

(La)
Iqbal's

**Gulshan-i
Raz-i Jadid**

AND

**B a n d a g i
N a m a h**

AN ANNOTATED ENGLISH TRANSLATION

BY

BASHIR AHMAD DAR

Institute of Islamic Culture

IQBAL'S

GULSHAN-I RAZ-I JADID

[NEW GARDEN OF MYSTERY]

AND

BANDAGI NAMAH

[BOOK OF SERVITUDE]

Rendered into English by
BASHIR AHMAD DAR
(Reader in Islamic)

WITH NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS

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To

The Memory of

My Revered Teacher

Professor Hafiz Mahmud Khan Shairani

Introduction

GULSHAN-I RAZ-I JADID, which forms part of Iqbal's *Zabur-i 'Ajam*, occupies a very significant place among Iqbal's works, because it deals with all the important problems of his philosophy. It was written after the book of the same name by Mahmud Shabistari who was born in the middle of the seventh century A.H. in Shabistar, a town near Tabriz in Adharbaijan. Very few details of Shabistari's life are known but the period in which he lived witnessed catastrophic changes which brought about a steady decline of Muslim culture. The fall of Baghdad in 656/1258 at the hands of Hulagu Khan was not a mere political defeat or the termination of a particular dynasty of Muslim kings. Only forty years after this fateful event, Islam won converts from among the grandsons of Hulagu and thus politically Muslims were able to regain their lost position. But in the cultural sphere the loss was so tremendous that later revival in the political field could not make up for the destruction of books and the indiscriminate killing of the scholars. The moral and spiritual impoverishment was so great that the people lost all confidence in themselves. Ibn al-Athir says that the panic (during the Mongol devastation) made the people extremely cowardly. He quotes the instance of a man who, in obedience to the command of an unarmed Mongol soldier, kept lying where he was till the soldier returned with a sword and killed him.

Shaikh Sa'di (d. 690), the elder contemporary of Mahmud, describes this awful tragedy in the following verse:

اے مجھ گر قیامت می بر آری سر ز خاک
سر بر آور ویں قیامت در میان خلق ہیں

O Muhammad ! you will get out of your grave on the Day of Judgement,
Arise now and witness the same among the people to-day.

His natural reaction to these horrible events is thus expressed :

تکيه بر دنيا نشايد کرد و دل بر وے نهاد
کآساں گاهے به مهر است اے برادر گه به کين
چرخ گردوں با زمين گوئی دو سنگ آسياست
درميان هر دو روز و شب دل مردم لچين

One should not care much for this world,
For fate is sometimes kind and sometimes unkind.
The sky and the earth are two stones of the grinding-mill,
Between which, day and night, are the hearts of men ground.

It was in this atmosphere of mental frustration and physical torment that Mahmud Shabistari wrote his book. In 710 A.H. he received a set of twelve questions from an inquirer in Khurasan. The last three deal with the allegorical expressions often employed by the mystic writers, such as wine, idol, love, beauty, eye, etc. The first nine questions, however, are really important, for they deal with the main problems of all metaphysics—nature of the individual, of Reality and their relation, and the problem of knowledge. The language of the questions clearly betrays a bias towards pantheism, a theory of life first propounded by Ibn al-'Arabi. Questions 6 and 8, for example, imply that the inquirer took this theory as granted and only wanted Mahmud to explain the position in detail for the benefit of those who were not conversant with it.

It is not a mere coincidence that this theory first made its appearance among Persian poets and prose-writers during the period which coincided with the Mongol invasions, first of Chengiz and then of Hulagu and his successors. 'Attar, 'Iraqi, Awhad al-Din Kirmani, and Mahmud Shabistari lived during this turbulent period and popularised this theory among the

intellectuals as well as the masses. According to this theory, true being and existence belong only to the One, while plurality or Many is devoid of any effective being. From this basic position follow all the main tenets which universally characterise the teachings of pantheistic mystics. God alone is the real doer while man is nothing but a plaything in the hands of fate; the sense of individuality or "I-ness" is an illusion which should be dissipated as early as possible; any interest that man takes in the affairs of this life will be tantamount to neglecting his primary duty of achieving freedom from bondage to this illusory existence on the earth for the sake of salvation which consists in unity with the One at the time of death. Even in this life it is possible to achieve partial unity, provided we succeed in sealing off all our sense-organs and deaden our sensitivity towards the affairs of this mundane existence.

In their theory of knowledge, the pantheistic mystics usually condemn the empirical sources of knowledge and rely only on mystic experiences. For them intuitive insight is the sole standard by which they judge the validity of prophetic traditions and rational judgements. In the moral sphere, they refuse to accept the usual standards of good and evil. If all Being is One and there is no duality in any real sense, there can be nothing which people usually call evil. With the disappearance of this distinction, all the moral values vanish into nothingness. It is not moral life, they allege, that leads to salvation; it is rather the attainment of true knowledge in the sense of mystic intuition that alone can liberate man from bondage to phenomenal existence. Similarly, in the religious sphere, the sharp distinction of *kufir* and Islam appears meaningless for, according to them, all are traversing different paths on their way to the same goal.

کفر و دین است در رهت پویان وحده لا شریک له گویان

Kufir and religion are all travelling towards You,
Uttering "He is one without a partner."

As subsequent events proved, the propagation of this philosophy proved much more dangerous for the revival of Muslim culture than the physical destruction at the hands of the Mongol invaders. Muslim society was able to recover its political power, but the mental confusion produced by this doctrine of negation of life remained unchecked and soon led to the total transvaluation of all Islamic values. In *Rumuz-i Bekhudi* Iqbal refers to this unhappy state of affairs in the following verses :

He who would kill a lion as if it were a sheep
 Came to feel stings of sympathy at the trampling of a tiny ant ;
 He whose *takbir* used to melt even stone hearted persons
 Began to feel uneasy at the song of a nightingale ;
 He before whose will even a mountain became a straw
 Handed himself over to passive resignation ;
 He whose steps created several new worlds
 Adopted a hermit's life ;
 His endeavours and active life were given up for the sake of
 contentment,
 So much so that he came to feel proud of his Bowl of Beggars.

It was for the purpose of undoing this mischief that Iqbal strove all his life. He was face to face with a new situation that was fraught with grave consequences. The Mongol invasion, as we have stated, resulted in the destruction of Muslim political power. In the ideological field the Mongols had nothing better to offer in comparison with Islam. In the end they had to succumb to this superior ideology. In the early decade of the twentieth century, however, the situation of the Muslim world was not so simple ; it was a fight between two antagonistic ideologies : Islamic and Western. The action was not confined to the contending armies in the field ; the mind and heart of every individual became the battle-ground. Unfortunately, the ideology of the West was not only coloured by materialistic outlook but was also positively anti-Islamic due to centuries of prejudice and ill-will created by political and religious conflicts of Christianity and Islam. This feature of the

new ideology was a challenge to the very existence of the Muslims throughout the world. Iqbal realised this danger and made it a mission of his life to counteract the irreligious forces of Western culture. In the Introduction to *Gulshan-i Raz-i Jadid*, he refers to this fact :

گذشت از پیش آن دانائے تبریز قیامت ها که رست از کشت چنگیز
نگاهم انقلابے دیگرے دید طلوع آفتابے دیگرے دید

That wise man of Tabriz witnessed before his eyes
Calamities that resulted from the invasion of Chengiz.

I saw a revolution of another type :

Appearance of a new sun.

Unlike Mahmud he met the new challenge not by a philosophy of passive resignation to the unrelenting fate, but by the advocacy of the doctrine of *Khudi*, a centre of powerful will that bends everything else to its wishes ; not of withdrawal from the world of matter into the dark regions of the soul, but of active immersion into the currents of time in order to divert its course according to one's needs. It is this philosophy of dynamic activism which Iqbal presents in his *Gulshan-i Raz-i Jadid*.

Bandagi Namah, another *Mathnavi* of *Zabur-i 'Ajam*, expresses in most poignant words Iqbal's reaction to the state of Muslim society under the political and cultural bondage to Western imperialism. There had been contacts of cultures in the past and Muslim society in its long career has faced many such situations. There had been political defeats in the past but in almost every case Muslims emerged stronger and succeeded in the end not only in gaining the lost ground but in winning greater glories in the field of culture. But their contact with the West was unique in one respect : here they lost not only their political independence but also failed to maintain their leadership in the cultural field. This two-fold defeat naturally brought about a situation that called for greater and more comprehensive effort on the part of the Muslim peoples all over the globe.

In this *Mathnavi*, Iqbal tries to bring to the fore-front the transformation of true Islamic values that has taken place as a result of decadence in the political field and a sense of inferiority in the cultural field. In the last section, he contrasts this sorry state of affairs with the fruitful life of those free people who are true leaders of mankind in all fields of activity—political, religious, moral, and cultural.

Gulshan-i Raz-i Jadid and *Bandagi Namah* form the closing parts of Iqbal's *Zabur-i 'Ajam*. Professor A. J. Arberry's translation of this book under the title *Persian Psalms* (Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1955) omits both these *Mathnavis*, because, as he says in the Preface, his main object was to introduce to the English readers Iqbal's "extraordinary talent for the most delicate and delightful of all Persian styles, the ghazal."

The present translation thus completes the translation of Iqbal's *Zabur-i 'Ajam*.

In the end I must express my thanks to the Honorary Editor of the quarterly *Iqbal* for allowing me to publish in book form this material that first appeared in its pages.

May 1964

Bashir Ahmad Dar

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Gulshan-i Raz-i Jadid

[The New Garden of Mystery]

Prologue

I HAVE imparted insight to the pupil of your eye,
And created a new world in your self;
All the East is asleep; hidden from the eyes of the
stars,
I have created morning by the melody of life.

Introduction

THE old ardour has disappeared from the life of
the East ;

Its breath wavered and soul left its body—
Like a picture without the chain of breath—
And does not know what the taste of life is.
Its heart lost desire and craving,
Its flute ceased to produce notes.

I am expressing my ideas in a different form,
And writing in reply to the book of Mahmud.
Since the time of the Shaikh,
No man has given the sparks of fire to our life.
We lay on the earth with shrouds around our
bodies,

And did not experience a single resurrection.
That wise man of Tabriz witnessed before his eyes
Calamities that resulted from the invasion of
Chengiz.¹

I saw a revolution of another type² :
Appearance of a new sun.

I removed veil from the face of meaning,
And gave sun in the hands of a mote.

Don't you think I am intoxicated without wine,

1. The period of Shaikh Mahmud of Tabriz coincides not with Chengiz but with Hulagu Khan. The poet means to refer to the political and social disintegration that resulted from Mongol invasions.

2. Reference is to the political, social, and intellectual domination of the East by the West.

And spin tales likes poets.

You will see no good from a low person,

Who accuses me of being a poet.

I have nothing to do with the street of the beloved,

And do not have a grief-stricken heart nor a

longing for the beloved;

Neither is my earth the dust of a street,

Nor is within my clay a heart without self-control.³

My mission in life is in line with Gabriel the

Truthful,

I have neither a rival, nor a messenger, nor a porter.

Though a mendicant, I have the wherewithal of

Moses:

Kingly pomp under a beggar's garment.

If I am earth, desert cannot contain me;

If water, river cannot encompass me.

The heart of a stone trembles at my glass,

The ocean of my thought is without a shore.

Behind my curtain lie concealed several destinies,

And several resurrections take birth at my hand.

For a moment I retired unto myself,

I created an immortal world.

“I am not ashamed of such poetry,

For in a hundred years an ‘Attar might not

appear.”⁴

A battle of life and death is being waged in my

soul,

3. He declaims to be a poet of the traditional type who revels in love-songs.

4. This verse is taken from Shabistari's *Gulshan-i Raz*. Farid al-Din ‘Attar (627 A.H. ?), a great mystic poet whose *Mantag al-Tair* is an exposition of pantheistic mysticism. Here Iqbal is willing to be called a poet in the sense of a prophet who has a message of life to convey to the people.

