to Iqbal, they believed that religion was neither the most important nor the sole component of Pakistani nationhood, and stressed other factors contributing to the building up of a nation, such as common political and state institutions, unity of will and goals or endeavour to live together.¹⁸

Unfortunately, the followers of the *one nation theory* never succeeded fully to build up a true national unity of all the linguistically and ethnically heterogeneous people inhabiting Pakistan. They expected it would be secular India that would break up fast under her regional, ethnic and linguistic strains. That did not happen, because the Indians already possessed something what Pakistan hitherto lacked: a positive national identity. In spite of all their differences they could say: We are Indians, whereas the Punjabis, Balochis, Sindhis and Bengalis of Pakistan, with the powerful glue of Islam, found themselves only with a negative identity: We are not Indians.¹⁹

The adherents of both the one nation and the two nations theory tried hard to build up the feeling of national identity and refused to take any account of the regional peculiarities of the people in the provinces. They feared that the recognition of the right of self-determination would lead towards the disintegration of the country. Their fears were not unjustified: the country really disintegrated 24 years after its creation, and the emergence of Bangladesh buried the last remnants of the two nations theory.

¹⁷ *The Dawn*, Karachi 11.10.1956, quoted in Gankovskiy, Yu. V., *Nacional'nyi vopros i nacional'nye dvizheniya v Pakistane*, Moskva, 1967, p. 23.

¹⁸ Cf. Cohn, H., *Nationalism, Its Meaning and History*, Princeton, 1955.

¹⁹ Fishlock, Trevor: "The State that Got Stuck", in *The Sunday Telegraph*, London 10.10.1996, p. 1.

Field Marshall Ayub Khan who ruled the country for eleven years (1958-1969) pursued a more realistic religious policy than his predecessors. Notwithstanding his religious orientation, he did not believe the people of Pakistan had succeeded to form a nation. He realized the country had to face many obstacles in creating national unity. During his rule, the most important divisive factor was the geographical distance between the two halves of the country, each half being moreover dominated by a different linguistic, cultural and historical pattern.

Another deep antagonism separated the people in the countryside from the urban classes. Regional identities also often asserted themselves to the exclusion of the national identity. But more than anything else it was the irreconcilable nature of the forces of science and the forces of dogmatism and revivalism which was operating against the unification of the people.²⁰

Iqbal would have been surprised that the essential conflict was between the *ulema* and the educated classes. The *ulema* were regarded as the custodians of Islam, whereas the educated classes as those who had been led astray by Western thought and influence. The educated regarded the *ulema* as relics of the past and the *ulema* treated the educated as heretics. Superstition and ritualism had given Pakistan a fatalistic outlook which was contrary to the teachings of Islam. The Pakistanis failed to order their lives in accordance with Islam, because they failed to define the Islamic ideology in a simple and understandable form.²¹ Although President Ayub Khan in 1962 succeeded in embodying most of the Islamic principles in the constitution of the Second Republic of Pakistan, seven years later his rule ended in another military coup d'etat.

The next vigorous attempt to reunify the population on Islamic principles came ten years later under the military

²⁰ Cf. Ayub Khan, M., *Friends Not Masters*, London, 1967, pp. 194-195.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 196-197.

regime of general Ziaul Haq who tried to enforce Islamic laws. He could not achieve the support of the people and therefore he decided to legitimise his rule as a defender of Islam.²²

Iqbal may have been disappointed if he could see that the majority of Pakistanis had never voted for politicians of Islamic fundamentalism. In the party-based elections of 1970, the right-wing fundamentalist *Jama'at i Islami* won only 2% of the seats in the National Assembly, in 1977 it lost completely and in 1993 it did not turn out much better. Notwithstanding the elections results, Islam continued to play an important role in the social life of Pakistan.

General Zia rejected the idea of Western style democratic election and launched the Islamisation campaign. He decided that if Pakistan was to have any meaning, it was Islamic or nothing. Therefore he proclaimed he wanted an Islamic Pakistan, an Islamic society, economy and polity, where there was no place for elections, democracy, political parties or women. His strict Islamisation, with an emphasis on Islam's penal code rather than on its compassionate side, was resented by many educated Pakistanis who did not want their country to have a reputation for hand-chopping.²³

Some right-wing religious bodies at that time allegedly carried out a survey of the devotion of the people towards Islam. Its results were not surprising: they showed that most Pakistanis believed in Islam and considered themselves true Muslims, but they were not ready to accept the medieval Islamic laws and ethical codes imposed from the top. Some influential professional groups, like industrialists, lawyers, doctors, or journalists, saw in these laws a serious hindrance to modern development.

²² On the Islamisation policy of general Ziaul Haq see Malik, Hafeez, "Zia is Dead, Long Live Pakistan", in *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, XII, 1, Villanova, 1988, pp. 3-11.

²³ Fishlock, Trevor, "The State that Got Stuck", in: *The Sunday Telegraph*, London, 10.10.96, p. 2.

The major funding for general Zia's Islamisation campaign came from the United States which desired to transform Pakistan into a pro-American Islamic state. By the American propaganda general Zia was projected as the leader of the Islamic world instead of Imam Khomeini. Islamisation became a way to get grants from the Western countries. The people did not believe Islamisation was syncretic, they sensed it was simply a pretext for the military, landlords and clergy to maintain power. Nobody expected that a true Islamic regime would prevail in Pakistan.²⁴

The Zia regime in alliance with the *ulema* tried to turn Pakistan into an Islamic state in which no religious freedom or tolerance would remain. Minor Muslim sects were targeted for being different from the Sunni majority. The orthodox Islamic education was imparted to children in the Christian schools and to other religious minorities as well.

Five years after the enforcement of the Islamic penal code the Zia regime introduced *nizam i salat* (prayer squads) which would direct people to mosques at prayer time. It also started to deduce mandatory *zakat* (religious tax) from the accounts of the citizens in contravention of the Islamic principle calling for a voluntary payment of charity. Similarly, the fasting during *ramazan* was stringently enforced and women were denied participation in public life, e.g. by introduction of the Islamic laws of evidence, in which the evidence of one man is considered to be equal to that of two women.²⁵

If the Islamisation campaign of general Ziaul Haq was not successful, a question arises, what is the position of the Islamic forces now, after the election victory of the Muslim League in 1997. The Muslim League is a centrist party whose economic programme does not differ much from that of the defeated Pakistan People's Party. Its policy towards the

²⁴ Cf. Abidi, M. H., "Pakistan Military Dictatorship and Democratic Struggle", in *Pakistan Progressive*, V, 2 Costa Mesa, 1983, pp. 34-50.

²⁵ Cf. Ali, Babar, "Pakistan Without Zia, A Critical Period", in *Pakistan Progressive*, IX, 4, Oshkosh, 1989, pp. 14-20.

Islamic bodies is more realistic than before. Pakistan is constitutionally an Islamic state and her politics are bound to be religious. The Council of Islamic Ideology analyses and recommends the newly introduced laws, but the right of the final decision rests with the Parliament.

Although the fundamentalist *Jama'at i Islami* party is not very strong, it has a very influential students' section, and students are ready to use violence. To be pro-Islamic or fundamentalist has become a fashion among young people who are disappointed by the failure of the West-oriented elite to solve economic problems of the country. The puritans say that the Westernised liberals have defied the Islamic principles, the liberals think the orthodox *ulema* have misinterpreted the spirit of Islam, rendering it too rigid. The arguments are endless.²⁶

The Qaid-e Azam M. A. Jinnah after the Lahore resolution was passed on 23 March 1940 allegedly declared: "Iqbal is no more amongst us, but had he been alive, he would have been happy to know that we did exactly what he wanted us to do."²⁷ Would he be happy even today?

²⁶ Cf. Mishra, R., "Religion in Politics", in *News International*, Islamabad, 16.10.1993.

²⁷ Sayyid, M. H.: *M.A. Jinnah, A Political Study*, Karachi, 1962, p. 231.

IQBAL: A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE EAST AND THE WEST

Saeed A. Durrani

In speaking on the above theme, one cannot do better than to start by quoting one of Iqbal's own couplets:

*The dervish imbued with the spirit of God is neither of the East nor
of the West*

My home is neither Delhi, nor Isfahan nor yet Samarkand.

(*Baal i Jibril* (Gabriel's Wing), p. 357*)

One is also to keep in mind Iqbal's inscription on the frontispiece of his book of Persian poetry entitled *Payam i Mashriq* (*Message of the East*, 1923), namely: To God belong the East and the West. And this was the book which he subtitles: 'In reply to the Diwan of the German poet, Goethe'. It is worth mentioning here that Goethe's *West-Östlicher Divan* (The West-Eastern Divan) had itself been inscribed in its author's own handwriting in the Arabic script as follows: "Eastern Diwan by a Western Author". So the discourse came a full circle!

It is with such thoughts that the famous German writer and Nobel prizewinner (1946) Herman Hesse (1877-1962), who was a contemporary of Iqbal (1877-1938), wrote thus of him: "Iqbal belongs to three domains of the spirit or intellect,

* All the pages quoted in this essay refer to Iqbal's *Kulliat-i-Urdu* (Collected Works in Urdu) and the *Kulliat-i-Farsi* (Collected Works in Persian), both published by Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1990. The translations are by the present author, except where indicated otherwise.

the sources of his tremendous work: the worlds of India, of Islam, and of Western thought.” There are, to my knowledge, few writers or poets, whether from the East or from the West, who have been as much at home in the philosophies of both these vast domains, or who have written with such eloquence in Urdu, Persian and English. (He also had full command of Arabic and Panjabi, and knew German.)

Iqbal had shown early signs of this duality of interests. In his application for admission to the University of Cambridge as a research student in the field of philosophy, he wrote to the Senior Tutor, Trinity College, Cambridge, on 29 September 1905: “My knowledge of Arabic and Persian and my acquaintance with European philosophy (the study of which I began 12 years ago) suggest to me that I might make a contribution to the knowledge in the West, of some branch of Muhammadan philosophy. . .” Perhaps I might add parenthetically that such studies were probably greatly influenced by his erstwhile mentor, Professor Thomas Arnold- the great Orientalist, who was a good role-model for the young Iqbal, and who had arrived at Iqbal’s *alma mater*, Government College, Lahore, in February 1898 as the Professor of Philosophy. Iqbal’s BA dissertation, submitted to the University of Cambridge in around March 1907- on the basis of which he subsequently gained his PhD degree from the University of Munich in November 1907- entitled *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, was a perfect expression of Iqbal’s pluralistic of approach. For in this dissertation, starting from a description of Persian dualism as displayed by Zoroaster, Mani and Mazdak, Iqbal critically examines the interaction of Persian metaphysical thought with the Greek system of philosophy expounded by Aristotle and Plato. He then goes on to discuss the resulting amalgam as displayed by Neo-Platonic Aristotelians of Persia, as he calls them, and then on to rataionslism, materialism, and finally Islamic Sufiism.

But I do not wish to lay undue emphasis on Iqbal’s output or originality as a philosopher: to me more important is his

standing as a visionary or a 'prophet'. As one of his contemporaries, the Persian-language Indian poet, many years his senior, Ghulam Qadir Girmi (1854-1927) - who was the Court Poet of Hyderabad Deccan and the Nizam's poetry teacher- wrote:

In the eyes of those who can fathom his meanings, Iqbal

Has wrought a kind of prophethood, and yet one may not call him a prophet.

Here, may I draw a parallel or an analogy? A prophet may repeat or reiterate a received message- not necessarily original to him- but with passion. The Prophet of Islam did this, and many other biblical prophets, too. It is worth remarking here that the Bible is a book of grace and compassion, not a dry, philosophical discourse. Similarly, the Qur'an, while emphasising the importance for 'those who can see' (*ulu al-absar*) of upon pondering the orbits of the sun, the moon and the stars, does not append mathematical equations of planetary motion: for that is not its primary purpose. By the same token, what Iqbal wrote was poetry, with rare passion and eloquence and lyricism; he did not aim to present a consistent philosophy which would conform to the style and standards of a philosophical magazine. And what he wrote in the Introduction to his aforementioned dissertation, namely: ".....Yet the inquirer who approaches the extant literature of Persia expecting to find any comprehensive systems of thought, like those of Kapila or Kant, will have to turn back disappointed, though deeply impressed by the wonderful intellectual subtlety displayed therein.....(and) the Persian people's love of metaphysical speculation."- perhaps applies equally to Iqbal himself. But so far as passion is concerned, Iqbal says emphatically:

If Truth does not contain Passion, it is merely a statement of facts

It becomes Poetry, when it is suffused with the heart's Passion.

(*Payam-i-Mashriq*, p. 262)

I am afraid I have been carried away in my somewhat passionate advocacy of Iqbal's message- for his message

aroused, and continues to arouse today, many people and nations throughout the world. Let me, therefore hasten to reutrn to my main theme.

Iqbal's Urdu and Persian poetry is full of references to the teachings and doctrines of both Eastern (Islamic, Hindu., Sikh, Buddhist, Christian) and Western philosophers and famous figures: statesmen, poets, writers, men of action. For instance, in *Payam i Mashriq* (Message of the East) alone one finds poems and verses about illustrious figures of the West, such as Kant, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Hegel, Bergson, Auguste Comte, Lock, Tolstoy, Karl Marx, Lenin, Kaiser Willhelm, Mussolini, Goethe, Byron, Browning, Petöfi, Einstein.....And in his *Javidnameh* (The Chronicles of Eternity) one comes across Eastern immortals, such as Guatama Buddha, Zarathustra, Jesus, Muhammad, Bhartari Hari, Halláj, Pharaoh, Jamál-ud-Din-Afghani, Jalál-ed-Din Rumi, Ghalib, Syed Ali Hamadani, Ghani Kashmiri, Quratul'Ain Tahira, Nadir Shah, Ahmad Shah Abdali, the Dervish of Sudan, Tipu Sultan the Martyr, Ibn-Saud, etc., etc. In what other poet- whether Oriental or Occidental- can one find such all-embracing and oecumenical wealth of *dramatis personae*?

On the face of it, it may appear that Iqbal is hostile to the West. But what he is hostile to is the West's imperialism and exploitation of the weak and the poor. For example, Iqbal says:

Europe's hordes, with flame and fire
Desolate the world entire;
O architect of sacred realms
To rebuild the world arise!
Out of leaden sleep
Out of slumber deep
Arise!
Out of slumber deep
Arise!"

(*Zabúr-i 'Ajam*, Persian Psalms), p. 396.
 (A. J. Arberry's translation)

And again:

Don't entertain the illusion that Europe will sympathise with you:

The eagle's heart does not melt for the bird that is clutched in its claws!

(*Zabûr i 'Ajam*, p. 417)

Another thing that Iqbal is up in arms against is the materialism and permissiveness or immorality prevalent in the West, e.g. in speaking of the the overlords of the East- the whites of Europe, (*Baal i Jibril*, p. 434) he thunders:

This knowledge, this wisdom, this statesmanship, this governance

They suck blood, and teach the tenets of equality!

Unemployment and promiscuity and inebriation and destitution

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

(From "Lenin in the presence of God" *Baal-i-Jibril*, p. 435)

And then

Is this the zenith of your civilisation?

Man without work, and woman without a child.

(*Zarb i Kaleem*, The Rod of Moses, p. 605)

These Western houris, a mirage of the eyes and the heart

The paradise of the West is nothing but ephemeral visions.

(*Baal i Jibril*, p. 371).

But Iqbal is very even-handed. He is full of praise for the dynamism, creativity, and the intellectual incisiveness of the Western nations. And while extolling the oriental values of spirituality, sincerity of heart, respect for high traditions, he also chastises the East for its blind obsequiousness to old ways of thought, received doctrines, slavish mentality, lack of self-respect and a bedazzled view of all things Western. For example, he says

The Sufi's circle is bereft of the fire of longing

What is left is but the stale tales of miracle-making

On the Day of Judgement even God will feel sorry

For the blank pages that the book of the Mullah and the Sufi will display.

(*Baal i Jibril*, p. 393.)

*The forest of learning and invention is devoid of lion-hearted men
What remains is but the slaves of the Sufi and the Mullah, O Sáqil!
Who has stolen the sharp sword of creative passion?*

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

(*Baal i Jibril*, p. 351)

I have observed the Leader of the Faithful:

His character hath no fire, his speech no sense.

(*Baal i Jibril*, p. 382)

And

Where there once were schools for lions and emperors

Those shrines are now the haunts of foxes alone.

(*Baal i Jibril*, p. 400)

Finally, Iqbal sums it all up:

Reality has been lost in trivialities

This nation has lost itself in mere folk lore.

(*Baal i Jibril*, p. 451)

Iqbal also advises the East to learn the good things of the West— not simply shun everything that it has to offer: for that would be bigotry and paranoia. According to the dictum “extract what is clean and reject what is unclean”. This attitude shows Iqbal’s open-mindedness and moderation.

For instance, he declares:

Open to all are the winehouses of the West

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

(*Zarb i Kaleem*, p. 691)

He is also very perceptively observed that:

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

Nor does it spring from the cavortings of veil-less beauties.

Its solidity does not stem from godlessness

Nor does its ascendancy result from the Latin script.

The strength of the West stems from science and technology:

This is the fire that lights its lamp so brightly.

(*Jazidnámeh*, Chronicles of Eternity, p. 648)

It is true, of course, that as one scans Iqbal's poetical works, one finds that there is much more of a strident criticism than praise of the West. Thus one reads:

*Humanity wept bitterly from the excesses of the West
Life received much turmoil from (the workings of) the West.*

(Pas Cheh Báyyad Kard ai A qe'ám i Sharq?

So What Should be Done, O Nations of the East, p. 713)

Thus, what he had said as early as 1907 (writing in Cambridge) near to the beginning of his poetic career, addressing the West, namely

*Your civilisation will commit suicide by using its own dagger
A nest that is built on a slender bough will always be impermanent.*

(Baang i Drá, The Caravan Bell), p. 167)

he reiterated towards the end of his life (1936):

*Europe is in the throes of death from its own sword
For it launched the rule of godlessness on this earth.*

The problems of mankind stem, verily, from it:

Humanity has sustained deep wounds thereby.

It regards man as nought but water and clay;

It assumes that the caravan of life has no destination.

(Pas Cheh Báyyad Kard, p. 713)

In the same vein he reports:

I have been informed by the powers that rule the land and the sea:

The West lies in the path of a flood that is ineluctable.

(Baal i Jibril, p. 395)

And Iqbal is equally vociferous in cautioning the Orient against adopting the facile and harmful aspects of the Occidental life rather than grasping its sturdier and more difficult qualities. For example:

The slave of the West, in order to show himself off

Adopts from the Westerners music and dance.

Being indolent, he takes up that which is easy;

His nature only absorbs that which is painless.

(Javidnámeb, p. 648)

which is as true, if not truer, today as it was in Iqbal's time. And he advises the East:

Preoccupied with the beauty of others, not like a mirror be
Of the image of others, eye and heart wash free.

(*Payám i Mashriq*, p. 311)

(Paraphrased by Peter Avery)

Do not court the favours of the glassblowers of the West
Make thy winejars and goblets from thine own Indian clay.

(*Baal i Jibril*, p. 477)

For:

The tavern of the East still holds in its vaults

That wine which sets alight men's consciousness.

(*Zarb-i-Kaleem*, p. 625)

But what Iqbal is really stressing is his belief that the East and the West have each their different and intrinsic strengths- and that it is best to strive to adopt the strengths and eschew the weaknesses. Thus he points out:

For the Westerners, intellect is the maker of life

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

Intellect recognises the truth through love

Love consolidates its works by intellect.

Rise, and draw the blueprint of a new world

Go, and make an amalgam of love and intellect.

(*Javidnáme*, p. 538)

He is not partisan; he sees some good in each system when he says:

I speak only that which I consider to be the truth

I am neither the idiot of the mosque nor the progeny of civilisation.

(*Baal i Jibril*, p. 357)

Shun not the East nor fear the West

Nature decrees that you turn each night into a bright morn.

(*Zarb i Kaleem*, p. 621)

And there are weaknesses in each, too:

The East is in ruins, and the West, an even greater ruin

The whole world is dead and without the urge to seek and search.

(*Zabur i 'Ajam*, p. 376)

The knowledge of the West, the metaphysic of the East

All a house of idols- and to run round the idols leads one nowhere.

(*Zabur i 'Ajam*, p.413)

Iqbal, at the same time, is quite aware of the fact that he links the two worlds, and he thus stands as a bridge between the East and the West- like a Colossus astride the gulf that separates the twain historically, spiritually and philosophically. He is an ambassador of unity: a joiner rather than a divider, for he declares:

I have spoken two words according to the temper of my times:

I have enclosed two seas within a pair of vessels.

I am a stream that originates from two seas

My split is a parting and, withal, a union, too.

(*Javidnámeh*, p. 669)

It is in this context that one is inspired to hear Iqbal's immortal declaration regarding the twin sources of his genius, as noted by Herman Hesse:

My intellect was enhanced by the philosophy teachers of the West:

My heart was enkindled by the company of men of vision.

(*Payám i Mashriq*, p. 296)

And, finally, how fitting that the "Knower of the Secret" (*mabram i asrar*) of the East should send a salutation, a homage, to that immortal savant of the West, Goethe, whose mortal remains rest in Weimar:

O zephyr! Take our salutation to the garden of Weimar

For the soil of that land lighted up the eyes of those who could perceive.

(*Payám i Mashriq*, p. 300)

“THAT I MAY SEE AND TELL” SIGNIFICANCE OF IQBAL’S WISDOM POETRY

Muhammad Suheyl Umar

It was Ahmad Shawqi, the famous Egyptian poet and an older contemporary of Iqbal who, while paying his homage to the poet-philosopher made an extremely perceptive remark. His words fervently spoke of the high esteem and regard in which Iqbal was held in the eyes of the Egyptians. At the same time, perhaps incidentally, his remarks convey to us in a remarkably revealing manner the real significance of Iqbal’s poetry in particular and his message in general. Shawqi said:¹

Iqbal was unique among the Muslim poets in the sense that, while almost all of his contemporaries were singing praises of the high ups or indulging in indolent love poetry, central to the conscious concerns of Iqbal were the issues that were of vital importance to the Muslim Ummah, both on the theoretical as well as the practical level.

In these remarks, Shawqi has used the construct “conscious concerns” in order to bring out the characteristic features of thought which, in his view, distinguished Iqbal from his contemporary poets and thinkers. It is the same expression, which, in our view, provides the key to understand the psycho-dynamics of Iqbal’s mind, and leads

¹ I am indebted to my teacher and one of the greatest authorities on Iqbal, Mirza Muhammad Munawwar to have informed us, during his class lectures, of the views of the Egyptian intelligentsia about Iqbal.

us to appreciate the reasons for which Iqbal's poetry has become significantly important and meaningful for us.

In the perspective of Islamic metaphysics, the phenomenon of consciousness, discerned in the world in a hierarchical manner, is a manifestation of the Divine Consciousness. The most central and total manifestation of the Divine Consciousness, a self-disclosure (*tajalli*) of the Divine Attribute of Knowledge (*'ilm*), is the human intelligence. In the same way, it is only man, which has the gift of speech because he alone among earthly creatures is made in the image of God² in a direct and integral manner. It is the summit and perfection of human intelligence and, therefore, of human consciousness. Speech is as it were the immaterial, though sensory, body of our will and our understanding.³ Similarly, human speech or human language attains to its full plenitude or perfect deployment in poetry. If the summit and perfection of human consciousness is human language, then poetry or the poetic art could like wise be termed as the summit and perfection of human language. This necessarily entails that, not only in the Islamic traditional perspective but also in the traditional oriental theories of art, poetry is a conscious activity never separated from the Intellect. "Art has to do with cognition".⁴ It is never envisaged as "emotions recollected in tranquillity" or "a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings".⁵ According to

² The Biblical expression says "in the image of God". In the Islamic tradition it appears in the following Hadith report "*khalaq Allahu 'l-Adama 'ala suratih*". See Bukhari, *Al-Sahih*, "Istidhan", 1; Muslim, *Al-Sahih*, "Birr", 115, "Jannah", 28; Ahmad bin Hanbal, *Musnad*, Vol. II, 244, 251, 315, 323. Also see Ibn 'Arabi, *Al-Futubat al Makk'iyah*, Dar Sadir, Beirut, n.d, Vol. II, p. 124, p. 490. For an illuminating exposition of the the implications of the statement in terms of the Divine Attributes see Murata and Chittick, *The Vision of Islam*, Suhail Academy, Lahore, 2000, p. 120.

³ It may, however, be remembered that speech is not necessarily exteriorised; the articulated thought also involves language.

⁴ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, III. 33.1.

⁵ See *Lyrical Ballads*, ed. R. L. Brett & A. R. Jones, Methuen & Co Ltd. London, 1963, p. 260. These famous lines from Wordsworth are cited

this perspective, poetry is not the expression of the subjective experiences of the separated ego of the poet, but the fruit of a vision of a reality, which transcends the being of the poet, and for which the poet must become the expositor and guide.⁶ This does not mean — we add by way of a word of caution — that consciousness should be reduced to rationality alone i.e. discursive thought⁷ or reason severed from its transcendent noetic roots,⁸ since, to borrow the words of Iqbal, “The Total reality.....has other ways of invading our consciousness”⁹; there are “non-rational modes of consciousness”¹⁰; “there is the possibility of unknown levels

here only as a representative sample of the way the modern, reductionist conception of poetry exhibits itself. Parallel examples could be given from every branch of art in which the artistic activity is reduced to even more inferior phycisms. They all have a common characteristic that, in these theories, the artistic activity is truncated to a segment of the human soul and confined to the limitations of the human domain, cut off from intellectual vision and spirituality. Thus, to quote S. H. Nasr, “poetry, rather than being a vehicle of a truly intellectual knowledge, becomes reduced to sentimentalism or a means of expressing individual idiosyncrasies and forms of subjectivisms.” *Islamic Art and Spirituality*, Islamic Text Society, Cambridge, 1987, p. 91. Another authority who had covered the philosophic and religious experience of the entire pre-modern world, the great Orientalist A. K. Coomaraswamy has expressed something similar in this regard. He remarked, “As humanists and individualists, it flatters us to think that art is the expression of personal feeling and sentiments, preference and free choice, unfettered by the sciences of mathematics and cosmology. But mediaeval art was not like ours “free” to ignore truth.” See his *Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art*, Dover, N.Y., 1956, p. 29.

⁶ See S. H. Nasr, *Islamic Art and Spirituality*, Islamic Text Society, Cambridge, 1987, p. 93.

⁷ Which is, as if, a reflection of the Intellect on the mental plane.

⁸ In the words of Rumi, “*‘aql I juz’i ‘aql ra badnam kard’*”, *Mathnawi*, (ed. Nicholson) Vol. III, p. 31, line, 8. Also see Vol. II, p. 352, line, 11, Vol. I, p. 130, line, 4.

⁹ Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (referred to as *Reconstruction*, here after), Iqbal Academy Pakistan/Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore, 1989, p. 13.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 14.

of consciousness”¹¹ and “there are potential types of consciousness lying close to our normal consciousness”.¹² How do these “other ways of invasion” relate to poetry? Iqbal tells us that the questions that call for an intellectual vision of reality for their answers are, “common to religion, philosophy and higher poetry”.¹³

In order to elucidate my point further, I quote here, not from the theorists of literature but from the poets themselves. Jami referred to the same doctrine when he sang the following verses:

What is poetry? The song of the bird of the Intellect.

