

REPAIR AND REDEEM
IQBAL'S RE-STATEMENT OF SUFI
THOUGHT

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The famous Cambridge scholar Prof. A. J. Arberry had once remarked, *“Poets are the unofficial legislators of mankind”*. “[they] have played a prominent, in some instances indeed a leading part, in that most exciting drama of modern times, the revolt against internal corruption, and against external domination, intellectual as well as political.”¹ According to my lights, Prof. Arberry has been too modest in his claims. The Muslim civilization has not seen this phenomenon for the first time in the modern age. It has made its cyclical appearance throughout our history. Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, who has been for more than a decade the best-selling poet in America, is its prime example in the eastern lands of Islam. He, more than any other cultural, literary or political figure of his times, was responsible for the spiritual revival of his milieu.² In the works of Rūmī, poetry holds one of the keys, for it speaks a universal language, but with Rūmī, mysticism (sic. Sufism) is added to poetry. This is a winning combination, for poetry and mysticism are both universal languages of the human soul and nowhere do they reinforce each other more than in the life and legacy of Jalāl al-dīn Rūmī.³

Iqbal’s Persian poetry— and his Urdu verse mirrors it— is regarded as a legacy of Jalāl al-dīn Rūmī.⁴ Do Iqbal and Rūmī’s have a shared legacy for reform? Did Iqbal, Rūmī’s disciple, employ the same universal languages of the human soul— poetry and mysticism— to achieve his objective? Can he offer us, like Rūmī, fresh insights about the state of the world today and the problems faced by humanity? The answer is a **yes**, unequivocally and unabashedly, and it comes from Iqbal himself.⁵

چو	رومی،	در	حرم	دادم	اذان،	من
ازو	آموختم	اسرار	چلن،	من		
بہ	دور	قتنہ	عصر	کهن،	او	
بہ	دور	قتنہ	عصر	روان،	من	

*Like Rūmī I made the prayer-call in the Ka‘bah;
 And learned from him the secrets of the soul.
 He was meant to take up the challenge of the past age;
 I am meant to take up the challenge of this age.*

To this one must add the following:

I claim that the philosophy of the *Asrār* is a direct development out of the experience and speculation of old Muslim Sufis and thinkers..... It is only a restatement of the old in the light of the new.⁶

The persistent themes of Rūmī are the longing for the eternal, the reuniting with God, enlightenment through love, and the merging of one’s self with the universal spirit. Overarching themes in Iqbal are the One Reality coursing through the veins of the Universe, the Immanent-Infinite, the relationship between the human and the Divine, search for what does it mean to be human, unfolding of the human potential, love, universal peace and harmony and core human values.

His background and the times in which he was born were very different from that of Rūmī or Ḥāfīz or Sa‘dī and this partly explains the difference of emphasis these poets respectively put on various elements in their poetical works. Apart from the quite general and ever needed reminders against the recurrent human tendencies of *gafīlah*⁷ (heedlessness towards the essential, spiritual vocation of human beings) Rūmī or Ḥāfīz had no immediate or urgent need for that kind of a message or worldly dynamism that Iqbal required to ‘jolt out’ his audience from its indolent state of torpor and spiritual apathy. Rūmī, Ḥāfīz and their likes had a different task to accomplish and they did it in such a remarkable manner that ever since their poetic excellence has never surely been surpassed, if seldom equalled, by any of the later poets. If there had been such a need in the epoch in which Rūmī or Ḥāfīz lived and sang their verses they could also have used their medium of expression and their skill to convey the new ideas, more suitable to their age, as Iqbal successfully did by taking over the images, the idiom and diction of the Persian poetic tradition, of Rūmī and Ḥāfīz

and others, and made use of it for a different and, in a sense, more immediate purpose by filling inherited forms and images with a new spirit through a shift of emphasis.

Hence the theme of the presentation, namely, “**Iqbal’s Re-Statement of Sufi Thought**” offers an opportunity to explore an aspect of that “most exciting drama” and take a fresh look at how one of the most outstanding sages and poets of our times, Allama Muhammad Iqbal, participated in its unfolding. This is a vast subject. Iqbal Studies has grown into a discipline in itself and has spawned an enormous body of literature– primary, secondary and even tertiary, (verging on the repetitive and the trivia)– which needs to be taken into consideration before one can arrive at a sufficiently comprehensive account of Iqbal’s view on a certain issue or his contribution to a specific field. For the purposes of the present discussion, our focus shall, therefore, be limited, even more limited than “Iqbal and Sufism” since the task of describing the nature of Iqbal’s relationship with Sufism and defining his worldview with reference to it comes close to being the object of an entire book. I will not try to compress it here into the limits of a brief talk but rather try to highlight one of its aspects with reference to our theme– albeit the most fundamental and important aspect. Moreover I would like to take an approach slightly different from the one usually adopted in Iqbal Studies and would try to address the issue from a conceptual point of view, by referring to the overarching perspective or the paradigm that governs the conceptual shift in question.