My eye is riveted on immortal life.
 I saw your clay stranger to life,⁶
 Hence I breathed into your body of my own soul.
 I am wholly affected by the fire that I possess:
 Illumine the darkness of your night by my lamp.
 Heart⁶ was sown into the soil of my body like a
 seed,

A different destiny was written on my tablet.⁷
 To me the ideal of *Khudi* is sweet as honey.
 What else can I do? My whole stock consists of
 this experience.

First I tasted the fruit of this experience myself,
 Then I decided to share it with the people of the
 East.

If Gabriel were to go through this book,
 He would cast aside the pure [Divine] Light as if it
 were dust;

He would bewail about his [low] station,
 And relate to God the condition of his heart:
 "I no longer desire unveiled Epiphany,
 I desire nothing but hidden heart-sore.
 I am ready to forego eternal union,

5. Refers to the social decay of Muslim society.

6. "Heart" is used here as the capacity to understand and grasp reality through intuitive perception in opposition to "head" which stands for intellectual apprehension. See *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 15. For a similar use of the word "heart," see Ghazali, *Ihya' al-Ulum*, Vol. III, Chapter I, Part 1, pp. 3-5 (Urdu translation).

7 Tablet (= *Lawh*) refers to *Lawh al Mahfuz* (Preserved Tablet) of the Qur'an (lxxxv. 22). According to the common Muslim belief, the destiny of everybody was written in the Preserved Tablet before the creation of the world. *Lawh* may refer to the forehead where, as it is believed, one's destiny is supposed to be written.

For now I realise what sweetness is in lamentation!⁸

Give me the pride and submissiveness of man,
Give unto my heart burning and consuming of
man.”

8. See Answer to Question 6 for what Iqbal understands by “lamentation.” For pantheism, the highest ideal is the state of union; for Iqbal it does not consist in annihilation of the individual ego in the Ultimate Ego, but in maintaining its separate existence even in His Presence; in “separation” (which is here described as “hidden heart-sore”) rather than in union. See *Reconstruction . . .*, p. 118; *Iqbal Nama*, Vol. II, pp. 215-17, where he discusses the relative significance of separation and union with reference to Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind. Also see *Iqbal*, Vol. II, Nos. 2, 4.

Question 1

FIRST of all I am perplexed about my thought:
What is that which is called "thought"?
What sort of thought is the condition of my path?
Why is it sometimes obedience, sometimes sin?

Answer

WHAT a light there is within the heart of man!
A light that is manifest in spite of its invisibility.
I saw it in the constancy of change,
I saw it both as light and fire.¹
Sometimes its fire is nourished by argumentation
and reasoning,
Sometimes its light is derived from the breath of
Gabriel.
What a life-illuminating and heart-kindling light!
The sun is nothing in face of a single ray of this
light.

5

1. "Thought" as light is intuitive insight and as fire is intellectual apprehension. Cf. Rumi:

داند آن کو نیک بخت و محرم است ز برکی ز بلیم و عشق از آدم است
Iblis (Satan), the embodiment of intellect, is made of fire (cf. Qur'an, vii. 12), while man, in so far as he employs intuition, is the reflection of divine light.

Conjoined² with dust, it is above limitations of space;

Chained to the alternation of day and night, it is free from the bonds of time.

The calculation of its time is not through breath, There is none like it in seeking and discovering.

Sometimes it feels exhausted and sits on the shore, Sometimes a shoreless ocean is in its cup.

It is both the river and the staff of Moses,

On account of which the river is divided into two.³

It is a deer whose pasture is the sky,

Who drinks water from the stream of the Milky Way.

Earth and sky are its halting places,

It walks alone amid a caravan.

Some of its states are: the world of darkness and light,

The sound of the trumpet,⁴ death, paradise, and Hourie.

It gives both to Iblis and Adam opportunity to develop,

And provides them a chance of expansion⁵

Eye is impatient at its sight,

2. The original word *Aludah* (آلوده) literally means polluted, contaminated. But association of the soul with material body, according to Iqbal, is not a fall but an opportunity. It is one of the different modes that Life adopts for its manifestation. See Answer to Question 3.

3. Reference is to the well-known incident in the history of Israelites when Moses threw his staff into the river which sundered and made way for his followers to cross safely while being pursued by the army of the Pharaoh. See the Qur'an, xx. 77; xxvi. 61.

4. *Sur* (صور), the trumpet of Israfil, summoning mankind from their graves to Resurrection. Qur'an, xxvii. 85; xxxvi. 51-52.

5. See note 1 above.

Its charms even beguile God.

With one eye, it sees its own privacy,

With the other eye, it looks at its apparent lustre.

If it closes one eye, it is a sin;

If it sees with both eyes, it is the true condition of
the path.⁶

30

Out of its little stream, it produces an ocean,

It becomes a pearl and then settles at its bottom.

Soon it takes a different form;

Becomes a diver and catches itself again.

In it there are noiseless commotions;

35

It has colour and sound perceptible without eye
and ear.

There is a world hidden in its glass,

But it reveals itself to us piecemeal.⁷

Life makes it into a lasso and throws it,

To catch everything low and high.

40

By its means it ensnares itself,

And wrings also the neck of duality.⁸

One day the two worlds fall a prey to it,

And are caught into its beautiful lasso.

If you conquer both these worlds,⁹

45

6. This, in a nutshell, is the answer to the two questions. "Thought" has two aspects—light and fire, intuition and intellect. Both must be employed; sin arises only when one is employed to the exclusion of the other.

7. Intuition grasps the "whole" of Reality while intellect proceeds by cutting it into parts.

8. *Ma sawa* (ما سوا) means all that which is other (than God). It refers to transition from plurality to unity, from Many to One, under the guidance of intuition.

9. "Both the worlds" refers to *afsaq* and *anfus*, the world of nature and the world of self, both of which, according to the Qur'an, afford clue to the Ultimate Ego; cf. Iqbal, *Reconstruction* p. 127.

You will become immortal even if everything else
dies.

Do not set foot in the desert of search lazily;
First, take hold of that world which lies within
you.

If you are low, become strong by conquering the
Self.

50 If you wish to seek God, get nearer yourself.

If you become proficient in conquering Self,
Conquering the world will become easy for you.¹⁰

Happy is the day when you conquer this world,
And pierce the bosom of the skies.

55 The moon will prostrate before you,¹¹

And you throw over it a lasso of waves of smoke.

You will be free in this ancient world,

Able to fashion the idols to your purpose ;

60 To hold in the grasp of your hand all the world,

Of light and sound, of colour and smell;

To change its quantitative aspect,

To mould it according to your purpose;

Not to be captivated by its sorrows and delights,

To break the spell of its nine skies;

To go down into its heart like the point of an

65 arrow,

Not to exchange your wheat for its barley;

10. This is the main thesis of Iqbal's philosophy. According to him, the human ego should be the starting point of our inquiry into the world of nature as well as God, for in the inner recesses of the ego, as the mystics of all ages have testified, we get a direct glimpse of Reality.

11 Reference is to verse 4 of Surah xii of the Qur'an where Joseph describes his dream of seeing the moon and eleven stars prostrating before him.

This is indeed the true kingly glory,
This is the State that is linked to religion.¹²

Explanatory Note

Question 1 of Iqbal corresponds to Questions 1 and 2 of Shabistari. While discussing the problem of thought, both Iqbal and Shabistari are, generally speaking, on the common ground. According to Shabistari, thought, i.e. logical reasoning, is incapable of transcending the phenomenal sphere. The world of noumena, being beyond time, space, and cause, is inaccessible to intellect. All different conceptions about God like *tashbih*, *tanzih*, *halul*, are defective; philosophers, Mu'tazilites, Kalamists, and externalists are in the wrong. The only course then is to pass beyond sense and reason, as Abraham passed beyond the worship of the stars, moon, and sun, which, in the words of Shabistari, represent "senses, imagination, and reason," or like Moses who was asked to throw down his staff which act he interprets as transcending the sensuous sources of knowledge.

Spiritual illumination alone will help in realising the true nature of Reality. But has this illumination any relation with intellect? To Shabistari, there is none at all. In order to reach illumination, he thinks, one must divest oneself of all kinds of relations and attachments. But to Iqbal both these things are necessary. To confine oneself to intellect is as defective as to rely solely on intuition; the two must be used as complementary sources. Intuition that is not based on and is not a continuation of intellectual efforts is totally fruitless. Discussing the relation of the two, Iqbal says, "Nor is there any reason to suppose that thought and intuition are essentially opposed to each other. *They spring up from the same root and complement each other.* The one grasps Reality piecemeal, the other grasps it in its wholeness.

12. According to Iqbal, the true ideal is to link politics with morality and religion. If political activity is divorced from moral considerations, the result will be anarchy as is noticeable in modern age. See Answer to Question 3, lines 39-48.

The one fixes its gaze on the eternal, the other on the temporal aspect of Reality. The one is present enjoyment of the whole of Reality; the other aims at transversing the whole by slowly specifying and closing up the various regions of the whole for exclusive observation. Both are in need of each other for mutual rejuvenation. Both seek vision of the same Reality which reveals itself to them in accordance with their function in life. In fact, intuition, as Bergson rightly says, is only a higher kind of intellect."¹³

About the second question, Shabistari holds that human reason can help us only so far as the works and attributes of God are concerned; it is useless for contemplation of the Pure Essence. "His signs are illumined through His Essence; therefore it is impossible to grasp intellectually His Essence through His signs." For this we will have to take the help of intuition. According to him, the world of Nature (*afaq*) is subservient to God's Will which no scientist can hope to discover, and the world of self (*anfus*) is equally unsusceptible to human thought and logic, and therefore we should cease to think of self. But, according to Iqbal, this is the most defective aspect of the mystic doctrine of intuition. Immersed in the spiritual intricacies of the "heart," the mystic forgets the demands of the external world. As Shabistari himself admits, the worlds of *anfus* and *afaq* equally reflect divine Light and the quest of man to understand Reality cannot be confined to one sphere only. Iqbal says, "According to the Quran . . . the universe has a serious end. Its shifting actualities force our being into fresh formations. The intellectual effort to overcome the obstruction offered by it, besides enriching and amplifying our life, sharpens our insight, and thus prepares us for a more masterful insertion into subtler aspects of human experience. It is our reflective contact with the temporal flux of things which trains us for an intellectual vision of the non-temporal. Reality lives in its own appearances; and such a being as man, who has to maintain his life in an obstructing environment, cannot afford to ignore the visible."¹⁴

13. *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 2-3. Italics mine.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

But which is to come first, intuition or intellect? Iqbal suggests that the world of the heart should first be controlled; for through this control man can hope to attain a vision of God. After this achievement, the conquest of the world of Nature would be quite easy. In other words, intuition should come first and intellectual efforts afterwards, or a man should move from within to without. This view is in agreement with the mystic stand, as, e.g., advocated by Shaikh Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi. He looked upon *majdhub-salik* as the fit person to become a spiritual guide, i.e. one who first receives *kashf* or illumination and then passes on to intellectual application of his vision. But Ghazali thought otherwise. According to him, a *salik-majdhub* or a scientist-mystic is better. He illustrates it by reference to the life of Junaid, the well-known mystic saint. Junaid relates that once his preceptor asked him : Where do you go after attending my assembly? He replied that he went to Harith Muhasibi's. The latter was a great lawyer of religious science (*faqih*) as well as a mystic. The preceptor nodded his approval. Then he added: May God enable you to become a mystic after you have attained knowledge and not the other way round! Commenting on this statement, Ghazali says that he who attains intuitive insight after he has gone through intellectual discipline is the right sort of person, while he who traverses the mystic path before undergoing that discipline is sure to be led astray.¹⁵ The history of mysticism amply bears out the truth of Ghazali's judgement. In the *Reconstruction*, however, Iqbal too supports this point of view of Ghazali. He says, "The cultures of Asia and, in fact, of the whole ancient world failed, because they approached Reality exclusively from within and moved from within outward. This procedure gave them theory without power, and on mere theory no durable civilization can be based."¹⁶

15. *Ihya'*, Vol. I, Chap. I, Part 2, pp. 30-31.