What is poetry? The similitude of the world of eternity.

The value of the bird becomes evident through it,

*And one discovers whether it comes from the oven of a bath house
or a rose garden.*

It composes poetry from the Divine rose garden;

It draws its power and sustenance from that sacred precinct.¹⁴

Likewise, Milton in his *Paradise Lost* (Book II-17; Book III -51) wrote of a vision which would then be translated into poetry.

And chiefly thou O Spirit, that dost prefer

Before all Temples th' upright heart and pure,

Instruct me, for thou know'st:

So much the rather thou celestial light

Shine inward and the mind through her powers

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 37.

¹² *Ibid.* p. 146.

¹³ His complete statement reads as follows. “What is the character and general structure of the universe in which we live? Is there a permanent element in the constitution of this universe? How are we related to it? What place do we occupy in it, and what is the kind of conduct that befits the place we occupy? These are the questions that are common to religion, philosophy and higher poetry. But the kind of knowledge that poetic inspiration brings is essentially individual in its character; it is figurative, vague and indefinite.” *Reconstruction*, op. cit. p. 1.

¹⁴ Jami, *Sisalat al-dhabab*, cf. Nasr, *Islamic Art and Spirituality*, Islamic Text Society, Cambridge, 1987, p. 91.

*irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.*¹⁵

Valmiki, who composed *Ramayana*, is reported to have been ordered to record a vision granted to him. "Then only, after concentrated meditation, when the whole story lay like a picture in his mind, he began to shape it into shalokas".¹⁶

Dante in his *Divine Comedy* says in the same vein:

*I am one who hearkens when
Love inspires me, and I put thought into word
After the mode which He dictates within me.*¹⁷

It is, therefore, significant and not a matter of mere coincidence that the words which denote poetry or poetic activity in all the major Islamic languages¹⁸ and the word which denotes consciousness (*shu'ur*) share the common

¹⁵ John Milton, *The Complete Poetical Works of John Milton*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Mass., USA, 1941, p. 155 and 199; Nasr, *op.cit.* p. 96.

¹⁶ See A. K. Coomarasawamy and Sister Nivedita, *Myths of the Hindus and the Buddhists*, New York, 1914, pp. 23-24, cf. Nasr, *op. cit.*, p. 93. Also see A. K. Coomarasawamy, *Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art*, Dover, N.Y., 1956, p. 53-55.

¹⁷ Dante, "Purgatorio", XXIV. 52-54, *The Divine Comedy*, translated by Laurance Binyon in *The Portable Dante*, ed. Paolo Milano, The Viking Press, New York, 1995, p. 312. Other authorities are no less explicit about these traditional dicta: Plato says "In the making of thing by art, do we not know that a man who has this God for his leader achieves a brilliant success, whereas he on whom Love has laid no hold is obscure?" (*Symposium* 197 A). Plotinus is in complete agreement when he adds 'crafts such as building and carpentry take their principles from that realm and from the thinking there' (*Enneads*, V. 9. II); "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me... He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory", (John VII. 16, 18.) "Lo, make all things in accordance with the pattern that was shown thee on the mount" (Exodus, XXV. 40.)

¹⁸ In Arabic, Persian it is the word *shi'r*, as well as its various constructs and derivatives which denote poetry. Similar is the case of Urdu, Turkish and most of the regional languages of the Islamic lands. Poet, in all these languages, is called *sha'ir* which again is a derivative form of the same root implying "the conscious one, some one who is aware, the person with cognition."

triliteral verbal root *sh. 'r* which means 'to become aware of', 'to be conscious of'. The same conceptual underpinning is evident in the traditional definitions of poetry that are found in the classical works on literary theory and compilations of the technical terms.¹⁹ For the purposes of our present study, however, we have fashioned afresh these definitions, which does not make them better but merely make these more elaborate and easily accessible. The need for this reformulation²⁰ is rooted in the fact that Iqbal, though standing as an out post of the sensibility and the world view which the great masters²¹ of traditional Islamic literature adhered to, was at the same time a man of the modern age.²²

¹⁹ For example see *Kashshafu Istilahat al-Funun*, rpt. Suhail Academy, Lahore, 1993, Vol. I, pp. 744-46. This is the finest and the most detailed encyclopaedia of the technical terms used in the Islamic sciences that the Muslim scholars have produced over the centuries. For an account of the views of Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina see S. Kamal, *The Poetics of Alfarabi and Avicenna*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991; Also see S. H. Nasr and O. Leaman (eds.) *History of Islamic Philosophy*, Routledge, London, vol. 2, p. 970; Mansour Ajami, *The Alchemy of Glory: the Dialectic of Truthfulness and Untruthfulness in Medieval Arabic Literary Criticism*, Washington, 1988, pp. 55ff; H. Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, Irving, 1980. Also see Ibn Qutaybah, *Kitab al-Shi'r wa 'l-Shu'ara* for the classification of poetry according to the Islamic poetic canons.

²⁰ For this formulation we are indebted to our colleague Mr. Ahmad Javid who is himself a first rate poet of the Urdu language, a fine metaphysician and an expert in Iqbal studies, Kalam and Sufism.

²¹ Like 'Attar, Sana'i, Rumi, Jami.

²² This point has always been emphasised in most of the studies of Iqbal's mind and art. As a random sample, read the following. "A typical example of modern use of traditional forms is the poetry of Mohammed Iqbal, who utilised mainly forms inherited from Persian and Urdu poetry...He used traditional imagery but filled it with new content, and it seems clear that his listeners would scarcely have accepted his daring message had he told it in free verse or in images taken from English or German tradition. People—literate or illiterate—were so used to certain rhythms, rhyme forms and images that their use facilitated Iqbal's work tremendously", Annemarie Schimmel, *The Two Colored Brocade*, Chapel Hill, 1992, p. 35. From the other end of the world we hear the comment, "like Abraham, he came out of the fire alive, that is, with his Muslim identity intact

The definitions are listed here in their hierarchical order, which is also the order of their scope and level of comprehensiveness.

What, then, is poetry,²³

1-Language, in-formed²³ or moulded by metrical structures²⁴ and rhythmic patterns, is called poetry.

2-Language, in-formed by metrical structures and rhythmic patterns and manipulated in an excellent and beautiful manner, is called poetry.

3-Language, in-formed by metrical structures and rhythmic patterns and manipulated in an excellent and beautiful manner, is called poetry provided it does not take place involuntarily.²⁵

4-Language, in-formed by metrical structures and rhythmic patterns and manipulated in an excellent and beautiful manner, is called poetry provided it does not take place involuntarily.²⁶ The content, which is thus expressed

despite his Western education and his engaging the West in the frontier of philosophy.” Anwar Ibrahim, *The Asian Renaissance*, Time Books, K. L./Singapore, 1996, p. 35.

²³ This is a rather unusual usage of the word which is now a day used without a hyphen. However it conveys very well the idea of “shaping, giving form to, fashioning”. See Nasr, *op. cit.* p. 90; *Oxford Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, Vol. I, 1971, p. 1341; *Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary*, 2nd edition, Dorset & Baber, 1972, p. 940.

²⁴ The word commonly used to denote the idea of metre (*babr* or *ruzn* in Arabic and Persian) is *marezun* which means ‘to weigh or measure’. See Finn Thiesen, *A Manual of Classical Persian Prosody...*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1982; Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, vol. II, last chapter. In so far as number and measure are nothing but expressions of unity, they constitute the essence of rhythm as the “formal” pole of poetry. Number must be understood as the expression of Unity with in multiplicity; it is the very “vibration” of the One. In this regard see Ray Lavingston, *The Traditional Theory of Literature*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1962.

²⁵ *Bi ’l-qasd*, that is, an act of one’s own volition, some thing accomplished on purpose.

²⁶ It was, perhaps, this level of poetic activity to which Dr. Schimmel has directed her following remarks in her fine study of Persian poetry. “there

beautifully, pertains to the formal aspect of beauty (*jamal suẓẓari*).²⁷

5-Language, in-formed by metrical structures and rhythmic patterns and manipulated in an excellent and beautiful manner, is called poetry provided it is not involuntary and manifests beauty of expression. The content, which is thus expressed beautifully, pertains not to the outward form of beauty (*jamal suẓẓari*) but to the beauty²⁸ of the inner meaning (*jamal ma'navi*).²⁹

are brilliant-looking verses which express no real feeling and have no content whatever — yet which fulfil all the necessary conditions of poetry. The reader will encounter this kind of poetry more often than might be expected.” *The Two Colored Brocade*, op. cit., p. 38.

²⁷ That is, the sublimation of the sensible or the sense data (*mahsus*) into a more subtle and refined form or a higher integrated pattern.

²⁸ That is to say that as the impression or rather the imposition of the *ma'na* increases, the outward form becomes more transparent and reveals more readily its inner meaning. Since we are dealing with poetry here, it would mean that, in the case of this highest level of poetry, the *ma'na* comes to dominate totally over *surah* (outward form) and remoulds the outward form from within (without, of course, destroying the poetic canons).

Beauty, in this perspective, is, then, the attractive power of perfection. For a further discussion on the point, see Coomaraswamy, *op. cit.* p. 34. Plato, in *Cratylus*, 416 c has made the same point. Also see Dionysius Areopagiticus, *De divi nom.* IV.5 and *Lanka ratara Sutra*, II. 118-9.

²⁹ That is, the transmutation of the intelligible (*ma'qul*) into the quasi-sensible or the transmutation of the sensible into the intelligible. In this case, the spiritual and the intellectual principle imposes its harmony upon the conceptual modalities of the human soul (mind i.e. discursive thought is included in the faculties of the human soul in classical terminology). If the soul fails to receive the imprint of Beauty, that is, if it is excluded from the orbit of the human receptivity of Beauty the totality of the poetic phenomenon becomes somehow lacking.

There is yet another, rather esoteric, definition of poetry that we have left out from the purview of our present discussion. It reads as follows. “Poetry is the beauty of expression as well as the manifestation of Beauty. It is the total and perfect expression of the manifest which is always rooted in that which is completely un-manifest.” This is to say that it is rooted in the ineffable Principle, the Silence, which is the alpha and omega of all poetry and all music.

What distinguishes Iqbal from other Urdu poets is that his major works, unlike any other Urdu poet, fall under the last of the definitions of poetry that we have listed above which, in fact, is the highest class of poetry.³⁰ This point, perhaps, needs further elucidation. Proceeding against the backdrop of the definitions that we have formulated, we can say that the Urdu poetry³¹ of the Indian subcontinent, at the time when Iqbal emerged on the literary scene, could be *grosso modo* classified into four categories³²:

I- Contemplative or higher poetry³³ in which the inner meaning (*ma'na*) dominates over the outward form. In the every day language this kind of poetry³⁴ is called the poetry of ideas and concepts e.g. parts of the poetic works of Mir and Ghalib.³⁵

II- Poetry where the process of sublimation of feelings, sentiments and the sense impressions is the dominant motif

³⁰ Obviously, this should not be taken to mean that Iqbal did not try his hand on versification pure and simple or that the other Urdu poets did not reach the heights of excellence. It is a question of the predominant characteristic only, otherwise examples of "language informed by metrical structures and rhythmic patterns" abound in Iqbal's *Baqiyat* (disowned verses) and, on the other hand, first rate poetry is to be found in all the great poets of Urdu.

³¹ The reason that we talk here of Urdu poetry only while 55% of Iqbal's poetic works are in Persian is, precisely, that in the days of Iqbal, and even afterwards, the Persian poetry cultivated in India, as well as in the Persian speaking lands, failed to produce any specimens that could be said of genuine significance and real poetic worth.

³² The classification is for the ease of discourse, otherwise there are always emphasis shifts and overlapping.

³³ This is the name given to it by Iqbal. See note 10.

³⁴ When we say poetry it is presumed that it observes the canons described in the definitions, the difference arising from other distinguishing factors as well as from the level of consciousness and perfection to which a certain poetic composition may attain.

³⁵ In the same category, one has to include those verses, lyrics, odes, poems and epics which are either didactic or versify some historical or mythological story adapted for the purpose.

e.g. most of the poetic works of Mir³⁶ and some of the lyrics of Ghalib.³⁷

III- Poetry of lexical and linguistic techniques i.e. poetry which incorporates the appropriate skills like play on words, use of proverbs, adages and other linguistic resources and devices. Poetic works of Dhawq³⁸ and Dagh³⁹ provide examples of this kind of Urdu poetry.

IV- Poetry of literary embellishment and rhetorical devices. Most of the poetry of the Lucknow School⁴⁰ falls into this category as does a part of Mu'min's⁴¹ poetic works and *Mathnawi Gulzar-i-Nasim*.⁴²

Iqbal is neither the poet of sublimation, nor of the lexical/linguistic techniques and resources nor of the literary embellishments and rhetorical devices though he uses all these elements in a consummate manner. Iqbal's poetry belongs, essentially and predominantly, to the first category.⁴³ He is a poet of intellectual-conception and intuition-expression⁴⁴ wherein the *ma'na* (inner meaning) dominates totally over the *surah*. It is, however, still different from the Urdu poetry of the same category, both in its inner dynamics and content of the inner meaning. While Iqbal's poetic master pieces were a fruit of an intuitive vision associated with the

³⁶ See Mohammed Sadiq, *A History of Urdu Literature*, 2nd edition, Oxford, Karachi, 1984; Ali Jawwad Zaidi, *A History of Urdu Literature*, Sahitia Academy, Delhi, 1993.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Some critics have found in this fact a matter of reproach. From their point of view, which is typically modern, poetry is a matter of feelings and sentiments. Since Iqbal untiringly repeated some basic ideas, used a comparatively smaller number of poetic symbols and there is a complete absence of allusions to erotic subjects in his verse, he should be regarded as a thinker and not a poet.

⁴⁴ We shall explain these terms during the course of our discussion.

realm of the intelligibles⁴⁵ in the first place, the ideas and concepts that were prevalent in the works of the other poets were, by and large, conventional ideas shunted off from Sufism and the Illuminationist Schools. The psycho-dynamics of the common run of the poets was different in the sense that it stemmed from a different level of the artist's being. At this point we encounter the question of the levels of consciousness which is central to the gradation of poetry into hierarchical levels, ranging from the most mundane and facile versification to the most sublime degree of in-spired poetry.⁴⁶ Keeping ourselves within the same perspective but making our terms of reference more concise, we can say that poetry could be considered as the response or activity of a part of our being which, manipulated by the faculty of imagination, manifests itself in linguistic patterns. Those who represent the poetry of lexical/literary techniques and rhetorical devices or, in other words, the skilful craftsmanship of the poetic art, bring into play their rational faculties only and, to a certain extent, the lower reaches of imagination. It is a response born of the cerebral and discursive part of their being. Poetry of sublimation of feelings and sentiments is born of the response of the passionate soul or the psychic activity surging and overflowing from the emotive self.⁴⁷ Contemplative or

⁴⁵ Primary or secondary (*ma'qulat ula* and *ma'qulat thaniya*), respectively, in the terminology of Muslim philosophy.

⁴⁶ Some of the leading authorities on the religious sciences have given the title of "the poet of inspiration" to Iqbal. See Amin Ahsan Islahi, "Dr. Iqbal — The Poet of Inspiration", *Iqbaliyat*, (Urdu) Vol. 27, No. 4, January, 1987, pp.13; "Al- Sha'ir al-Mulham", *Iqbaliyat* (Arabic), 1992, pp. 149; Abu 'l-Hasan 'Ali Nadavi, *Rawa'i' Iqbal*, Dar al-Fikr, Damascus, 1960; *Nuqush -i-Iqbal*, Karachi, 1973.

⁴⁷ This is the kind of poetry which, in all probability, Wordsworth had in view when he defined poetry. This also explains the remark made by John A. Haywood, "The fact is that by accepted Islamic poetical canons, Wordsworth's poetry would rate very low — much lower than Shelley's — whereas to most English tastes these two poets are rated almost equal." See John A. Haywood, "The Wisdom of Muhammad Iqbal —

higher poetry⁴⁸ is the response of the Intellect⁴⁹ i. e. born of intellection. The reason Iqbal's poetry has to be considered as contemplative or higher poetry is, precisely, that the response is born of his intellect. His life is, as if, in the realm of the intelligibles and his faculties entertain their imprint, the ideas, in the way ordinary people receive the effects and impressions of events and sense data. What do we mean, then, by the entertainment of ideas? It is the intuition of things as they are on higher than empirical levels of reference. Before we go any further, we feel that this calls for a word about the terms that we have used in the foregoing remarks since we are aware of the fact that the same terms do not always carry the same signification for every one especially in our times when there is hardly any agreement over the technical terms used in various disciplines, and more markedly, in the field of literature. Moreover it is important for the understanding of the doctrine of art that we have adopted as our point of departure and which provides the theoretical underpinning to our evaluation of Iqbal's art and thought.

The terms "intuition" and expression are used here as the equivalents of "conception" and "generation" and, in using these, we are not thinking either of Bergson⁵⁰ or of Croce. By "intuition" we mean an intellection extending beyond the

Some Considerations of Form and Content", in *The Sword and the Sceptre*, ed. Dr. Riffat Hasan, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1977, pp. 162-175.

⁴⁸ The terms in-spired poetry or wisdom poetry as well as other terms shall become clear as we go along.

⁴⁹ It must have been evident by now to the reader that we make a distinction between reason and intellect in the sense that, to use the expression of Rumi, '*aql-i-juz*' (delimited reason) has defamed the intellect ('*aql-i-kulli*'). See S. H. Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, rpt., Suhail Academy, 1988; Martin Lings, "Intellect and Reason", *Ancient Beliefs and Modern Superstitions*, rpt., Suhail Academy, 1988, p. 57.

⁵⁰ H. L. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*. tr. Arthur Mitchell, London, 1911, p.1, pp. 187-88.

range of dialectic to that of the eternal “reasons”.⁵¹ It is therefore a contemplation rather than a thinking. Contemplation, in turn, implies to raise our level of reference from the empirical to the ideal, from observation to vision, from any auditory sensation to audition and so on. The poet, thus, “taking ideal form under the action of the vision while remaining only potentially ‘himself’”.⁵² This is what we saw in the case of the verses quoted earlier from Dante.⁵³ We must emphasise that contemplation is an act and not a passion⁵⁴ and, contrary to what modern psychology says, we do not see in “inspiration” the up-rush or inrush of an instinctive and subconscious will. “Inspiration”, in the terms of our perspective, is an elevation of the artist’s being to *super-conscious* and *supra-individual* levels.⁵⁵ In this the poet or artist is not a passive instrument. “He” is much rather actively and consciously making use of “himself” as an instrument.⁵⁶ Inspiration and aspiration, therefore, are not exclusive alternatives.⁵⁷ It seems that the caricaturing of inspired poetry of the 20th century Surrealists with their “automatic writing” stems from a confusion, which they made between the light of the super-conscious with the darkness and the chaos of the sub-conscious.⁵⁸ Therefore, the man incapable of

⁵¹ St. Augustin, *De Trin.* IX.6, II, cf. Gilson, *Introduction a' l' etude de St. Augustin*, 1931, p. 121.

⁵² Plotinus, *Enneads*, VI. 4. 2.

⁵³ See note 17.

⁵⁴ Free thought is a passion, however; it is much rather the thoughts than ourselves that are free.

⁵⁵ What is for the psychologist the “libido” is for the other “the divine Eros”.

⁵⁶ Body and mind are not the man, but only his instrument and vehicle. The man is passive only when he identifies himself with the psychophysical ego letting it take him where it will.

⁵⁷ Because the spirit to which both the words refer cannot work in the man except to the extent that he is “in the spirit”.

⁵⁸ The great mistake of the Surrealists is to believe that profundity lies in the direction of what is individual; that it is this and not the universal, which is mysterious, and that the mystery grows more profound the more

contemplation, in the sense described above, can not be an artist but a skilful workman. It is demanded of an artist to be both a contemplative and a good workman.⁵⁹ This is precisely what we had in mind when we tried to formulate the definitions of higher poetry, in the earlier part of our paper, to which Iqbal's major works conform.⁶⁰

Let us now briefly consider how the form of the artistic creation — in the case of the poet, a verbal crystallisation — is evoked? Human activity, in this regard as in others, works in a manner analogous to the Divine Activity, the Act of the Logos. The human operation reflects the manner of operation *in divinis*. The art of the human artist is his creation as the universe is the divine creation. The intuition-expression or, in other words, conception-articulation, of an imitable form is an intellectual conception born of artist's wisdom just as the eternal reasons are born of the Eternal Wisdom.⁶¹ The images arise naturally in the spirit, not by way of an aimless inspiration, but in purposeful and vital operation "by a word conceived in the intellect".⁶²

The words "conceived in the intellect" come from a statement of St. Thomas Aquinas⁶³ and we have so far only alluded to the doctrines of the Christian and Hindu literary

one delves into what is obscure and morbid: this is mystery turned upside down and therefore satanic, and it is at the same time a counterfeit of the "originality" — or uniqueness — of God.

⁵⁹ Best of all if, like the angels, he need not in his activity "lose the delights of inward contemplation".

⁶⁰ This does not, obviously, mean that Iqbal was a man devoid of volition, sentiments, feelings and emotions; merely a cerebral. No one is like that. It is only a question of emphasis and predominance which, in the traditional scheme of the division of human types, is described as the *janamic*, the *bhaktic* and the *karamic*. All we want to say is that Iqbal was a *janamic* or, if one prefers that, a pneumatic.

⁶¹ The conception of an imitable form is a "vital operation" that is to say a generation, St. Bonaventura, *In Hexaem*, coll, 20, n. 5.

⁶² *Per verbum in intellectu conceptum*, St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I. 45. 6c.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

traditions just because we regarded it more opportune for the present audience and occasion. Moreover, we have not quoted from Iqbal's poetic works either. This was, in the first place, to escape the charge of circular reasoning⁶⁴ and, secondly, to place Iqbal in a more universal and richer perspective. At this point, however, we find ourselves facing such strikingly close similarities of the doctrines mentioned above with the doctrines of the Islamic poetic tradition, to which Iqbal was a direct heir, that we find it impossible to silently pass over it.

According to Firdawsi, Sana'i, 'Attar, Sa'di, Rumi, Jami and other masters of Persian literature, poetry is the fruit of a vision that is articulated by the poet. To quote their exact formulation, "it is conceived in the intellect and then born through the wisdom of the poet".⁶⁵ The word used for wisdom is *Hikmah* (sapiential wisdom) and the intellect is referred to by the words " *'aql, zamir, dil or jan etc.*"⁶⁶

⁶⁴ i.e. classifying or defining Iqbal by quoting Iqbal himself.

⁶⁵ They all use various expressions but the meaning is almost always the same.

⁶⁶ 'Attar, *Asrar Namah*, p. 186; *Musibat Namah*, p. 48, 50, 367; *Diwan*, p. 800; *Ilahi Namah*, p. 366; Sana'i, *Hadiqah al-Haqiqah*, p. 706, 708. In this regard the remarkable detailed studies of Nasr Allah Pourjavadi are extremely informative and illuminating. See his *Bu-i Jan*, Markaz i Nashr i Danishgahi, Tehran, 1387 and *Naqd -i-Falsafi-i shi'r az Nazar -i-'Attar*, Tehran, 1995.

For Suharawardi's formulations on art and aesthetics see *Oeuvres philosophiques et mystiques*, (ed. S. H. Nasr) Paris, 1977; W. Thacksten, (tr.) *The mystical and Visionary Treatise of Suhrawardi*, London, 1982; For Muhammad Ghazzali, see R. Ettinghausen, "Al-Ghazzali on Beauty," in *Art and Thought*, Luzac, London, 1947, p. 160: For Ahmad Ghazzali, *Majmu'ah Athar-i-Farsi*, Tehran, 1370s. especially his *Sawanih*, (pp. 93-190 loc. cit.) translated into English by Nasrullah Pourjavadi, London, 1986: Rumi, to give just one example of his formulation from among his large opus, speaks of the *modus operandi* of traditional art in the story of the Greek and the Chinese painters in exactly the same vein, see *Mathnawi*, Bk I, 3465-85 (also see Bk IV, 733; Bk V 372): For another of Jami's formulations see *Lawa'ih*, tr. Whinfield and Kazvini, London, 1978. For a comprehensive survey of these formulations, see S. H. Nasr, "Islamic

One of the greatest authorities of Islamic metaphysics and sufism is Shaykh MuHhi al-Din Ibn ‘Arabi who wrote not only several hundred prose works, but also three *dirans* of poetry and many thousands of additional verses scattered throughout his prose writings. As the greatest Muslim theoretician of imagination, he was able to utilise—with perfect awareness of what he was doing—the possibilities of poetical expression gained through imaginal perception.

For the Shaykh as well, the subject matter of poetry is not something that one thinks about as one might think about a problem in dogmatic theology. Rather it is something that is seen with the inner eye and heard with the inner ear. Only then is it described.⁶⁷

So whether we call it higher poetry⁶⁸, designate it as the poetry of gnomic wisdom⁶⁹, give it the title of sapiential or contemplative poetry⁷⁰ or classify it as in-spired poetry⁷¹, all these appellations refer to one and the same reality which is situated at the junction between the form and essence and opens onto the Infinite. It is an activity in which the human

aesthetics” in *A Companion to World Philosophies*, Blackwell, 1996, pp. 448-459.

⁶⁷ For a detailed elucidation of the issue see W. C. Chittick, “Revelation and Poetic Imagery” in *Imaginal Worlds*, State University of New York Press, 1994, 67-77. This doctrine of the imaginal world and its significance for artistic creation received further elaboration in the works of Mulla Sadra. “It underlies the belief among so many Islamic artists, from poets to miniaturists, that traditional art involves an “alchemy” that transforms the corporeal into the spiritual and the spiritual into the corporeal. The alchemical process of spiritualising the material and materialising the spiritual, for all of its significance for Islamic art can be fully understood in the context of Islamic thought only in the light of the metaphysics of the imaginal world which was to receive its final elaboration in the hands of Mulla Sadra.”

⁶⁸ This is how Iqbal designated it. See note 13.

⁶⁹ The title given to this genre by Haywood, see note 80.

⁷⁰ This is my preferred expression for it.

⁷¹ The epithet used by S. H. Nasr, *op.cit.*, p. 90.

poet is but the imitator of the Divine Poet since his “logical”⁷² utterance is simultaneously a “poetical”⁷³ work.⁷⁴

To return to what we have earlier said, we repeat that the “vital operation”⁷⁵, of which Iqbal’s poetry is a manifestation, is an intellectual conception born of the poet’s wisdom. Thus it does not come as a surprise when we find Iqbal singing in the same vein: “Poetry is the heir of prophecy”⁷⁶ or when he refers to himself as “of one voice with the trustworthy Gibra’il”⁷⁷ or declares that “poetry that communicates the message of eternity is either the song of Gibra’il or the trumpet of Israfil”.⁷⁸ By doing this, he places himself squarely

⁷² Meaning here “stemming from the *logos*”.

⁷³ Referring here to *poiesis*.