For Rūmī, Sufism was a spiritual vocation and a system of repair, a means of repairing the ills (فتنہ عصر کہن) of his times. Rūmī took up the challenge posed by rationalism in the mediaeval age of Islam. Can a similar claim be made for the Iqbalian project? Does Iqbal, like Rūmī, take up the challenge posed by the modern age of secular modernity and materialism i.e. (فتنہ عصر روان)?⁸ Would it be correct to say that for Iqbal, like Rūmī, Sufism was a system of repair, a means of repairing the ills of modernity, (فتنہ عصر روان) and by his criticism of prevalent Sufism he was pointing out the problems within that system of repair? Here, as earlier, the answer is a **yes**,

unequivocally and unabashedly. His “confrontations with Modernity”, in his own words, read as follows:⁹

تکسّم	را	حاضر	علم	طلسم
گسّم	دماش	و	داند	ربودم
براهیم	مانند	که	داند	خدا
نشستم	بی پروا	چہ	نارِ او	بہ

*I broke the spell of modern learning:
I took away the bait and broke the trap.¹⁰
God knows with what indifference,
Like Abraham, I sat in its fire!¹¹*

Before I try to elucidate the point any further I would like to take a pre-emptive measure in order to dispel certain errors in advance and to forestall some possible misgivings. Mention was made of “**his criticism of prevalent Sufism**” and it is here that many controversies raise their ugly head. The most common and frequently encountered objection that I anticipate the moment I make a claim similar to the one made in the foregoing remarks is the following: “but isn’t it true that Iqbal regarded Sufism as a phenomenon alien to Islam?” The “proof text” that we are presented with is a letter published in *Iqbāl Nāmah*¹² which reads as follows:

اس میں ذرا بھی شک نہیں کہ تصوف کا وجود ہی سر زمین اسلام میں ایک اجنبی پودا ہے جس نے عجمیوں کی دماغی آب و ہوا میں پرورش پائی ہے۔

*No doubt, the **very phenomenon of Sufism** is a foreign thing implanted on the body of Islam and nurtured by the intellectual ambiance of the Persianate culture.*

Here is an interesting issue that should be taken into consideration by research scholars of Iqbal’s original texts. The objection gives us to understand that Iqbal regarded Sufism as an accretion and a foreign importation in Islam. This is in blatant contradiction of what he has said about Sufism at numerous other places in his writings. The

contradiction is resolved when we compare it to the recently discovered original letter¹³ which gives the following reading:

اس میں ذرا بھی شک نہیں کہ تصوف وجودی سر زمین اسلام میں ایک اجنبی پودا ہے جس نے بھیموں کی دماغی آب و ہوا میں پرورش پائی ہے۔

No doubt, pantheistic Sufism is a foreign thing implanted.....

The readers can decide for themselves what difference takes place with the slight change of a phrase “*the very phenomenon of Sufism*” and “*pantheistic Sufism is a foreign thing implanted!*”

This is clearly not a case of hostility towards Sufism, rather a response to a received body of thought and praxis manifesting itself in India, attributed to the *Wujūdiyya* (pantheistic) School of thought as well as the *Persianate* influences that had reached the thinker through his milieu. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that his criticism of the process of decadence and deviation that had set in was not focused on Sufism in isolation.¹⁴ It covered the whole gamut of the Islamic civilization as could be seen from the following verses from his famous *Sāqī Nāma*,¹⁵ which is only a representative example:

تمدن، تصوف، شریعت، کلام
 بُتان، عجم کے، پجاری، تمام!
 حقیقت، خرافات میں کھو گئی
 یہ اُمت روایات میں کھو گئی

.....

وہ صوفی کہ تھا خدمتِ حق میں مرد
 محبت میں یکتا، حسیت میں فرد
 عجم کے خیالات میں کھو گیا
 سالك مقامات میں کھو گیا
 بچھی عشق کی آگ، اندھیر ہے
 مسلمان نہیں، راکھ کا ڈھیر ہے

شرابِ کهن پھر پلا ساقیا
وہی جام گردش میں لا ساقیا!

The last couplet is extremely significant as it explicitly mentions the remedy (matured, age-old wine of Sufism) as well and leaves no doubt about the fact that for Iqbal, Sufism was a system of repair, a means of repairing the ills of modernity and he was only pointing out the problems within that system of repair through his criticism of some of the decadent aspects of prevalent Sufism.

The affinities go much further. If Rūmī had brought about a second flowering and revival for its times, Iqbal, after having applied the system of repair (read Sufism), was also able to make the claim for a rejuvenation of the non-Arab world that had swung between hope and despair.¹⁶

عجم از نغمہ ہائے من جوان شد
ز سودایم متاع او گران شد
بجوے بود رہ کرم کردہ در دشت
ز آوازِ درایم کاروان شد

*‘Ajam¹⁷ became young again through my songs
My frenzy¹⁸ raised the price of its wares
It was a crowd lost in the wilderness
The sound of my bell made it a caravan*

The target of Iqbal’s criticism, thus, has to be identified as the intellectual position of a school of thought and not Sufism as such. He wrote to Kishan Parshād Shād in 1920.¹⁹

Two years ago I voiced some of my differences with Sufism on a few doctrinal issues and that was a long standing debate among the Sufis. It was nothing new. Unfortunately some people who are unaware of their own history misconstrued it as hostility for Sufism.