16. Pp. 14-15.

Question 2

WHAT is this ocean whose shore is knowledge?
What is that pearl which is found in its depth?

Answer

EVER-MOVING Life is a flowing ocean,
Consciousness is its shore.

What an ocean that is deep and surging—

A thousand mountains and deserts are on its bank.

5 Don't talk about its surging waves,

For each had overflowed its bank.

It left the ocean and imparted moisture to the
desert,

It gave to the eye the sense of quantity and quality.

Whatever thing comes into its presence,

10 Gets illumined through the grace of its conscious-
ness.

It is satisfied with its privacy and is not inclined
to association with others,

Yet all things are illumined by its light.

First it brightens it up,

Then it ensnares it in a mirror.

15 Its consciousness makes it familiar with the world,

The world made it aware of its potentiality.¹
 Intellect removes veil from its face,
 But speech reveals it much better.

Yet it is not confined to this mundane world—
 It is only one of its stages in the path of evolu-
 tion.

20

You look upon the world as existing *outside* you:
 These mountains and deserts, oceans and mines;
 This world of colour and smell is our nosegay;²
 It is independent and yet intimately related to
 us.

The ego bound them all by its one glance:
 The earth and the sky, the moon and the sun.
 Our heart has a secret gateway to it,
 For every existent depends for its existence upon
 our perception.

25

If nobody sees, it becomes contemptible;
 If anybody sees, it becomes mountains and oceans.
 The world has significance through our seeing it—
 Its tree grows by our growth.
 The problem of subject and object is a mystery;

30

1. When life, in its evolution, attains to the level of consciousness, it becomes aware of the material environment which, in its turn, gives depth and significance to the human ego. It is in the mutual action and reaction of the ego and the non-ego that the life of the individual develops. Cf. lines 187 ff. of *Asrar-i Khudi* which are in the spirit of Fichte, the German philosopher:

When the ego awoke to consciousness,
 It revealed the world of thought.
 A hundred worlds are hidden in its essence:
 Consciousness of the ego brings non-ego to light.
 It makes from itself the forms of others,
 In order to multiply the pleasures of strife.

2. The external world is a chaos of scattered and unrelated flowers; it is we who integrate it into a coherent cosmos.

The heart of every particle of matter is expressing
its supplication:

35 O observer, make me your object,
Make me existent by the grace of your sight.³

The perfection of the being of a thing lies in being
present,

In becoming an object for an observer;

Its defect, not to be before our eyes,

40 Not to be illumined by our awareness.

The world is nothing but our manifestation,

For without us there would be no world of light
and sound.⁴

You also should crave help by associating with
it,

Discipline your eyes by its twists and turns.

45 Rest assured that master-huntsmen

Have sought help in this matter even from
insects.⁵

With its help, keep a watchful eye on yourself;

You are like Gabriel the truthful; take wings.

Open the eye of intellect on this world of plurality,

3. The problem of perception is a mystery in philosophy. The controversy between Realism and Idealism revolves round it. Cf. introductory remarks in Iqbal's article "Self in the Light of Relativity" published as an appendix in B.A. Dar, *A Study in Iqbal's Philosophy*. See also Joad, *Guide to Modern Thought*.

4. What Iqbal means to deny is not the existence but the seeming externality of the objects of perception. See line 21. See also Ishrat Hasan Enver, *Metaphysics of Iqbal* (Lahore, 1955), p. 51, footnote. Iqbal wants to emphasise the important contribution our minds in the process of perception. The external world is what it is because of the stamp that our minds inscribe on it.

5. Reference is to the legend of Solomon and ants which are said to have helped the great prophet-king in one of his exploits. See the Qur'an, xxvii, 17-18.

So that you may enjoy the revelations of the One.⁶
 Take your share from the smell of the shirt,
 While sitting in Kan'an, get fragrance from Egypt
 and Yemen.⁷

Ego is the hunter, the sun and the moon are its prey;
 They are chained to the strings of his intellectual
 efforts.

Throw yourself on this world like fire!
 Make an assault on the visible and the invisible
 worlds alike.⁸

Explanatory Note

This question corresponds to Question 10 of Shabistari which

6. The external world, the non-ego, may be the construction of the ego, yet it serves to develop human personality by affording opportunities of expansion. Study of Nature, as the Qur'an emphasises again and again, leads to the realisation of the Creator. For Iqbal, the world of matter is not evil as mystics of the old thought. "It enables inner powers of life to unfold themselves."

7. Reference is to the legend of the Prophet Joseph who sent his shirt from Egypt to Kan'an for his father who is said to have been cured of his blindness through its fragrance. See the Qur'an, xii. 92. His father, Jacob, smelt the fragrance of this shirt while his sons were yet far away from their home town in Kan'an.

8. *Makan* and *la-makan*, literally world of space and the world beyond. Iqbal, like Bergson, thinks that our intellect is bound up with space and cannot transcend this limitation. Yet, in spite of this handicap, it has its utility: we can control this world of nature through intellect. But through intuition it is possible to transcend this space-bound universe. He identifies this intuitive insight with what the Qur'an calls *sultan* (power):

گفت اگر سلطان ترا آید بدست می توان افلاک را از هم شکست

"If you possess *sultan*, you can ascend through the skies." Cf. Iqbal's *Reconstruction* (p. 131): "It is the intellectual capture of and power over the concrete that makes it possible for the intellect of man to pass beyond the concrete. As the Quran says: 'O company of djin and men, if you can overpass the bounds of the Heaven and the Earth, then overpass them. But by power alone shall ye overpass them.' (55 : 33)"

deals with the problem of knowledge.

The ocean, according to Shabistari, is Being, and speech or knowledge is its shore. But knowledge about the material world is like shell while knowledge of faith, i.e. of the states of the heart, is like the pearl which should be the real goal of the seeker. Any attention to the sciences of the world will serve to distract the human soul from its real destiny. For the purification of human life Shabistari enumerates all the moral qualities which Plato and Aristotle recommended in their ethics. When man attains moral purity, he receives grace from the Heavenly Spirit from above.

According to Iqbal, the ocean is life, and its shore, consciousness. When, in the course of evolution, life develops consciousness, it becomes, at the same time, aware of the hindrances that material environment offers in the way of its expansion. Discussing this problem, he says, "Consciousness may be imagined as a deflection from life. Its function is to provide a luminous point in order to enlighten the forward rush of life [lines 9-10]. It is a case of tension, a state of self-concentration, by means of which life manages to shut out all memories and associations which have no bearing on a present action. It has no well-defined fringes; it shrinks and expands as the occasion demands.... Thus consciousness is a variety of the purely spiritual principle of life which is not a substance, but an organizing principle, a specific mode of behaviour essentially different to the behaviour of an externally worked machine. Since, however, we cannot conceive of a purely spiritual energy, except in association with a definite combination of sensible elements through which it reveals itself, we are apt to take this combination as the ultimate ground of spiritual energy."⁹

As such, consciousness is intimately related to its material environment for its further progress of going beyond the limits of space, time, and causality. To Iqbal, this world of Nature somehow or other looks external, though if we analyse our perceptual process we do not find any satisfactory answer to the question why it should look "outside" us.¹⁰ It owes much to our contribution. It is

9. *Reconstruction* . . . , pp. 40-41.

10. Cf. Iqbal, "Self in the Light of Relativity"; also *Reconstruction* . . . , pp. 32-33. See lines 33-36.

our consciousness that reduces the chaos of sensations into a cosmos of ordered Nature. The part that our consciousness plays in determining the character of the universe is emphasised by the theory of relativity. According to it, "the object observed is variable; it is relative to the observer its; mass, shape, and size change as the observer's position and speed change."¹¹ This idea, as expressed in poetic form in lines 21-42 of the text, has led certain critics to think that Iqbal denies the objectivity of Nature. As a matter of fact, what it purports to do is not to destroy its objectivity but to refute the theory of matter or substance put forth by nineteenth-century physics. "Nature is not a static fact situated in an a-dynamic void, but a structure of events possessing the character of a continuous creative flow which thought cuts up into isolated immobilities out of whose mutual relations arise concepts of space and time."¹² But this act of intellect in cutting this creative flow into static concepts of space and time has its own utility. Without it our spiritual life cannot hope to attain its goal. From the observable aspect of Reality we can reach the Ultimate Ego, from the Many we can go to One (lines 45-46). Without the intellectual background, the spiritual experience will lack proper balance and significance. "The scientific observation of Nature keeps us in close contact with the behaviour of Reality, and thus sharpens our inner perception for a deeper vision of it."¹³ And when a man succeeds in getting vision, both the worlds, visible and invisible (*makan* and *la-makan*), are under his heels.

11. *Reconstruction* . . . , p. 37.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 91.

Question 3

WHAT is the union of the contingent and the necessary?
What are "near" and "far," "more" and "less"?

Answer

THE world of how and why has three dimensions;
Intellect controls its quantitative aspect.

This is the world of Tusi and Euclid.¹

The fit object of earth-measuring intellect.²

Its time and space are relative,

And so are its earth and sky.

Draw your bow and find the target,

Learn from me the secret of ascension.

Do not seek the Absolute in this mundane world:

For the Absolute is nothing but the Light of the

Heavens.³

1. Khwajah Nasir al-Din Tusi (597-672 A.H.), a great mathematician, astronomer, and thinker, who was attached to the court of Hulagu Khan. Euclid was a famous Greek mathematician.

2. See note 8 of Answer to Question 2.

3. Reference is to the Qur'an (xxiv. 35): "God is the light of the Heaven and of the earth." In the light of the teaching of modern physics, Iqbal is able to repudiate pantheistic implications of this verse. Thus he says (*Reconstruction . . .*, p. 64) that "in the world of change, light is the nearest approach to the Absolute. The metaphor of light as applied to God, therefore, must, in view of modern knowledge, be taken to suggest the Absoluteness of God and not His Omnipresence."

Reality is beyond time and space,
Don't say any more that the universe is without a
limit.

Its limit is internal, not external;

There are no distinctions of low and high, more or
less, in its internal aspect.

Its internal aspect is devoid of high and low,
But its external aspect is liable to extension.⁴

Infinity is not amenable to our intellect,

"One" in its hand becomes a thousand.

As it is lame, it likes rest;

It does not see the kernel; it therefore looks towards
the shell.

As we divided Reality into several spheres,

We made a distinction of change and rest.

In non-spatial sphere intellect introduced spatial
categories,

4. Cf. *Reconstruction* . . . , p. 64: "Modern science regards Nature not as something static, situate in an infinite void, but a structure of inter-related events out of whose mutual relations arise the concepts of space and time. And this is only another way of saying that space and time are interpretations which thought puts upon the creative activity of the Ultimate Ego. Space and time are possibilities of the Ego, only partially realized in the shape of our mathematical space and time. Beyond Him and apart from His creative activity, there is neither time nor space to close Him off in reference to other egos."