⁷⁴ In their essence, “poetry” and “logic” are one and the same. “According to traditional doctrines, logic and poetry have a common source, the Intellect, and far from being contradictory are essentially complementary. Logic becomes opposed to poetry only if respect for logic becomes transformed into rationalism: poetry, rather than being a vehicle for the expression of a truly intellectual knowledge, becomes reduced to sentimentalism or a means of expressing individual idiosyncrasies and forms of subjectivism.” Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Art and Spirituality*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987, rpt. Suhail Academy, Lahore, 1998, p. 91.

⁷⁵ The conception of an imitable form is a “vital operation” that is to say a generation. This statement, already quoted above, comes from St. Bonaventura.

⁷⁶ *Jawid Nama*, tr. A. J. Arberry, Unwin, London, 1966, p. 65.

⁷⁷ *Zabur-i-‘Ajam*, in *Kulliyat -i Iqbal*, Iqbal Academy, 1994, p. 430. Gibra’il is the angel of revelation in the Islamic angelology.

⁷⁸ *Zarb-i-Kalim* in *Kulliyat -i Iqbal*, Iqbal Academy, 1994, p. 644.

These are only representative samples; otherwise much more could be cited from him on this point. See “Hikmat-o-Shi’r” in *Kulliyat -i Iqbal*, Iqbal Academy, 1994, p. 262; “Rumi” in *Kulliyat -i Iqbal*, Iqbal Academy, 1994, p. 335; “*Asrar-o-Rumuz*” in *Kulliyat -i Iqbal*, Iqbal Academy, 1994, p. 30, 52; pertinent is also the following quotation from his prose “Or perhaps our chief want is rather for the poet of the new age than for its prophet—or for one who should be poet and prophet in one. Our poets of recent generations have taught us the love of nature, and enabled us to find in it the revelation of the Divine. We still look for one who shall show us with the same clearness the presence of the Divine in the human

in the traditional continuity of Islamic literature⁷⁹, draws the sap of poetry from it and eventually becomes perhaps the finest flower that blossomed in the withering garden of traditional Islamic poetry. This point has been well made in the study made by John Haywood⁸⁰ which, however, focuses mainly on the formal aspect of this continuity.

Iqbal is in the long line of Classical Islamic poets (and I do not use the term "Islamic" in the narrow religious sense). Indeed, he is perhaps the last great Classical Islamic poet... The scholar familiar with the poetical classics of Arabic and Persian has the feeling, after reading Iqbal, that he is very much in the same tradition. Indeed, the last way to think of Iqbal is as a Pakistani poet. Rather does he speak for Islam universally and for the common ground between Islam and the other major world religions...⁸¹

...a large proportion of the verses in his work is truly gnomic poetry- "*Hikmah*" wisdom in the highest sense of the word. Moreover, they are not wisdom only to Muslims, or to Orientals, but to men of every creed and race. This is one of Iqbal's great achievements that he bridged the gap between

- We still need one who shall be fully and in all seriousness what Heine playfully called himself "Ritter Von dem Heiligen Geist", one who shall teach us to see the working out of our highest ideals in the everyday life of world and to find in devotion to the advancement of that life, not merely a sphere for an ascetic self-sacrifice, but a supreme object in the pursuit of which all thoughts, all passions, all delights may receive their highest development and satisfaction", Syed Abdul Wahid ed., *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1964, pp. 95, 96.

⁷⁹ Many fine studies have appeared which focus on this aspect of continuity. See Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, Iqbal Academy, Lahore, 1989; *Two Colored Brocade*, op. cit.; Mirza Muhammad Munawwar, *Iqbal ki Farsi Ghazal*, Aiwan-i-Urdu, Karachi, 1977.

⁸⁰ See John A. Haywood, "The Wisdom of Muhammad Iqbal — Some Considerations of Form and Content", in *The Sword and the Sceptre*, ed. Dr. Riffat Hasan, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1977, pp. 162-175.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* p.162

East and West, and gave utterance to the common ground in the great religious and philosophical systems of the world.⁸²

In the context of the issue of formal and spiritual continuity that we have just mentioned the question that is often debated in Iqbal studies is whether Iqbal was Classical in both matter and manner or in style and imagery only! In other words, did he express new ideas, new matter in a classical manner? Old symbols-new message; traditional forms, modern content! A definitive answer to this problem requires further research and comparative studies with the great figures of the Islamic tradition that could reveal the intellectual aspect of this continuity. In my view, however, he represents a continuity of both form and content. To maintain this position one has to explain the differences that exist between the content of his poetry and that of the classics of the Islamic literary tradition. In this regard, some scholars have also pointed out, often in a manner of reproach, that much of Iqbal's poetry focuses on the problems and concerns of his own community. It is also something, which, at least apparently, runs contrary to universality, which is fundamental to sapiential poetry.

The key to the understanding of this problem again lies in the doctrine of art that we have tried to expound in its essentials. Poetry "has something to say" which "cannot be said". It "has something to say": it may not be didactic in the negative sense of the word but, if genuine, it is also the result of a kind of necessity, the outcome of a "pressure" or a "need" to crystallise a "meaning" into a "form". Then, an invisible spiritual universe governs every sector of humanity. This spiritual universe not only determines the form, language and symbolism that the poetic inspiration of that sector of humanity has to take but also the "pressure" and the "need" that arise from the specific cosmic conditions pertaining to it. The specificity of this "urgent" and "necessitating" character

⁸² *Ibid.* p.172-73

of inspiration, under which the poetry of that particular sector comes into existence, does not prevent the poetic expression to be any thing less than perfect and to fulfil the first and the main criterion of art i.e. nobility of content.⁸³ On a secondary and contingent level, the question of social responsibility also enters into consideration.⁸⁴ As an applied side of sapiential doctrines and art, practical wisdom has always occupied its legitimate place in human collectivities and a poet, being a responsible member of the collectivity, has to participate in it and has to undertake it as a part of his human and spiritual vocation. It is, therefore, neither the question of a dichotomy nor a contradiction of the claims of universality. It is rather the other side of the same intellection, which is turned towards more practical and immediate issues of human existence. Here, poetry is “given to” or rather “imposed upon” the poet. Consider the case of Shaykh Mahmud Shabistari, the author of *Gulshan-i Raz (The Secret Rose Garden)* which is one of the greatest masterpieces of Persian Sufi poetry. He was asked about some extremely sophisticated and subtle theological and esoteric questions. In his own words:

Everyone knows that during all my life, I have never intended to compose poetry.

Although my temperament was capable of it, rarely did I choose to write poems.

⁸³ Perfect art can be recognised by three main criteria- nobility of content, this being a spiritual condition apart from which art has no right to exist; exactness of symbolism...and purity of style and elegance. See F. Schuon, *Language of the Self*, Ganesh, Madras, 1954, pp. 122-135.

⁸⁴ A contemporary poet such as Rilke is still very aware of this aspect when he writes to a young would-be poet. “This most of all: ask yourself in the most silent hour of the night: must I write? Dig into yourself for a deep answer and if the answer rings out in assent, if you meet this solemn question with a strong simple ‘I must’, then build your life according to this necessity.” Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letter to a Young Poet*, Random House, N.Y., 1987, p. 6.

Yet in spite of himself, Shabistari, in a period of few days, and through direct inspiration (*ilham*) composed one of the most enduring and widely read masterpieces of oriental literature.⁸⁵

This brings us to consider, at the end of this paper, the question of the purpose or “use” of sapiential poetry. Let us have, first of all, a look at a few representative statements of Iqbal on the question.⁸⁶ He said:

I have no interest in the art of poetry, but I have some special objectives. To achieve these ends I have chosen the medium of poetry because of the state and conditions of this country.⁸⁷ All human art must be subordinated to this final purpose (i.e. life) and the value of every thing must be determined with reference to its life-yielding capacity..... The dogma of the art for the sake of art⁸⁸ is a clever invention of decadence to cheat us out of life and power.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ See Muhammad Lahiji, *Sharh -i Gulshan-i Raz*, Tehran, 1337, p. 41.

⁸⁶ See Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, op. cit. pp. 61-72.

⁸⁷ A letter written in 1935, see *Iqbal Nama*, Ed. S. 'Ata Ullah, Lahore, Vol. I. See also the following quotations; “In poetry, literature for the sake of literature has never been my aim. There is no time left to me to attend to the delicacies of art. The purpose is to revolutionise modes of thinking. That is all. Keeping this principle in view, I try to express what I find useful. No wonder if the coming generations may not recognise me as a poet.” (*Iqbal Nama*, Ed. S. 'Ata Ullah, Lahore, Vol. I, p. 108); “I have never known myself as a poet. Therefore I have no rival competitors and I do not recognise any as such. I have no interest in the art of poetry. Yes, I have some specific goals to achieve, which I always keep before me. I took to poetry to explain these goals with reference to the conditions and traditions obtaining in the country, otherwise

*You will not find any good coming from that low-minded person
Who accuses me of writing poetry*

Iqbal Nama, Ed. S. 'Ata Ullah, Lahore, Vol. I, p. 195.

⁸⁸ The error in the thesis of “art for art’s sake” really amounts to supposing that there are relativities which bear their adequate justification within themselves, in their own relative nature, and that consequently there are criteria of value inaccessible to pure intelligence and foreign to objective truth. This error involves abolishing the primacy of the spirit

Iqbal is again in conformity with the traditional theory of literature here. Coomaraswamy tells us that “It is the same if we read the scriptures of any tradition or the authors like Dante or Ashvaghosha who tell us frankly that they wrote with other than ‘aesthetic’ ends in view”.⁹⁰ Since, according to the Hindu tradition, the purpose of art and, of course, poetry is “to know immortal through mortal things”⁹¹ and the Christian doctrine announces that “the invisible things of God” (that is to say the ideas or eternal reasons of things, by which we know what they ought to be like) are to be seen in the things that are made”.⁹² Dante could say, “the whole work was undertaken not for speculative but a practical end... The purpose of the whole is to remove those who are living in this life from the state of wretchedness and to lead them to the state of blessedness”.⁹³ Ashvaghosha declared⁹⁴ his purpose in the following manner:

This poem, pregnant with the burden of Liberation, has been composed by me in the poetic manner, not for the sake of giving pleasure but for the sake of giving peace, and to win over other-minded hearers. If I have dealt in it with subjects other than that of Liberation, that pertains to what is proper to poetry, to make it tasty, just as when honey is mixed with a sour medicinal herbs to make it drinkable. Since I beheld the world for the most part given over to objects of sense and

and its replacement either by instinct or taste, by criteria that are either purely subjective or else arbitrary. F. Schuon, *loc. cit.*

⁸⁹ Translation taken from Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, op. cit., p. 62.

⁹⁰ A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art*, Dover, N.Y., 1956, p. 25.

⁹¹ *Aitareya Aranyaka*, II. 3.2; *Aitareya Brahmana*, VII. 10; *Katha Upanishad*, II. 10 b.

⁹² Rom. I. 20. St. Thomas Aquinas repeatedly compares the human and divine architects: God's knowledge is to His creation as is the artist's knowledge of art to the things made by art. See his *Sum. Theol.* I. 14.8:I. 17, I; I. 200. 2; I. 45. 6; I-III. 13. 2 ad 3.

⁹³ Cf. Coomaraswamy, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

⁹⁴ Ashvaghosha, *Saudarananda*, colophon, cf. Coomaraswamy, *op. cit.* p. 54.

disliking to consider Liberation, I have spoken here in the garb of poetry, holding that Liberation is the primary value.”

Plato was also explicit on the point since the Muses are given us “that we may use them intellectually, not as a source of irrational pleasure but as an aid to the revolution of the soul within us, of which the harmony was lost at birth, to help in restoring it to order and content with its Self”.⁹⁵ We need not dwell on it because it is evident that, according to the traditional theory of literature, the foundations of art lie in the Spirit, in metaphysical, theological and mystical knowledge, not in the knowledge of the craft alone nor yet in genius, for this may be anything at all; in other words the intrinsic principles of art are essentially subordinate to the extrinsic principles of a higher order. Art is an activity, an exteriorisation, and thus depends by definition on a knowledge that transcends it and gives it order; apart from such knowledge art has no justification: it is knowledge which determines action, manifestation, form and never the reverse.

Sapiential poetry, then, is a means and a vehicle for the expression of truth and it complements logic in that it deals with forms of knowledge which are not accessible to the unaided logical faculties of man. Also this poetry brings about the transformation of the soul and its sensibilities in a manner which is not possible otherwise. It causes an ascent in the soul of man and in this regard it has an almost alchemical quality about it, a power to transform knowledge, making it a “tasted” fruit which is digested and which transforms one’s being, thus, through its re-echoing of the fundamental truths of our existence aids man to return to the higher states of being and consciousness.

Finally, art, even the highest as in the case of sapiential poetry, is only the means to an end. It is a manner of “seeing through a glass, darkly,” and although it is far better than not

⁹⁵ *Timaeus* 47 D, cf. Coomaraswamy, *op. cit.* p. 55

to see at all, the utility of every art must come to an end when “vision is face to face”.⁹⁶

*A finite image of Infinity:
This is the nature of all poetry.
All human work to its last limit tends;
Its Archetype in Heaven never ends.*⁹⁷

⁹⁶ I Cor. 13. 12.

⁹⁷ F.Schuon, *The Garland- Poems*, Bloomington: Abodes, 1994, p. 85.

THE PROBLEMS OF INTERPRETING IQBAL'S POETRY AT THE END OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Natalia Prigarina

“Our soul discovers itself when we come
into contact with a great mind”

(Muhammad Iqbal. *Stray Reflections*.)

In this paper I'd like to touch on some aspects of the Iqbal studies in the light of contemporary approach towards a poetic text.

First of all I'd like to bring to your attention the importance of time distance for the understanding of a classical text (if we'll admit that Allama Iqbal is the classic of literature).

Very often one can run into contradictory and even polarised appraisals of the different aspects of Iqbal's art and thought. My intention is to stress the importance of the text as a source of objective conclusions.

I'd like to show just briefly (a) some peculiarities of Iqbal's poetic method which determine some important sides of his texts; (b) the importance of the intertextual interaction between the text context and metatext in the case of Iqbal. The use of similar apparatus could help the scholar “to make a text itself talk”.

Iqbal and Modern Era. Saying this we have in mind the contemporaneity. But immediately many questions arise. What do we mean by the Modern era? Are we ourselves the

representatives of the Modern era? Is there a difference in understanding Iqbal's poetry at the beginning and at the end of the century? What is the opposition of the notion *modern*? Is it *classic*? Iqbal is considered beyond all questions. There are living classics even among the audience— Professor Annemarie Schimmel, for example.

What is more, which time frames are important to be considered a representative of the Modern era? May I recall, that Allama Iqbal was born 120 years ago, and passed away, to be exact, 59 years ago. It will be soon 100 years when the first Iqbal's poem appeared in the *Makhzan*.

All Iqbal's generation is now in the best of worlds, so those who represent the contemporary Iqbal studies could have been considered as his sons and daughters, and the youngest among them as his grand children. (80 years ago, he said, that the new appearance of the Haley's comet, which he saw by his own eyes, will be available for the eyes of his grandsons: "It is with the eyes of my grandsons that I shall see it again."¹)

For those who might affiliate themselves with the generation of poet's children, his epoch is still not so far away in the distance, its cultural, aesthetic and moral values are perceptible and clear for them, as far as they could associate their own life experience with the experience of their parents.

For the grandchildren, Iqbal's epoch seems to be a distant history. Hence for some of them the poet's vivid treats seem to become petrified and his dictum acquires the power of law. Thus the poet, as if becoming a sort of a deity, loses his right to contradict himself, to be illogical, spontaneous, paradoxical, even to feel frustrated and painful.

Javid Iqbal, criticising those scholars for whom this attitude is typical, says, "such scholars tend to only static

¹ In, Address by Anwar Ibrahim, acting Prime Minister of Malaysia, to the International Conference on Iqbal and Asian Renaissance. Shah Alam, Selangor, 1997, p.10.

research, and their achievement is to represent Iqbal- the warm and human iconoclast- as a cold and forbidding idol”²

The great importance of Iqbal, his universal appeal was clear for Iqbal's contemporaries, and for them (as Sheikh Abdul Qadir stated soon after Iqbal's death) he was not exceptionally “the Poet of Islam”- a title often used in conjunction with his name- but also “the Poet of India” and “The Poet of the East” and “of Humanity”³

So, Iqbal became classic in his lifetime and it is obvious that his poetry will forever provide him this place in the world literature. In his paper “Poetry of Iqbal” delivered this June on the International Conference on “Iqbal and the Asian Renaissance” held in Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia, Mr. Suheyl Umar gave a very beautiful definition of Iqbal's poetry. He said: “So, whether we call it higher poetry, designate it as the poetry of gnomic wisdom, give it the title of sapient or contemplative poetry or classify it as inspired poetry all these appellations refer to one and the same reality which is situated at the junction between the form and essence and opens onto the Infinite. It is an activity in which the human poet is but the imitator of the Divine Poet since his ‘logical’ utterance is simultaneously a ‘poetical’ work” (p.10)

In my opinion, the poetic beauty of this definition is the best proof of its correctness. But if I were permitted to add something to this definition I would quote a saying of the great Russian poet of the 20th century Ossip Mandelstam who said about Dante-“His theology was the vessel of dynamics”. This is absolutely true of Iqbal's vitalism. At the same time one can't help mentioning that Iqbal assigned primary importance to the main source of the inspiration and sapience-the all-absorbing feeling which is love (*muhabbat, Ishq*).

² Javid Iqbal. Introduction- *Stray Reflections*, Lahore, 1992, p. 22.

³ Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal the Great Poet of Islam,” in *Iqbal- The Great Poet of Islam* by Sh. Abdul Qadir, Lahore, 1975, p. 40.

If we could put together all the books written about Iqbal by all the researchers of his poetry, there would be a huge library, but there exists the only unalterable unit which is more important than all this virtual library, - that is the complex of Iqbal's texts. They will appear before the reader of the third Millennium with all their mystery, which every poetic text contains even if it seems to be simple and understandable.

Nevertheless the preceding generations of Iqbal's investigators tried to do all their best so that the future readers could cope with the mysteries of Iqbal's poetry and thought. But it was not a simple task and the difficulties which Iqbal's text creates for a researcher will only increase in the future.

This is connected mainly with the ageing of the text. It is a well-known fact that one hundred years after Hafez's death the understanding of his ghazals especially for the foreign readers became so uncertain that it was necessary to create commentaries for every line. (The first was the famous *Sharh-i Sudi*, written by the Serbian Muslim in Turkish language).

The central notion of the modern literature studies is the concept of the text. In the given case it might be equal to all Iqbal's poetry. It is open and linked by many intertextual relations with the other texts of culture. It demands a careful attitude. Everyone who had dealt with the classical texts knows about their numerous traps and hence many difficulties. The most common are misreading, misunderstanding, false interpretations partially due to lack of information of the given epoch, and modernisation of the text. Difference of religious and cultural traditions and many other reasons may lead towards the false interpretations and nobody is absolutely immune to it. To prove this statement I'd like to adduce some examples of certain typical erroneous understanding of the text.

In this respect the materials of the conference, which I mentioned previously in connection with the Mr. Suheyl Umar's definition of Iqbal's poetry are typical of the end of

the century. The conference was very successful and interesting, and I managed to participate in it. What I am going to criticise is by no means personal and is interesting for me, so to say, methodologically, as a tendency of the contemporary approach to some important questions.

But I shall start from the literary history - and quote Ali Sardar Ja'fari, one of the well-known writers and the ideologists of the *taraqqi pasand* movement in Urdu literature.

Poetry or Philosophy?

One of the most common subjects for the discussion has for many years been the importance of Iqbal- the poet versus Iqbal- the philosopher. So Ali Sardar Ja'fari in his *Taraqqi pasand Adab* says: "That's why separating the personality of Iqbal- the great poet from Iqbal- the philosopher, it is usually said that Iqbal is a poet but a small philosopher" (p.114).

Image of Salamander.

The next problem is one of the use of poetic images (or rather poetic motifs) as equivalents of political or social statements, without the correction factor of its poetic origin. "Another of these metaphors,- a contemporary scholar says, - is what we should seek the 'nature of salamander which feeds on flame'. This image suggests that the human soul is that which continually changes colour, and is eaten up by fire...In the case of the salamander image, the situation was the domination by the European powers of Muslim countries in the period after 1914. Iqbal's poetry on this level was an imperative to throw off this domination, and to get rid of the psychology of self-content that had developed in the midst of a colonised people. Muslims were asked to image themselves free people".⁴

⁴ "Iqbal: His Metaphysical Ideas", By Dr. Sheila McDonough. Int. Congress on Muhammad Iqbal and the Asian Renaissance, Shah Alam, Selangor 1997, p. 2.

This is one of the examples of the textual trap for a reader who is not acquainted with the symbolism of poetry and has no doubt to treat it by the means of common sense. In Urdu and Persian poetry the first connotation of his image is that salamander never burns in the flame and even feeds on it (and this is the idea of being powerful and able to overcome all the obstacles). The connotation of the changing colour belongs to the other character- chameleon (*Buqalamun*) used in this poetry. It is connected with the topos of garden, beautifully changing its colour under the sweet touches of zephyr, or as simile comparing it with the changeable temper of the beloved. The most curious side of this interpretation is that the mistake does not influence upon the correctness of the author's conclusion.

Iqbal's socialism

Without any doubt during his lifetime Iqbal experienced the influence of the socialist ideas⁵

At the same International Congress in Malaysia this question arose at least twice. In his paper Prof. Hafeez Malik said: "Iqbal thought that the Soviet Union was in some measure doing God's work unconsciously."⁶ and Johan Effendi stated that in "Bal-i Jibril" Iqbal "identified himself *completely* (italics mine, -N.P.) with Lenin"⁷. If it were at least 15 or 20 years ago such statements would have been considered in my country as the great victory of the Marxist ideology over the world. But in my studies and even in the studies of my learned colleague (most of whom were the members of the Communist party) nobody dared jump to such conclusions (I mean first of all the idea of Iqbal identifying himself with Lenin!). I think that the text of the

⁵ cf. J. Iqbal, op. cit., Introduction, p.23 "He was therefore the first Muslim in the Indian sub-continent to express a coherent demand for the establishment of *Islamic socialism*" /italics mine. N.P.

⁶ Hafeez Malik, "The New World Order within the Iqbalian Framework", p. 19.

⁷ Johan Effendi. "Iqbal's quest for social Justice", p. 5.

well known long poem *Lenin [Khuda ke buzur men]*, *Fereshton ka git* did not allow even us at that time to interpret the poetic license in such straightforward terms. I can't help saying that if Iqbal could get the real information about Lenin's mentality and details of his political activity which our society has got now, he would have forced Lenin to answer at the Day of Judgement, and not to put questions in front of God.

I would say that in *Rumuz i Bekhudi* which I studied in my book *Poetics of Muhammad Iqbal* I found the convincing evidence that the poet chose the way of *taqlid* of the Prophet and identifies the role of his prophesy with the Prophet's one.

Iqbal: the poet?

Now I'd like to return to the same topic which I started with and which at the end of the century finds, so to say, the new nuances. So the young Iranian (of the grandson's or rather great-grandson's generation) contemplates on the phenomena of Iqbal's poetry. In a small clause entitled "What Poetry?", the author says: "For Iqbal poetry was powerful means for conveying his message to the Muslim masses of the East. So his poems should be differentiated from those poetic imaginations with mere aesthetic character. In other words, one may consider Iqbal *as a prose poet* (italics mine, N.P.), rather than a conventional poet... Nevertheless Iqbal's poems, due to their figures of speech, like conventional symbolism, are subject to different interpretations that complicate a scientific study"⁸ Indeed, this opinion is very interesting because it testifies that sometimes even educated Iranians can find it difficult to appreciate the poetry written in the Persian language but following another literary tradition—that of Indo-Pakistani subcontinent. For them the aesthetic aspect of this poetry is beyond discussion, the author even describes it in terms of prose poetry! And the symbolism is regarded as an obstacle for the scientific study.

⁸ M. Esmael-Nia, "Iqbal as a Social Reformer", Shah Alam, Selangor, 1997, p. 5.

Let me now turn to those traits of Iqbal's text which demand special attention, in spite of their seemingly well-known character. The most important feature of Iqbal's poetry is its evolution. The common opinion is that there are three main different periods of his poetry according to the division of collection of poems (*Bang i dara*) into three parts (up to 1905, 1905-1908, and the rest, here up to 1924). It is correct, that these three periods show the change of ideas and subjects.

But actually every new collection of poetry testifies the new changes in Iqbal's worldview and adds new colours to this poetry. One of the bright examples is the use of the notion *taqlid* by Iqbal in different periods of his poetical life.

The problem of Iqbal's poetic bilinguism seems to be solved by the two different opinions (one is, that he wanted to convey his message to the Persian-speaking people, and the second, based on his words, that his goal was to make his words available first to the restricted group of educated readers, so that after accepting his ideas they could convey them to the wider circle). But there are questions to be answered. And except just the same question- why did he create in Persian his magnum opus and his most beautiful poetry (*Payam and Zabur*) depriving Indian Muslims of his noble and passionate lyrics- the question is also what is the difference between both parts of his poetry. In other words, what is the genuine value of Iqbal's bilinguism?

Duality is one of the characteristic features of all the background both of his thought and poetry. Iqbal experienced influence of Western and Eastern thought, and as a Russian scholar Polonskaya noticed- "he was eager to combine a set of traditional Muslim ideas, mainly of religious reformers of the East, with the rationalistic ideas of the Western philosophers"⁹

⁹ L. R. Gordon-Polonskaya, "The social ideas of Muhammad Iqbal", (in Russian) in *Tvorchestvo Muhammada Iqbala*. M., 1982, p. 73.

In his poetry one can find a sort of the dual motivation of the main poetic ideas— one source of which is Islamic and Sufi literary tradition and another one— ideas and images of the Western literature, mainly the Romanticism.

And the last example of the duality is the inner development and thus a sort of bifurcation of the traditional poetic motifs due to the new ideas which Iqbal brought into his poetry. The examples are the moth, the drop of rain and some other. In his early poetry Iqbal used these motifs in a traditional way, but later he changed their connotations so that we could say, that there are two kinds of moths in his poems— one burning in the flame of the candle and the other which is not going to die in the flame, while its soul achieves grace to the neighbourhood of Candle.

Iqbal's poetry is inseparable from the literary traditions both of East and West which creates its context. The metatext of Iqbal's poetry may be considered the Qur'an as well as Rumi's *Masnawi* (*Qur'an bar zaban-e pehlu*). Comparing Iqbal's Qur'anic quotations with those Rumi, it becomes obvious that the list of Iqbal's quotations is close to Rumi's (from the total number of Qur'anic quotations of Iqbal coinciding with those of *Masnawi-ye Maa'nawi* of Rumi.¹⁰

Perhaps it is of some interest we try to estimate even hypothetically the interaction of Iqbal's poetic text with the verbal context.

First of all it concerns the contemporary literature. I can only say, that *Makhsan* publications may be the evidence of the existence of the motifs common to Iqbal and the poets of that period. This topic still needs further investigation.

The nearest to Iqbal is Altaf Husain Hali, whose importance for the modelling of the Iqbal's *qaremi nazm* is indisputable. After it, the Urdu classical tradition is worth mentioning— Mir and Ghalib. Then the tradition of the

¹⁰ See S. Wazir al-Hasan Abidi, "Manba-i mushtarak-i Hazrat-i Maulana wa Allam Iqbal dar ayat-i mubarakah-i Qur'ani wa Ahadis-i muqaddasa-i nabwi", *Armughan-i daneshgah*, Punjab Univ. Lahore, w/d, p. 44).

regional Persian literature of Sind, Punjab, Kashmir, Malwa and Hyderabad (Deccan) of the XIX-XX follows. It is striking how many coincidences one can find between Iqbal's poetry and the Sufi and philosophical lyrics of these regions.