Though this letter is sufficiently illuminating, it seems indispensable here to make, without any claims for being exhaustive, a few remarks about the nature of Iqbal’s

criticism of Sufism. Firstly, Iqbal’s statements and writings in this regard must be contextualized in the overall debate that surrounded the first edition of *Asrār i Khudī*²⁰ and, apart from the issue of Hāfīz and the Persian poets, brought the larger question of the origins of Sufism into the arena. We cannot enter here into a discussion concerning the origins of Sufism. The readers may consult the works given in the notes.²¹

Secondly, Iqbal’s criticism of Sufism was a part of a much larger phenomenon existing within the framework of Sufism— the self-critique of Sufism that had always risen to address and redress the manifestations of deviations in matters of Sufi Doctrine and Method and the general trend of falling away from standards of excellence created by the forces of decadence influencing Sufism. It was not a critique of a hostile outsider. Rather it was in the long illustrious tradition of Sufi self-critique that dates back to very early Islamic history. In this sense, when Iqbal criticized some personalities or practices connected with Sufism its true nature was that of a benevolent concern for the welfare for his own “interpretive community” that is Sufism. For him, Sufism was a system of repair, a means of repairing the ills of modernity, and by his criticism he was pointing out the problems within that system of repair. Iqbal’s criticism of Sufism remains within the bosom of Sufism of which he himself was a great champion. Ample evidence can be adduced from his poetry and prose writings. For the present, it is enough to note that, even during the days of the heated debate of *Asrār-i-Khudī*, he paid glowing tributes to Sufism and even to Ibn ‘Arabī.²² Thus one would search in vain to find a general condemnation of Sufism in the works of Iqbal. This is a point which is generally accepted by the majority of the learned among the Iqbal scholars.²³ To this we can add a few representative references to his letters by the way of further corroboration.

He had written to Kishan Parshād Shād in 1920:²⁴

I was initiated in the Qādiriyyah order and now I intend to have a *tajdīd* (renewal of initiation). I have heard that there

is a holy man in Nagpur. Would you kindly take the trouble to inquire about him so that I can undertake the journey?

I plan to write a history of Sufism. It is not an attack on Sufism, rather “looking after its wellbeing.

Thirdly, the self-critique of Sufism that we come across in Iqbal’s works pales into insignificance when compared to the criticism of the famous Sufi Masters. Disappointment, and even indignation, was the reaction of the famous Andalusī Sufi Master Muḥyī ʿl-Dīn b. ʿArabī (Ibn ʿArabī) when, on his arrival in Egypt in 598/1200, he viewed the behaviour of Eastern Sufis, as he told his master and friend Shaykh ʿAbd al-Azīz al-Mahdāwī two years later:²⁵

The moment I arrived in this part of the world, I enquired after those men following the Ideal Way, in the hope of finding among them the breath of the Supreme Companion (rafiq al-aʿlā). I was taken to an assembled khānqāh, in a quite enormous building, where I noted that their greatest care and their chief preoccupation was cleaning their clothes and combing their beards ... In this country I met [Sufis] who, with no feelings of shame before the All Merciful (Al-Rahmān), decked themselves out in the gowns worn by fityāns, while neglecting all question of obligatory and supererogatory acts. They would not be fit even to clean latrines.

There is something a little disconcerting about the scathing severity of Ibn ʿArabī’s judgement on first sight of his Eastern colleagues. Are we to see, in this virulent outburst, no more than an exaggerated expression of Andalusī patriotism, or does his harshness rather reflect a genuine malaise in relations between the Western and Eastern Sufi communities?²⁶

Even this severe criticism seems mild and relenting if we put is side by side what Shaykh ʿAlī Hujwīrī had to report. Inveighing against his times the tenth-century Sufi Al-Fushānjī said: “Today Sufism is a name without a reality, but formerly it was a reality without a name.” Commenting on this in the next century al-Hujwīrī added: “In the time of the Companions of the Prophet and their

successors this name did not exist, but the reality thereof was in everyone; now the name exists but not the reality.”²⁷

If this pronouncement be toned down slightly as regards its praise of the past as well as its blame of the present, it may be said to agree with the unanimous opinion of the Sufis themselves, who hold that although there have been many holy men and women scattered throughout the later generations of Islam, sanctity has never been so common as it was in the first generation; and apart from the fact that this thousand-year-old opinion cannot be lightly brushed aside, those Western scholars who still cling to the opinion that mysticism was a later development in Islam are forced to turn a blind eye to more than one powerful piece of evidence which corroborates the Sufi view.

Against the back drop of this scathing criticism all that Iqbal had to say about decadent or aberrant Sufism remains no more than a mild reproach! Here is a representative sample:²⁸

رہا نہ حلقہٴ صوفی میں سوزِ مشتاقی
 فسانہ ہائے کرامات رہ گئے بانی
 خراب گوشک سلطانِ مصلیٰ و خانقاہِ فقیر
 فعال کہ تخت و کرسی کمالِ زانی
 کرے گی داویرِ محشر کو شرمسار اک روز
 کتابِ صوفی و ملا کی سادہ اورانی

Clearing the way with these necessary remarks about Iqbal’s hostility about Sufism we can now proceed to the main question that is the focus of our discussion today i.e. for Iqbal, Sufism was a system of repair, a means of repairing the ills of modernity. At this point we can clearly formulate the question, or a set of questions. Islamic Tradition, like all other faith and wisdom traditions, is not a monolithic whole; there are perspectives, vernaculars and “interpretive communities”. When Iqbal turns to the Islamic Tradition for tapping at the sources of wisdom offered by it or to look for systems of repair that could be drawn from the Tradition, which perspective is his mainstay? There are a number of “interpretive

communities” with in the Islamic Tradition that have gone before us. To which of these Iqbal belonged, where he could be seen squarely rooted? Like any great religion, Islam has its towering landmarks, and it is from these that one should seek to understand it. What does Iqbal reveal through his works in this regard in terms of the towering landmarks that he most frequently falls back upon? Lastly, there are great texts that have been universally acknowledged (until recent times) as the highpoints of the Islamic Tradition. Which of these are foundational to his thought? Together, these set of questions provide us the criteria through which one can judge Iqbal’s “house of faith” or his “interpretive community”. Which ever question we take as our point of departure they all inevitably lead to a single entity/phenomenon/ “house of faith” / perspective/ vernacular/ “interpretive community”/ towering landmark/ a set of great texts – Sufism, theoretical, gnostic, devotional or practical!