The universe has limits, but these limits are not to be conceived in terms of perceptual space and time. Commenting upon the Qur'anic verse iv. 33 (quoted in note 8 of Answer to Question 2), Iqbal says, "The thought of a limit to perceptual space and time staggers the mind . . . in order to overpass its bounds the mind must overcome serial time and pure vacuity of perceptual space. 'And verily towards thy God is the limit,' says the Quran . . . it definitely suggests that the ultimate limit is to be sought not in the direction of stars, but in an infinite cosmic life and spirituality" (*Reconstruction* . . . , pp. 131-32). See Iqbal's article "Self in the Light of Relativity."

Like a belt⁵ it girdled time round its waist.
 We did not look for time within the depth of our
 25 hearts,
 And so we created months and years, nights and
 days.⁶

Your months and years are of no value:
 Just ponder over the Qur'anic verse, "How long did
 you remain?"⁷

Reach within yourself and retire from this noisy
 world,
 30 Throw yourself into the inner recesses of your
 heart.

To talk of body and soul as two separate entities is
 wrong;

To see them as two is sinful.

The whole secret of the universe lies in the soul,
 Body is one of its modes of expression.

The bride of Reality adorned itself by the *henna* of
 35 form,

It assumed different shapes for its manifestation.

Reality weaves veils for its face,

For it finds delight in display.

Since the West viewed body and soul as separate,

5. *Zunnar*, literally a cord or belt worn round the waist by Christians, Jews, or Persian Magi.

6. Iqbal is referring to the fact that Reality is changing and not static, is a whole and not made up of parts, and that mathematical time is not applicable to it.

7. Reference is to the Qur'anic verse xviii. 19. It refers to the People of the Cave who went to sleep in a cave and there lay asleep for several years. When they awoke, they thought to have slept only for a day or so. Iqbal only wants to emphasise the difference between mathematical time and real time. See *Reconstruction . . .*, pp. 48-49, for an illustration of this distinction.

It also regarded State and Religion as two. 40
 The churchman only tells his beads,
 For he has no work of the State to perform:
 See deceit and artifice in statecraft:
 It is a body without a soul, or a soul without a body.
 Make intellect a companion of your heart; 45
 Behold, for instance, the Turkish nation.

By imitation of the West, the Turks lost
 their individuality;
 They did not see any link between State and
 Religion.⁸

We looked at the One as compound of so many parts
 That we created numerals to count it. 50
 Do you think that this ancient world is a handful
 of earth?
 It is a fleeting moment of God's activity.⁹
 The scientists tend to adorn a dead body,
 They neither possess the Hand of Moses¹⁰ nor the
 Breath of Jesus.¹¹

8. See *Reconstruction . . .*, pp. 153ff.

9. "The ultimate Self, in the words of the Quran, 'can afford to dispense with all the worlds.' To Him the not-self does not present itself as a confronting 'other.' . . . What we call Nature or the not-self is only a fleeting moment in the life of God. His 'I-amness' is independent, elemental, absolute. . . . Now a self is unthinkable without a character, i.e., a uniform mode of behaviour. Nature, as we have seen, is not a mass of pure materiality occupying a void. It is a structure of events, a systematic mode of behaviour, and as such organic to the ultimate Self. Nature is to the Divine Self as character is to the human self. In the picturesque phrase of the Quran, it is the habit of Allah" (*Reconstruction . . .*, p. 56).

10. Reference is to the miracle attributed to Moses. Whenever he took his hand out of his armpit, it shone like a white light. See the Qur'an, vii. 108.

11. Reference is to the miracle attributed to Jesus of bringing the dead to life by his breath. See the Qur'an, iii. 49.

I have seen nothing of value in this type of science,
 I have been craving for a wisdom of another sort.
 I believe that the world is undergoing a revolution,
 Its inside is alive and in convulsions.

Pass beyond your numerals,
 Look for a while within your self and leave.
 In a universe where a part is greater than the
 whole,¹²

The calculations of Razi and Tusi are irrelevant.¹³
 For a while familiarise yourself with Aristotle,
 For another while sit in the company of Bacon.¹⁴
 But then you must pass beyond their stand,
 Don't get lost in this stage, journey on.

With the aid of that intellect that deals with
 quantities

Probe the depths of mines and oceans,
 Master the world of how and why,
 Catch the moon and pleiads from the sky.
 But then learn wisdom of another sort,
 Free yourself from the snare of night and day.

Your real place is beyond this mundane world,
 Aspire for a right that is without a left.

Explanatory Note

Question 3 of Iqbal corresponds to Question 9 of Shabistari which discusses the possibility of union of the contingent and the

12. See Answer to Question 6.

13. Fakhr al-Din Razi (1149-1209 A.C.), the famous commentator of the Qur'an and philosopher. The sphere of the heart is not amenable to human intellect.

14. Aristotle and Bacon represent deductive and inductive types of science.

Necessary, of man and God, and the significance of "near" and "far" in the context of this union.

According to Shabistari, union (as discussed by him in Question 8) means annihilation of the sense of selfhood and otherness. He who has completely thrown away the dust of contingency from himself is "near" the Absolute and he who is not aware of his non-being is "far." As such, man is totally determined; he has no will or action of his own. The idea of free-will or free causality is only an illusion.

Iqbal's conception of union of the contingent with the Necessary is quite different from Shabistari's. According to Iqbal, union means the capacity of man to achieve divine point of view. What is this and how can we achieve it?

The world of Nature confronts us as something "other," existing *per se*, which the mind knows but does not make. But to the Infinite Mind, the distinction of self and not-self does not exist. "The ultimate Self, in the words of the Quran, 'can afford to dispense with all the world.' To Him the not-self does not present itself as a confronting 'other,' or else it would have to be, like our finite self, in spatial relation with the confronting 'other.' What we call Nature or the not-self is only a fleeting moment in the life of God. His 'I-amness' is independent, elemental, absolute."¹⁵ Again, our conception of Nature as subject to space and time is only an interpretation which our intellect puts on the continuous creative activity of God. Our mathematical space and time, which is the subject-matter of science, is only a partial manifestation of the behaviour of the Ultimate Ego who is beyond these limitations. "At a particular moment in its forward movement it [i.e. Nature] is finite; but since the self to which it is organic is creative, it is liable to increase, and is consequently boundless in the sense that no limit to its extension is final. Its boundlessness is potential, not actual [lines 11-16]. Nature, then, must be understood as a living, ever-growing organism whose growth has no final external limits. Its only limit is internal, i.e., the immanent self which creates and sustains the whole. As the Quran says, 'And verily unto thy Lord

is the limit' (53 : 14)."¹⁶

How can we attain this divine point of view? According to Iqbal, there are three ways of attaining it. The first is the mystic way which consists in directing our total energy to plumbing the depth of the heart to the exclusion of other interests. It enables an individual to gain a vision of the Absolute but, unfortunately, there is a danger of "the possible relaxation of his activity caused by his enjoyment of and absorption in the experiences that precede the final experience."¹⁷ This lack of activity on the part of the mystic has had dangerous consequences in the development of Muslim society as influenced by mystic thought. "The ultimate aim of the ego is not to *see* something but to *be* something" and it is due to the unwillingness on the part of the mystic to go beyond mere seeing that Iqbal rejects this method of attaining the divine point of view of appropriating the universe. The mystic rivets his eyes on the Real and, although he theoretically accepts that the Appearance is a manifestation of the Absolute, is totally neglectful of the observable aspect of Reality and thus reduces his gain in one field to the total loss of the over-all development of human personality.

The other way is intellectual, the method adopted by the modern scientific man. It consists in understanding the world as a rigid system of cause and effect and thus controls it for the purpose of human betterment. But as it is now too evident to need any exposition, this method has failed to achieve its end. Instead of contributing to the welfare of mankind, it has tended to the destruction of the human race.

The last way is what Iqbal calls vital, which he explains as "the absolute acceptance of the inevitable necessity of life, regarded as a whole which in evolving its inner richness creates serial time. This vital way of appropriating the universe is what the Quran describes as 'Iman.' Iman is not merely a passive belief in one or more propositions of a certain kind; it is living assurance begotten of a rare experience. Strong personalities alone are capable of rising to this experience. . . ."¹⁸ This experience results

16. Ibid., pp. 56-57.

17. Ibid., pp. 197-98.

18. Ibid., p. 109.

from rising from the efficient to the appreciative level of self which is achieved by what Iqbal calls Love. Here man feels himself at the height of his creative power and freedom, above the limitations of time and space; "now" and "then," "to-morrow" and "yesterday," "here" and "there," "near" and "far" lose their significance for him; his time becomes coterminus with eternity. But this retirement to the inner core of personality, this detachment, must be the culmination as well as the starting-point of our active participation in the affairs of the world, the aspect of attachment. As Bergson says, attachment and detachment are the twin poles of our social life; without either of them our life would degenerate into either destructive lust for power or unhealthy monasticism.

It is this comprehensive view of life which led Iqbal to assert that to look upon body and mind as two entities absolutely different from each other, as Descartes advocated, is a totally false view of Reality. Just as consciousness is a spiritual principle which in its development comes into contact with material environment, so mind or soul is a spiritual principle which uses body as a mode of its manifestation. In *Javid Namah*, Iqbal says, "What is soul? It is a spiritual principle characterised by love and ecstasy, which enables an individual to overstep the bounds of sky and earth. What is body? It is to familiarise the individual with the limitations of this mundane world. The distinction of 'near' and 'far' is due to our attachment to body. What is ascension? It is to change this consciousness of 'far' and 'near' by resort to love and ecstasy."¹⁹ In the *Reconstruction...*, he says that "the 'Nafs' [soul] is the pure act; the body is only the act become visible and hence measurable."²⁰ As a consequence of this view, Iqbal advocates the union of religion and State in political matters. According to him, the true development of society must suffer miserably if the politics of a nation is divorced from moral and religious ideology as was done in the West and in Turkey.

Question 4

How did the eternal and temporal separate,
That one became the world, and the other God?
If the knower and known are the One pure essence,
What are the aspirations of this handful of earth?

Answer

THE life of the ego is to bring non-ego into existence,
The separation of the knower and known is good.
Our ideas of eternal and temporal are due to our
way of reckoning,

Our reckoning is the result of the spell of mathe-
matical time.

We constantly talk of yesterday and to-morrow,
We deal with "is," "was," and "might be."

To sever ourselves from Him is our nature,
And also to be restless and not to reach the goal.
Neither do we get worth in separation from Him,
Nor does He feel peace without union with us;
Neither He without us, nor we without Him! How
strange!

Our separation is separation-in-union.

Separation gives to this dust (i.e. man) an insight,
It gives the weight of a mountain to a straw.

Separation is a token of love ; 15
 It agrees with the nature of lovers.
 If we are alive, it is due to this affliction (of
 separation),
 And if we are immortal, it is due to it.
 What is "I" and "He" ? It is a divine mystery !
 "I" and "He" are a witness to our immortality.¹ 20
 The light of the Essence is everywhere, hidden and
 apparent ;
 To live in company is real life.
 Love does not acquire insight without company,
 And without company, it does not become
 self-conscious.
 In our assembly, there are divine manifestations,
 behold ! 25
 The world is non-existent and He is existent,² behold.
 Doors and walls, cities, towns and streets are not
 there,
 For here there is nothing existent except we and He.
 Sometimes He makes Himself a stranger to us,
 Sometimes He plays upon us as upon a musical
 instrument. 30
 Sometimes we fashion His idol out of stone,
 Sometimes we prostrate before Him without having
 seen Him.
 Sometimes we tear every veil of Nature,
 And boldly see His beautiful face.

1. It is a protest against pantheistic creed of *fana* or absolute union of everything in the All, i.e. the extinction of a drop in the ocean. See note 8 of the Introduction.

2. Cf. Ibn al-'Arabi's saying, "God is a percept ; the world is a concept" (*Reconstruction . . .*, p. 183).

35 What fancy has this handful of dust?
It is due to this fancy that his inner self is
illuminated.

What a nice fancy that he bewails in separation,
And yet he grows and develops through it.
This separation developed in him such a spiritual
insight,

40 That he turned his dusk into a dawn.
He made the ego subject to affliction:
Thus turned the ancient grief into an ever-living
joy.