Now there is the Persian postclassical literature or the Indo-Persian one with the names of Bedil, Saeb, Naziri, Urfi, Fayzi and many others who are constantly present in Iqbal's poetry, mostly in Urdu.

In his Persian poetry he appeals mainly to the classical Persian poetry and personally to Rumi, Hafiz, Sa'adi etc.

There is also the old-Persian tradition, and one can find its traces, for example, in the motifs of fire in the reed (found in *Ayatkar-e Zareran*) or the motif of mourning over the dead child, found in a Maniheyan fragment 45.¹¹ In this fragment mother says, that to mourn the death of a child is to kill the spiritual son- the soul of the dead son. (cf. Iqbal's poem "Mother's dream").

This is just a little part of the addresses of the literary interactions of Iqbal's poetic text only with Urdu and Persian literature which the researcher must take into consideration.

Similarly, a vertical context can be found for the Western literature and for the cultural, political and philosophical phenomena inherent to Iqbal. The religious context of Iqbal's poetry was studied in *Gabriel's wing* by Prof. Annemarie Schimmel.

All this allows us to conclude that Iqbal's poetry has a very complicated structure, perhaps the most sophisticated in Urdu literature, and that there is the real danger of loosing the information which is contained in its every word.

Every classical text has to be interpreted. There are three main levels of the necessary commentary: a real commentary, which helps to reconstruct the real base of the image and the circumstances of its creation (so to say) the *asbab an-nuzul*).

¹¹ See Rypka, *Istoriya tadjikskey I persidskoy literatury*, M, 1973, p. 87.

The second level is one of the poetic interpretation of the ideas, images and poetic means of the text as it is understood by the contemporary reader.

And the last level is that of the symbolical, or mystical, interpretation of the text. But, in the case of modern literature it may be just the opposite. As Anvar Ibrahim puts it, to understand Iqbal's *Rumuz i Bekhudi*, signifies: "to lift the metaphoric veil and see its true meaning"¹².

To conclude, it is obvious, that the text of Iqbal's poetry will forever remain the source of contemplation and reflections.

¹² *Op. cit.*, p. 7.

ALLAMA IQBAL'S VIEW OF *FIQH* AND DR. JAVID IQBAL'S OPPOSITION TO THE IMPOSITION OF *HUDOOD* LAWS IN PAKISTAN

Khaled Ahmed

Dr. Javid Iqbal began by defining the nature of the state envisioned by the Quaid and Allama Iqbal. He posited that the unifying principle among Muslims in the modern Islamic state was unity of faith, and the unifying principle between the Muslims and the non-Muslim citizens of the state was the principle of humanity. While the Quaid and Allama Iqbal did not intend to create a secular state, they were conscious of the fact that they desired an 'ideal secular state' (*misaali dunyavi riyasat*). The first speech of the Quaid at the Constituent Assembly in 1947 was based on the Quranic principle of tolerance. Both the preceptors wanted to establish a modern Islamic state based on democratic principles, multi-party and federal-parliamentary in structure.

Dr. Javid Iqbal says: 'The Jinnah-Iqbal correspondence, discussing "Shari'ah", points to the establishment of a state based on Islam's "welfare legislation"; it does not propose that in the new state any laws pertaining to cutting of the hands (for theft) and stoning to death (for fornication) would be enforced'. Dr Javid Iqbal then refers to his experience in the Supreme Court and says that a Supreme Court judge sitting in the federal 'shari'ah' bench had raised the question whether hands would be cut by an executioner or a doctor,

and had said that on the basis of the strict conditions of prescribed evidence it was impossible to convict anyone under ‘*qat’ i yadd*’ (cutting of hand). Since the law of ‘*qat’ i yadd*’ is on the statute book and no one has ever been convicted under it, the law merely serves a decorative purpose and has been imposed as a political device. Dr Javid Iqbal also pointed out that since the imposition of ‘*hudoob*’ sexual crime had actually increased and the law has been used against innocent people.

He went on to say that there were the ‘*Ahl i Jalal*’ (The Angry Ones) in the country who favoured a revolutionary and quick enforcement of all the ‘shari’ah’; opposed to them were the ‘*Ahl i Jamal*’ (The Aesthetic Ones) who wanted a gradualist imposition of Islamic Law and gave preference to those laws which would express the ‘blessings’ rather than the punitive side of Islam. There are three attitudes to the question of Islam: the traditionalist, the populist, and the reformist. The Quaid-i-Azam and, in particular, Allama Iqbal were strongly opposed to both traditionalist and populist models; both favoured Reformist Islam and this was the model that should have been adopted in Pakistan individually and collectively.

Was Allama Iqbal opposed to the ‘*hudoob*’ as Dr Javed Iqbal says? Did he anywhere in his writings clearly say that he new Islamic state would not cut hands and stone people to death? To extend the argument, was he also opposed to the ‘*fiqh*’ favouring the law of evidence that discriminated against women and the non-Muslim citizens of the state? That he was unhappy with and scared of the traditionalist ulema is testified by his arguments in his *Lectures*; there is also evidence that he inclined to a ‘liberal’ version of Islam in the new state. Towards the end of his life he was collecting material to write on ‘*fiqh*’ and had been writing to the traditionalist ulema to elucidate points that he presumably wanted discussed in his new work. He was not a trained *alim* and was not accepted as such by the ulema, but he thought himself qualified to produce a work of *ijtihad*.

According to Dr Javid Iqbal's biography of Allama Iqbal, *Zindarood* (1989), Allama Iqbal read his first thesis on 'Ijtihad' in December 1924 at the Habibya Hall of Islamia College Lahore. The reaction from the traditionalist ulema was immediate: he was declared *kafir* for the new thoughts expressed in the paper. Maulavi Abu Muhammad Didar Ali actually handed down a *fatwa* of his apostatisation. In a letter written to a friend, Iqbal opined that the ulema had deserted the movement started by Sir Syed Ahmad and were now under the influence of the Khilafat Committee. He promised to publish his paper but later thought better of it. The newspapers however carried a report about the Habibya Hall lecture. In South India, this report was read by Seth Jamal Muhammad, a trader of great wealth who ran a Muslim Association in Madras. Renowned religious thinkers, Marmaduke Pikhthal and Suleiman Nadvi, had lectured at the Association on his invitation. In 1925, Seth Jamal invited Iqbal on behalf of the Muslim Association to deliver lectures on *Ijtihad* on Madras. The invitation was accepted.

Iqbal accepted the invitation for two reasons: to visit the tomb of Tipu Sultan whom he held in great reverence, and to present some very important religious issues in the light of contemporary times. The preparation of the six lectures he had promised Seth Jamal took a long time. He wanted to cast a critical glance at the *fiqh* for which he started gathering literature on Islamic jurisprudence. He wrote to the more reputed ulema to seek their guidance. The letter he wrote to Maulana Suleiman Nadvi is an important document because its contents do not only reflect his intention of seeking guidance but also a subliminal effort at criticising the traditionalist confusion on certain issues. Iqbal had asked some embarrassing questions about *fiqh*. Was 'collective opinion' (*ijma'*) superior to the clear text (*nas*) of the Quran? For instance, how has *fiqh* modified the *nas* of two years' lactation for the new-born? Nadvi had told him earlier that *fiqh* could modify (takhsees) the Quranic *nas*. Caliph Umar

had modified the *nas* on the method of *talaq* (divorce). Can Muslims give this kind of right to the Islamic Constitution? The *fiqh* allows the right of divorce to persons other than the husband. Is there any Quranic order or any authoritative 'hadith' in this regard? As for modifying *nas*, is this right given to the collective opinion of ulema or is it also given to an individual reformer?

Allama Iqbal's intent becomes clear when he quotes Maulana Shibli in the same letter: 'It is therefore a good method to pay regard to the habits of the society while considering punishments so that the generations that come after the times of the "Imam" are not treated harshly.' He goes on to refer to an earlier opinion of Nadvi and seeks clarification on how the Islamic ruler can postpone edicts of *faraiz* (duties) when he sees that their implementation will lead to disorder. The basic question he asked was: what are the scansions of the Imam when he modifies *nas*, that is, clear text of the Quran.

By January 1929, Iqbal could complete only three out of the six promised lectures, and these are the lectures that he read at Madras and Hyderabad. He left Delhi for Madras after attending the All-Parties Muslim Conference and was received by his host at Madras on 3 January 1929. The lectures were reported in detail in a Lahore magazine from which the three readings and the local reaction to them can be gauged. It was in Madras that a Muslim women's delegation sought a separate session with him to clarify their status under Islam. Allama Iqbal's detailed answer reveals that he was not willing to follow the *fiqh* with regard to the Quranic edict of 'absolute equality of rights' between men and women. He said that the Quran did not decree polygamy, only permitted it, of which the Muslim men took unfair advantage. He told the women's delegation that they could counter exploitation by asking for remuneration for household work and demanding regular maintenance, a Quranic order which was irreducible.

The all-India reaction to the Lectures was favourable in contrast to what had happened in 1924 in Lahore. Iqbal was convinced that his project was feasible despite opposition from the traditionalist ulema. As if to confirm his conviction, Sir Ross Masood, vice-chancellor of the Aligarh University, invited him to read six lectures at the University. Iqbal wrote three more in the next eight months and went to Aligarh on 30 November 1929 where he read the promised six lectures at the University's Strachey Hall. They were so well received that he published them in Lahore in 1930 as *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Another edition of seven lectures was published later in 1932 by Oxford University Press in London, with the addition of a lecture that he had read at the Aristotelian Society during his visit to London to attend the Round Table Conference.

The lectures were published in English and Iqbal was aware that the book had a very restrictive readership because of the language. He thought of getting them translated through a friend Nazir Naizi, but his family friend Chaudhry Muhammad Hussain was opposed to it. He thought that the Lectures were not 'basic' enough to be published in Urdu and that after getting into the hands of the ulema might arouse adverse reaction. The Lectures were partially translated into Urdu in his own lifetime and were completed and published twenty years after Iqbal's death in 1958. Very few ulema turned to the book and those who did pronounced it as heresy conceived under the influence of Western philosophy.

In his introduction to the Lectures, Iqbal said: 'The Quran is a book that emphasises deed rather than idea'. This was his expression of intent about the thesis he was going to explore: that the holy writ followed induction as the methodology of discourse, and therefore it was a book that helped in the formulation of a premise scientifically instead of being tied to a 'given' promise. In his first Madras Lecture, 'Knowledge and Religious Experience', Allama Iqbal wrote: 'During the last five hundred years religious thought in Islam has been

practically stationary. There was a time when European thought received inspiration from the world of Islam. The most remarkable phenomenon of modern history, however, is the enormous rapidity with which the world of Islam is spiritually moving towards the west. There is nothing wrong in this movement, for the European culture, on its intellectual side, is only further development of the most important phases of the culture of Islam'.

One can say that in the Aligarh Lectures a much emboldened Iqbal stated the most rebellious view on *fiqh*. In his fifth lecture, 'The Spirit of Muslim Culture', he wrote: 'The Prophet of Islam seems to stand between the ancient and the modern world. In so far as the source of his revelation is concerned he belongs to the ancient world; in so far as the spirit of his revelation is concerned he belongs to the modern world...In Islam prophecy reaches its perfection in discovering the need of its own abolition. This involves the keen perception that life cannot forever be kept on leading strings; that in order to achieve full self-consciousness man must finally be thrown back on his own resources. The abolition of priesthood and hereditary kingship in Islam, the constant appeal to reason and experience in the Quran, and the emphasis it lays on Nature and History as sources of human knowledge, are all different aspects of the same idea of finality'.

It seems clear that Allama Iqbal is steadily moving towards a refutation of the traditionalist *fiqh* by emphasising the scientific and experimental aspects of the Quran and insisting on 'induction as the only form of reliable argument'. Traditionalist Islamic jurisprudence treats the Qurani edict as a premise and then seeks to suit the social environment to it; and if a law is proved 'bad' in practice, more coercion is sanctioned against the society to bring it in line with the law, instead of following the 'inductive' method of suiting the law to the sociology of the target population. The stringency of Islamic law and the disagreement over the degree of application of the 'shari'ah' spring from its deductive

approach to law-making under Islam. The target population is treated to repeated repudiation of the 'shari'ah' already enforced; and more 'shari'ah' is pledged after each effort to enforce laws deductively fails to bring about the desired change in society.

In the Sixth Lecture, Iqbal takes the cue from the Nationalist Party of Turkey as it sought to 'rebuild the Law of Shariat in the light of modern thought and experience with the help of freedom of Ijtihad'. He accepted the Turkish liberal Ijtihad that parliament was vested with the validity of Caliphate or Imamate and agreed that the republican form of government was in tune with the spirit of Islam. He thought Turkey had shaken off its dogmatic slumber and had through intellectual freedom passed from the state of the ideal to the state of the real. He quotes Hobbes to say that 'to have a succession of identical thoughts and feelings is to have no thoughts and feelings at all'. Then he adds: 'Unfortunately, the conservative Muslim public of this country is not quite ready for a critical discussion of *fiqh* which, if undertaken, is like to displease most people, and raise sectarian controversies; yet I venture to offer a few remarks on the point before us'. Then he says: 'In view of the intense conservatism of the Muslims of India, Indian judges cannot but stick to what are called standards works. The result is that while the peoples are moving the law remains stationary'.

Dr Javid Iqbal thinks that Allama Iqbal's discussion of a reconstructed *fiqh* in reference to Shah Waliullah in the Sixth Lecture is the crux of his argument against the traditionalist Islamic law. Needless to say, throughout the Lectures Iqbal is scared of the opinion of the ulema in India. It is for this reason that he has attributed the most significant part of his views on the need to reconstruct Islamic law to Shah Waliullah. Iqbal writes: 'The prophetic method of teaching, according to Shah Waliullah, is that, generally speaking, the law revealed by a prophet takes especial notice of the habits, ways, and peculiarities to whom he is specially sent. The

Prophet who aims at all-embracing principles, however, can neither reveal different principles for different peoples, nor leaves them to work out their own rules of conduct. His method is to train one particular people, and to use them as a nucleus for the building up of a universal Shariat. In doing so he accentuates the principles underlying the social life of all mankind in the light of the specific habits of the people immediately before haching, according to Shah Waliullah, is that, generally speaking, the law revealed by a prophet takes especial notice of the habits, ways, and peculiarities to whom he is specially sent. The Prophet who aims at all-embracing principles, however, can neither reveal different principles for different peoples, nor leaves them to work out their own rules of conduct. His method is to train one particular people, and to use them as a nucleus for the building up of a universal Shariat. In doing so he accentuates the principles underlying the social life of all mankind in the light of the specific habits of the people immediately before him. The Shariat values (*Ahkam*) resulting from this application (e.g. rules relating to penalties for crimes) are in a sense specific to that people; and since their observance is not an end in itself they cannot be strictly enforced in the case of future generations.¹

According to Dr Javed Iqbal, there is ground in this observation to justify the rejection of the ‘hudood’ punishments imposed by General Zia, if one is to heed the opinion of the philosopher of the state of Pakistan. There is embedded in this observation the extremely delicate issue of the apparent rejection of a *nas* with regard to the cutting of

¹ Later researches revealed that in order to present Shah Waliullah’s ideas, Iqbal relied on its abridged quotations included by Shibli Nu‘mani in his *Al-Kalam* which, in its turn was a dubious, interpolated text manufactured by Shibli that did not present Shah Wali Ullah’s position correctly. Iqbal became aware of this error in late 1929 and could not change the text of *The Reconstruction*. Details of this research and documents corroborating the issue could be seen in Muhammad Suheyl Umar, “Saza ya nasza”, in *Khutbat i Iqbal, Ney Tanazur Men*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2002, pp., 199.

hands. The issue of *rajm* (stoning to death) is not a 'nas' and has at least once been rejected by the Federal Shariat Court of Pakistan. The law of evidence, reducing the evidence of a woman and a non-Muslim to half that of a man, is a *nas* only through extrapolation but is considered a direct Quranic command or *nas* by *fiqh*. The equation of rape with fornication in Islamic *fiqh* has raised serious issues of adjudication in Pakistan. A woman raped cannot invoke *hadd* against the rapist because she is compelled to bring four pious Muslims as eye-witnesses to the rape. Instead, she is forced to conceal rape under threat of being punished under *qazaf* (wrongful accusation). In Pakistan, no male has ever been punished under *hadd* for rape, but a large number of women are undergoing prison sentences on account of *qazaf* and under accusation of fornication from their husbands. While serving as a judge of the Lahore High Court, Dr Justice (Retd) Javid Iqbal had heard a number of cases in which women had been *trapped* into the *hudood* punishment by parties after bribing the police. He says that he told General Zia that Islamic laws required a society of immaculate character for their successful enforcement which the Pakistani society didn't possess. According to Dr Javid Iqbal, the general replied that he couldn't postpone his Islamic reform just because the people didn't possess good character.

In 1983, the women had protested against the Law of Evidence. Their view was that the *hudood* specifically targeted the women and Islam thus seemed only threatened by the female population of Pakistan. General Zia then formed a commission in 1985 to prepare a report on the status of women in Pakistan. The report, when it was submitted to him, was so opposed to the *hudood* that the general had to suppress it. It was finally made public in 1988 after democracy was restored to Pakistan. In 1994, the government of Ms Benazir Bhutto established another commission to inquire into the status of women while remaining within the parameters defined by the Quran and Sunnah. Since the

government had asked the Commission 'to review all the existing laws promulgated through ordinances or otherwise which affect the rights, living conditions and social and legal status of Pakistani women for bringing them in conformity with Islam as enshrined in Holy Quran and Sunnah', one can say that the findings of the Commission were sought in the form of *Ijtihad*.

Without actually referring to the point of view of Allama Iqbal as expressed in his Lectures., 'Report of the Commission of Inquiry for Women', submitted to the Muslim League government in August 1997, recommended the striking down of all *hudood* laws in Pakistan in favour of *tazir* which it found according to the spirit of the Quran and Sunah. The Commission was headed by a judge of the Supreme Court and included an *alim* from the Islamic Ideology Council of Pakistan. While accepting the bulk of the recommendations by the Commission, the *alim* appended a note of dissent on some aspects of the recommendations made in the area of Family Laws. It is significant that he prefaced his Note of Dissent by saying, 'The Report of the Commission has made recommendations with the bulk of which I find myself in agreement. My own understanding of the law is based on my knowledge of the Quran and Hadith while I do not subscribe to any particular school of *fiqh*.

The Report was immediately shelved by the government and all official comment was avoided. The women members of the ruling party either expressed their ignorance of the Report or dismissed it by saying that some parts of it were not practicable. A copy of the Report was obtained by the writer from the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan in Lahore. The publication, while carrying all the official letters of sanction, doesn't bear the publisher's name. It implies that no one wants to take the responsibility for having made it public for fear of adverse reaction from the religious parties and their right-wing supporters. The religious parties are demanding the imposition of *shari'ah* and have brought the ruling Muslim League under challenge on the presumption

that *shari'ah* has not yet been enforced. The Punjab Assembly, almost totally dominated by the ruling party, instead of rebutting the challenge and asserting that the *shari'ah* already stood enforced, has passed a resolution asking the federation government to enforce it.

Renowned scholar Fazlur Rehman writes in his book *Islam and Modernity: transformation of an intellectual tradition*: 'Where interpreters attempted to deduce law from the Quran in abstracto - for example, in the area of penal law called *hudud* - the results were not very satisfactory. This was because the instrument for deriving law and other institutions, called *qiyas*, or analogical reasoning, was not perfected to the requisite degree. The imperfection and imprecision of these tools was due in turn to the lack of an adequate method for understanding the Quran itself.' It should be remembered that Fazlur Rehman was forced to leave Pakistan after he wrote a controversial book on Islam in the 1960s, a work that was appreciated among the educated class but was condemned by the orthodoxy. After 1947, the rationalist school identified with the *mutazila* was rejected in Pakistan. This led to the discrediting of many scholars like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan of Aligarh and Lahore's Ghulam Ahmad Parvez. The tradition is still carried on by maverick writers in English, as it were, away from the attention of the Urdu-speaking militant orthodox circles who are by and large armed these days.

One such writer is Brig (Retd) Nazir Ahmad who in his book "Quranic and non-Quranic Islam" has questioned *fiqh* on the question of *hudood*. He thinks that the clear text of the Quran with regard to '*qat' i yadd*' (cutting of hands) relates to the sociology of the Arabs in the times of Muhammad. The Arabs had not yet developed the institution of state prisons and had not set up a regular police system. it was therefore correct to cut the hand of the convicted thief and let him go. The author says: 'The punishments do not belong to the immutable parts of the Quran as they are the means and not

the end. Their severity may therefore be changed, or an altogether new system of punishments and corrective procedures may be devised In the light of researches in the social and psychological fields. There is rarely a mention of *Hudood-Allah* in the Quran in the case of social crimes like theft, extra-marital sex and murder, the reason being that retribution for social offences ranges from forgiveness and correctional therapy to “recompense for an injury is an injury thereto”. Unfortunately, we have transposed injunction (*hudood*) from the doctrinal to the social excesses and feel free to distort and misinterpret the basic principles of Islam.’

The above-mentioned book has sold well in Pakistan and the publisher is about to issue its second edition, a rare occurrence in Pakistan for books in English. Yet there is another religious leader of India who is a best-seller in Pakistan. Maulana Waheeduddin’s books and diaries are doing good business in Lahore where most religious leaders would not tolerate his completely rationalist approach to Islam. His *tafseer* of the Quran is also a secret best-seller. His philosophical meditations are circulated three or four times in a month where he challenges most of the views expressed by such great Islamic reformers as Shah Waliullah and Shah Abdul Aziz. Because of his views on Kashmir and his counselling of peaceful coexistence to the Muslims of India, he has been condemned in Pakistan. During his last visit to Pakistan, he was not allowed to speak and was forced to leave after the audience objected to his views. In India most Muslims condemn him for being pro-BJP since he is not averse to communicating with orthodox Hindu religious leaders. Maulana Waheeduddin is also known for his frequent dialogue with the Christian leaders of the world. His article on the ‘Fikr-e-Islami ki Tashkeel-e-Jadeed’ has just been published in Lahore quarterly *Arwaz* which is very similar in title and content to Iqbal’s *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. He recommends a new style of *Ijtihad* to which Allama Iqbal had pointed in his *Lectures*. Dr Javid Iqbal is now a member of the Senate in the Pakistani Parliament but he

remains marginal to the religious policy of the ruling Muslim League.²

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IQBAL AND ITALY

Vito Salierno

The first contact of Muhammad Iqbal with Italy was in 1905 during the crossing of the Mediterranean on his voyage from India to England. Seeing the coasts of Sicily from his ship, he composed one of the most touching poems, "Siqilliya", which was later on included in the *Bang-i Dara* published in 1924.

"Siqilliya" is a mournful recollection of the past glories of the island during the Arab period: it appears to Iqbal as the tomb of the Arab civilization. Once, he says, the men of the desert ploughed the waves of the Mediterranean with their fast ships and the whole island re-echoed with their battle-cry *Allah u Akbar*. Now everything weeps in the world of Islam: Sa'adi, the nightingale of Shiraz, weeps for Baghdad destroyed by Hulagu Khan in 1258; Dagh sheds tears for Delhi conquered by the British; Ibn Badrun laments Granada's fall into Christian hands; finally Iqbal himself does the same as he takes back to India a vision of Islamic decay.

It might seem that Iqbal despised the West: it was not so. When he published his lectures, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, he cleared his point of view by saying that the world of Islam was moving towards the West and that European culture, on its intellectual side, was a further development of some phases of Islamic culture.

In order to recall here the ties between the Islamic and the Western worlds and the inscrutable ways of exchanges, influences, interpenetrations, in other words the whole

process of osmosis in more than thirteen centuries of history, it is sufficient to call attention to what took place in Europe in 1919 when the Spanish scholar Miguel Asin Palacios surprised and provoked the western world, and Italy in particular, with the publication of his inflammatory book *Escatologia musulmana en la Divina Comedia*. In this work the Spanish scholar described the analogies existing between the construction of the celestial world in Dante's *Commedia* and the Muslim eschatology: to support his theory he quoted comparisons between episodes in the *Commedia* and passages taken from Arabic literature. At the time his claim was countered by saying that Dante did not know Arabic and that the works of Arabic literature to which Asin Palacios referred had not been translated into any European languages in Dante's times. Actually these counter-theories were more the result of factiousness than of a critical approach, at least as far as many scholars interested in the problem were concerned. It was an alliance of scholars who seemed to believe that Dante's fame would be diminished by his knowledge or use of Islamic texts and not, on the contrary, increased.

Thirty years after, in 1949, the Italian Orientalist Enrico Cerulli published *Il Libro della Scala e la questione delle fonti arabo-spagnole della Divina Commedia*. In the first part he published the French and Latin texts concerning a celestial voyage of the Prophet and His vision of the skies and of hell; in the second, the unknown texts of medieval authors containing information on the Muslim traditions about eschatology. The purpose of this second part was to consider how much the western world knew about the Muslim ideas about Paradise and Hell, independently from the *Libro della Scala* (its original Arabic title was *al-Mi'raj*), which was a Latin and a French translation from the Castilian, the latter derived from an Arabic text.

Did Iqbal think of these aspects of the osmosis between Islam and the West when he wrote his lectures, in particular the lecture "Knowledge and Religious Experience"? We think so if one examines the whole lecture carefully.

Let us go back to the poem “Siqilliya”: though the vision of the island is a literary recollection, it contains Iqbal’s considerations on the then political situation of Indian Muslims, which was the key subject of Iqbal’s presidential speech in the Lahore session of the All Indian Muslim Conference on 21-22 March 1932. In that speech, famous for the idea of creating two separate areas in India for Hindus and Muslims, there is a significant passage in which Iqbal quoted Mussolini, certainly a linguistic and formal quotation, which however is not without evidence of attraction towards Mussolini, even though on a personal level and not on the level of the ideas:

Concentrate your ego on yourself alone, and ripen your clay into real manhood, if you wish to see your aspirations realized. Mussolini’s maxim was “He who has steel has bread”, I venture to modify it a bit and say “He who is steel has everything”. Be hard and work hard. This is the whole secret of individual and collective life. Our ideal is well defined. It is to win, in the coming constitution, a position for Islam which may bring her opportunities to fulfil her destiny in this Country.¹

The previous year, in 1931, Iqbal had been to England as a Member of the Indian Delegation to the Second Round Table Conference. On his way back home he had stopped for a few days in Rome on an official invitation from the Accademia d’Italia. Generally all the visits of prominent men from India were officially organized by the Accademia d’Italia with the consent of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which did not want to appear in the forefront for political reasons; practically the invitations came from the Government, i.e. from Mussolini himself.

¹ Quoted from S. A. Vahid, *Introduction to Iqbal*, Karachi, Pakistan Publications, no date [1960?], p.47.