It needs to be kept in view that Iqbal distinguishes between religious faith and theological method. Religious faith, which depends on a ‘special type of inner experience’, may be likened to spirit, whereas theological method, which explains and rationalizes that faith, may be called the form assumed by that spirit. While religious faith is a constant, theological method has a certain contingency about it: it develops in response to issues raised by the peculiar habits of thought in a given age, and it requires revision or replacement if those habits change in a later era. In this regard Dr. Mustansir Mir has observed:

In Iqbal’s view, the classical structures of Muslim thought and spirituality are incapable of making an effective response to the issues raised by the modern mind’s penchant for concrete thought, and this fact underscores the need for a reconstruction of Muslim religious philosophy. Such reconstruction comes under the general heading of *tajdīd*, the Islamic technical term for a significant ‘renewal’ or ‘rejuvenation’ of Islamic religion. Iqbal’s *Reconstruction* itself may be viewed as a contribution to the cause of Islamic *tajdīd*.²⁹

The deficiency that Iqbal hopes to supply to some extent, he does through Sufism.

This is a point that has been noted by every Iqbal scholar of merit. Here I would like to refer to a few of these observations. The foremost philosopher, Iqbal Scholar and educationist of Pakistan, Dr. Manzūr Aḥmad, who now advocates, unfortunately, secular Modernity and the Postmodern conceptual shift, had observed:³⁰

A somewhat deep study of Iqbal’s work leaves one with no doubt that Iqbal has presented a Sufi philosophic system of his own...it has an ontology which deals with the nature of reality, it has an epistemology which discusses the origin, modes and faculties of knowledge and the issue of soundness and inaccuracy of knowledge, it has its own ethics, a philosophy of good and evil, a psychology; in short it is whole religious system.

Read with the earlier quoted remark by Iqbal that “the philosophy of the *Asrār* is a direct development out of the experience and speculation of old Muslim Sufis” this observation of Dr. Manzūr Aḥmad leads to the inevitable conclusion that “the whole religious system” was founded on Sufism from which it drew its sap, life blood, and insight.

Prof. Sa‘īd Nafīsī, the leading scholar of Iran observed:³¹

The mystical aspect is definitely the most significant aspect of Iqbal’s poetry. In fact we should consider him a mystic poet and in this respect he is not different from other mystic poets of Iran and Pakistan.

In the course of his conversations with the great minds, Iqbal, apart from discussing the fine points and intricacies of philosophic thought and agnosticism, brings in the social and political issues. *Javed Namah*, therefore, is to be regarded as the latest treatise on d mysticism, and Iqbal has to be accepted not only as one of the topmost exponents of mysticism, but also as the last great exponent of Irano-Pakistani mystic thought

Iqbal, certainly, is one of such eminent men and we can rightly call him the prophet of poets– a poet with a prophetic mission.

Robert Whittmore the brilliant Iqbal scholar from the West has the following to say:³²

In the world of modern Muslim thought he stands alone. His *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* aspires to a place akin to that occupied by al-Ghazali’s *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn* (“Revivification of the Religious Sciences”). His philosophical poetry is regarded by many Muslim scholars as a worthy postscript to the *Diwān* and *Mathnavī* of Jalāluddīn Rūmī.

The claim, however, needs elaboration. But before we start investigating our question with reference to Iqbal let us say something about the perspective that informs our remarks as well as an overview of the path through which Iqbal arrived at his vision rooted in Sufism as a system of repair.

We had the occasion to mention three great conceptual shifts between the traditional, the modern and the postmodern that occurred during our intellectual history. Here we elaborate on it to provide a context to our inquiry. That allows for a brief digression. The present audience, I presume, agrees that with regard to the view of Reality we can speak of the entire Premodern world in the singular and simply assume that a common metaphysical “spine” underlies the differences in the worldviews, the theologies of the classical languages of the human soul, the world’s great religions or wisdom traditions. This is coupled with the claims of all the Premodern civilizations, including the pre-renaissance Western civilization, that people need worldviews, that reliable ones are possible, and that they already exist. It is only Modernity that made the totalizing claim for the truth of a single worldview and Postmodernism which categorically denies the existence or the possibility of reliable worldviews. I will come back shortly to the question of these conceptual shifts between traditional, modern and postmodern but let me first situate Iqbal in the context of our present discussion.

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

Iqbal is the best articulated Muslim response to totalizing claims of Modernity that the Muslim India has produced in the 20th century. His response to the worldview of Modernity has three dimensions:

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

This entire Iqbalian project had its roots in the Islamic Tradition, from which it drew its sap. I realize that is too generalized a statement so I will elucidate it further, using epistemology as my point of entry, to work up to the question that I would like to bring to your attention.

As a point of departure I have selected a event/seminar arranged by the Iqbal Academy Pakistan in collaboration with the University of Cambridge, held at Trinity College, on 19th-20th June, 2008. It was titled “The Contemporary Relevance of Muhammad Iqbal”– *An International Seminar in Cambridge on the Occasion of the 100th Anniversary of Iqbal’s Completion of his Studies in Europe*. The Seminar consisted of three sessions under the themes “The Relevance of Tradition,” “The Promise of Modernity,” and “Religion in the 21st Century.”