He got strings of pearls from the tears of his eyes,
From the tree of bewailing he got sweet fruit.

45 To press the ego tightly to the bosom
Is to turn death into everlasting life.

What is Love? It is to tie all the different stages
in a knot.

What is Love? It is to pass beyond all goals.
Love does not know of any termination,
50 Its dawn has no dusk.

There are no bends in its way as in that of
intellect,

In its lustre of a moment, there is a world.

Thousands of worlds lie along our path,

How can our endeavours reach their finale?

55 O traveller! live for ever and die for ever,

Take hold of the world that comes before you.

It is not the goal of our journey to merge ourselves
in His ocean.

If you catch hold of Him, it is not *jana*
(extinction).

It is impossible for an ego to be absorbed in another ego,
For the ego to be itself is its perfection.³

60

Explanatory Note

Question 4 of Iqbal is the same as Questions 6 and 12 together of Shabistari. If Absolute alone is, why is there the distinction of contingent and Necessary Being? What is the significance of man's aspiration?

According to the pantheistic view of Shabistari, distinction of contingent and necessary is meaningless; for, in the last resort, they are not separate at all. The eternal is real and what we call temporal is eternal plus attribution of not-being attached to it—the Being (*wujud*) in the so-called plurality is One. The goal of *fana*, according to pantheists, is not the attainment by the temporal of union with the eternal. There is no question of *becoming* one with Him, for everything is one from all eternity. *Fana* is only to become consciously aware of this eternally existing unity of Being. And yet man, the acme of creation, who is made to reflect in his innermost heart the beauty of the One, aspires to know and realise in this temporal life the sacred Covenant (Qur'an, vii. 171) undertaken by the progeny of Adam before their birth and so, according to Shabistari, the highest ideal is to seek in the self all that one wishes to know.

To Iqbal, who is an advocate of pluralistic theism, separation of the temporal and eternal is not only an actual fact but is a real blessing and necessity. Without this distinction neither the One nor the Many would have significance and value in the economy of life. Man as a permanent element in this cosmos, no doubt, derives his existence and importance from the divine Light which is manifest everywhere, but his career as an individual

3. Cf. *Reconstruction* . . . , p. 118, where Iqbal says that the perfect ego "is able to retain full self-possession, even in the case of a direct contact with the all-embracing Ego."

demands that he must have a distinct individuality of his own, separate from the Absolute. Existentially, there is not unity but duality between man and God which the pantheists wrongly deny, though ideally God is the ideal towards which all creation including man must look for its development.

Discussing this point of view in one of his articles ("Self in the Light of Relativity") Iqbal says that Pringle-Pattison deplored that in the English language there is only one word—creation—to denote the relation of God to the universe of space and time on the one hand and to the human ego on the other. But in Arabic there are two different words to distinguish this dual relation. As related to this spatio-temporal order, the Qur'an uses the word *khalq*, creation, while as related to human ego, we have the word *amr*, direction. From this Iqbal argues that Nature must be viewed as a passing phase of God's consciousness, a fleeting moment of His activity. But not so the human ego. It "must be taken as something individual and specific, with all the variations in the range, balance, and effectiveness of its unity."⁴ "The finite ego must be *distinct*, though not *isolated*, from the Infinite. . . . I am distinct from and yet intimately related to that on which I depend for my life and sustenance."⁶

The final fate of man, therefore, is not the obliteration of this distinctness of the human ego from the Infinite Ego but a gradual growth in self-possession, in uniqueness, and intensity of his activity as an ego. "The climax of this development is reached when the ego is able to retain self-possession, even in the case of a direct contact with the all-embracing Ego."⁶

4. *Reconstruction* . . . , p. 103.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

6. *Ibid.*

Question 5

WHAT am I? Tell me what "I" means.
What is the meaning of "travel into yourself"?

Answer

Ego is the amulet for the protection of the
universe ;
The first ray of its essence is Life.
Life awakens from its sweet dream,
Its inside, which is one, becomes many.
Neither it develops without our expansion, 5
Nor do we expand without its development.
Its inner core is a shoreless sea,
The heart of every drop is a tumultuous wave.
It has no inclination to rest,
Its manifestation is nothing but individuals.¹ 10
Life is fire and egos are like its flames ;
Like stars they are (both) stationary and moving.
Without going outside, it looks towards others ;

1. According to the pluralistic philosophy of Iqbal, the basic manifestations of life are individuals of different sorts and grades. As he says in his letter to Nicholson reproduced in the Introduction to the English translation of *Asrar-i Khudi* (p. xii), "All life is individual ; there is no such thing as universal life. God Himself is an individual. He is the most unique individual."

Though in company, is yet in privacy.
 Just see its self-meditation,
 It develops out of the trodden earth.
 Hidden from the eyes, it is in tumult,
 It is constantly in search of adornment.
 It is in perpetual activity through its internal
 ardour,
 As if it is at war with itself.
 The world gets order through this strife of the ego :
 A handful of dust becomes translucent through
 strife.
 From its ray, nothing comes into being save egos,
 From its sea, nothing appears save pearls.
 The earthly garb is a veil for *Khudi*,
 Its appearance is like the rising of the sun.
 In the innermost heart of ours is its sun,
 Our dust is illumined through its potency.
 You ask to be informed about "I," and
 What is meant by "travel into yourself."
 I informed you about the relation of body and soul,
 Travel into yourself and see what "I" is.
 To travel into self?—It is to be born without
 father and mother,²
 To catch Pleiads from the edge of the roof ;
 To hold eternity with a single stroke of anguish,
 To see without the rays of the sun ;
 To obliterate every sign of hope and fear,
 To sunder the river like Moses ;³
 To break this spell of sea and land,

2. I e. second birth. The same problem of spiritual regeneration is discussed more fully in *Javid Namah*, pp. 15-16.

3. See note 3 of Answer to Question 1.

To split the moon with a finger.⁴

40

So to return from this experience of the spaceless world,

That it is within his heart, and the world in his hand.⁵

But it is difficult to unravel this secret :

Here "seeing" is valuable and "describing" worthless.

What can I say about "I" and its brilliance?—

45

It is manifest from the Qur'anic text, "We proposed."⁶

The heavens are in terror of its glory,

Time and space are in its grip.

It sought refuge in the heart of man,

And has fallen to the lot of this handful of dust.

50

It is distinct from the other and yet related to it,⁷

Is lost within itself and yet conjoined with the other.

What kind of aspiration this handful of dust has

4. It refers to the well-known miracle of the Prophet Muhammad. *

5. "Travelling into self," the second birth, is what the mystics usually call unitary experience, experience of the light of the Ultimate Ego. But while the mystic does not wish to forego this experience and remains submerged in its delights, the prophet returns. "He returns to insert himself into the sweep of time with a view to control[ling] the forces of history, and thereby to create a fresh world of ideals" (*Reconstruction . . .*, p. 124). Such a type of prophetic experience is noticeable in the life of Ghazali and Rumi.

6. Reference is to the following verse, "'Verily We proposed to the Heavens and to the earth and to the mountains to receive the trust (of personality), but they refused the burden and they feared to receive it. Man alone undertook to bear it, but hath proved unjust, senseless' (33 : 72)" (*Reconstruction . . .*, p. 11).

7. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 118: "The finite ego must be *distinct*, though not *isolated*, from the Infinite."

That its flight is beyond the limitations of time
and space.

It is in prison⁸ and yet free! What is this?

It is the lasso, the prey, and the hunter! What is
this?

There is a lamp within your heart;

What is this light which is in your mirror?

Don't be negligent, you are its trustee,

What folly that you do not look within your self!

Explanatory Note

Question 5 of Iqbal, corresponding to Question 3 of Shabistari, deals with the nature of "I" and the real meanings of knowing the self or what is described here as "journey into the self."

According to Shabistari, the "self" is a mere accident or adjective of the Necessary Being and possesses no independent status, nor does it signify the human soul. It is only particularisation of the Absolute, or, to use the metaphorical language employed by him, is a veil (*barzakh*) between the contingent and the Necessary Being. Being the seed of plurality, it should be done away with to attain Unity. As long as the sense of I-ness is present, there is no possibility of the veil being removed, but as soon as one delves deep into the secrets of selfhood and realises its phenomenal character, one becomes free from the bondage and attains *fana*.

To Iqbal, this sense of I-ness or what he calls *khudi* or ego is the centralised force of life and it is due to this that the individual becomes a self-contained exclusive centre. Its life can be maintained only if it be kept in a continuous state of tension to which are due all the manifold activities of life (lines 17-20). If this state of tension is not maintained, relaxation will ensue which will mean virtual death of the individual. According to Iqbal, the

8. Refers to human body.

"trust" mentioned in the Qur'an (xxxiii. 72) is the trust of personality and egoism which neither the heavens nor the earth and mountains were willing to carry.

The ego being enclosed in the body of clay is subject to the limitations of space and time and cause and so is hampered in the full expression of its potentialities. But there is a way out of this difficulty and this way Iqbal expresses as "travelling into self," of looking into deeper self that lies beyond the phenomenal surface. This is what in an earlier discussion has been called the vital way of appropriating the universe or to be born again and to pass beyond the spatial time that weaves the chains of days and nights around the neck of the ego. As soon as the ego is able to transcend this limit, it becomes coterminus with eternity and then its return to the phenomenal or efficient level is fraught with fruitful possibilities. It is now really free and creative. Like the mystics, Iqbal preaches "knowing the (real) self" but he does not look upon it as the end of all efforts. "Knowing the self" is only a process complementary to the intellectual efforts and as soon as it is achieved, he, unlike the mystic, strongly advocates the return to the phenomenal self once again.

Question 6

WHAT is that part which is greater than its whole?
What is the way to find that part ?

Answer

EGO is greater than what we imagine it to be ;
Ego is greater than the whole which you see.
It falls from the heaven again and again to rise,
It falls into the sea of the world to rise.
5 Who else in the world is self-conscious ?
Who else can fly without wings ?
It lies in darkness and yet has a light in its bosom,
Outside the paradise and yet has a houri in
embrace !
10 With the charming wisdom that it possesses,
It brings out pearls from the depth of life.
The impulse of life is eternal,
But looked at from outside, it is bound by time.
Upon its destiny depends the position of this
universe,
Its manifestation and preservation of it.
15 What do you ask about its nature ?—
Destiny is not something separate from its nature.
What should I say about its character ?

Outwardly it is determined, inwardly it is free.
Such is the saying of the Lord of Badr,
That faith lies between determinism and
indeterminism.¹

20

You call every creature to be determined,
To be confined to the chains of "near" and "far."
But the soul is from the breath of the Creator,
Which lives in privacy with all its manifestations.
Determinism with regard to it is out of question,
For soul without freedom is not a soul.²

25

It lay in ambush on this world of quantitative
measurements.

From determinism it passed over to freedom.

When it (ego) removes from itself the dust of
determinism,

It drives its world like a camel.

30

The sky does not revolve without its permission,
Nor do stars shine without its grace.

One day it reveals its hidden nature,
And sees its essence with its own eyes.

Rows of heavenly *choir* stand on either side of the
road,

35

Waiting for a glimpse of its countenance.

The angel gets wine from its vine,
It gets significance from its earth.

1. Lord of Badr refers to Prophet Muhammad. The Battle of Badr was the first successful war waged by Muslims against the unbelievers. The saying is a well-known tradition.

2. It refers to the doctrine held by Iqbal and Bergson that determinism is due to body and intellect while with regard to soul, man is free. As long as man remains at the level of what Iqbal calls efficient self, he is subject to mechanical causation, but as soon as the appreciative self comes into play, he becomes fully free. See *Reconstruction . . .*, pp. 47, 48, 109.