On 27 November, at 15.45, the Poet was received by Mussolini at Palazzo Venezia.² The news of the visit was not published in newspapers; the only news was a short notice in the monthly magazine "Oriente Moderno", saying that Muhammad Iqbal had delivered a lecture on 27 November at the Accademia d'Italia on an ethical and religious subject. Evidently the Italian government did not want to publicize the visit of a Muslim personality in order not to create difficulties with Great Britain in a period of apparent *dhbente*.

The purpose of the visit is unknown. A courtesy call? Yes, but with a double interest: a personal admiration for the man by Iqbal, a political interest by Mussolini, who, as we know from other sources, was trying to develop his own personal policy towards India.

Iqbal was certainly impressed by the personality of Mussolini, without of course subscribing to the cult of Fascism: Italy made no secret of her anglophobia. Back in Lahore Iqbal wrote, some time after, two poems on Mussolini, which were published in 1935-1936. The first appeared in the *Bal-i Jibril* in January 1935: it was written before the Abyssinian war. It is favourable to Mussolini whom Iqbal saw as a new force, able to reawaken "the splendour of life in the eyes of the old and the burning desire in the hearts of the young"

چشم پیران کہن میں زندگانی کا فروغ
نوجوان تیرے ہیں سوز آرزو سے سینہ تاب

² In the Visitors' Book of Friday, 27 November 1931, one can read: "Time 15.45. Sir Mohamed [sic] Iqbal, great Muslim Poet". See "Segreteria particolare del Duce, Carteggio Ordinario, Udienze b.3107". I had discussed this problem with Dr. Saeed A. Durrani, Chairman of the Iqbal Academy, Great Britain, in a meeting in Milan: he had asked me to do some research in the State Archives in Rome and I was successful in finding the original Visitors' Book, Mussolini's Private Secretariat. My thanks go to Dr. Saeed A. Durrani, and to the Ministero per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali, Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Roma.

He closed this poem by saying that “the guitar was just waiting for the artist’s touch”:

زخمہ ور کا منتظر تھا تیری فطرت کا رباب
فیض یہ کس کی نظر کا ہے، کرامت کس کی ہے؟
وہ کہ ہے جس کی نگہ مثل شعاع آفتاب!

The second poem was written in the Shish Mahal of Bhopal on 22 August 1935: it appeared in the *Zarb-i Kalim* in July 1936. Was there a change in Iqbal’s mind between the writing of the poem and the time of its publication after the Abyssinian campaign and the proclamation of the Italian empire on 9 May 1936? Apparently, there was. The sub-title “*Apne mashriqi aur maghribi harifun se*” (to his rivals east and west) announces Mussolini’s self-defence against the British who had not accepted the Ethiopian campaign. Mussolini lists all the crimes and outrages of the British which had been justified under the veil of civilization and gives a justification of his crimes

پردہ تہذیب میں غارت گری، آدم کشی
کل روا رکھی تھی تم نے، میں روا رکھتا ہوں آج!

*Under the pretext of civilization pillage and murder
Yesterday you did, today I do.*

These verses might appear as a defence of Mussolini by Iqbal, actually it is a criticism and a denunciation of the colonial and imperialistic policy disguised under the cloak of civilization in a cunning Machiavellian way. Four days before this poem Iqbal had written a poem on Abyssinia: the first two lines are very significant:

یورپ کے کرگسوں کو نہیں ہے ابھی
خبر ہے کتنی زہناک ابی سینیا کی لاش

*The vultures of Europe do not realize
how poisonous is the carcass of Abyssinia³*

³ “Abyssinia” in the *Zarb-i Kalim*, in *Kulliyat-i Iqbal*, already quoted, p.657.

We have said that we do not know anything on the meeting between Mussolini and Iqbal; as a matter of fact we were not even sure that a meeting had taken place. There was only a statement by the Italian diplomatist Pietro Quaroni⁴ who had met Iqbal in Lahore in 1936 and the recollections of Iqbal's son, Javid. Now we know for certain that Iqbal was received by Mussolini in the afternoon of Friday, 27 November 1931. In what language was their conversation? Mussolini was not able to follow a conversation in English; Iqbal did not know Italian. And we do not think that the conversation was a long one as it was scheduled for a span of only ten minutes. Fortunately we know Iqbal's thoughts from his long conversation in Lahore with the Italian diplomatist Quaroni.

In 1936, while travelling from Rome to Afghanistan where he was posted as Minister Plenipotentiary of Italy at the head of the Italian Legation in Kabul, Pietro Quaroni met at Athens with his colleague Gino Scarpa, who gave him letters of introduction for some of his Indian friends. One of these letters was for Muhammad Iqbal.

After reaching Bombay, Pietro Quaroni left by train for Lahore in order to proceed to Kabul. In Lahore he put up at the Faletti Hotel where the hotel porter offered to take the letter to destination.

Iqbal accepted to meet the Italian diplomatist, who related his conversation with the Poet twenty years later in the most widely-circulated Italian newspaper "Corriere della Sera".

Here is Quaroni's description of the meeting:

It was a small, irregular room, with a low ceiling: a small sofa was along the wall. Iqbal was sitting on the ground on a couple of cushions, a green glass *buqqa* near him. He held an

⁴ Pietro Quaroni (Rome 1898-1971), entered the diplomatic service in 1920, Minister plenipotentiary in Kabul from 1936 to 1944, Ambassador to Moscow, Paris, and Bonn, Chairman of Radio & Television from 1965 to 1969.

amber and red-velvet mouth-piece in his hand and inhaled every now and then some puffs, as if absent-minded.

His face was thin, pale, very white as if drawn; I was told he had been ill.

Before Islam we were a family of brahmans in Kashmir - were his first words. His nose was aquiline, prominent, and sharp, his moustache thin and lightly grey, his fingers tapering and nervous.

His head was slightly bent, his voice was slow, weary, clear, it seemed as if every word was to be thrust into your head. Every now and then he showed a light smile, the upper lip on one side of his face, one of his eyebrows slightly up behind his eyelid. In his smile however there was hidden the confidence of his intellectual superiority, and perhaps a deep irony, sometime a little hostile.

I had met many Muslims, in Turkey, in Albania, in the Middle East, most of them conservative, perhaps attached to their religion more formally than substantially, their attitude was self-defensive. This time it was different: in front of me there was a thinker, a reformer, a prophet, perhaps a follower of a renewed Islam, surely conscious of its strength and its will.

Of course, we spoke of the position of Italy with regard to Islam. It was the time of the first theories about the sword of Islam and the defender of Islam. It was not easy to explain our ideas which were too vague. Besides it was not easy to speak to Muhammad Iqbal: he spoke no word, he looked at me through his half-closed eyelids, he bent towards me as if to listen to me in a better way, but I perceived his refusal. I was trying to guess his hardness, if there was any.

Suddenly he asked me: "When are you going to build a mosque in Rome?"

I tried to explain, but it was even less easy than before.

"Well, why do you send your missionaries to our country? Why do you compel us to accept your churches? You are catholics, you think that your religion is the only true one,

you try to convert us. It is your right. I too am convinced that my religion is the only true one and try to convert those who do not believe in it. But if you want to be friends or protectors of Islam, if you want us to trust you, then you must begin by respecting us, and demonstrating that you think our religion is as good as yours. And then, logically, you should stop sending your missionaries, and there are no reasons why a beautiful mosque should not be built in Rome, precisely in Rome. We too know and appreciate logic, the same logic of yours, the Aristotelian logic, do not forget it”.

Impossible to say that he was wrong. I tried to change the subject unsuccessfully, the conversation was always political.

It was 1936 and the proclamation of the Italian empire was a recent event. It was not the easiest thing to defend our campaign in the eyes of people who were struggling to get free of a foreign domination. It is strange how many subjects look excellent when one thinks of them at a table and sound useless when one is in front of human beings.

“You understand what I say when I speak of Rum” - he asked.

He had turned to me: there was something ironical deliberately while he stroke his thin moustache.

Literally Rum is Rome, generally the Roman empire, in particular the Byzantine empire, in a certain sense of the word it meant the organized christianity of the epoch of the crusades.

“Well, can you explain to me why Italy wants to become Rum again? If Italy is Italy, though a catholic country, there are no reasons not to get on well. But if Italy wants to become Rum again, then it is better not to cherish false hopes: the whole world of Islam will be against her, just as at the time of the old Rum”.

Was it a warning, a threat? I do not know. His tone was very kind, his voice calm and peaceful: there was in the deep of his eyes a kind light, but there was in the tone of his voice something hard, almost unmerciful.

“We want to get rid of the British - went on Iqbal as if following his thoughts - but not to put someone else in their place. As a matter of fact, to tell the truth, we prefer to get our freedom by ourselves”.

Actually the matter was very delicate. I could not say whether it was me or my host to shift our conversation on the less burning subject of the mystics of Islam. Muhammad Iqbal went on speaking with his same calm voice, with his slightly ironical tone.

“Do you know I have written a poem on Mussolini? - he told me with a faint smile when I was about to take leave - I will send it to you tomorrow”.

The next day three of his followers came to see me at the hotel: they delivered me, on the open palms of their hands, as if in a ceremony, a bound book of Iqbal's poems. And they spoke to me about him: there was a kind of excitement in their words. How did that man, apparently cold, indifferent, ironical, excite so much enthusiasm? Or did he use a mask in front of a stranger?

The book was in Urdu, and this was not an easy problem for me. I asked my young friends to translate what concerned Mussolini. They tried to hide their embarrassment, then one of them glanced through the book, looked at me, and began translating.

It was written, I think, after Muhammad Iqbal had been received by Mussolini at Palazzo Venezia [in Rome]. I wondered whether a full translation had ever been sent to Mussolini.⁵

This is the essential part of Quaroni's article, from which we have been able to know Iqbal's views on a burning problem. Today we know from other sources that according to a logical but disarming axiom Mussolini had thought of an

⁵ Pietro Quaroni, *Ricordi di un ambasciatore. Un poeta difficile*, in “Corriere della Sera”, Milan, 11 February 1956, re-printed in *Il mondo di un ambasciatore*, Milano, Ferro Edizioni, 1965, pp.106-112.

Italian policy in the Indian sub-continent, or better of his personal policy towards India. His axiom looked apparently simple: India and Italy are anti-British, hence India and Italy should get on well. This was the heart of the problem even though it was not so simple.

Actually there was not a clear policy of fascist Italy towards British India. The Italian policy was always unprepared and subject to the availability or willingness of those Italians or Indians who were actually or apparently ready to cooperate according to their own interests or their personal vision of the problem. Even top officials such as Galeazzo Ciano⁶ or Dino Grandi⁷ did not have a unified vision: their ideas were subject to their personal preferences and to their attitudes regarding England before the second world war and Germany from 1940 onwards.

Mussolini's idea was to exploit India from the cultural and economical point of view and to occupy some strongholds after the victory of the Axis and the collapse of the Indian Empire. A proof of this idea is a sentence he had read and underlined in a book about Yugoslav unity:

⁶ Galeazzo Ciano (Livorno 1903-Verona 1944), entered the diplomatic service in 1925, married Mussolini's daughter Edda in 1930, Under-Secretary for Press and Propaganda in 1934-1935, Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1936, a position he left on 5 February 1943. In the historical meeting of the "Gran Consiglio del Fascismo" on 25 July 1943 he voted in favour of Dino Grandi's Order of the Day against Mussolini. He was tried for high treason in front of a special tribunal of the "Repubblica Sociale Italiana" in Verona, sentenced to death and shot on 11 January 1944.

⁷ Dino Grandi (Mordano, Bologna 1895-Bologna 1988), Under-Secretary for the Interior in 1924-1925, and for Foreign Affairs in 1929-1932, Ambassador to London from 1932 to 1939, Minister for Justice from 1939 to 1943. With his Order of the Day of 25 July 1943 he caused Mussolini's fall: he was sentenced to death by default in 1944. He returned to Italy after the war and was granted an amnesty.

India is the strong-room of the world. Italy must have it. What the British say is of no importance. The fascist comrades will see them silenced...⁸

This book was printed in 1931. When did Mussolini read the just quoted passage? Perhaps in the same year. We think so because in his library there was an essay written by Gino Scarpa⁹ under the pseudonym of "Viator" with the title *L'India dove va?* (Where does India go?) and published in Rome by the Libreria del Littorio, a fascist government press.

The introduction to the book was written by someone belonging to a restricted circle of fascist officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After describing the political situation of India and the beginning of the Indian struggle for independence, the unknown writer said that Britain was responsible for the position of the peoples of Asia regarding Europe, which was not compelled to support Britain's policy. The British empire was not a European creation or a defence of Europe: it was based on England only, perhaps hostile to Europe. The conclusion was that Rome could become a mediator and get advantages, thus becoming the fulcrum of the international balance. The final words were very significant: "The Eastern Mediterranean will go back to its historical function of the past, Rome is the place where East and West shall meet again".

⁸ "Les Indes sont bien le coffre-fort du monde. Il faut que l'Italie les possiede. Peu leur importe ce que les Anglais diront. Les Ighionnaires fascistes se chargeraient de les faire taire ...", in Krsta Chantitch-Chandan, *L'uniti yougoslave et le roi Alexandre 1*, Paris, P. Bossuet, 1931; quoted by Loretta De Felice, *Un fondo bibliografico, d'interesse documentario, conservato nell'Archivio Centrale dello Stato. La "Collezione Mussolini"*, in "Storia Contemporanea", XIV, N.3, giugno 1983, pp.489. The best work on Mussolini's attitude towards India is by Renzo De Felice, *Il Fascismo e l'Oriente. Arabi, ebrei e indiani nella politica di Mussolini*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1988, in particular the third chapter devoted completely to India, pp.187-241.

⁹ Gino Scarpa, a man close to Mussolini, had been to India from 1923 onwards: he was Consul General in Calcutta in the years 1929-1933.

In his library Mussolini had many other books on India which are further evidence of his interest in the Indian problem. Moreover, in 1935, he created the IsMEO, an Italian Institute for the Middle and Far East, which was officially an institution for cultural purposes, but actually for the development of economic relations mainly with India (the name of the Institute was vague in order to divert British suspicions or to avoid their protests at interference).

Some further considerations on Mussolini's plan towards India. In the late Twenties and in the Thirties Mussolini agreed to send to India the most important pro-fascist Italian journalists with the task of collecting first-hand information and of making propaganda for the fascist regime.¹⁰ One of them, Mario Appelius, a pro-fascist journalist, wrote a book *India*, which was published in Milan in 1925. According to him Britain had failed in her task of civilizing India because of "the incontestable inferiority of the Anglo-Saxons in front of Rome". It was a silly and distasteful statement, but I think it was said in order to imply that Rome could do better.

On a cultural level the tactical manoeuvre was assigned to two well-known scholars of Sanskrit and Indian literatures, the professors Carlo Formichi¹¹ and Giuseppe Tucci.¹² Their task was to invite Tagore to Italy in 1926 and to organize the poet's visit. This is not the place to describe in details

¹⁰ Mario Prayer, *Gandhi e il nazionalismo indiano nella pubblicistica del regime fascista 1912-1938*, in "Storia Contemporanea", XIX, N.1, febbraio 1988, pp.55-83.

¹¹ Carlo Formichi (Naples 1871-Rome 1943), Professor of Sanskrit in the Universities of Bologna, Pisa, and Rome, member of the Italian Academy in 1929, and later on Vice-President of it.

¹² Giuseppe Tucci (Macerata 1894-Rome 1984), Professor of Indian Religions and Philosophies in the University of Rome, Member of the Italian Academy in 1929, President of the Italian Institute for the Middle and Far East, Rome, from 1948 to 1979. From 1925 to 1930 he taught Italian, Chinese, and Tibetan languages in the Universities of Shantiniketan and Calcutta.

Tagore's visit to Italy.¹³ It is enough to say that Tagore's critical attitude to the Italian government, which he expressed after leaving Italy, had created a hostile impression in the Italian press and a sort of ostracism of him personally, even though four years later Tagore sent to Mussolini a letter from New York on 21 November 1930 in which he said: "...I earnestly hope that the misunderstanding which has unfortunately caused a barrier between me and the great people you represent, the people for whom I have genuine love, will not remain permanent".¹⁴

This was more or less the climate in which Gandhi's short visit to Italy took place in December 1931. He was received by Mussolini at Palazzo Venezia on 12 December 1931, exactly two weeks after Iqbal. Gino Scarpa, who was then Consul General in Calcutta, accompanied Gandhi on a visit to the town and to some fascist institutions. It happened that a false interview with Gandhi was published on 15 December by the Editor-in-Chief of the daily paper "Giornale d'Italia", Virgino Gayda. The truth is that Gandhi did not agree to any interview: it was Gayda who had pieced one together by using words said by Gandhi here and there during his visit to Roman cultural places, etc.¹⁵ It is important to mention here that Gandhi's autobiography, which had appeared in London in 1930 under the title of *Mahatma Gandhi: His Own Story*, edited by C. F. Andrews, was immediately translated into Italian and published in Milan in 1931 with a preface by

¹³ Vito Salierno, *Tagore e il fascismo. Mussolini e la politica italiana verso l'India*, in "Nuova Storia Contemporanea", II, N.5, settembre-ottobre 1998, pp.63-80.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, pp.79-80. The passage I have quoted was personally underlined by Mussolini in the Italian translation of the letter made by the Press Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Presidenza del Consiglio, Fasc.20/15, N.13238.

¹⁵ Gandhi was received by Mussolini on 12 December 1931, at 6 p.m.: the visit lasted twenty minutes. See Gianni Sofri, *Gandhi in Italia*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1988.

Giovanni Gentile, the philosopher and ideologist of the regime, who, in a lecture in 1935, stated that “Italy is present almost everywhere in the East where people see in Rome one of the principal elements of world policy”.¹⁶

Furthermore, since September 1935 the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had been trying to contact Nehru, who after Gandhi’s temporary retirement from politics had become the actual leader of the nationalist movement. But, after the previous experiences of people utilized for fascist propaganda against their wishes and sometimes even without their knowledge, Nehru declined Mussolini’s invitation while passing through Rome in the early days of March 1936, because “the Abyssinian campaign was being carried on, wrote Nehru, and my meeting him would inevitably lead to all manner of inferences, and was bound to be used for fascist propaganda”.¹⁷

In conclusion, Tagore, Iqbal and Gandhi were interested in meeting Mussolini on a personal level because all of them wanted to have an idea of the personality of the Italian dictator. However they did not realize that whatever they said or did was always distorted and altered in the press in order to present them as supporters of the fascist regime rather than men interested in the Italian affairs from a cultural point of view.

¹⁶ Giovanni Gentile (Castelvetrano, Trapani 1875-Florence 1944), philosopher and politician, Director of the “Enciclopedia Italiana”, President of the Italian Academy 1943-1944.

¹⁷ Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, Calcutta, The Signet Press, 1946, p.28.

IQBAL AND GERMANY

M. Ikram Chaghatai

The topic of my paper is "Iqbal and Germany". Much has been written on this subject by Iqbal's biographers and other reputed scholars of Iqbalian studies in the South-Asian Subcontinent and abroad. Here only a few can be mentioned, such as a very recent article, "Iqbal und Deutschland", by B. Robotka published in a Mection entitled *Fremde Erfahrungen: Asiaten und Afrikaner in Deutschland, Österreich und in der Schweiz* published in Berlin in 1996. Rashid al-Haydari's study "Mohammad Iqbal wa-Saqafat al-Almania" appeared in *Fikrun wa Fann* from Hamburg in 1963, S.A. Durrani's two books in Urdu and above all, the pioneering and most informative writings of Professor A. Schimmel whom we Punjabis call "Iqbal di Malangni" a title translated by herself as "*Wanderderwischin in Sachen Iqbal*". Her article "Germany and Iqbal" has been published in many collections particularly in *Mohammad Iqbal und die drei Reiche des Geistes* in 1977 and now also available in Arabic translation *Akmania wa Iqbal*. Despite, a few more studies on the poetical, intellectual and spiritual relationship of Iqbal can also be referred such as J.C. Bürgel's important article "Iqbal und Goethe" appeared in *Iqbal und Europa* in 1980. In my present article, I have tried to supplement that information contained in all these well-researched writings. A few excerpts taken from the German writings have given in original only not to spoil the beauty of the expression.

Unlike some other European countries, Germany had no expansionistic designs in the South-Asian Subcontinent and when during the 18th and 19th centuries the struggle for establishing political supremacy peaked among the fighting nations it stood aloof and showed no interest in becoming a colonial power. Instead of entering into the arena of this political aggrandizement or military chauvinism, Germany took more interest in another field, which was entirely academic, and contributed substantially to the cultural history of the inhabitants of this Subcontinent. They gained much respect and appreciation from the local intelligentsia who spoke very highly about their general behaviour and attitude. An Indian traveller, Mirza Abu Talib Khan (d.1806) in his Persian travelogue named *Masir-i Talbi*, after having frequent meetings with the German Ambassador and his wife in Istanbul in 1802, remarked that "judging from their conduct and that of some others of their countrymen whom I have met with in the course of my travels, I conclude that the Germans stand very high in the scale of polished nations."

Several noted German scholars, travellers, linguists and missionaries came to India and made diligent researches in their areas of study and thus enriched the literary and cultural treasures of the Indian Muslims. Out of this trail of reputed scholars, here only a few names can be mentioned, such as Dr. Aloys Sprenger (d.1893), by birth a Tyrolean but died in Heidelberg, who was a leading authority on the literature of Muslim India. Besides, Joseph Horowitz, who died in 1931, Fritz Krenko (d.1953), Johann Fück (d.1974) and Otto Spies (d.1981), worked in the Islamic and Arabic departments of the Universities of Aligarh, Hyderabad Deccan and Dacca and as the contemporaries of Iqbal provided an impetus to the learned people to pay attention to the profound contribution made by the Germans in the field of Islamic studies. No doubt, their high teaching standards, research methodology and friendly contacts with the Indian Muslims created an intellectual environment which proved very conducive for a learned person like Iqbal who was already

acquainted with the German philosophy and particularly the 'oriental current' in German poetical masterpieces.

In a concise foreword to Dr. Schimmel's German translation of Iqbal's *Javidnama* published in Munich in 1957, Hermann Hesse (d.1968), a world famous German author, beautifully evaluates the creative personality of Iqbal and divides whole of his *Gedankenwelt* into three realms of the spirit, namely the word of India, the word of Islam and that of occidental thought. In his last spiritual realm he was deeply influenced by the philosophical and poetical achievements of Germany. Intellectually, and to some extent, emotionally, Iqbal was very close to Germany and in some of his letters written to his girl friend, Fraulein Emma Wegenast, he openly confessed that "Germany was a kind of second home to my spirit. I learnt much and thought much in that country. The home of Goethe has formed a permanent place in my soul".

Again in one of his German letters which he wrote about one year after his departure from Europe, he stressed that "Deutschland habe ich sehr gern - er hat eine grosse Einfluss über meine idealen gemacht und ich werde niemals vergessen meinen Aufenthalt ins Deutschland."

It is now evident that the poet-philosopher, Dr. Mohammad Iqbal had a deep admiration and veneration for Germany, German thought and German literature and the innumerable instances in his poems, articles, epistolary material and in recorded conversations of his associates and intimate friends, indicate very clearly that the works of German poets and philosophers had been a source of great inspiration to him.

As the early period of Iqbal's Urdu poetry and admirable remarks in his notebook of 1910 under the title *Stray Reflections* explicitly show that his relations with Germany were only due to Goethe and not vice versa. He refers to Goethe frequently in his writings, of whom he says "though not a prophet he has a book namely Faust", and realising the infinitude of his imaginative power, Iqbal compares him with

Ghalib (d.1869), a great Indian poet of Persian and Urdu languages, and the illustrious sage and mystic of the East, Maulana Rumi (d.1273). In one of the poems of *Payam i Mashriq* Iqbal's response to Goethe's *West-Östlicher Divan*, he imagines Goethe's meeting with Rumi in paradise and reciting *Faust* to him. Rumi listens and extols Goethe as one who has really understood that great secret. Through this meeting of the two great spirits of the West and the West, Iqbal has brought together the two such persons who have influenced him more than anyone else in his career as thinker and poet.

At the creative level this strong wave of the profound influence of German culture on Iqbal's mind continues throughout his life and its periodisation seems rather difficult. Simultaneously, extensive biographical material of Iqbal's life reveals that he had friendly relations with some German intellectuals, scholars and renowned orientalists of his time and he benefited from their studies, mostly in original, as the most reliable primary sources for his writings. This personal and scholarly contact of Iqbal with Germany can easily be divided into these three periods:

i) Iqbal's brief stay of about three months of the year 1907 in Heidelberg and Munich for improving and brushing up his German language and afterwards for submitting his doctoral dissertation *Development of Metaphysics in Persia* to Munich University;

(ii) R.A. Nicholson's, review on the first edition of his *Payam i Mashriq* (1923) which was published in the first volume of *Islamica*, a journal which commenced its publication from Leipzig in 1925 under the editorship of August Fischer;

(iii) The first edition of Iqbal's lectures came out from Lahore in 1930 under the title *Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Islamic Thought in Islam*, and Iqbal sent several copies to different reputed European orientalists of the period. They responded to him in the form of reviews and the detailed personal letters, all written in German, which are now housed in the Iqbal Museum, Lahore, and their contents are still

unnoticed to the biographers and scholars of Pakistan and abroad.

1) Though Iqbal's stay in Germany was short, but it had lasting influence on his thinking and life-style. He could not forget the days he spent in Heidelberg, accompanied by some Indian and Schwabian beauties. Intellect and beauty rarely combine but Iqbal was fortunate to have both. Inspired by these human and natural beauties of Heidelberg, he wrote some poems including his oft-quoted "An Evening" which reflects his feelings created by the environmental serenity. In one of his unpublished diaries, housed in the Iqbal Museum, he has mentioned the date and place of those Urdu poems which he composed in Heidelberg and Munich. These highly artistic pieces of poetry show his spiritual solitude mixed with a nostalgic tinge. As reported by the sister of Iqbal's female tutor, that when he returned to Cambridge, all his friends found him absolutely a changed person.

Iqbal's sojourn in Heidelberg was documented by Atiya Faizi, a talented Indian woman who especially came there to accompany him. Her brief but informative book in English was published in 1947, exactly after 40 years when they met in Heidelberg in 1907. In the meantime, Iqbal's general image had been drastically changed and owing to the lapse of time, most of the details faded out. Nonetheless, this book is still a unique source of Iqbal's stay in Heidelberg and has been ranked by the Iqbalists as one of the most reliable sources. To make it more useful, it must be thoroughly edited and annotated with the help of the material preserved in the various archival institutions of Heidelberg.

In the early 60s, another source of Iqbal's personal connections with Germany came to light. And that was a collection of 27 letters, according to another source 40, both in German and English languages written by Iqbal to Emilie Emma Wegenast ranging from 1907 to 1933. Mohammad Amanullah U. Hobohm a German diplomat who had embraced Islam in 1939, introduced these letters to the public

as “a Correspondence of the Heart”. Afterwards, this very rare collection was publicised in the print media of Pakistan and Dr. S.A. Durrani, made incessant efforts to introduce them in the Subcontinent.

Fraulein Emma Wegenast (1879-1964) was in her prime youth when she met Iqbal. She taught him German language in a centre, privately established for foreign students. Iqbal was emotionally linked with her charming beauty and also deeply impressed by her literary attainments. They often discussed Goethe and recited his poems. To Iqbal she was the embodiment of all that he loved and respected, of all that he was so strongly attracted by in German culture, thought, literature, perhaps in German life as a whole.