It is a well known biographical note that Iqbal spent three years in Europe during 1905-08. He began his graduate studies at the University of Cambridge, went on to the University of Munich to get his PhD and then returned to London to attain a Bar at Law from Lincoln’s Inn. In 1905, he arrived in Cambridge, entering Trinity College as a research scholar as, in the early part of the twentieth century, Cambridge was a renowned centre of Arabic and Persian studies. The European phase of Iqbal’s life is notable for several reasons. During this period, Iqbal gave almost exclusive attention to his studies; never before or after was he to lead such an intense academic life. His devotion showed results– three degrees from three prestigious schools in three years was a remarkable feat by any standard; some thing that none of his contemporaries and fellow students in England– Jinnah, Gandhi, Nehru– managed to accomplish. But that was only the outward part of it. Some thing more profound and important than these feats of academic excellence was realized– a full awareness of the conceptual shift that the enlightenment project and modernity’s world view had brought in the human thought, the damage that it had done to the academia, and the means of repairing the ills. The Seminar mentioned above tried to explore the significance of this important phase of Iqbal’s intellectual career.

His stay in Europe proved to be a crucial turning point in his intellectual development. Even though he was already an accomplished poet and thinker before his departure for Europe, it was only after his return that his work began to display the universalistic characteristics that make it the perfect bridge between the East and the West.

This sets Iqbal apart from acculturated liberal Muslim thinkers for whom exposure to Western ideas becomes an occasion for a wholesale critique of the Islamic tradition. At the same time Iqbal’s immersion in the Western academy gave him the analytical tools and methods he would later use to subject the received Islamic tradition to critical scrutiny. This sets Iqbal apart from dogmatic zealots who see nothing problematic in the received tradition and nothing of value in the modern academy. Iqbal’s constructive-critical engagement with the Islamic tradition in the aftermath of his studies in Europe is complemented by a constructive-critical engagement with modern Western thought.³³

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

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

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

- Iqbal was a man whose thought was focused on God, intensely engaged with life of the Spirit. His entire project, in broad terms, related to the task of restoring God to the public and the private sphere.

- Through his first hand encounter with the paradigm of Modernity in the West, especially at Cambridge, he had developed a deep insight into the worldview of Modernity and the overarching perspective that governed this important conceptual shift brought about in human thought.
- He had a tremendous capability of bringing different, even conflicting, perspective into conversation.
- He was keenly aware of the ills of Modernity and, in a sense, presaged the debates that took the centre stage after the advent of Postmodernism and are even ardently pursued in the present day Academy in the context of the Human Sciences as well as their relationship to Religion and Science. A large part of his poetical and prose works is focused on the deficiencies and shortcomings of the worldview of Modernity and its radical departure from the “human collectivity” with regard to the view of Reality of which we can speak for the entire Premodern world in the singular and may claim that a common metaphysical “spine” underlies the differences in the worldviews, the theologies of the classical languages of the human soul, the world’s great religions or wisdom traditions.
- He was also sensitive to and clearly conscious of the limitations of the sources of wisdom at the disposal of the worldview of Modernity and its inadequacy to map certain regions of Reality, to register certain types/modes of knowledge and to successfully deal with and provide guidance for certain aspects of human life.
- Iqbal has something to offer to philosophy, he has something to offer to science and he has something to offer to religion; to repair the ills in their respective domains by tapping at the sources of wisdom offered by Tradition. That is what makes him relevant today and for the future.

I have referred to the three periods of traditional, modern and postmodern with regard to their respective

conceptual shifts and also the word Modernity. For the rest of my presentation I would use Modernism in place of Modernity. In the wake of its Traditional and Modern periods, the Western world is now generally regarded as having become Postmodern. Both *Modernity* and *Postmodernity* refer to a life-style. *Modernism* and *Postmodernism*, by contrast, suggest an outlook: the basic sense of things that gave rise to *Modernity* and *Postmodernity* in the first place and now reflects its way of life.

Contrasts tend to throw things into relief, so I shall define these terms by contrasting these outlooks with one another; the traditional, the modern and the Postmodern, using epistemology as my point of entry.

Even today, when traditional peoples want to know where they are— when they wonder about the ultimate context in which their lives are set and which has the final say over them— they turn to their sacred texts; or in the case of oral, tribal peoples (what comes to the same thing), to the sacred myths that have been handed down to them by their ancestors. *Modernity* was born when a new source of knowledge was discovered, the scientific method. Because its controlled experiment enabled scientists to prove their hypothesis, and because those proven hypotheses demonstrated that they had the power to change the material world dramatically, Westerners turned from revelation to science for the Big Picture. Intellectual historians tell us that by the 19th century Westerners were already more certain that atoms exist than they were confident of any of the distinctive things the Bible speaks of.

This much is straightforward, but it doesn't explain why Westerners aren't still modern rather than Postmodern, for science continues to be the main support of the Western mind. By headcount, most Westerners probably still *are* modern, but I am thinking of frontier thinkers who chart the course that others follow. These thinkers have ceased to be modern because they have seen through the so-called scientific worldview, recognizing it to be not *scientific* but *scientistic*. They continue to honour science for what it tells

us about nature or the natural order/natural world, but as that is not all that exists, science cannot provide us with a worldview– not a valid one. The most it can show us is half of the world, the half where normative and intrinsic values, existential and ultimate meanings, teleologies, qualities, immaterial realities, and beings that are superior to us do not appear.³⁴

In his second lecture, “The Philosophical Test of the Revelations of Religious Experience”, in *The Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam* Iqbal has made a very perceptive remark:³⁵