You ask about the way of its seeking ;
 40 Come down to the state of lamentation.³
 Change your days and nights for eternity,
 Change from intellect to the morning lamentation
 (intuition).
 Intellect has its source in senses,
 Lamentation gets light from love.
 45 Intellect grasps the part, lamentation the whole,
 Intellect dies but lamentation is immortal.
 Intellect has no categories to comprehend eternity,
 It counts moments as the hands of the watch.
 It contrives days and nights and mornings ;
 It cannot catch the flames ; therefore it takes only
 50 sparks.

The lamentation of the lovers is the ultimate goal,

In one moment of it lies hidden a world.

When the ego manifests its potentialities,
 It removes its inner knots and veil.

55 You do not have that light by which it sees,
 You look upon it as momentary and mortal.
*Why fear that death which comes from without ?
 For when the "I" ripens into a self it has no danger
 of dissolution.*

There is a more subtle inner death

60 *Which makes me tremble !*

*This death is falling down from love's frenzy,
 Saving one's spark and not giving it away freely to
 the heaps of chaff ;⁴*

3. See note 8 of the Introduction and Answer to Question 3.

4. *Khashak* (خاشاک) = small bits of wood, chips, straw, chaff.

*Cutting one's shroud with one's own hands ;
 Seeing one's death with one's own eyes ;
 This death lies in ambush for thee !
 Fear it, for that is really our death.⁵*

It digs your grave in your body,
 Its *Munkar* and *Nakir* are with it.⁶

Explanatory Note

Question 6 corresponds to Question II of Shabistari. It deals with the problem of "part" that is greater than the "whole" and the way of finding that part.

To Shabistari, the "part" is the Absolute, while the "whole" is the phenomenal existence which is Absolute Being's particularisation. Everything phenomenal is transitory and the Absolute Being alone is the object worthy of our search. But to Iqbal the "part" is the ego and far more important than any "whole" one can think of. Apparently, it is enclosed in body and, therefore, subject to spatial time but in reality it has the potentiality of transcending these limits and becoming free. As confined in body, the ego is determined and subject to mechanical laws which operate in the physical sphere but is capable of rising beyond these limits, and travelling into its inner depth, it is free and creative. Thus Iqbal fully endorses the prophetic tradition according to which faith lies between freedom and determinism. The free and creative aspect of the ego enables him to control the forces of visible and invisible worlds alike and therefore the aim of every moral system should be to help an individual attain this super-temporal and super-spatial level for as long and as frequently as possible. And the only requisite, according to Iqbal, is

5. Translation of lines 57-66 was done by Iqbal himself in his article "McTaggart's Philosophy."

6. *Munkar* and *Nakir*, two angels, who, according to tradition, visit the dead in the graves and question them to test their faith.

to pass from intellect to intuition or what in this context he calls "lamentation," for intellect is not fit to understand or grasp the significance of eternity. When the ego attains this high status of freedom and creativity, even death loses its pangs. Death may be extinction for an ego who remains at the phenomenal level, but for others who have steeled themselves against dissolution by creative efforts, death means nothing but a passage from space-time cosmos to a world where eternity rules. Even death will not be able to break the unity of the strong ego.

Question 7

OF what sort is this traveller, who is the wayfarer?
Of whom shall I say that he is the Perfect Man?

Answer

IF you direct your eyes towards your heart,
You will find your destination within your bosom.
To travel while at rest is :
To travel from one's self to one's self.
None knows here where we are, 5
That we look so insignificant in the eyes of moon
and stars.
Don't seek the end of the journey, for you have no
end;
As soon as you reach the end, you lose your soul.
Do not look upon us as ripe, for we are raw,
At every destination we are perfect and imperfect. 10
Not to reach the end is life ;
Immortal life for us lies in constant travelling.
The whole world from the centre of the earth¹ to
the moon is within our reach,
Time and space are like dust in our path.

1. *Mahi* (ماهی) = literally fish that is supposed to lie at the bottom of the earth and on which this terrestrial globe is said to be resting.

Our selves are our centres and pine for manifesta-
tion,

For we are waves and rise from the bottom of
Being.

Lie in constant ambush against the self,

Fly from doubt to faith and certainty.

The fire and ardour of love are not subject to
extinction;

Faith and "sight" have no end.

The perfection of life consists in seeing the
Essence,

The way of achieving it is to free oneself from the
limits of time and space.

You should enjoy privacy with the Divine Person
in such a way,

That He sees you and you see Him.²

Become illumined by the light of "what you see."³

Do not wink, otherwise you will be no more.

In His presence, be strong and self-possessed,

Don't merge yourself in the ocean of His Light.

Bestow that perturbation to the mote,

That it may shine in the vicinity of the sun.

So burn amid the splendour of the Beloved

That you may illumine yourself in public and Him
in privacy.

He who "saw" is the leader of the world,

2. See note 3 of the Answer to Question 4. "And the climax of this development is reached when the ego is able to retain full self-possession, even in the case of a direct contact with the all-embracing Ego. As the Quran says of the Prophet's vision of the Ultimate Ego: 'His eye turned not aside, nor did it wander' (53 : 17). This is the ideal of perfect manhood in Islam" (*Reconstruction . . .*, p. 118).

3. Reference is to the Qur'anic verse (vii. 143).

We and you are imperfect ; he alone is perfect.
 If you do not find him, rise in search of him; 35
 If you find him, attach yourself to him.
 Do not allow yourself to be guided by the *faqih*,
shaikh, and *mulla*,⁴
 Like fish, do not walk about careless of the hook.
 He is a man of the path in matters of State and
 religion;
 We are blind and he is a man of insight. 40
 Like the sun of the morning,
 Wisdom shines from every root of his hair.
 The West has set up the rule of democracy,
 It has untied the rope from the neck of a fiend.
 It does not possess sound without plectrum and
 musical instruments, 4
 Without a flying machine it does not possess the
 power of flying.
 A desolate field is better than its garden,
 A desert is better than its city.
 Like a marauding caravan it is active,
 Its people are ever busy in satisfying their hunger.⁵
 Its soul became dormant, and its body awoke;
 Art, science, and religion all became contemptible.
 Intellect is nothing but fostering of unbelief,
 The art of the West is nothing but man-killing.
 A group lies in ambush against another group,
 Such a state of affairs is sure to lead to disaster.
 Convey my message to the West

4. *Shaikh*, a mystic saint ; *faqih*, a learned theologian ; *mulla*, a theologian of shallow knowledge.

5. It refers to the "gold hunger" of the modern Western society. See *Reconstruction . . .*, p. 187.

That the ideal of democracy is a sword out of its sheath :

What a sword that it kills men
And does not make a distinction between a believer
and an unbeliever !

If it does not remain in the sheath for a little
more time,

It will kill itself as well as the world.

Explanatory Note

This Question corresponds to Question 4 of Shabistari and attempts to describe the attributes of a Perfect Man.

According to Shabistari, perfection as represented in saints means passing away from the state of phenomenal existence and realising oneness with the Absolute. But a true Perfect Man is one who, after realising this unity, comes down from this state of *fana*. In the position of a saint, he may and often does ignore the formalities of religious laws, but when he goes beyond this stage and attains perfection, religious law (though a husk) becomes as important for him as the mystic path (which is the kernel).

Perfection, according to Iqbal, lies in passing beyond all experiences of ephemeral character till what is absolutely objective is reached. "This final experience is the revelation of a new life-process—original, essential, spontaneous. The eternal secret of the ego is that the moment he reaches this final revelation he recognizes it as the ultimate root of his being without the slightest hesitation."⁶ In his letter to Nicholson reproduced in the Introduction to English translation of *Asrar-i Khudi*, Iqbal views God as the most unique Individual and the progress of man is measured by his nearness to this ideal. "The Prophet said, 'Create in yourself the attributes of God.' Thus man becomes unique by becoming more and more like the most unique

6. *Reconstruction . . .*, p. 197.

Individual The greater his distance from God, the less his individuality. He who comes nearest to God is the completest person. Not that he is finally absorbed in God. On the contrary, he absorbs God into himself" (pp. xiii-xiv). In *Javid Namah* (p. 14) and in *Gulshan-i Raz-i Jadid*, he argues that the distinction lies in appropriating attributes and essence of God. He who assimilates attributes (*akhlāq*) of God is no doubt a higher person but a truly perfect man is he who goes beyond this stage and assimilates the very Essence (*dhat*) of God. In *Javid Namah*, enumerating the different stages in the evolution of man, he says:

The third witness is God's consciousness—

See thyself, then, with God's light.

If thou standest unshaken in front of this light,

Consider thyself as living and eternal as He!

That man alone is real who dares—

Dares to see God face to face!

Discussing this problem in *Reconstruction*. . . , he says, "The climax of this development [of man] is reached when the ego is able to retain full self-possession, even in the case of a direct contact with the all-embracing Ego. As the Quran says of the Prophet's vision of the Ultimate Ego: 'His eye turned not aside, nor did it wander.' (53 : 17.) This is the ideal of perfect manhood in Islam. Nowhere has it found a better literary expression than in a Persian verse which speaks of the holy Prophet's experience of Divine illumination:

موسیٰ ز هوش رفت بیک جلوہ صفات تو عین ذات می نگری و در تبسمی

['Moses fainted away by a mere surface illumination of Reality : Thou seest the very substance of Reality with a smile!']"⁶

Like Plato, Iqbal thinks that such perfect men, philosopher-kings, alone are fit to rule, for they alone will be able to bring moral principles to bear upon the problems of State. It is due to the lack of moral basis of modern political thought that Iqbal criticises Western democracy which, according to him, is a fiend let loose from its bondage. It has brought about worldwide destruction of spiritual values.

6. *Reconstruction*. . . , p. 118.

Question 8

WHAT point does the aphorism "I am the Truth" imply?

Do you think that this mystery was mere nonsense?

Answer

I AM once again going to explain the mystery of "I am the Truth."

Before India and Iran I am unfolding a secret again.
The Magi in the circle of his followers said,
"Life was taken in by itself and uttered 'I.'
God went to sleep and our being is through His dream
Our existence and appearance are merely His dreams
Down and above, all four dimensions are illusions,
Rest and motion, desire and search are all illusions!
Wakeful heart and wise intellect, a dream.
Dread and anxiety, certainty and belief, a dream;
Your wakeful eye is in reality in a state of dream,
Your speech and action are all in a dream!

When He wakes up, nothing else remains,
There is no customer for the merchandise of
yearning."

The development of our intellect is through
reasoning,

Our reasoning depends upon the nature of the senses.
 When sense changes, this world becomes different—
 Rest and motion, quality and quantity are changed.
 It can be said that the world of colour and smell is
 non-existent,

Earth and sky, house and street, are nothing. 20

It can be said that all these are dreams or illusions,
 Or veils over the countenance of the Divine Person.

It can be said that all is sorcery of the senses,
 A deception produced by our eyes and ears.

But the ego does not belong to the universe of
 colour and smell ; 25

Our senses do not intervene between us and it.

Eyesight has no access to its sacred precincts,
 You can see "self" without eyesight.

The calculation of its days is not through the
 revolution of the sky ;

If you look within, there is no doubt or
 misgiving about it. 30

If you say that the "I" is a mere illusion—

An appearance among other appearances—

Then tell me who is the subject of this illusion.

Look within and discover.

The world is visible, yet its existence needs proof!¹ 35

Not even the intellect of an angel can comprehend it ;

The "I" is invisible and needs no proof!

Think awhile and see thine own secret!

The "I" is Truth, it is no illusion ;

Don't look upon it as a fruitless field. 40

When it ripens, it becomes eternal !