As reported by some family members of Emma, once she made up her mind to sail for India after Iqbal’s departure. But she could not. According to the records of Heidelberg University and the “Sterbebuch” of the “Standesamt” she was appointed as the technical assistant in the “Apotheke der Universitat-Kliniken” in 1920 and retired from the same post in 1947. She did not marry till her death at the age of 81. Except these letters, nothing is directly related with Iqbal.

It would be interesting to give here a few lines from these letters which show Iqbal’s warmth of feelings he had for Emma:

“Mein Grösser Wunsch ist noch einmal mit Ihnen zu sprechen und Sie zu sehen...Für eine Man welcher hat Ihr Freundschaft gemacht, es ist nicht möglich ohne Sie zu leben”.

“Mein Körper ist hier, mein Gedanken sind in Deutschland. Es ist frühling, die Sonne lacheet, mein Herz, aber, ist traurig. Senden Sie einige Worster, und Ihre Brief wird meinen Frühling sein.”

“Vergessen Sie nicht dass es gibt eine unsichtbare Verbindung gzwischen uns.....Mit ein magnetische Gewabt meine Gedanken eilen nach Ihnen, und diese Verbindung festigen und stark machen.”

“I remember the time when I read Goethe’s poems with you, and I hope you also remember those happy days when we were so near to each other, spiritually speaking.”

So Emma also responded and wrote many letters to Iqbal in German language which was not fully understandable to him. Now, all these letters are now extant and their disappearance is a mystery yet to be solved.

It would be interesting to note here that during the first World War, a literal verse German translation of Iqbal’s short nature poem ‘An Evening’ was published in the *Heidelberg Tageblatt*, a local newspaper on 16 March 1916 under the title “Deutschland in der indischen Dichtung”. Commencing with the translation of the first line of Iqbal’s poem “An Indian Anthem” that is, “Indien ist das Schönste in der Welt und wir sind die Nachtigallen in diesem Rosengarten”, the translator gives the title of the poem as “Am Ufer des Neckase, um 2 Uhr morgans”. The text of this translation is the same which later on has been engraved on a slab still lying in the garden near to Iqbal Ufer in Heidelberg. After Iqbal’s poem the translator has appended the translation of some passages of the book entitled *Germany Katha* by Raja Shnama Kumar Tagore, which was published from Leipzig in 1913. At the end, the translator has used abbreviations of his name which are still unidentified.

2) Nicholson’s review on *Payam i Mashriq in Islamica* (1925) attracted many German orientalists and those persons who were fully aware of the rich treasures of the creative and mystical poetry of the Muslims. One of such little known person was Hanns Meinke, who was deeply impressed by Iqbal’s poetry and translated some of his Persian poems published in Nicholson’s review. As usual, he prepared a handwritten and beautifully illuminated copy of the translation that was sent to Iqbal in 1926.

Hans Meinke was born in Strasburg, a small city in Uckermark on 12 May 1884. By profession he was a teacher (1904-1933) and during his career he was transferred to

different places but he spent most of his time in Königswusterhausen. After Second World War, he went to Berlin (Moabit) and lived with his son Dr. Almar Meinke and there he died on 12 February 1974, three months before his 90th birthday.

Hanns Meinke started writing poetry almost in his childhood. In the beginning he was influenced by Boudelaire and translated some of his verses in German. In the introductory remarks of Meinke's "Ausgewählte Dichtungen" (1977) and "Ghazelen aus rumis diwan" (1969), Helemut Röttger and Joachim Uhlmann respectively highlighted the oriental influence on his poetic thought and diction. He is considered as a leading poet after Friedrich Ruckert whose poetical adaptations of Rumi's verses in an oriental form has become the part of German literature.

The title of Meinke's German verse translation of Iqbal's ten Persian 'ghazals' is "Zehn gedichte aus dem Persischen nach Muhammad Iqbal in achtzehn Fassungen". This "Leather Book", as named by Josef Hell in one of his unpublished letters, is still housed in the Iqbal Museum in Lahore.

Iqbal was very much pleased to get this friendly gift from Germany and he showed it to some of his intimate friends. An interesting brief note about this translation was published in an Urdu daily *Inqilab* on 4 July 1927 which reads

"A German Orientalist and famous poet-philosopher, Dr. Hanns Meinke, has translated a part of *Payam i Mashriq* with overwhelming love and deep reverence. Beautifully written on leather paper which is commonly used in transcribing the old scriptures like Bible and decorative motifs of Eastern style he sent this German translation to Iqbal... It is usually thought that such rare things used to be prepared only in the olden days."

Iqbal reciprocated by sending a copy of *Payam i Mashriq* and afterwards *Javed Namah* to Hanns Meinke and now both copies are in Professor Schimmel's personal collection. She is

the first Iqbalist who wrote about this relationship between Iqbal and Meinke.

With reference to Meinke's "Leather Book", Doris Ahmad, a German governess of Iqbal's children, who came to Lahore from Aligarh in 1935, writes in her book entitled, *Iqbal As I Knew Him*, which was published from Lahore in 1986, in these words:

"Dr. Sahib had done his Ph.D. from Germany, he remembered some German and would put in a word here and there when I was talking to him. But we didn't hold a proper conversation in German. He had a few German books and he once gave me a beautiful handwritten German book to read. It was beautifully bound with painted borders and parchment and he asked me to handle it very carefully. It contained some of his poetry translated into German and I enjoyed reading it as this was the only time I could find out what his poetry was really like. I returned the book to him after reading it but I have not seen it since and no one can tell me what has become of it. Dr Sahib had gifted his entire library to the Islamia College through his will except for about 150 books which he left to Javid. These were the books that he liked best and studied most frequently. He wanted Javid to read them when he grew up. The German book is not in Javid's collection which is now in the Iqbal Museum. Perhaps it is in the Islamia College library. It must be an extremely valuable book."

There is another collection of Meinke's poetry in the Iqbal Museum named *Terzinen von der Sphinx* (1926). It comprises 18 hand-written pages with beautifully decorative motifs.

3) Now I am going to present some of the letters written by German orientalist to Iqbal and all these are luckily available in the Iqbal Museum, Lahore.

Rudi Paret who died in 1983, belongs to the tradition of German orientalism in spanning several different genre and subject areas within the field, but it was especially in Quranic studies that he gained world-wide recognition. He became the

post-World War Second period virtually the sole standard-bearer of the long tradition of Quranic scholarship in Germany.

In 1930, Rudi Paret went to Heidelberg as a Dozent, where he was to move up to junior professorial rank in 1935. During these years, he took keen interest in contemporary Islam and its place in the modern world. This interest is visible in his little known book titled *Zur Frauenfrage in der arabisch-islamischen welt* (1934), which treats in some detail the arguments of five different Muslim writings from the years 1928 to 1932 on the status of Muslim women. He sent this book to Iqbal and this copy is still available in the personal collection of Iqbal.

Iqbal was introduced to Rudi Paret by Josef Hell of Erlangen University who received a complimentary copy of *Six Lectures*. He borrowed it from Professor Hell and was deeply impressed by Iqbal's views about the modernisation of Islamic thought. He tried to get another copy of his own but failed. Then Iqbal sent him a separate copy of the first edition (1930). Its second edition entitled *Reconstruction* was published with the addition of a new article ("Is Religion Possible)" which was sent to Rudi Paret and he reviewed it immediately in *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*. He appreciated Iqbal's views on 'Ijtihad' and its significance in the modern Muslim world.

On receiving the first edition of Iqbal's *Reconstruction*, Rudi Paret acknowledged it and wrote a letter to him in German on 3 May 1932 from Heidelberg. This letter is preserved in the Iqbal Museum and its English translation is given below: "Through Professor J. Hell, Erlangen, you sent me your book *Six Lectures*. Cordial thanks. I am very pleased to have the book now within reach, after having borrowed it during Easter from Professor Hell only for a short while, and having not had an opportunity as yet to buy it I had ordered it, though, from a bookshop in Delhi by the end of last year already, but my order had not been executed, and in the meantime I had not undertaken any other steps.

The contents of your book is extraordinarily interesting for me as a source for the study of modern Islam. Of particular value were for me in this sense your developments on the 'Ijtihad' question and on the position of Islam with regard to nationalism. But also in other respects, I have, of course, learnt a lot from the book, and I certainly shall, after this first reading, take it up still many times and shall on this basis orientate myself on your views about the burning questions of the present time. I find that in certain basic issues the problems of modern Islam resemble those of modern Christianity, and in this respect it might not be uninteresting if one day a young Muslim, well versed in theology and philosophy, were to study the new 'dialectical' theology of certain Protestant systematic thinkers, were it only for the purpose of apologetics and in order to enunciate new Islamically founded trains of thought. By the way, I took the liberty to put a very brief notice on your "Lectures" in the so-called critical bibliography of *Der Islam*. Since last autumn I have within this journal to provide current information on new writings concerning modern Arabic and modernistic Islamic subjects.

It may interest you to learn that during this summer semester (for the last two years, I have been in charge of substitution for the ordinary professor of oriental languages). I am teaching a public lecture course on Islam as a problem of the present time, at this University. In this connection I do, of course, not hold the view point which a Muslim will have to take on, nor do I hold the view point of Christian missionaries, but I endeavour to report as objectively as possible on what is going on in the Islamic world in these days. In this pursuit one can, of course, hardly come to any tangible results, for without a theological or philosophical position of one's own one can in most cases reach only to the doorstep of the problems. It, nonetheless, is possible to make it clear to a small circle of interested people that there is much movement within the Islamic world and that many

things that are old - one might well say: antiquated - make place to new ideas. The intellectual debates which at present, especially since the end of the world war, take place in the oriental countries, are no doubt too important to be simply bypassed, all the more so as in this process a good deal of elements of thought originating from Europe are being taken over or simply evaluated and rejected. Alone the common front against the Bolsshevic danger to which you too point to in your book, should be enough to open people's eyes in Europe.

With renewed thanks and best regards”.

August Fischer (1865-1949) was another German scholar whom Iqbal ranked among those European orientalists who made valuable contribution to the study of Islamic civilisation. Since 1925, both had been in contact with each other and Fischer reviewed some of Iqbal's Persian poetical works in his journal *Islamica* and thus introduced him to the wider circle of German scholars.

After passing his habilitation on the subject of Oriental Philology (1890), August Fischer was appointed as lecturer of Arabic languages in the Seminar für Orientalischer Sprachen in Berlin (1896) but then went to Leipzig as professor (1900) and carried on there the tradition set up by the Leipzig School in the domain of Oriental Philology. Except his main interest in Arabic language, his another field of research deals with the history of Ottoman Turks and the religious movements of the pre-Kumalist period of Turkey. In such studies, he was assisted by his colleague in Leipzig, Ahmed Muhieddin. While preparing his *Lectures* Iqbal used some of his studies relating to various reform movements in Turkey, particularly in reproducing the substance of Ziya Gokälp's poems, a famous Turkish poet who died in 1924.

Presently, only one German letter of Fischer is available to Iqbal Musuem and it was sent to Iqbal from Leipzig on 31st October 1930. Its English translation is as follows:

“Dear Sir,

I was absent from Leipzig for several months and consequently found your beautiful present "Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam" only a short while ago on my return to Leipzig. You have my best thanks for that. Up to now I have been able only to turn over the leaves of your book, I am, however, already convinced that it contains deep and striking thoughts in abundance. I shall carefully study it next week and then think of writing a review on it in my periodical "Islamica" or in the "Zeitschrift Deutsch Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft".

I am very glad that my work "Aus der religiösen Reformbewegung in der Türkei" has proved of use.

Thanking you again

Yours very sincerely
A. Fischer

P.S.

I shall send you a small work of mine which, I feel sure, will be of little interest to you: *A Translation of five modern Turkish poems*.

Among the German scholars, Josef Hell (1875-1950) of the Erlangen University had close friendly relations with Iqbal. As a pupil of Fritz Hommel, under whose guidance Iqbal completed his doctorate in Munich, he might have heard something about Iqbal or his works before they exchanged letters with each other. He was very much attracted by Iqbal's *Payam i Mashriq* and he translated it in German language but it remained unpublished. Prof. Annemarie Schimmel informs that:

"I once had an opportunity of examining it but found it too unpoetical for a publication. Still, the very fact that Professor Hell undertook this venture probably in the 1930ies, and in any case long before any other translation outside the English language appeared - proves that there was indeed some interest in Iqbal's work in German academic circles."

Professor Hell studied Semitic Philology in Munich (1896-98) and devoted most of his time to the Arabic language and literature. He took his doctorate from Munich and was appointed as the professor of Oriental Philology in Erlangen (1911). Under Hommel's guidance he took much interest in the pre-Islamic Arabic poetry and discovered many poetical collections of that period. He wrote also the books on the religious and cultural history of the Arabs.

Josef Hell wrote three letters in German to Iqbal, all were sent from Erlangen on 5th October 1930, 10th March and 1st May of 1932. All these letters are available in the Iqbal Musuem. The English translation of the first one is as under:

Dear Sir,

If I have not thanked you till today for sending me your work "Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam" so it happened certainly not out of ungratefulness. I was extraordinarily pleased to receive the book; but I regarded it my duty- next to gratitude- to read it; and as I do not read English very easily and as also your train of high ideas- at any rate at the beginning- were new to me and not always easily intelligible, so my reading of the book proceeded only slowly. I have, however, as far penetrated into the whole that I am in a position to express my sincere admiration for the richness of ideas of your work. I shall, in the course of the coming term, when I again hold lectures on the "Die Religion des Islam", shall take frequent opportunities of referring to your work and quoting from it.

In my small pamphlet *Der Islam und die abendlandische Kultur* I wrote in the year 1915, during the War, "Earlier in India than elsewhere has Islam begun to make progress independently. Just in accordance with European fashion, the Indian Muslim authors expound the Western view-point in their works written in English."

Your work is a new proof of the significance of the Indian intellect in the world of Islam. I hope always to go deep into your significant book and I know I shall derive great benefit out of it. Please accept my deep thanks for your present.

As Mr Krenkow informed me, you have translated Goethe's *West-Ölisches Divan* into Persian. This also is a fact of the highest cultural significance and I wonder that I have not been able to read it. Our Islamists fix their attention too much on the meaningless details, and, I believe there are very few who have a view or conception of the close connection between the Western and Oriental intellectual life through all the centuries to the present day. I have had the fortune- in the quiet of my study- to be able to direct my thoughts not so much towards the detail as on the great connections and I have become an orientalist only with a view to discovering these connections.

Your work is to me one of the most important phenomena of the modern times. Perhaps it will not be without interest to you - as a definite test of my thinking and seeking - to read the discourse which I held on the occasion of my entering on the duties of the Rector of our University. I take the liberty of sending you a copy of the same along with this. In sincere veneration."

In his second letter of 10 March, 1932, Professor Hell writes that he has received a copy of *Six Lectures* and some of his young colleagues and pupils are taking much interest in the contents of this book.

He informed Iqbal that the German translation of *Payam i Mashriq* and *Javid Namah* are in process and some linguistic intricacies are difficult to solve, as there was no Indian or Persian who could be helpful to him. He sent some of his translations to him for having his consent. For the publication of these translations contact Otto Harrossowitz, the publisher of Oriental books in Germany.

In his last letter (1st May, 1932) Professor Hell acknowledges the receipt of Iqbal's letter of 7th April 1932 and thanks him for sending his German translations back to him.....

He mentions that he despatched a copy of *Six Lectures* to Rudi Paret, who was the "Privatdozent" in the Heidelberg University and after reading he would write to him separately.

Professor Hell explains that Iqbal mentioned about Hanns Meinke's "Leather-Book" in his letter which he did not receive. He comments about the German translation of some parts of *Payam i Mashriq* and gives brief but useful biographical details of translator's life.

Besides, Prof. Hell furnishes some information about his Indian colleague, Professor M. Barkat Ali Quraishi, who did his Ph.D. from Berlin and afterwards was appointed as the head of the Islamic and Arabic studies in the Islamia College (Lahore) and later on the Principal of the Oriental College.

Lastly, this Seminar is being held on the Golden Jubilee celebrations of Pakistan and with this reference it would be most relevant to mention that Dr. Javid Iqbal, the son of Iqbal, in his lecture on Iqbal Day in 1976, disclosed that a German geographer helped him for quite a long time to prepare maps showing the minority and majority districts of India- a geographical division which later on played a vital role in the formation of Iqbal's idea for a separate homeland for the Indian Muslims. According to Professor Schimmel:

"He was not only Goethe and Hegel on the spiritual plan, but also the help of a German geographer on the practical plan..... which prove Iqbal's close and friendly relations with Germany."

IQBAL'S CONCEPT OF SELF-IDENTITY

Alois Van Tongerloo

An opulence of reflections on the *humana condicio*, on the ancient and modern eastern and western societies as well, combined with an astonishing erudition compel every studious working on the Iqbalian corpus to a necessary restriction which in consequence does harm the philosophy of the master of contemporary Islamic philosophy.

In this contribution I proposed to evoke and interpret some characteristic ΤÓΠΟΤ, focusing on Iqbal's interpretation of being and existence through his exegesis of a central topic in his thought on self-identity.

The awareness of and the concern about the formation of a modern state in every aspect combined with an actualised and consciously expressed Islamic revival are the ultimate objects for Iqbal, giving the philosopher's opus a not only very realistic but also primary dimension which quite certainly must be classified among the most important 20th-century philosophic works of East and West.

His in-depth study of the structures of ancient and contemporary oriental societies, his sojourns in East and West and self-evidently his own genuine reflective attitude forced Iqbal to opt for *une philosophie de l'engagement*, an engaged philosophy, for a Πραξις, because of the imperative rule to create a new-born oriental man, a *Homo Novus*, who we will simply call New Man, that will live in a regenerated

environment in order to equalise in an adapted way, in an updated modus, including of course the economic aspects too, the West, not only to survive but to equalise as well. In this aspect Iqbal must also be compared and confronted with the nucleus of modern Western philosophic quest.

The exigence of the Modern Age towards a transmutation, a fundamental change in the existential status of oriental man in general and of the Muslim in particular, forms the point of departure of Iqbal when he states in his *Bal-e Gibril*, Gabriel's Wing, verses 495-6, that

*“Modern civilisation has given me liberty,
Which is only apparently a liberty, but in fact it is seritude”.*

The first decades of this century indeed created a coactive problem, namely the conflict between the heritage, the tradition of the ancient world and a radical adaptation towards modern technocracy. The two poles are clearly defined. On the one hand there stands the preponderance of the Western nations, which gradually lose their glamour, especially in the (former) colonial spheres, and, on the other hand, there is the rising star of the increasing shaping of an own consciousness in Asia. The oppressed become more and more aware of their aware of their own millenary-old traditions which were obscured by the imperialistic aspirations of the Western empires, although for example the half-millennium old classical Central Asian Chaghatay culture, language and political ideology was practised until the end of the 19th century in Central Asia.

In the first books of Iqbal this problematic and controversial situation takes a central position: the conflict becomes a *Leitmotiv*, and one of his essential objectives relies in its solution. But - his contemporaries and the future nation, will they believe the words of the poet, the deeper intellectual grounds of the philosopher, submersed in the metaphors of his prophetic language, or will they reject his views and will he become a prophet for another future?

The anticipation of this reborn Muslim can be called the transfigured New Man, and the methodology is defined in the

typical Iqbalian concept and therefore terminus technicus of the Self, *das Selbst*, which I at this moment prefer to the expression Ego used in studies or publications.

(A) THE SELF, THE HODI AS CENTRAL ΤΌΠΙΟΣ OF IQBAL'S PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT

(1) INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Iqbal is by no means a blind or extremist thinker who forgot - as many of his predecessors and contemporaries did - to elaborate the concept of New Man as a "perfect realisation". Being not only of transcendental nature but also synthetical in essence, the two dimensions which seem to be at first glance mutually irreconcilable converge in his person characterised by the essential connotation of the *hodi*.

First of all we have to analyse this *hodi*-concept before examining the field of tensions in which the New Man has to be coined, the scene of his life in which he not only is participating but which in itself constitutes certain elements of Man himself.

It is quite difficult to render an adequate translation of the *hodi*, as it is always problematic to translate philosophical notions in another language of course. It not only comprises the Self, the *Soi-même*, but understands the Self-fullness, as opposite to the *bh-hodi*, anti-hodi, the *Anti-soi*, selflessness, *Selbstvergessenheit*. Iqbal elucidated the aspects of his interpretation of these two basic philosophical concepts in his *Asrar-e hodi* "Secrets of the Self" and his *Rumuz-e be-hodi* "Aspect of the Anti-Self". In a reply to his English translator, R. A. Nicholson, Iqbal wrote, I quote,

"What then is life? It is individual: its highest form, so far, is the Ego (Khudi) in which the individual becomes a self-contained exclusive centre."

Thus the *hodi* must be interpreted first of all as sublimised self-realisation as well as a self-affirmation, a constitutive and fundamental *Intentionalitat* in relation with the Being itself accompanied by a perception in 'the I', *das Ich*, and 'the World', *die Welt*, as a spiritualised scenic environment.

However, this exalted status is a datum to be realised, *ein zu erlangen*: God created a multitude of possibilities-values, *possibilités-valeurs*, and man is a *être-réalisateur*; he can increase or decrease his free will..

(2) DIMENSIONS OF THE HODI: THE EXISTENTIAL AMBIGUITIES
-A- "LOVE" AS POINT OF DEPARTURE, AS FUNDAMENTAL ATTITUDE

In order to realise the final aim, the subject has to undergo an evolution towards and to possess an attitude called "Love", *‘asq*, which creates a positive increase of the *hodi*-status opposing the "Demand", *so‘al*, which refers to the alienated man. His *Bal-e Gibril*, aGabriel's Wing», verses 423-6, state that

"The song of life, Love provides it with vocalises;
The figures of clay, Love incessantly vivifies them;
In the human being Love penetrates into fibres and fibres
Like the freshness of a matutinal breeze in the stem of
flowers."

Iqbal interprets Love as a cosmic energy which forces man in a dynamical open-heartedness to catch in an effusive act, as a *Erschlossenheit*, his surrounding world, which is de factor the primordial emanation of the divine *Amor creativa*. On this spiritualised scene, the subject steps out of himself when he is progressing towards the other in an act of respectful comprehension. This act which surpasses the simple correlative interaction between man and environment, his *Umwelt*, becomes a supreme aspiration while applying in an ethical way the values, which means, quoting Iqbal's own words

"(...) the desire to assimilate, to absorb. Its highest form is
the creation of values and ideals and the endeavour to realise them."

The *hodi* thus finds a *modus vivendi*, the authenticity of which will augment through the creation of ideals and the consequent realisation of these. The imposed need to act gives a dynamic dimension to Iqbal's philosophical thought, which makes clear that he must be classified among the modern philosophical trend of *philosophie de l'engagement*. Only the engaged active conduct of man working in the *hic et nunc*

gives a sense to his environment, *Umraelt*, this certainly is the reality of the being-in-this-world, *das In-der-Welt-Sein*. I quote here *Bal-e Gibril*, verses 1968-9,

“You say: Look for the heart!
Look for the heart and fight!”.

The status of *so'al*, Demand, forms the antipode of the status of Love because Love symbolises the awakening of Man who is budding in order to meet the world through his engaged activities, his constructive mobility, while the *modus vivendi* characterised by the *so'al*, Demand, is cultivated by inactive man, who passes his life in submission, resignation. Passivity equals negativity in Iqbal's philosophy, as he considers in *Bal-e Gibril*, verses 825-6:

“To stop is a luxury which is prohibited to the pilgrims of the heart.
All are travellers, even when they seem to be installed!”

Iqbal remains loyal to the primordial dialectic between the temporary order and the infinite: basically, the subject has to engage himself in the world, on this scene where his life is blossoming and which will help him to realise his mission but, on the other hand, many may not be absorbed completely in the concrete *hic et nunc*: the principle of creative Energy focusing on his self-achievement is of divine origins. Iqbal's interpretation of religious Πραξις, must be interpreted in this light as well, namely that it is not at all the concern of an individual, but that it can attain the fullness of its importance exclusively through the testimony of an engaged community, that it will be a mutual dialogue between man and the Other.

Moreover the poet maintains in *Bal-e Gibril*, verses 783-4:

“Without the float of Desire, I would cease to exist.
What then is my life? It is the float of Desire itself!”

Man will autorealise more and more while practising the attitude of Love, which is in itself, en soi, a power which is nourished by the action of arzu, Desire, as exteriorisation of Love, *‘asq*, itself.

Moreover this Love is characterised by a transcendental character. Through its theistic-teleological interpretation, Iqbal is stressing not only the fact that the future society must be *civitas dei*, but he is awarding to the sublimised Love a religious dynamism of the subject in order that man will fulfil divine will through his cooperation with the divine Intention. Iqbal expresses in *Bal-e Gibril*, verses 43-4:

“Concentrate in the heart Love and Loyalty!
That they might know the divine sanctuary!”.

In fulfilling his religious ambition, man will find not only the pinnacle, the culminating point of his existential state, namely the *hodi*, but he will be the vicegerent of God on earth. At the same moment he will be the master of terrestrial creation which is presented by God as an object of useful domination. The philosopher states in verse 1128 of *Bal-e Gibril*:

“The Hodi: the whole universe is within his reach!”

While Love tends to the intelligibility of the Being and existential wholeness, its opposite, the Demand, leads to self-negation, thus an ontological opacity. Life is not a closed present, but a complex field of possibilities which must be exploited and developed by man.

-B- THE THREE EVOLUTIONARY STAGES OF THE HODI

In order to achieve his terrestrial mission, man has to pass three stages, each of these imposing a metamorphotic and kathartic passage, namely to acquire the values.

The first stage is obedience, *eta'at*, the submission to the divine Law as the initial imperative disposition to accept a complex of moral guiding values which is expressed in *Bal-e Gibril*, verses 145-6 as:

“It is a treasure without price, of the torture of ardent desire
My dependency, I would not exchange it for the magnificence of a
lord!”

He who is living in accordance with the Divine Law possesses the force to realise his intentions because he is inspired by a divine Power (δύναμις).

The second stage is self-control, *dabt-e nafs*, an apology on behalf of the αὐτονομία, that man may not renounce his being. The realisation of his most desired ambitions unconditionally requires the right of auto-determination of the *hodi* which forms Iqbal's reaction against the persistent colonial aspirations of those days.

With a certain predilection the poet uses the image of an exalted and extatic caravan under the guidance of the mursid Galal-ud-din Rumi, who is advancing upon the ultimate goal of the auto-explorative pilgrimage: the divine vicegerancy of God on earth, *niyabat-e Elahi*. In *Bal-e Gibril*, verses 653-4 & 663-4 we read:

“You are not for the earth, you are not for the heaven,
The universe is for you: you are not for the universe.
(...)

A raised look, a fascinating word, a burning soul:
This is the baggage of a leader of the caravan.”

The subject becomes a spiritualised New Man who can govern with his personality the whole universe, which is penetrated with a renewed significance. Man thus becomes the living and materialised expression of the emanated Divine Love, as a *Weltseele*. In this aspect Iqbal plays a very unique role among modern philosophers because he rediscovered meaning in human existence in personal and elect relationship with the eternal Power.