There is no doubt that the theories of science constitute trustworthy knowledge, because they are verifiable and enable us to predict and control the events of Nature. But we must not forget that what is called science is not a single systematic view of Reality. It is a mass of sectional views of Reality– fragments of a total experience which do not seem to fit together. Natural Science deals with matter, with life, and with mind; but the moment you ask the question how matter, life, and mind are mutually related, you begin to see the sectional character of the various sciences that deal with them and the inability of these sciences, taken singly, to furnish a complete answer to your question. In fact, the various natural sciences are like so many vultures falling on the dead body of Nature, and each running away with a piece of its flesh. Nature as the subject of science is a highly artificial affair, and this artificiality is the result of that selective process to which science must subject her in the interests of precision. The moment you put the subject of science in the total of human experience it begins to disclose a different character. Thus religion, which demands the whole of Reality and for this reason must occupy a central place in any synthesis of all the data of human experience, has no reason to be afraid of any sectional views of Reality. Natural Science is by nature sectional; it cannot, if it is true to its own nature and function, set up its theory as a complete view of Reality.

Where, then, do we now turn for an inclusive worldview? Postmodernism hasn’t a clue. And this is its deepest definition.³⁶ The generally accepted definition of

Postmodernism now that Jean-Francois Lyotard fixed in place decades ago in *The Postmodern Condition* is, “incredulity toward metanarratives”.³⁷ Having deserted revelation for science, the West has now abandoned the scientific worldview as well, leaving it without replacement. In this it mirrors the current stage of Western science which leaves *nature* unimagined. Before modern science, Westerners accepted Aristotle’s model of the earth as surrounded by concentric, crystalline spheres. Newton replaced that model with his image of a clockwork universe, but Postmodern, quantum-and-relativity science gives us not a third model of nature but no model at all. Alan Wallace’s *Choosing Reality* delineates eight different interpretations of quantum physics, all of which can claim the support of physics’ proven facts.³⁸ A contemporary philosopher described the situation as “*the Reality Market Place*”— you can have as many versions of reality as you like.

Another analogy can pull together all that we have just said and summarize the difference alluded to in these remarks. If we think of traditional peoples as looking out upon the world through the window of revelation (their received myths and sacred texts), the window that they turned to look through in the modern period (science) proved to be stunted. It cuts off at the level of the human nose, which (metaphysically speaking) means that when we look through it our gaze slants downward and we see only things that are inferior to us.³⁹ As for the Postmodern window, it is boarded over and allows no inclusive view whatsoever. In the words of Richard Rorty, “There is no Big Picture.” This analogy is drawn from the works of one of the traditionalist writers, namely, Huston Smith, who is by far the easiest to understand. It is fascinating to note that Iqbal not only mediates between these conflicting views in exactly the same manner by pointing out to the shortcomings and achievements of all the three paradigms objectively but— and that is remarkable— uses the same analogy. Smith or Iqbal never met or read each other! Iqbal agrees that there is a Big Picture and his writings give us to understand that the Postmodern view of the self and its world is in no way nobler than the ones that the

world’s religions proclaim. Postmoderns yield to their dilapidated views, not because they like them, but because they think that reason and human historicity now force them upon us. Iqbal would argue that it is not necessarily the case and the present predicament is the result of a tunnel vision that we have adopted but which really is not the only option for us. Here is Iqbal’s depiction of the conceptual shift that the enlightenment project and modernity’s world view had brought in the human thought, the damage that it had done to the academia. Cultures and their world-views are ruled by their mandarins, the intellectuals and they, as well as their institutions that shape the minds that rule the modern world are unreservedly secular. The poem is addressed to our present day intellectual mandarins, the leaders of the academia.⁴⁰

تیخ مکتب ہے اک عمارت گر شیخ مکتب سے
جس کی صنعت ہے رُوحِ انسانی
نکتہ دلپذیر تیرے لیے کہ گیا ہے حکیم قآنی
”پیش خورشید بر مکش دیوار
خواہی ار صحن خانہ نورانی“

To the Schoolman

*The Schoolman is an architect
The artefact he shapes and moulds is the human soul;
Something remarkable for you to ponder
Has been left by the Sage, Qā’ānī;
“Do not raise a wall in the face of the illuminating Sun
If you wish the courtyard of your house to be filled with
light”*

What does the metaphor of خورشید (the illuminating Sun) in this analogy try to convey which, in the parallel analogy used by Huston Smith, is depicted by the stunted/slanted window of Modernity that resulted in a truncated, tunnel

vision and the Postmodern window, boarded all over, thus precluding the possibility of any world view what so ever! And this is intimately connected to our initial remarks about (فتنة عصر روان), the challenge posed by the modern age of secular modernity and materialism, which Iqbal, like Rūmī, takes up. The word *fitnah* carries the twin meanings of ordeal or trial and crisis and it is a recurrent theme in Iqbal’s works right from the early days of *Bāng i Darā*. Here is a representative couplet from *Zubūr i ‘Ajām*:⁴¹

من از هلال و چلیپا دگر نیندیشم
که فتنة دگری در تعمیر ایام است

*I am no longer concerned about the crescent and the cross,
For the womb of time carries an ordeal of a different kind.*⁴²

What is this (فتنة عصر روان), “an ordeal of a different kind”? A clear picture emerges from the following representative sampling.

A quatrain “Criticism of the Modern Age”⁴³ speaks thus: The modern age is notable for its loss of faith (faith in the twin senses of religion or God-consciousness and certitude or conviction). Despite its claim to bestow freedom and dignity on human beings, it has actually put them in chains.