1. See Iqbal's article "Self in the Light of Relativity."

Lovers, even though separated from the Beloved,
live in blissful union!

It is possible to give wings to a mere spark,
And to make it flutter for ever and for ever!

The Eternity of God is (elemental and) not the
reward of His action!

For His eternity is not through seeking.

That eternity is superior, which a borrowed soul
Wins for herself by love's frenzy.²

The being of mountains and deserts and cities is
nothing,

The universe is mortal, the ego immortal and
nothing else matters.

Do not talk of Shankar and Mansur any longer,³
Seek God through seeking your own self.⁴

Be lost in your self to find the reality of the ego,
Say "I am the Truth" and affirm the existence
of the ego.

Explanatory Note

This Question corresponds to Question 7 of Shabistari. It deals with the significance of the cry *an al-Haqq* of Hallaj.

This famous cry of Hallaj has been universally accepted by pantheistic mystics to be the main slogan of their creed. It was Ibn al-'Arabi who first utilised this utterance in support of his philosophy. After him, 'Attar, Shabistari, 'Iraqi, and others

2. Translation of lines 31-39, 41-45 and 47-48 was done by Iqbal himself in his article "McTaggart's Philosophy."

3. Shankaracharya, the famous pantheistic commentator of Vedanta Sutra. Mansur, i.e. Husain bin Mansur Hallaj, whose cry of *an al-Haqq* was wrongly interpreted by the Muslim mystics pantheistically.

4. It is Iqbal's version of the old mystic saying, "He who knows self, knows God."

have followed suit. According to the theory, Being is One and the Real has no duality. The distinction of One and Many has no place in the unity of Being. When a mystic attains self-annihilation, he becomes eternal with God and for him all things are God and so he has every right to say "I am God." Being and Existence are one and that is the Real, *Haqq*. All objects of the world which appear to have independent being are in reality non-existent and illusory; they are mere shadows. Time—past, present, and future—is unreal. It is an imaginary point which is ever-fleeting and we call it a running stream. Even what we call substance is, according to the Ash'arite theory, nothing but composed of accidents which continually change, appear, and disappear. The three dimensions of things are relative and therefore unreal. Such is the reality of the phenomenal world on which we have relied so much. The conclusion, therefore, is that since there is no Being except God, you are at liberty to say either "He is God" or "I am God."

But, as modern research has proved, Hallaj was not a pantheist at all. He was a confirmed dualist and believed in the transcendence of God. According to Iqbal, this utterance was a vivid expression of the depth of religious experience which Hallaj was able to reach in his spiritual development. It was the unique example of the vital way of appropriating the universe, by which the individual not only experiences the Ultimate Ego but is also able to discover the true significance of his own ego in relation to Him. Massignon, the French Orientalist, who published Hallaj's works, has redered *an al-Haqq* as "I am the Creative Truth," which brings out the real spirit of the cry. After attaining the highest point, the whole being of the ego is deepened and the individual seems to partake of the freedom and creativity of the Ultimate Ego. But this in no way implies any loss of distinct individuality at all, nor did Hallaj contemplate any such pantheistic union. 'The true interpretation of his experience, therefore, is not the drop slipping into the sea, but the realisation and bold affirmation in an undying phase of the reality and permanence of the human ego in a profounder personality.'⁶

In view of the creed of self-negation of the mystics and scholastics, Hallaj's *an al-Haqq* was a sort of challenge, and Iqbal in his days tried to follow Hallaj in emphasising the important role of the self. He argues in the Cartesian fashion that we can doubt the existence of each and everything, the world of objective nature and the knowledge gained through senses, but we cannot doubt the existence of the ego which doubts and thinks. Referring to the metaphysical difficulties involved in the act of perception, he says that the external world is apparent and yet needs proof, but the ego is above all these doubts and, though hidden, its reality and existence is beyond all misgivings.

But unless it is ripened and perfected by creative activity, the ego cannot hope to attain everlasting life. "The resurrection," as Iqbal puts it, "... is not an external event. It is the consummation of a life process within the ego."⁶ Personal immortality in the case of man is not attainable as a matter of right; it depends upon personal effort while God's immortality is elemental and not conditioned by any efforts, on His part. This doctrine of conditional immortality serves to emphasise the activist role of human life.

6. *Reconstruction . . .*, p. 120.

Question 9

WHO at last became familiar with the secret of
unity?

Who is the wise man that is a gnostic?

Answer

THE world beneath the sky is a charming place,
But its sun and moon are prone to decay.

The corpse of the sun is carried on the shoulders of
the evening,

The stars vanish when the moon appears.

The mountain flies like the moving sand,

The river changes in a moment.

Autumn lies in ambush against the flowers,

The merchandise of the caravan is the fear (of loss)
of life.

The tulip does not retain its beauty through dew,
If it retains it for a while, it loses it the next moment.

The sound dies in the harp without being produced,

The flame dies in the stone without manifesting
itself.

Don't ask me about the universality of death,
You and I are tied by our breaths to the chain
of death.

An Ode

15 Death is destined to be the wine of every cup,
 How ruthlessly has it been made common!
 The arena of sudden death
 Has been called the world of moon and stars.
 If any particle of it learnt to fly,
 20 It was brought under control by the spell of sight.
 Why do you seek rest for us? We are
 Tied to the revolutions of the days.

Be careful of the ego within your heart,
 From this star, the night was illumined.

25 The world is absolutely a place of decay,¹
 This is the gnosis in this strange land.
 Our heart is not seeking anything futile,
 Our lot is not fruitless grief.
 Desire is looked after here,
 30 And also the intoxication of the yearning of search.
 Ego can be made immortal;
 Separation can be changed into union.

A lamp can be lit by our hot breath,
 Crack in the sky can be sewn by a needle.

35 The Living God is not without a taste for beauty,
 His manifestations are not without society.
 Who cast the lightning of His Grace on the heart?
 Who drank that wine and struck the cup on the
 head?

Whose heart is the criterion of beauty and good?

1. Reference is to the Qur'anic verse (vi. 77) where Abraham declares that he does not like (to worship) the things that set, referring to the setting of the stars, moon, and the sun.

Whose house is it round which His moon revolves? 40
 From whose privacy the cry of "Am I not your
 Lord" arose?

From whose musical strings the answer of "Yes"
 appeared?²

What a fire Love kindled in this handful of dust!
 One cry from us burnt down thousands of veils.
 It is only our presence that keeps the cup of the
 S^{aqi} in motion 45

And maintain liveliness in His society.

My heart burns on the loneliness of God!

*In order, therefore, to maintain intact His Ego-
 Society*

I saw in my dust the seed of selfhood,

And keep a constant vigil over my "I".³ 50

Explanatory Note

This Question corresponds to Question 5 of Shabistari. It deals with the so-called "mystery of the union" and determination of a true gnostic.

According to Shabistari, the true gnostic is one who purges himself of all alloys of selfhood, who gambles away himself before God. He alone then is able to understand the mystery of union; he alone attains unity with the Lord and realises the truth of Unity of Being.

To Iqbal, the true gnosis lies in believing that this world is transitory and is subject to decay and decline. But amidst this universal phenomenon of death, the human ego alone is above dissolution and decay. As we have seen, according to Iqbal, at the

2. "Am I not your Lord?" and "Yes" are references to the Qur'anic verse vii. 173 where the story of the sacred pre-natal Covenant is related.

3. Translation of lines 47-50 was done by Iqbal himself in his article "McTaggart's Philosophy."

final stage the egos do not merge into the Absolute but remain distinct and retain their individuality. Discussing McTaggart's philosophy of the differentiations of the Absolute, Iqbal views the life of egos after death as a society of egos presided over by the Highest Ego.

Epilogue

You are a sword, come out of your cover,
Come out of your sheath.
Remove the veil from your potentialities,
Take hold of the moon, the sun and the stars. 5
Illumine your night by the light of faith,
Take your white hand out of the armpit.¹
He who has opened his eyes on the heart
Has sown a spark and reaped a fire.
Have a spark from my innermost heart, 10
For my heart is as fiery as Rumi's.

Otherwise get fire from the new culture of the
West,
Adorn your exterior and bring spiritual death on
you.

1. See note 10 of Answer to Question 3.

Bandagi Namah

[*Book of Servitude*]

Introduction

THE world-illuminating moon said to God :
“My light turns the night into day ;
I remember the time when there was neither day
nor night
And I lay slumbering in the depth of Time ;
There was no star in my retinue 5
And my nature was unaware of revolution.
No vast expanse of desert was illumined by my
light
Nor did the sea feel commotion on seeing my
beauty.
Alas ! all this was changed by the magic and spell
of Being,
By the illumination and by the desire for
manifestation ! 10
I learnt from the sun the art of shining
And brightened this dead earthly abode—
An abode that possessed splendour but lacked joy
and happiness.
Its face was distorted by the ugly marks of servitude.
Its Adam entrapped in the net like a fish, 15
He has killed God and worships man.
Ever since you bound me down to this earth
I have been ashamed of revolving round it.
This world is not aware of the light of the soul,
It is not worthy of the sun and the moon. 20

Cast it away into the space blue
 Sever the ties that bind us, the celestial beings, to it.
 Either relieve me of my service to him
 Or create another Adam out of its soil.

It were better if my ever-vigilant eye be blind !
 O God, let this earthly abode remain without
 light."

Servitude deadens one's heart,
 It makes the soul a burden for the body.
 Through servitude the young suffer weakness of
 old age,
 A fierce lion of the forest is enervated ;
 A society disintegrates
 And its members fly at one another's throat.
 If one is standing, the other is in prostration ;
 Their affairs are disorganised like a prayer without
 an Imam.

Everyone is fighting with the other
 Each individual is seeking his own interests.
 Through servitude even a virtuous man goes astray
 And his potentialities for good fail to actualise.
 His branches are shorn of leaves even when there
 is no autumn.

He is always encumbered with the fear of death.
 Devoid of good taste, he takes the evil for the good,
 He is dead without death and carries his corpse
 on his shoulders.

He has staked away the very honour of life,
 And like asses is content with hay and barley.

Just look at his "possible" and his "impossible,"
 See how months and years of his life pass.

His days bewail of one another,

Their movement is slower than the sands of time.

Imagine a brackish ground, infested with stings of
scorpions,

Its ants bite dragons and prey on scorpions.

Its strong wind has fire as if from Hell

Which is for the barge of Satan steering gail.

The fire permeates the air

Its flames intermingling and multiplying.

A fire that has grown bitter through wreathing
smoke—

A fire that has the roar of a thunder and the rage
of a storming sea.

On its outskirts, snakes are biting one another—

Snakes whose hoods are full of poison.

Its flames pounce upon (people) like biting dogs,
Are dangerously frightening, burn them alive and
their light is dead.

To live for millennia in such a dangerous desert
Is far better than a moment spent in servitude.

50

55

60

On the Fine Arts of the Slaves

Music

ARTS cultivated (by people) in servitude are symbols
of death ;

The spell cast by servitude is beyond description.

Its songs are devoid of the fire of life ;

They storm the wall like a flood.

5 The countenance of a slave is as black as his heart,

The notes of a slave are as insipid as his nature.

His dead frozen heart has lost all gusto and ardour

And is emptied of to-day's pleasure and the
expectations of future.

His lute betrays his secret,

10 His instruments embody the death of multitudes.

It makes you weak and ill

And estranges you from the world.

His eyes are always full of tears—

Keep away from his songs as far as you can.

15 Beware ! it is but the song of death !

It is nothing but nothingness in the guise of sound.

Feeling thirsty ? This *Haram* is without *Zam-zam*.¹

His songs bring about the destruction of mankind.

It removes from the heart all ambitions and gives
grief instead,

1. *Haram* is the sanctuary of Ka'bah which is famous for its sweet-water well, *Zam-zam*. As tradition relates, it appeared miraculously to quench the thirst of child Isma'il.