(B) NEW MAN AS A HISTORICAL SYNTHESIS AND FUTURE OBJECTIVE

(1) HISTORICAL OBSERVATIONS

Typologically the vision of Muhammad Iqbal on the New Man must be affiliated with the archisecular oriental concept of the *insan al-kamil*, with that restriction that he of course imposes on this too general notion his proper interpretation of the spiritualised *Homo Novus*. As the researcher is encountered with this concept in the ancient Oriental philosophico-religious systems, well-developed already in the first centuries of the C.E., the origins of which are obscured

in remote Mesopotamian cultures. The theme of Man desiring an existential level, the status of his own *In-der-Welt-sein*, creating a vestibule equalising the purified paradisiac status, is already attested not only in the pre-Islamic Iranian evidence of *Gayomart*, cf. Avestan *gaya marδan-*), but more explicitly in the mythology of the Gnostic *ävθρωποζ*, the Manichaeen *al-insan al-qadim* or the Cabbalistic Adam Qadmon.

The idea of Man possessing the power to accomplish a metamorphosis like Protee and to become a sublimized essence influenced classical Islamic philosophers who were in close dialogue with the heritage of their colleagues of the Classical World, which is clearly demonstrated by the sufi scholars who profoundly knew Hellenistic scriptures, the astrological and alchemical texts, Neo-Platonist ideas and *γνωσις* as well.

This idea of a New Man does not contradict the basis of Islam, as, in the Qur'an Allah himself mentions that man occupies a unique place in creation, he informs about the privileged place in the divine concept, in one word, that man represents God on earth.

In this sequence the prophet Muhammad must be interpreted as the New Man *par excellence*; he becomes prototype which must be imitated in a positive way by the followers, as Christ must be followed by the believers in an *Imitatio Christi*.

In the philosophical discourse of Iqbal '*abdubu* literally meaning "His Servant" has a technical meaning in relationship with, as an epithet of, his own interpretation of New Man. Now we have to mention:

(2) THE INTERPRETATION OF MUHAMMAD IQBAL

Referring to the aforementioned conflict the philosopher insists on the complexity of the nucleus of the problem. Indeed, it is the task of the contemporary oriental man not only to free himself from the colonial yoke, not only to address himself towards his own glorious history not to feed

himself with cultural souvenirs... The centennial contacts with the West in relationship with religion and culture, on the political and military levels created not only a profound gap between the two continents, but also more positive acquisitions penetrated Asia. Iqbal declares in his *Bal-i Gibril* that "My knowledge is European, my belief is Brahmanic!". Assimilation and integration in the traditional cultural patrimonium are *conditio sine qua non* for tomorrow's Asia which desires to achieve a liveable rejuvenated society. Moreover it is imperative to display a refreshed vitality for his religious heritage in order to avoid an unproductive, sterile and intellectualistic orthodoxy. Iqbal did not hesitate to accentuate in a very distinctive way these factors; as an observer with acribal perspicacity displayed on the occasion of his travels to East and West he was able to furnish a concrete dimension to the theoretical ideas. In this way Iqbal must be compared with his contemporary Kahlil Gibran who exorcised in an inexorable way the chimeras of his public where he writes:

"Your souls are freezing in the / Clutches of the priests and the / Sorcerers, and your bodies / Tremble between the paws of the / Despots and the shedders of / Blood, and your country quakes / Under the marching feet of the / Conquering enemy; what may you / Expect even though you stand / Proudly before the face of the / Sun? Your swords are sheathed / With trust, and your spears are / Broken, and your shields are / Laden with gaps; why, then, do / You stand in the field of the battle?" (ed.: M.L. Wolf, transl. R. Ferris, *A Treasury of Kahlil Gibran*, London 1974, p.163).

This field of high tension produced by the fundamental divergence between Europe and Asia, is in fact the background, the scene on which New Man must be formed. He must be very much aware of his cultural heritage as a result of his classical traditions. He will be obliged to converge divergent tendencies in himself in a harmonical and equilibrated synthesis, he will be the centripetal convergent role who shall have to accomplish a new spiritual mission.

In this light, the philosopher envisages a synthesis between:

-a- Man who takes into account his *identity*: enchained in a historical dimension which is the continuity of the Islamic 'umma must construct a new nation founded upon the characteristic religio-cultural pillars. Nobody disputes that the most solid pillar is constituted by the religious testimony. New Man is a *homo religiosus*. Thus, we must adjudge to the Iqbalian vision a νόησις of the *Jenseitsphilosophie*, in which man - like the traditional ethically motivated pilgrim - encounters his *raison d'être* in a redemptive religion towards transcendency.

-b- and the *homo universalis* as a *homo creator* of modern society strongly influenced by radically oriented technology. Oriental man has to participate himself too in this progress, which in its own way becomes a major problem. Thus Iqbal's philosophy must be characterised as a *Diesseitsphilosophie* as well on the level of *πραξις*.

Iqbal did not escape from this bifurcation, as the choice of one of the two unavoidably leads towards *Holzwege*. In his efforts to project a prototypical image of Man, *Menschbild*, he prefers the harmony of the two constitutive tensions, therefore his philosophy must be characterised as *philosophia transcendentalis* surpassing *Diesseits-* or *Jenseitsphilosophie*. In this light he is a true protagonist of modern thinking, especially because of his optimistic points of view.

THE RELEVANCE OF IQBAL IN THE MODERN WORLD

Dr. Rafiuddin Hashmi

The Poet-Prophet Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) was also a thinker, philosopher, reformer and a scholar. Being a versatile genius, he seems to be a specialist par excellence of the field he is talking about through many of his characters.

Iqbal knew Arabic better than many of our most learned Islamists.¹ He practised law.² His serious studies ranged from Quran to philosophy and the modern economics. He taught History, Economics, Philosophy and English Literature at post-graduate level.³ He enjoyed poetry and literature directly in Punjabi, Kashmiri, Urdu, Persian, Arabic, German and English. He was also interested in wrestling,⁴ mathematics and physical sciences. Whatever he studied, his central theme remained man and his life. This variety, depth and comprehensiveness of interests, experience and studies enriched his thought about his central theme. That is why that when more than half a century has elapsed on his death

¹ Iqbal got first position in Arabic in B.A. (*Rozgar i Fakir*, vol.2, Ed. Fakir Syed Waheed-ud-Deen, Karachi, 1963, p. 20.).

While In England in 1908, he taught Arabic at School of Oriental Studies, University of London for about 6 months. Dr.S.A. Durrani, *Iqbal Europe main*, Lahore, 1985, p. 301-303.

² Javid Iqbal, *Zinda Rood*, Vol.I, Lahore, p. 139, 140 and 148.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁴ Syed Nazeer Niazi, *Dana-e-Raz*, Lahore, 1979, p. 66.

and we are standing on the threshold of the 21st century, his vital thought, his poetry and his concepts about life, as it is and as it should be made, are fresh as ever. They are quite relevant and meaningful with reference to the modern world and have full potential of meeting the fast and inherently changing challenges of our and foreseeable future times as well. Iqbal not only possessed an exceptionally deep insight into the social, economic, political and human problems of his own time, but he also combined with it such a unique philosophical and sagacious appraisals of the future that we, without any hesitation, can call him a poet of the times yet to come.

Iqbal's homeland, the then India, was being ruled by the British, the biggest colonial power the world has ever seen! But Iqbal could never reconcile with the British ways and life, neither for itself nor for its victims. He was not at all cowed down by its intellectual shackles. Since he had a unique outlook towards life and universe, quite different from the prevalent, he never felt satisfied with the society he lived in, world order of the day and the human situation, as a whole.

Iqbal had a firm faith in the existence of a conscious and creative Supreme Deity and believed in the supremacy of moral and spiritual values of human life. He had a universal outlook and wished peace, fraternity and filial cooperation in the world. He dreamt happiness and prosperity for all. His soul still seems to be zestfully singing about these optimistic themes. On the other hand, like a statesman of humanity he warned the world of the great threat to the international peace at the hands of the colonial powers, that had descended with all their scientific, economic and military might, and nationalistic prejudices, selfish motives and thus perpetuated indiscriminate injustice on global scale only to safeguard their vested material interests. Their own conflicting interests brought these materialistic groups to the First World War (1914-18), a "Catastrophe which destroyed the old world order in almost every respect" and which resulted in an unprecedented bloodshed and destruction. The League of

Nations was established in 1920, to avert a similar situation that could arise again, but it was all in vain. Humanity continued to moan under the yoke of "civilised" men; aggression, injustice and plunder remained unabated and ethnic, linguistic and religious chasms increased. Iqbal had always a hopeful attitude towards life but the contemporary scene made him gloomy and disgusted. In this context in his New Year's Message on January 1, 1938 broadcasted from Lahore Radio Station,⁵ he mourned over man's moral decline and degradation of humanity. In spite of all the progress and scientific developments and man's amazing success in unveiling the secrets of nature and harnessing its forces to his service, Iqbal felt that the tyranny of imperialism struts abroad covering its face in the masks of democracy, Nationalism, Communism, Fascism and heaven knows what else besides. With a very deep concern and heavy heart Iqbal stated:

"Under these masks, in every corner of earth, the spirit of freedom and dignity of men are being trampled underfoot in a way of which not even the darkest period of human history presents a parallel. The so-called statesmen to whom government and leadership of men was entrusted, have proved demons of bloodshed, tyranny and oppression. The rulers whose duty it was to protect and cherish those ideals which go to form a higher humanity, to prevent man's oppression of man and to elevate the moral and intellectual level of mankind, have, in their hunger for dominion and imperial possessions, shed the blood of millions and reduced to servitude simply in order to pander to the greed and avarice of their own particular groups. After subjugating and establishing their dominion over weaker peoples, they have robbed them of their religions, their moral, of their cultural traditions and their literatures.

⁵ Speeches, *Statements and Writing of Iqbal*, Ed. Latif Ahmed Sherwani, Lahore, 1977, p. 249.

As I look back on the year that has passed and as I look at the world in the midst of the Year's rejoicings, it may be Abyssinia or Palestine, Spain or China, the same misery prevails in every corner of man's earthly home, and hundreds of thousands of men are being butchered mercilessly. Engines of destruction created by science are wiping out the great landmarks of man's cultural achievements. The governments which are not themselves engaged in this drama of fire and blood are sucking the blood of the weaker peoples economically.⁶

Soon after the above statement (on 21st April 1938) Iqbal passed away. More than half a century has elapsed on this message but one feels that in the modern world, the same gloomy situation, is prevailing as it was in the age of Iqbal. He was restless on the events in Ethiopia, Spain and China, with Palestine in the lurch. The new oppressed are the inhabitants of Algeria, Bosnia Herzegovina, Afghanistan and Kashmir where brutality, butchery and killing is carried out by the so-called civilised, advanced, progressive and broadminded powers. They are complacently witnessing the catastrophe of human beings and human culture. It is in this chaotic and painful situation that Iqbal offers a sublime idea of honouring of mankind, without any discrimination or distinction.

The essence of humanity is respect for man.

And thou shalt do well to take

*Careful note of this important point.*⁷

In his first poetical collection *Asrar i Khudi* (The Secret of Self), Iqbal quotes Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi:

I am surrounded by animals and wild folk and I am in search of Man.⁸

Iqbal wanted to reconstruct the society on some universal human principles, as he felt the main factor in modern world was missing and that was the man himself.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

⁷ Iqbal, *Javid Nama*, Lahore, 1974, p. 205, Tr. A.Q. Niaz, *Iqbal's Javid Nama*, Lahore, 1984, p. 329.

⁸ Iqbal, *Asrar o Rumooz*, Lahore, 1976, p.5.

Be it East or West, the modern man is in the grip of fear, uncertainty and suspicion. He has neither belief nor confidence in his person. As man who has no understanding of his high place and calibre, as a human being, is unaware of the self. This unawareness of the self, no confidence and firm faith, created in the West the problem of existentialism. The philosophy of self in Iqbal is an affirmation of man's significance in the scheme of things. It is a solution for existentialism. Iqbal's concept of Khudi or self is quite different from the western concept of a rather unhappy and painful existentialism.

Some European existantionlists believe that life is meaningless, that it is absurd, and there exists no system of values, ethics and religion at all. This negative approached tends to promote atheism and extremism. Iqbal is against mechanic life, materialistic collectivism and lifeless rationalism. His outlook towards man and life is very much positive. He believes that the individual has a unique significance of his own, with a certain positive purpose of life. His philosophy of Khudi imparts courage to man and makes his struggle for a better life with zestful confidence and thus maintain rather improve upon the status of being the vicegerent of God on earth, i.e. Khalifa the Quranic term.

The three stages of the recognition of self introduced by Iqbal, through Rumi, invite men to relinquish worldly shine and artificiality and make a "voyage to inner-self". Iqbal stresses on the light emanating from "inner-self". The source of this light is human character. Iqbal has proposed the theory that "character is a sort of energy" and invisible force which determines the destinies of nations.⁹

Making a cursory study of developing and developed countries prove that disrespect for human values and tenets, criminal disregard for respect for humanity, tyranny and endless series of failure of capitalistic system are outcome of

⁹ Iqbal, *Stray Reflections*, Ed. Javid Iqbal, Lahore, 1987, p. 108.

ignoring the central position in the world and purpose of life. The importance of Iqbal's "Ideal Man" has increased in the developed society of the West owing to its problem of greed, riches, selfishness and alienation. For instance, the family fabric has collapsed; divorce rate is high: parent-offspring relationship is weaker. The walls of enstrangement erected between man and man are getting higher and higher. Everyone finds himself condemned to solitary confinement. Old houses have not solved the problems of old parents and young grand children. Hence, Iqbal's insistence on selflessness. Alongwith individual existence, Iqbal stresses upon the importance of society and family for perfection of life's potentialities.

*The link that binds the individual
To the society a mercy is,
His truest self in the community
Alone achievement fulfilment.¹⁰*

Philosophy of self is not individualistic in its spirit and essence. The man is not like a brick, his status is not only being a part of a big wall. Iqbal has stressed the perseverance and integrity of family structure. He gives special status to the female and believes her to be the nucleus of a family and the only mean safeguard to human life.

*The picture that this world presents
From woman gets its tints and scents
She is the lyre that can impart
Pathos and warmth to human heart.
Her handful clay is superior so far
To pleides that so higher are,
Like gem out of cask is cast.
Like plato can not hold discourses,
Nor can with thunderous voice declaim
But Plato was spark that broke
From her fire that blazed like flame.¹¹*

¹⁰ Iqbal, *Asrar o Rumooz*, Lahore, 1976, p. 85 (Tr A.J. Arberry, *The Mysteries of Selflessness*, Lahore, 1953, p.5.)

According to Iqbal women have been assigned a very important role. She is not object of domestic comfort not a commatitly, not a supplement to man but she has a higher role, that is motherhood.

Motherhood quickens the pace of life, the mysteries of life revealing;¹²

Napoleon was no fool when he said: "give me good mothers and I will give you a good nation". Cultural tradition of a nation can be preserved by its women.

*The world is stable from mother's grace,
Her kind nature guards the whole human race.
To this point, if the nations did not get,
the whole world order would soon upset.*¹³

It is a pity that some modern movements in the West tend to alienate the women from their biological responsibilities. Iqbal feels that this suicidal tendency is very alarming for the whole mankind:

*If Frankish Culture blights the motherly urge,
For human race it means a funeral dirge.*¹⁴

Now, if we turn our gaze from the individual and family to the global and the economic situation, we find that Iqbal was equally alert to this extremely important aspect of human society. As we know he was deeply interested in economics and his first prose work was a penetrating analysis of contemporary economic theories. He not only kept himself abreast of the development in the discipline, but also made scathing critique of the economic order that had started emerging during his time and which has reached its climax in our contemporary world, where according to Paul Kennedy, there is a growing mismatch between the world's riches,

¹¹ Iqbal' *Zarb i Kaleem*, Lahore 1974, p.94 (Tr. Akbar Ali, *The Rod of Moses*, Lahore 1983, p. 57-58.)

¹² Iqbal, *Asrar o Rumooz*, p. 150 (Tr. Arberry, p. 63.)

¹³ Iqbal, *Armughan i Hijaz*, Lahore, 1975, p. 93, (Tr. Q.A. Kabir, Lahore, 1983, p. 72.)

¹⁴ Iqbal, *Zarb i Kaleem*, p.96 (Tr. Akbar Ali, p. 59.)

technology, good health and other benefits are to be found and where the world's fast-growing new generations, possessing few if any of these benefits, live.¹⁵

Free economy has bound 20 percent population of the world to live below the line of poverty condemned to live on a fraction of 1.5 percent of total wealth of the world. Every day thirty five thousand men, women and children die of hunger, says an estimate, whereas in the North America and Western Europe, the heaps of food, bulks of butter, stores of milk and piles of meat are destroyed just to keep the prices of the commodities up. It will be strange to know that only five percent of the world population have sixty percent of wealth and resources unchallengeably. The modern day economists are forced to comment that the distance between rich and poor is growing fast, same is the case among the various developed countries. See, for example the fast grown income difference between the Americans and the British! In nature scheme of things man is for God and all things of World for man. Denying man his rightful status, we have deified worldly things. Thus economy has been dehumanised. Man has become a machine to produce money and worship it. Iqbal is entirely against the inhuman behaviour of money making, profit seeking and boundless wealth even made through fair legal means. According to him capitalism as well as communism has failed to solve the problem of man. Iqbal advocates an economic system which is based on equality, justice and fairplay, where man is not a victim of man and where there is no poverty and oppression. Iqbal says:

No one should be a destitute in this world.

*This is, indeed, the focus of the Divine Law.*¹⁶

Apart from philosophy, sociology and economics the relevance of Iqbal's poetry and thought could also be discussed on a higher and universal level. In the social and

¹⁵ Paul Kennedy, *Preparing for the Twenty-First Century*, Rawalpindi; Services Book Club, 1995, p. 331.

¹⁶ Iqbal, *Pas Che Bayad Kard*, Lahore, 1977, p. 32.

moral realms, traditional philosophy has lost its moorings. Iqbal's thought offers alternative positions to that philosophic thinking today and leads it towards an opening from the blind alley. Iqbal was an heir to the long and illustrious tradition of wisdom poetry developed by the Muslim Civilisation over the centuries. This wisdom poetry drew its sap from the sapiental doctrines of the Islamic Revelation and in this sense it was better equipped to face the challenges; better equipped than the philosophic positions evolved by unaided human reason. Moreover, the rich Persian tradition of poetry has a transforming quality which mere logic lacks. Sapiental doctrines vehicled by sublime poetry have a more powerful and profound effect on the human soul to bring about a moral change in it through existential appeal. Iqbal, being the last outpost of the classical Islamic worldview combined in his genius the sapiental wisdom and a consummate use of the art of poetry, a continuity of form and content which made him so relevant to the modern world.

To sum up, Iqbal's relevance could be sought on various planes; individual and the society, politics and religion, art and literature, economics and morals, philosophy and spirituality. His thoughts and his poetic works make a veritable repository of wisdom rooted in the sapiental doctrines of the Islamic tradition which are timeless, ever fresh and an inexhaustible treasure of illumination and guidance. Like these doctrines, his thought is also perennial; it has provided inspiration and guidance to his contemporaries, and in the generations who came after them. So shall it remain to the times to come.

IQBAL'S RELEVANCE TO THE PRESENT WORLD- PERSIAN WRITINGS OF IQBAL

Prof. Dr. G.R. Sabri Tabrizi

Many scholarly books and papers have been written about Iqbal. Some have regarded him superficially as a national poet with dogmatic religious views, and others, more thoughtfully, have tried to link him with the ideas of Nietzsche, Bergson and Goethe. In other words, Iqbal's poetry and philosophy are regarded as following a European model or influence. But a close study of Iqbal's writings rejects these extreme views. He was neither a nationalist in the limited meaning of the term, nor was he a student or follower of philosophers like Nietzsche.

Iqbal is above all the product of his social and historical environment. His writings are the voice of millions of people who either had no opportunity to speak out or were silenced by social and political oppression. India and most of Asia and Africa were blighted and reduced to poverty by Western imperial and colonial powers. The native culture and languages of these countries were downtrodden by foreign invaders. European languages, particularly English, gradually, though often by force or the need for better employment, became the official language and were regarded as the sign of civilisation and thus superiority. Western industrial goods were sold in Eastern bazaars. Their military weapons were used against the people. Philosophy of "Reason" religion and literature were also imported alongside industrial goods, and taught in universities. Thus the people were exploited both

economically and intellectually - bodily and spiritually. The operation took more than a century, during which native literature, language, religion and philosophy were buried underneath the imported and artificial culture. Islam, in particular, which had originally been a revolutionary movement and has risen against the suppressive system of Quraish, the Persian Empire and the rigid philosophical systems, had already become (like Orthodox Christianity) passive and abstract. This is the history of the times in which Iqbal lived. Only within this social and political atmosphere can Iqbal's voice, particularly in his Persian writings, be fully understood. His imagination and philosophy are rooted in Eastern culture and inspired by his love of the people and his share in their sufferings. Now this leads us to question ourselves: (i) What is the importance of Iqbal's writings and his historical and moral stand or commitment? (ii) What is his relevance to the present world?

Iqbal, like the great English poet William Blake, was a poet of the people. In other words, the centre of the poet's inspiration and attention must be Man or the people in the street. "My streets are my Ideals of Imagination" writes Blake in his book *Jerusalem*. By mentioning Blake I do not intend to suggest that Iqbal was writing with Blake as his model. Probably Iqbal had not read Blake at all. But what I intend to convey here by mentioning Blake is the definition of the poetry, personality, and social or historical commitment of Iqbal. Iqbal, like Blake, was a poet committed to the people. Contrary to many European Romantic poets (for example, Wordsworth), Iqbal was committed to Man rather than to nature.

Iqbal was born in Punjab while it was occupied by the British colonial power, and brought up among poor and hard-working people of Lahore and other cities. In other words, Punjab's streets, gardens and people formed his imagination. This mental form of the objective world or society became the root and source of inspiration for the

poet. He always looked within himself to this source. "Until we see an environment or society closely, until we live in it, mix with the people, and hear and share their griefs and learn about their wants, wrote Samad Behrangi (late famous contemporary Persian writer from Azerbaijan)" it is vain and useless to show ourselves sympathetic to that society and people, and even to write stories for them..." (I) A person who is living comfortably in Europe cannot be objective and aware of difficulties resulting from living and political conditions in Asia or Africa. Even a writer or poet who lives in comfort and writes only about nightingales, flowers, his girl friends, or in flattery of kings and lords, would not do much good for society. Poets or writers, no matter whether their subject be educational, economical, historical, philosophical or political, ought to have a social and human responsibility. In *The Secrets of Selfhood*, his first long philosophical poems in Persian (published in 1915 and 1918), Iqbal writes:

Gaining information about knowledge and science is not
the only end,
The buds and flowers cannot replace the meadow,
But knowledge ought to be a means for the security of life,
It ought to be the means of self-assertion.
Knowledge and science grew and rose with life,
They were born and brought up with human existence,
We live by recreation of ends,
We shine by the light of desire

PP. 17-18

Iqbal's imagination was neither abstract nor limited. It was rooted in his society. His driving desire and aim was to create society and protect its interests rather than to use knowledge for his limited and selfish interest. For 'The Buds and flowers cannot replace the meadow' or the people. When he attacks philosophers like Plato he attacks abstract philosophy and the limited nature of knowledge which is used by the ruling class to teach love, affection, democracy and reason, but which they do not put into practice. Satirising this kind of

philosophy and abstract knowledge, he writes in (*Zabur i Ajam*):

I won't depend on the kind of reason with which Plato regards the world,
 For there is a small joyful and seeing heart within me.
 What is this world? It is the idle-house of my assumptions,
 Its manifestation depends on my seeing eyes.
 Existence and non-existence depend on my seeing and not seeing
 For the idea of 'Time' and 'Place' is only a joke of my thoughts.
 Logic and philosophy have made me heavy
 Oh my Elias! Reason which wanders the universe deserves
 a Turkish surprise attack by night,
 A small heart-to-heart chat is better than Platonic
 knowledge

p.32

When Iqbal attacks 'Reason' he in fact attacks the mechanical and philosophical system of Europe. He criticises the poverty of philosophy and 'Reason' which were taught by the ruling colonial interests to their poor subjects. The ruling class tried, by the Newtonian concept of the universe and social outlook, to maintain the status quo. Otherwise, Iqbal was a supporter of the right kind of philosophy, the philosophy which honoured human values and attacked the exploitation of man by man:

Payam i Mashriq p. 228

There is indeed a difference between selfish or limited "reason" and the "reason" with the "world outlook". (*Payam i Mashreg* p. 228.) When he says that "a small heart-to-heart chat is better than Platonic knowledge" he wants to bring knowledge from vacuum to reality - to organic life, to turn eyes from the limited life to the unlimited one, from abstraction to action. Only the marriage of heart with heart or common interests can bring change and unseat the ruling class- not Newtonian "Reason".

Iqbal's poetry is organic and rooted in the heart of the masses because he shares their feelings and desires, and speaks and writes for them. Although in some of his poems, for example *Javid Nameh* and *Zabur i 'Ajam*, he seems to be flying high in his own realm, yet all these seem to me a necessary part of human imagination. This creation has, in one way or another, its roots in their streets, in reality - the objective world of colours and senses. By bringing in mythological stories and allegorical tales (such as the ascension of Mohammad to heaven, Gabriel's flight, etc.) the poet recreates the past and suggests that these are part of human imagination and desire which can remove obstacles and turn systems upside-down by translating vision or imagination into action. In other words, Man has created his own myth and allegory, but later on, forgetting and ignoring the power of the poetic or creative genius of Man (which is as old as Man), he has allocated these mythological and allegorical tales to God or gods. Here Iqbal has common ground with Rumi, who attacked rationalists and those who interpreted the Qur'an literally. Iqbal criticises mullahs and priests for using these allegorical tales for the enslavement of Man. Satirising mullahs by calling them "Wise" and the "Elect", he writes:

I am returning from the lesson of the Wise unhappy and
disturbed
Sometimes the world on top of me and sometimes I on
top of the world,
Here is neither winking of the wine-giver nor there is a
word of lover,
I am returning from the feast of mullah and sufi very sad,
A time will come that your Elect will need me
Because I am a man from the desert who is coming to visit
the King without fear.

Zabur i 'Ajam, p. 43

Iqbal knew that when religious leaders (the "Wise") escape from reality to the solitary and abstract world of Sufism or

give their service to the ruling interests (the "Elect") in order to receive money and live comfortably, then their minds become passive and enslaved and thus lose their creativity. But the poet, by honouring human values, frees himself from this passivity and bondage and sides with the people of the desert against the "Elect". This assertion of human values helps the poet to be independent from God or gods, so that he wishes to free others from mental enslavement by saying constantly: "Turn your eyes within yourself." Turning to oneself is the starting point of individual perception or emancipation and social revolution. Revolting against the concept of God and passivity, he writes in *Zabur i 'Ajam*:

Either you should not issue orders for Muslims to sacrifice
 Or you should create a new solution this run-down body.
 Either do this or that.
 Either a new world or a new test
 For how long will you treat us as you treated those before
 us,
 Either do this or that!
 Either kill in my heart the zeal of revolution
 Or you should turn the foundation of this earth and time,
 Either do this or that!
 Sparks rise up from my earth: where should I pour them,
 whom should I burn?
 You have made a mistake by putting this zeal and desires
 in my soul!"

p. 38

Through this independence and freedom Man is revealed as a responsible being in his individual and social life. Here is the difference between abstract knowledge or philosophy and the practical. The former binds and enslaves human imagination to a super-power which is separate and divorced from Man, but the latter frees human imagination and thinking power from all sorts of mystical and mysterious powers outside human existence or society. An abstract writer or philosopher acts outside human and social reality, but the

true poet or philosopher sees reality and uses all mythology and allegory as a vehicle to assert human values and creation. Attacking those who put mind to sleep by negating and denying the material world, Iqbal writes:

Do not say that the universe is without foundation
And that every minute of our life is covered with a veil”
Take today firmly in your hand
Because tomorrow is not yet born from the universe.
The universe of colours and smell is understandable,
There are too many flowers to be picked by you in this
land.
But do not close your eyes to within yourself
For there is an interesting thing to see in your soul too.