چه عصر است این که دین فریادی اوست
هزاران بند در آ زادی اوست
زروی آدمیت رنگ و نم برد
غلط نقشی که از بھزادی اوست

*What is this age, which religion laments?
Its freedom comes with a thousand chains.
It has robbed man’s face of brightness and moisture.⁴⁴
The picture its Bihzad⁴⁵ has made is fake.*

In terms of its mindset or worldview we presently live in what has been called the *Age of Anxiety*, and Iqbal, feeling the pulse of the times, looks beyond symptoms to find the prime cause. Through his studies and observation of the modern world Iqbal had come to realize that there

was something wrong with the presiding paradigm or worldview that his age had come to espouse, as his following remark clearly registers:

The modern man with his philosophies of criticism and scientific specialism finds himself in a strange predicament. His Naturalism has given him an unprecedented control over the forces of Nature, but has robbed him of faith in his own future.⁴⁶

The crisis that the world found itself in as it swung on the hinge of the 20th century was located in something deeper than particular ways of organizing political systems and economies. This is how Iqbal perceived it. In different ways, the East and the West were going through a single common crisis whose cause was the spiritual condition of the modern world. That condition is characterized by loss—the loss of religious certainties and of transcendence with its larger horizons. The nature of that loss is strange but ultimately quite logical. When, with the inauguration of the scientific worldview, human beings started considering themselves the bearers of the highest meaning in the world and the measure of everything, meaning began to ebb and the stature of humanity to diminish. The world lost its human dimension, and we began to lose control of it. In the words of F. Schuon:

The world is miserable because men live beneath themselves; the error of modern man is that he wants to reform the world without having either the will or the power to reform man, and this flagrant contradiction, this attempt to make a better world on the basis of a worsened humanity, can only end in the very abolition of what is human, and consequently in the abolition of happiness too. Reforming man means binding him again to Heaven, reestablishing the broken link; it means tearing him away from the reign of the passions, from the cult of matter, quantity and cunning, and reintegrating him into the world of the spirit and serenity, we would even say: into the world of sufficient reason.⁴⁷

In Iqbal’s view, if anything characterizes the modern era, it is a loss of faith in transcendence, in God as an objective reality. It is the age of eclipse of transcendence.

No socio-cultural environment in the pre-Modern times had turned its back on Transcendence in the systematic way that characterized Modernity. The eclipse of transcendence impacts our way of looking at the world, that is, forming a world view, in a far-reaching manner. According to Iqbal's perspective, Transcendence means that there is another reality that is more real, more powerful, and better than this mundane order. The eclipse of transcendence impacted our way of looking at the world, that is, forming a worldview? It was an issue of the greatest magnitude in Iqbal's opinion. He was convinced that whatever transpires in other domains of life— politics, living standards, environmental conditions, interpersonal relationships, the arts— was ultimately dependent on our presiding world view. This is what was wrong with the presiding paradigm or worldview that his age had come to espouse (فتنہ عصرِ روان). In Iqbal's view, Modern Westerners, forsaking clear thinking, allowed themselves to become so obsessed with life's material underpinnings that they had written science a blank cheque; a blank cheque for science's claims concerning what constituted Reality, knowledge and justified belief. This was the cause of our spiritual crisis. It joined other crises as we entered the new century—the environmental crisis, the population explosion, the widening gulf between the rich and the poor.

دو صد دانا درین محفل سخن گفت
سخن نازکتر از برگ سمن گفت
ولی با من بگو آن دیدہ ور کیست؟
کہ خاری دید و احوال چمن گفت

The Man who saw a thorn and spoke of the garden?...⁴⁸

That science had changed our world beyond recognition went without saying, but it was the way that it had changed our worldview that concerned Iqbal. More importantly, the two worldviews were contending for the mind of the future. The scientific worldview is a wasteland for the human spirit. It can not provide us the where withal for a meaningful life. How much, then, was at

stake? That was the fundamental question; and it surfaced again and again throughout his prose and poetry.

پنہاں تیرے نقاب تری جلوہ گاہ ہے
ظاہر پرست محفلِ نو کی نگاہ ہے
آئی نئی ہوا چمن ہست و بود میں
اے دردِ عشق! اب نہیں لذت نمود میں

یہ انجمن ہے سُستیہ نظارہٴ مجاز
مقصد تری نگاہ کا خلوتِ سرائے راز
ہر دل مئے خیال کی مستی سے چُور ہے
کچھ اور آج کل کے کلیموں کا طور ہے⁴⁹

عہدِ نو برق ہے، آتشِ زن ہر خرمن ہے
ایمن اس سے کوئی صحرا نہ کوئی گلشن ہے
اس نئی آگ کا اقوام کہن ایندھن سے
ملت ختمِ رُسُلِ شعلہ بہ پیراہن ہے⁵⁰

پھر یہ غوغا ہے کہ لاساقی شراب خانہ ساز
دل کے ہنگامے مے مغرب نے کر ڈالے خموش⁵¹

The “home-made wine” شراب خانہ ساز is an age old metaphor for Sufism/spirituality/inward dimension of the Islamic tradition.

یقین، مثلِ خلیلِ آتشِ نشینی
یقین، اللہِ مستی، خودِ گزینی
سن، اے تہذیبِ حاضر کے گرفتار
غلامی سے بتر ہے بے یقینی

*Faith, like Abraham, sits down in the fire;*⁵²

*To have faith is to be drawn into God and to be oneself.*⁵³

Listen, you captive of modern civilization,

*To lack faith is worse than slavery!*⁵⁴

فکرِ فرنگ پیشِ مجاز آورد سبوح
 پینای کور و مستِ تماشای رنگِ دلبوست
 مشرقِ خراب و مغرب از آن پیشتر خراب
 عالم تمام مرده و بی ذوق جستجوست⁵⁵

In Iqbal’s view a worldview is an inclusive outlook, and it is useful to distinguish its social, cosmological, and metaphysical components. The social component of past worldviews included, at times, justifications for slavery and the divine right of kings, while its cosmological components described the physical universe as understood by the science of the day– Ptolemaic astronomy or whatever. The contents of those two components obviously change, so are not perennial. The perennial, unchanging philosophy is metaphysical, or more precisely, ontological. It concerns such matters as the distinction between the Absolute and the relative, and the doctrine of the degrees of reality that is consequent thereon.