It pours poison in the cup of Jamshed.²
Hearken brother ! grief is of two kinds,
Lighten your lamp of reason with our flame :
One kind of grief is that consumes man ;
The other kind of grief is that eats up all other griefs.
The second kind of grief that is our companion
Frees life from all kinds of grief.

It involves the tumults of the east and west
It is like a vast ocean in which all beings are sub-
merged.

When it takes its abode in the heart,
It turns the heart into a vast shoreless sea.
Servitude is but ignorance of the secret of life ;
Its song is empty of the second kind of grief.

I don't say that its notes are wrong ;
Such bewailings become only a widow.

Song should be violent like a storm
So that it may remove from the heart the clouds of
grief.

It should be nourished on ecstasy—
A fire dissolved in the blood of the heart.
It is possible to develop flame out of its wetness,
And to make silence a part of it.

Do you know that in music there is a stage
Where speech develops "without words" ?
A brilliant song is Nature's lamp
Its meaning imparts form to it.
I don't know whence comes the essence of meaning
We are aware of its form which is apparent.

2. Jamshed is the mythical king of ancient Persia. He possessed a cup which was said to reveal the mysteries of the world.

If the song is shorne of meaning, it is dead ;
Its "heat" emanates from a dead fire.

The secret of meaning was unveiled by Rumi
On whose threshold my thought prostrates :

"Meaning is that transports you aloft
And makes you independent of the apparent form;
Meaning is not that makes you deaf and blind
And makes a man enamoured of mere form all the
more."

Our musician did not enjoy the beauty of meaning;
He attached himself to form and ignored mean-
ing altogether.

Painting

Similar is the case of painting,
It shows the stamp neither of Abraham nor of
Adhar.³

"A monk entrapped in the snare of baser passion;
A beloved with a bird in a cage;
A king (sitting) before a *Khirqah*⁴-clad dervish;
A highlander with a bundle of wood on shoulders;
A beautiful maiden on way to the temple;
A hermit sitting in the solitude of his cell,
A puny old man crushed under the burden of old age
In whose hands the flame (of life) has gone out;
A musician lost in a strange and alien song,—
A nightingale bewailed and his string broke;
A youth torn by the arrows of beloved's glance;

3. Adhar was the father (according to another tradition, uncle) of Abraham. Adhar represents idol-worship, polytheism, as opposed to Abraham who stands for worship of one God, monotheism.

Khirqah is the customary patched gown worn by mystic-dervishes.

A child on the neck of his aged grandfather.''

70

From the pen flow nothing but discourses of death,
Everywhere there is the story and spell of death.

The modern science prostrates before the evanescent,
It increases doubt and removes faith from the
heart.

A man without faith has no taste for search of
truth;

75

He has no capacity to create.

His heart is ever-wavering,

It is difficult for him to bring forth new forms.

He is far removed from the self and is sick at heart,

He is led by the vulgar taste of the masses.

80

He begs beauty from external nature,

He is a highwayman and tries to rob the destitute.

It is wrong to seek beauty outside one's self;

"What ought to be" is not (lying) before us.

When a painter gives himself up to Nature,

85

He depicts Nature but loses thereby his own self.

Not for a moment did he manifest his real own self,

Nor did he ever try to break our (idols).

Nature wrapped in multicoloured gown

Can be seen on his canvas with a limping foot.

90

His low burning moth lacks heat;

His to-day is devoid of reflections of to-morrow.

His sight cannot pierce through the skies,

Because he does not possess a fearless heart.

He is earthrooted, without experience of ecstasy, shy, 95

Totally devoid of contact with the world of spirit.

His thought is hollow and he has no liking for
struggle,

His Israfil-like⁵ call does not bring about any resurrection.

If man deems himself earthly,
The light divine dies in his heart.

When a Moses loses hold of his own self,
His hand becomes dark and his staff merely a rope.⁶

Life is nothing without the capacity for new creations,

Not everybody knows this secret.

The artist who adds to Nature
Reveals before our eyes his inner secret.

Although his ocean does not stand in need of anything,

Yet our rivulets do contribute to it.

He transforms the old values of life

His art establishes the true standard of beauty.

His houri is more charming than the houri of paradise,

He who does not believe in his *Lat* and *Manat*⁷ is an infidel.

He creates a new universe,

And gives a new life to the heart.

He is an ocean and lets his waves strike against himself—

These waves scatter pearls before us.

With that fullness which characterises his soul,

5. Israfil is an angel who, as tradition relates, will blow his trumpet and the dead will arise from their graves.

6. Moses possessed a miraculous hand which shone brightly and therefore called White Hand and a miraculous staff which helped him in diverse ways.

7. Lat and Manat are the names of two idols worshipped by the Arabs in the days of Ignorance

He strives to nourish the impoverished.
His pure nature is the norm of the right and the
wrong,

His art reflects both the ugly and the beautiful. 120
He is the very essence of Abraham and Adhar,⁸
His hands make as well as break idols.

He uproots all old-foundations
And polishes all creation.

In servitude body is deprived of soul; 125
What good can be expected of a soulless body?
Such a person loses all taste for creative work
And forgets his own self.

If you make Gabriel a slave
He would of necessity fall down from his lofty
celestial sphere. 130

His creed is blind imitation and all his activity is
centred in idol-making;

"Newness" is an infidelity in his religion.

New things increase his doubts and misgivings;
He is pleased with everything old and decayed.
He always looks to the past and is blind to the
future, 135

Like an attendant (of a tomb) he seeks his living
from the grave.

If this is skill, then it is death of ambition,
His inside is dark though his outside is beautiful.

A wise bird is never entrapped
Though the net be of silken thread. 140

8. See note 3 on p. 68. Abraham is idol-breaker while Adhar is idol-maker and idol-worshipper.

Religion of the Slaves

IN servitude, religion and love are separated ;
Honey of life becomes bitter.

What is love? It is imprinting of *Tawhid* on the
heart,

Then to strike oneself against difficulties.

In servitude love is nothing but an idle talk,

Our actions do not correspond with our professions.

The caravan of his ambition has no inclination for
a journey,

It lacks faith, has no knowledge of the road, and
is without a guide.

A slave underestimates both religion and wisdom ;
In order to keep his body alive, he gives away his
soul.

Although the name of God is on his lips,

His centre of attention is the power of the ruler—

Power that is nothing but ever-increasing falsehood,
Nothing but falsehood can come from it.

As long as you prostrate before it, this idol is your
god,

But as soon as you stand up before it, it disappears.

That God gives you bread as well as life ;

This god gives you bread but snatches life away.

That God is One *par excellence*, this is divided into
hundred parts ;

That God provides everything for everybody ; this
god is totally helpless. 20

That God cures the ailment of separation,
The word of this god sows the seeds of disunity.
He makes his worshipper intimate with himself,
And then makes his eyes, ears, and consciousness
infidels.

When he rides on the soul of his slave, 25
It is (no doubt) in his body but (in reality) is
absent from it.

Alive and yet soulless ! What is the mystery ?
Listen, I unfold for you its manifold meaning.
O wise man ! dying and living are
Nothing but relative events. 30

For the fish, mountains and deserts do not exist ;
For the birds, the depth of the sea is simply a
nonentity.

For a deaf person, there is no charm in a song ;
For him sound is non-existent.

A blind man enjoys the song of the harp, 35
But before a display of colours, he remains
unaffected.

The soul with God is living and lasting ;
For one it is dead, for the other it is alive.
It is God who is living and never dies ;
To live with God is absolute life ; 40
He who lives without God is nothing but dead.
Although nobody weeps and bewails over him.
To his eyes, thing worth seeing is hidden,
His heart is unaware of the desire for change.
There is no mark of devotion in his deeds ; 45
There is no breadth of vision in his talk.

His religion is as narrow as his world,
 His forenoon is darker than the night.
 Life is a heavy burden on his shoulders;
 He nourishes death in his own bosom.
 In his company even love suffers from manifold
 diseases,
 With his breath is extinguished many a fire.

For a worm that did not rise from the earth
 The sun, the moon, and the revolving sky do not
 exist at all.

You cannot expect from a slave any desire for
 "vision,"

Nor is there in him any sign of an awakened soul.
 His eyes never bore the trouble of "seeing";
 He ate, slept well, and died.

If the ruler unfastens one bond,
 He imposes another on him.

He produces a complex and intricate canon,
 And expects from the slave unswerving obedience.
 He sometimes shows a bit of wrath and malice
 towards the slave;

This increases in him the fear of sudden death.
 When the slave loses all faith in himself,
 From his heart vanish all desires.

Sometimes he bestows on him handsome bounty,
 And also invests him with some powers.

The chess-player throws the chessman out of his
 hand,

And raises his pawn to the status of queen.

He becomes so much enamoured of to-day's well-
 being,

That in reality he becomes a denier of to-morrow.
His body fattens through the benevolence of the
kings,

His dear soul becomes thin like a spindle.

It is better that a whole village of men be
destroyed

Than that a single pure soul be subjected to sorrow
and grief.

The fetters are not on feet, but (in fact) on the
heart and soul ;

This is indeed a very intriguing situation.

On the Architecture of Free Men

SEEK for a while the company of the ancients,
Have a look at the art of free people.
Arise and see the work of Aibak and Suri ;
Open your eyes, if you have the heart to see.
5 They displayed their inner selves before the people,
And thus saw themselves through the eyes of others.
By raising a structure of stones
They captured eternity in a moment.
Looking on it makes you mature,
10 And transports you to another world.
A symbol leads you to its creator
And lets you peep into his innermost heart.
A spirit of manly adventure and noble nature
Are the two precious jewels in the heart of the stone?
15 Don't ask me : Whose prayer-ground is this?
O you ignorant ! body cannot reveal the experiences
of the soul.
Woe me ! I am hidden from myself,
And have not tasted water from the river of life.
Woe me ! I am uprooted from my native soil,
20 And have fallen far away from my real position.
Stability arises from deep faith,
Woe me ! the branch of my faith is sapless.
I do not possess that power (which is implicit in)
illallah ;
My prostration is not befitting this shrine.
25 Just cast a glance on that pure jewel—

Look at the Taj in the moonlight.
Its marble ripples faster than flowing waters,
A moment spent there is more stable than eternity.
Love of men has expressed its secret,
And perforated the stone by their eyelashes. 30
Love of men is pure and charming like a paradise,
It produces songs from brick and stone.
Love of men is the criterion of beauty ;
It unveils beauty and sanctifies it too.
His aspirations soar beyond the sky, 35
And go away from this world of quantity.

As what he sees cannot be expressed in words,
He whisks away veil from his heart.

Through love passions are elevated,
The worthless gain value through it. 40
Without love life is all a-wailing
Its whole affair becomes corrupt and unstable.
Love polishes one's common sense,
And imparts the quality of mirror to the stone.
It gives to the people with enlightened heart, the
heart of Sinia, 45

And gives to the men of skill the "white" hand.
Beside him, all possibilities and existences are nothing
All the world is bitter ; it alone is sweet honey.
To its fire is due the vigour of our thought ;
To create and to infuse soul is its work. 50
Love suffices men, animals, and insects ;
"Love alone suffices the two worlds."

Love without power is magic,
Love with power is prophecy.

Love combined both in its manifestations,
Love thus created a world out of a world. 55

“Gulshan -i Raz -i Jadid” and “Bandagi Namah” are the two concluding *mathnavis* of Iqbal’s *Zabur-i ‘Ajam*. They were not done into English by Professor A.J. Arberry in his *Persian Psalms*, his objective being to introduce Persian *ghazal* to the English reader.

This volume now offers English translation of these two *mathnavis*, with exhaustive notes by the translator.

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