Payam i Mashriq, pp. 85-88

Iqbal is a dialectical thinker. While stressing the importance of the material world he stresses, at the same time, the importance of the human soul or human perception, without which the world becomes dead. He often tells us not to close our eyes to within ourselves. By this he in fact stresses the importance of the world's impression on Man and his mental perception from it. This perception forms the world from within which the driving force, or “Selfhood”, which is social, takes its energy.

Iqbal's revolt against the existing philosophical system manifests itself in two ways: one is in his satire on the whole universe and its creator, and the other is in his opposition to the selfishness and passivity of “spiritualism”

What do we mean when we say that Iqbal is a materialist philosopher? The ruling interests and their philosophical system (including orthodox religion) taught that the source of all life is the spiritual world. Love of Allah and the spiritual world was regarded as good, and love of the material world and bodily desire were considered evil. The orthodox religion and philosophical system, while living amid wealth and worldly riches, taught self-denial and the love of Allah. Orthodox Islam, like Orthodox Christianity and other state

religions, advocated self-restraint, warned people of (“Hell”) on the one hand and promised (“Heaven”) in the world after. Thus they defiled the humanism of Islam and suppressed its social and revolutionary spirit. Opposing these abstract and passive teachings, Iqbal writes:

A handsome youth with a colourful hat
 His look like a lion without shelter.
 He is sent to school to learn the knowledge of sheep,
 Which cannot even offer him a leaf of a tree.”

Armaghan i Hejaz, p. 144

or “knowledge of sheep” is the key word which shows how minds are tamed and formed, how eyes are blinded by the abstract and empty teachings of the established system. The system which is a slave-seller and wants people to follow its rules like sheep without thinking and questioning. Rejecting the rigid and mechanical system, Iqbal writes in *Armaghan i Hejaz*:

What is the use of that thought which is wandering
 in the universe,
 And goes round planets,
 Such a thought is like a piece of cloud
 Which is tossed in space by the wind. (p.40)
 When you see that a caravan is killed by thieves on its
 way,
 Why do you ask how caravan was killed?
 Do not be sure of the knowledge that you are taught
 For this knowledge can kill the spirit of a nation. (p.144)
 Your struggle is not of development and achievement,
 You are not aware of sufferings and poverty
 I have escaped from that non-existence
 Where you cannot hear lamentation at midnight.: (p.8)

Iqbal brings knowledge from an abstract level to a practical and human level. In other words, knowledge and religion which are divorced from people and their needs are abstract and thus useless. Iqbal’s stress on the word “action” (awal) should be understood in its social context. Satirising

those who have reduced religion to a discussion about this world and the world after he writes:

I do not want this world and the world after,
It is enough for me to know only the secret of life.
Show me the way to enthusiasm and joy
By which I can make the earth and heaven delightful.

Armaghan i Hejaz, p. 12

The Muslim who is poor and has no proper clothing
Makes Gabriel angry about his condition.
Rise and let us create another nation
Because this nation has become a burden.

(Ibid., 18)

When a nation has a plan for working
When a nation is rewarded joys for her efforts
Then such a nation cannot be satisfied with one world.
But carries two worlds on her shoulders.

(Ibid., p.19)

In other words, he marries the material world with the spiritual one. The intellectual life corresponds to the material world- Man develops both bodily and spiritually, or economically and intellectually.

Iqbal attacks the philosophical system which teaches metaphysics on the one hand and accumulates wealth on the other. Iqbal asserts that Man is made of matter and that his existence, desire, love and motivation are based on the material world. Man's dependence and independence are determined by his material circumstances. The root of suffering is social injustice and poverty. Merely reciting the Qur'an, or calling for help from the Prophet, is in fact degradation of the dynamic philosophy of Islam:

The poor Muslim sighs and pours out grief from his heart

His heart is lamenting! Why is it lamenting?

He does not know.

And saying: look down upon me, look down upon me,

O Prophet of Allah

Again he writes:

What shall I write about that poor and suffering Muslim
 who is valuable,
 He has neither energy nor excitement in his blood
 No tulips are being grown on his farm,
 His hands are as empty as his pockets,
 And his Book is lying in his ruined house.

Ibid., pp. 40-41

Although Iqbal is philosophically a materialist, he is morally a spiritualist and humanist. He asserts the importance of the material world but criticises selfishness. The material world is not evil, but evil can exist in the nature of human relationship with the material world. The man who works and enjoys material rewards is not committing a sin. But the who forbids others the material world, while accumulating wealth at the expense of others, is sinful. When Iqbal attacks *Frang* or the West, he is attacking the nature of her relationship with the East. In other words, he is attacking the colonialism and imperialism of the West. Western culture teaches love and morality on the one hand, and exploits on the other. She takes with one hand and offers aid under the banner of 'Christian charity' with the other.

A Muslim who is in bondage of the West
 His heart cannot be fulfilled easily.

Armaghan i Hejaz, p.11

The West knows how to gain her economy
 She offers to one and takes from others.
 Satan is benefited in such a way that even God
 is surprised at it.'

Ibid., p.209

Criticising the West for her support of the minority-ruling businessmen, Iqbal continues:

There is no need to extend this tale
 I shall put down the hidden secret in a word
 The world is the world of businessmen.

How can one appreciate a place which does not exist?

Ibid., p. 209

Iqbal's criticism of the philosophers of rationalism in the West was essentially because of their outlook. Rationalism was abstract and mechanical. Reason, which was introduced as a magic word from the civilised West, served as a banner for colonialism. In order to civilise the uncivilised world, Reason was used as a tool. It was the burden of the civilised West to teach the uncivilised East how to bear sufferings by mastering the mind. Iqbal in his philosophical writings often attacks the philosophy of rationalism.

In "Nagsh-e-Frang" Iqbal comments on European philosophers. He prefers Rumi to Goethe who is not a prophet but a writer. Hegel's birds of reason apparently soar too high but in reality 'are mere stupefied hens who stay in the yard without a mate' (p. 245). Hegel is trying to discover the way of love through reason as if he were seeking the sun through a lamp (p. 243). Kant emerges from the night of eternity with a glittering counterfeit star (p. 251). Nietzsche is regarded as a 'bull in a china shop' (p. 238). He is superficially attractive but his basic ideas are chaotic and lead the follower into the trap of egoism.

Iqbal's opposition to European philosophers is not superficial or mere prejudice of a Muslim thinker against non-Muslim thinkers. His criticism is fundamental and rests on moral and social bases. His quarrel with Nietzsche, for example, if we go to the heart of the matter, is based on human principles, and thus important and relevant to the present day. Nietzsche's outlook on the world is totally different from Iqbal's. Nietzsche regarded the world as a stormy ocean with currents of conflicting forces and energies fighting for power and lasting supremacy. Their sole aim is power. Nietzsche's 'blond bestir the 'herrenrasse' or 'race of leaders' and 'Übermensch' or "Superman' gave inspiration and a philosophical basis to German Nazism. This kin of thinking was practised in Vietnam and is still being practised

in parts of Africa and Asia by fascist regimes. Nietzsche's philosophy can thus lead to a disastrous kind of jungle rule, the strongest dominating the weakest. Iqbal opposed this social racialism and idea of conflict and his opposition is still relevant in the present world.

While Iqbal urges his fellow-countrymen to rise against imperialist and free themselves from the "Lords", at the same time he tells them that freedom from Western colonialism is not the end of the matter. They should also free themselves from prejudice and idol-worshipping.

You have freed yourself from the Western lords
 But you are still worshipping graves and tombs.
 You are so used to being lulled to sleep
 That you still carve your stone idols.
 While you are yet bound by water and land
 You talk about being a Rumi [Turk] or Afghani.
 I am, above all, a human being regardless of colour
 and peculiar odour.
 Only after that, I am either an Indian or Turanian.'

Payam-e-Mashriq, pp. 85-91

Iqbal's message is universal and his outlook is unlimited. Those scholars who interpret Iqbal's defence of his wretched people as limited nationalism are indeed mistaken and have misread his works. In *Payam i Mashriq* (pp. 52-4), for example, he condemns racialism and limited world outlook to the extent that he tells us that if ever an Arab (Prophet Mohammad, or Islam) considers himself superior because of the colour of his skin, then you should leave him, that is to say, leave Islam.

To our eyes the meadow has only one colour,
 Who knows what it looks like to the nightingales?
 O you people who behave childishly discipline
 yourselves
 Are you a true Muslim? Then leave your class superiority
 Even if the Arab regards himself superior because of the
 redness of his blood, and colour of his skin

Then leave the Arab too.

Payam-e-Mashriq, p. 52

To the limited eye the meadow has only one colour, but to the eye of the 'bird' or the unlimited eye, the meadow is formed of many colours. This is true Iqbal, who rises above all limited outlooks and inhuman racialism. He believed in Islam because of the human and social principles that Islam stood for. Iqbal's message is that:

'I am, above all, a human being regardless of colour and peculiar odour.

Only after that, I am either an Indian or Turanian.'

In other words, there is only one race, which is the 'human race', and all should unite against the enemies of this race.

Iqbal knew that, in order to fight against the enemies of the 'human race', we have to cultivate and revive the original culture will in the masses by giving them a sense of place and security. He recognising the power of the masses as a deciding factor in his struggle. He himself made a historical choice by siding with the workers and peasants. He felt at home and at peace with the people, rejecting the ruling class.

You stay here and mix with the Elect

I am going to the home of friends.

His friends were the people rather than the Elect or individuals - the 'meadow' rather than the buds and flowers. 'The buds and flowers cannot replace the meadow.'

He attacks the injustice of the existing social system, and defends the wretched people against the hypocrisy of the ruling interests, writing:

Do not tell me that God has done this,

You can wash away the dust by this excuse.

Just turn this world upside down

Where the unjust steals from the just;

Bring hatred out of your heart

For smoke should go out of the house

Refuse to pay tax from your dearly cultivated land,

And do not be the headman who plunders the village.

Ibid., pp. 164-165

Iqbal sided with the working class and the suffering peasants. By rejecting selfish individualism Iqbal asserts the importance and values of social and universal Man. In other words, a heart which beats only for its own limited interests is a selfish heart and thus non-human. Humanity should be understood in its social relationship, and the human heart must be unlimited - embracing the whole society. Attacking those who associate social evil with human nature, he remarks:

You say that the heart is made of earth and blood
 And is bound by materialism
 Our heart is confined in our chest
 But it is unlimited and exists outside our own
 Limited world.

Ibid., p. 168

This unlimited heart of Man has been reduced to this limited state by selfish interest. Thus Iqbal, remarking on Marx, concludes that Man has become the enemy of Man by the conflict of material interests.

Man who is creative and discoverer of all things has
 become alienated from his own creative past,
 Man has become killer of Man because of capitalism.

Payam-e-Mashriq, p. 236

In order to free ourselves from all sorts of bondages and exploitations, Iqbal advises us to rely on human creative power. Only by faith in the creative and practical power of Man can Muslims redevelop and flourish.

Bearing in mind what has been said, and the progressive ideas about Iqbal has expressed in most of his writings, one essential question occurs to one's mind: 'Why are we not taught about Iqbal's progressive ideas or, even if we are taught, why have we not put them into practice in society? Iqbal, as I pointed out at the start, revolted against imperialism, colonialism, and all sorts of exploitation of Man by Man; but later on, after his death, he was used by the

conservative governments and ruling interests in order to win the support of the people and, at the same time, to defuse its progressive ideas which ultimately can endanger the interests of the ruling class. Thus Iqbal's ideas are distorted and his poetry is reduced to fit merely ceremonial occasions.

However, Iqbal still belongs to the people, and I repeat it once more:

I am, above all, a human being regardless of colour and peculiar odour.

Only after that, I am either an Indian or Turanian.

In order to free human beings from the chains of racialism and exploitation:

Just turn this world upside down

Where the unjust steals from the just!

SOURCES

(I) Samad Behrangi, *Study of Educational Problems in Iran*, Tehran, 1969, pp. 63-4.

I have translated all quotations from Persian texts into English:

(a) *Payam i Mashriq*, Lahore, 1923

(b) *Javid Nameh*, Lahore, 1932

(c) *Zabur i 'Ajam*, Lahore, 1924

(d) *Armaghan i Hejaz*, Lahore, 1938

(e) *The Secrets of Selfhood and Selflessness*, Lahore, 1930

MAN VERSUS THE UNIVERSE- IQBAL'S PERCEPTION

Dr. Tehsin Firaqi

Of all the creatures, man, alone is a rational being and, as such, has a strong propensity to think about himself and his surroundings are. This he has been doing from times immemorial. It is said to have been written in the temple of Apollo (at Delphi) "Man! know Thyself". This, I think, might be the first and foremost advice which has come to man down the ages. But how to know oneself remains the question. What is man and how to define his nature and his relationship with God and the Universe? These are the questions which call for the answers- and they are many, so various and variegated that they often baffle him instead of satisfying him.

The fact is that the question of what is man, cannot be answered until and unless his relationship with God and the Universe is defined. Man, being an integral entity, is the sum-total of reason, instincts, emotions, sentiments and spirituality. He cannot be reduced to the water-tight compartments of being a mere *homo sapiens*, a featherless biped creature of Aristotle, the *homo economicus* or the vertical mammal,¹ nor can he be described in the bare terms of a mass of flesh and bone. A structure of flesh and bone, no

¹ Unamuno: *The Tragic Sense of Life*, Macmillan, London, 1921 p:1

doubt he is, but he is more than that- the throbbing heart of the universe!

Similar is the case with the Universe. Be it the theory of Ideas of Plato, which regards universe as a fleeting shadow of the Real,² or the concept of the static Universe of Aristotle or again the materialistic explanations of the Universe-all of these offer only the partial truth about the universe. The dualistic Greek tradition presents God and Matter as the two co-eternal and independent realities while the ancient Persian philosophy propounded the dualism of another kin i.e., the Yazdan (God) and the Ahriman (Satan)- representatives of Good and Evil. Descartes declared the material being having no inner principle.³ His dualistic theory of mind and matter offers no inner conceivable interaction of the two and, hence, is rigidly deterministic.⁴

Every serious thinker must delineate his concept of human capabilities in comparison with the Universe around. In Iqbal's view, as I, for one, can perceive it, the basic note in the scheme is that Man is creative while universe, with all its multiplying and ever-expanding vastness remains rather mechanical in character, bound by the instincts from within and physical laws from without. Iqbal's philosophy is, per se, a philosophy of religion and, as such, he sees man and universe in the perspective of God- the creator of all that is within and without. Hence, Man and Universe are no independent realities. They are subservient to God.

Iqbal has expressed his views about Man and Universe both in his poetry and his prose-writings, specially his lectures, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. In the following pages I have made an attempt to highlight the salient features of his thought in this respect.

² For details his "Allegory of Cave" (The Republic) is to be kept in mind.

³ For details see Jamila Khatoon, *The Place of God, Man and Universe in the Philosophical System of Iqbal*, Iqbal Academy, Lahore, pp. 73-76

⁴ Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, London, Rep. 1996, p. 551.

As man is subservient to God, Nature is subservient to man. The world is created for man. Hence, "Man, puny man, dressed in a little, brief authority, mocks at high heaven". In the saga of being, man has emerged potent and capable of improving upon nature. And since he can, so he ought, as goes the assertion. "Of all the creations of God", says Iqbal, "he (man) alone is capable of consciously participating in the creative life of his Maker."⁵ This is what Iqbal has exactly expressed in his famous poem "Dialogue between God and Man". Addressing God says man:

*You made the night, I made the lamp that lights it up.
 You fashioned clay; I made of it a drinking cup.
 You made the wilderness, the mountain and the steppe;
 I fashioned garden, orchard, avenue and scape
 I change dread poisons into panaceas and
 I am the one who fashions mirrors out of sand*⁶

This creative companionship of God and Man has persistently found expression in his poetry (as well as prose) but always in a new garb. In one of the beautiful and fascinating quatrains of "*A Message from the East*" he says:

*Love's music found its instrument in man
 He unveils mysteries, though himself one,
 God made the world; man makes it beautiful
 Man is God's colleague and companion*⁷

Man, in Iqbal's view must not reduce himself to the status of being an insignificant part of the scheme, only bearing the imprint of the natural change around him. He should rather be the overriding agent of change, able to mould the elements of nature according to his own ends and purposes. And in this process of progressive change", says Iqbal, "God

⁵ *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Lahore, Sh. Mohammad Ashraf, Rep: 1968, p. 72.

⁶ Hadi Hussain (tr.) *A Message from the East*, Iqbal Academy, Lahore, Rep 1977, p. 78

⁷ *A Message from the East*, op, cit., p. 10.

becomes a co-worker with him, provided man takes the initiative".⁸

But what does the doctrine of this human freedom signify? Is it not a limitation on the freedom of the all-Inclusive Ultimate Ego? Most of the traditional theologians would say yes to this question. Iqbal's view, however, is quite contrary to what the theologians believe. He says that "this limitation is not externally imposed. It is born out of His own creative freedom whereby he has chosen finite egos to be participators of His life, power and freedom⁹. Viewed against the backdrop of the theological debates on the issue of pre-determination and free-will, Iqbal's formulation of the problem is a step further as it vehicles a message of dynamism and brings an abstract philosophic discussion to bear upon the vicissitudes of human existence and evolution of human society.

Fired with imagination, enthusiasm, hope and unity of purpose, this man Iqbal is out to create a world of fresh ideals, to recast what is into what ought to be.

Iqbal has to credit many poems and verses where he has emphasised the need of these ideals and fresh avenues to be opened up to mankind. It would not be out of place here to quote some such verses:

1. *The world thou seest is not the
Handicraft of the Lord
From thee alone emerge
The spinning-wheel, the cord*¹⁰
2. *Until thou deeply enterest
The very heart in Being's breast,
To leave the gaze to speculate
Is wickedness and sin most great.*¹¹

⁸ *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, op,cit, p. 12.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 80

¹⁰ Sh. Mahmud Ahmed (Tr.) *Pilgrimage of Eternity* (translation of Javed Nameh) Lahore, Institute of Islamic Culture, 1961, p. 160.

3. *If worthy of an arrow in thy breast
Like eagles, then, should be thy life, thy death*¹²
4. *So faint a mote thou art
I fear thou shalt vanish quite
Then fortify thy heart
To meet the morning light
Transcend the dust, nor
Take thyself but dust to be
If thou thy breast will break
The moon shall shine from thee*¹³
5. *The sighs that out of the bosom break
of a people at earnest prayer
A brave and new foundation make
In life's mind everywhere.*¹⁴
6. *God said, "The world so lies,
And say not otherwise";
Said Adam, "So I see;
But this it ought to be!"*¹⁵
7. *If one in this Old Temple, seeks mere ease
It signifies departure of the soul*¹⁶
8. *Go, plunge a dagger in the bowels of this universe,
Like sommat's idol, it is full of jewels.*¹⁷

Iqbal's cosmogony admits of no rivalry among Man, God and Universe. Being a spiritual monist, he sees no gulf between the Creator and the Created. But unlike the pantheists, his individual, though steeped in the love of God, is so conscious of his unique ego that instead of losing is self

¹¹ Arberry. A. J. (tr.) *Persian Psalms*, Lahore, Sh. Mohammad Ashraf, Rep. 1961, p. 80

¹² *Pilgrimage of Eternity* op, cit, p. 175.

¹³ *Persian Psalms*, op.cit, p. 89.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 64.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 122.

¹⁶ *Pilgrimage of Eternity*, op.cit., p. 169.

¹⁷ *A message from the East*, op. cit., p. 5. I have made a slight change in the first line of the verse (T.F.)

in the Ocean of the Ultimate Reality, he tries to absorb the Ocean in a tiny drop; the human self:

“O man of courage! Cast thy net for God Himself.”

The line of Iqbal reminds one, of his speculative, intellectual and poetic affinity with, perhaps, one of the greatest mystic poets of the East, Rumi whom he rightly considers his spiritual mentor.

Like a mountain, grave and lofty, with a live and keen sense of dignity, Iqbal's Man often asserts himself and never recedes. Even in Paradise, he was so restive that despite the clear warning of God, he tasted the forbidden fruit. Iqbal is of the view that man's first act of disobedience was also his first act of choice and that is why, according to the Quranic narration, Adam's first transgression was forgiven.¹⁸ To regard man's first act of disobedience as his first act of choice reminds one, of the similar idea which Kierkegaard has expressed elsewhere. Again Iqbal is of the opinion that the purpose of the Fall-story, as described in the Quran, is rather to indicate man's rise from the primitive state of instinctive appetite to the conscious possession of a free self capable of doubt and disobedience. How beautifully, Iqbal has glorified man's free will and his restlessness in his poem-----
“Reflections of the Stars”:

*How Happy is man with his restlessness
So gaily riding on the steed of Time,
Life is a garment tailor-made for him.
Because he is a maker of new things*¹⁹

According to the Quran, says Iqbal, earth is not a torture-hell where an elementary wicked humanity is imprisoned for an original act of sin. Man's transgression forgiven, he was sent to earth with a view to reshape and remake it by continuous action. That is why he is hailed on this earth with joy and merriment. Iqbal, with his powerful imagination has

¹⁸ *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, op.cit., p. 85

¹⁹ *A Message from the East*, op.cit., p. 60.

visualised this event very artistically in some of his unforgettable Urdu and Persian poems in *Pyam i Mashriq* and *Baal i Jibril*. I would quote just a few lines from his poem "Adam is Received by the Spirit of the Earth", where the spirit expressing its joy accosts Adam:

*Thine are the clouds, the rains, the skies,
Thine are the winds, the storms,
The woods, the mountains, the rivers are thine;
The world of the angels was a void
Look at the earth which is thine*²⁰

Again in his poem "The Birth of Man", Iqbal has given tongue to the hopes and fears of the elements around regarding man as under:

"Love exclaimed, Lo, the lover is there who will welcome my painful shafts, and a tremor passed through Beauty that a great appreciator is born. In the closed sanctuary of the mysteries of being, the warning went around that eternal secret are going to be unveiled. Nature got perturbed that the dust of an unfree world has brought forth a being who shall freely make and break himself, a self-knowing and self-determining being. The unconscious urge that slept in the lap of life has opened its eyes thereby leading to a new vista of existence. Life said, long was I immured in a closed dome of clay, restless to venture out; but now I see the door that offers a chance to escape".²¹

The foregoing discussion amply proves the power and vision of man. This man is determined to do the some thing novel in the universe, to strike a happy balance between the ideal within and the actual without. He is free and freedom is a condition of goodness. "Hard his lot and frail his being, like

²⁰ Naeem Siddiqui (tr.) *Bal-i-Jibril*, California, Alhamra Publications, 1996, p. 128.

²¹ A free rendering in English by Kh. Abdul Hakim (included in) "*A History of Muslim Philosophy*, Vol.II. Karachi, Royal Book Company, Rep.1983, p. 1633.

a rose-leaf, yet no form of reality is so powerful, so inspiring and so beautiful as the spirit of man".²² Hope and determination on his back, this man is illuminating earth like the morning-star. He fights the negative forces of this universe but never gives way. He is not the "Empedocles on Etna:²³, who disillusioned of the hope that peace and joy and understanding can ever be found to appease man's desperate longings, hurls himself into crater of Etna. Iqbal's man hates this crater if it is to be used for self-immolation and suicide. Hope and fearlessness comes from the Absolute and Iqbal is first and last an ardent lover of God and a staunch believer in the last revealed religion. Iqbal, confidently, holds up his vigorous concept of Islam, which before anything else, means to negate the sovereignty of all except One i.e. the Omnipotent creator of the Universe. The old question of freewill and determinism in Iqbal's framework of Islamic perception melts into life-giving force than a dogma and lends force to the potent man emerging in his thought, capable of standing defiant to all but One. This man is nothing other than the Perfect Man, the vicegerent of God on earth, the highest conception of Man- a happy synthesis of reason, intellect and intuition, an epitome of peace, justice, equality, spirituality, liberty, fraternity, and fearlessness. Iqbal has written elsewhere in his lectures that power and vision are both important. Power without vision tends to become destructive and inhuman. Both must combine for the spiritual expansion of humanity. When this balance is lost, humanity suffers. And so it has in different times and climes in human history.

The present situation of the world offers a rather bleak picture. Man, especially the Western man has gained marvellous powers of science and technology but has lost the vision which is of utmost importance as Iqbal has said. He

²² *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, op.cit., p. 12.

²³ A dramatic poem of Matthew Arnold.

has ushered in a new era by giving birth to new information gadgetry, computers, faxes, satellites-- in a word, a "technology of freedom" as the phrase goes. But all this freedom has been gained at the cost of precious social and human values which are fast waning and for which the West is perhaps more responsible since it is more powerful. This sordid situation has been portrayed very aptly by the famous Czech writer, Milan Kundera. He says:

I thought of the fate of Descartes' famous formulation: man as 'master and proprietor of nature'. Having brought off miracles in science and technology, this 'master and proprietor' is suddenly realising that he owns nothing and is master neither of Nature (it is vanishing little by little from the planet) nor of History (it has escaped him) nor of himself (he is led by the irrational forces of his soul) But if God is gone and man is no longer master, then who is the master? There it is, the unbearable lightness of being²⁴

The similar sombre picture was presented by Iqbal years ago. He said in late thirties:

*Love fled, Mind stung him like a snake, he could not
Force it to vision's will
He sought the orbits of the stars, yet could not
Travel his own thoughts' world;
Entangled in the labyrinth of his learning,
Lost count of good and will;
Enchained the sunbeams, yet his hand no drawn
On life's dark night unfurled.*²⁵

The picture is, no doubt, dismal but Iqbal has also a solution to offer. He says:

"Humanity needs three things today- a spiritual interpretation of the Universe, spiritual emancipation of the individual and basic principles of a universal import, directing the evolution of human society on a spiritual basis."²⁶

²⁴ *The Art of the Novel*, New York, Perennial Library, 1988, p. 41.

²⁵ Victor Kiernan, *Poems from Iqbal*, Bombay, 1947, p. 99.

²⁶ *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, op. cit., p. 179.

The earnest soul that he was, Iqbal desired to see this world a happy abode of peace, justice, harmony, amity and spiritual growth. High though he soared up in distant heaven, his eye, was always pinned on his nest. His philosophy is a fine synthesis of the permanent and the contingent. His man is an emblem of innovation and originality. How fascinating he is when he says:

Human radiance is based on innovation and originality

While the celestial bodies continue to act

As they have been acting ever before.