Following this threefold criteria I would like say a few words about the Metaphysical, Cosmological and Sociological achievements/shortcomings of Tradition, Modernity and Postmodernism, respectively. When we align these problems with the three⁵⁶ major periods in human history: the traditional period,⁵⁷ the Modern period,⁵⁸ and Postmodernism,⁵⁹ it is obvious that each of these periods poured more of its energies into, and did better by, one of life’s inescapable problems than did the other two. Specifically, Modernity gave us our view of *nature*,⁶⁰ Postmodernism is tackling *social injustices* more resolutely than people previously did. This leaves *worldviews*– metaphysics as distinct from cosmology, which restricts itself to the empirical universe. In Iqbal’s view it is our ancestors, whose accomplishments on that front have not been improved upon.⁶¹

It is the age of eclipse of transcendence. This is what was wrong with the presiding paradigm or worldview that his age had come to espouse (تقنہ عصر روان). This is the conceptual shift that the enlightenment project and

modernity’s world view had brought in the human thought, the damage that it had done to the academia. And, above all, Sufism is the system of repair. Iqbal is in complete harmony with the traditionalist writers on all these points as the readers acquainted with the traditionalist perspective can easily discern. These are, however, general observations. Before making a comparison with regard to the specifics we need to say something more about Iqbal’s “interpretive community”, his “system of repair”. We had the occasion to quote Dr. Manzūr Aḥmad that Iqbal had a Sufi “ontology which deals with the nature of reality... an epistemology which discusses the origin, modes and faculties of knowledge and the issue of soundness and inaccuracy of knowledge.... ethics, a philosophy of good and evil, a psychology”. Let us now have a few illustrative examples in this regard. Our point of entry was epistemology; so let us continue with it and build up our inquiry with the help of an epistemological problem first.

An important question for worldviews is whether human beings have faculties, analogous to their sense receptors, for detecting immaterial, spiritual objects. Kant thought not, and epistemology has largely gone along with his opinion; but religion disagrees. There is no objective way of adjudicating the dispute, for each side has its own definition of objectivity. For science, common sense, and Postmodernism, objective knowledge, where it is countenanced, is knowledge that commends itself to everyone because it turns, finally, on sense reports that people agree on. Religious epistemology, on the other hand, defines objective knowledge as adequation to the real. When the Real in question is spiritual in character, special faculties are required. These need to be developed and kept in working order.

The instrument of contemplation is the intellect, but not that intellect with which we are familiar in our ordinary lives. In the modern view, man apprehends the objective world through his senses and he understands it or ‘makes sense of it’ by means of a mental faculty which may be called either reason or intellect; he is not admitted to have any other means of obtaining knowledge. This view is

completely opposed to the traditional doctrines of the East⁶² and Sufi epistemology as it is to those of medieval Europe.

Let us now turn our attention to Iqbal’s view and look for the perspective in which it is rooted. Here is a representative reference from *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* though one can add a long list of references from his Urdu/ Persian poetry and Urdu/ English writings and correspondence. One may note in passing here that both his Urdu/ Persian poetry and *The Reconstruction* are replete with concrete examples of Iqbal’s universal vision. Most of his major philosophical work, *The Reconstruction*, can be read as an ecumenical text in that what is being defended, promoted and expounded very often is religious thought as such and not just Islamic religious thought.⁶³ This is most clearly evident in his final, Lecture 7, entitled ‘Is Religion Possible?’

The whole of this chapter is a refutation of one of the most serious critiques mentioned above to which religion— all religion— has been subjected in the modern period, that of Immanuel Kant. Given the necessary licence of a little exaggeration, one can say that every theologian, Sufi theoretician, philosopher and thinker in the post-Kantian age had to settle his account with Kant before proceeding with his formulations. Even Renè Guènon, the leading figure of the traditionalist school, who rarely followed the “scholarly/Orientalistic” style of references and footnotes in his works and always maintained a different and higher level of discourse, made an exception for Kant at various places.⁶⁴ F. Schuon, an other outstanding figure of the traditionalist school, also made his response to Kant in his early writing career, in his article “Reflections on Ideological Sentimentalism”⁶⁵ and, during the course of his later expositions. He has made his observations on the epistemological perspective (anomaly) from various angles. Not only his overall critique of Kantianism is in complete agreement with what Iqbal had to say three decades earlier, and which the readers could have glimpsed through the verses and references made earlier, but many specific arguments, especially that of the

collective human experience/witness of all ages and climes that he had advanced carried a striking similarity with Iqbal. Let us first have a look at his formulation of the (تَنْزِہ) (عصر روان) in the field of epistemology, given in the article mentioned above.

If we take the example of a doctrine which is apparently completely intellectual and inaccessible to the emotions namely Kantianism, considered as the archetype of theories seemingly divorced from all poetry we shall have no difficulty in discovering that its starting point or “dogma” is reducible to a gratuitous reaction against all that lies beyond the reach of reason acting alone; it voices therefore, *a priori* an instinctive revolt against truths which are incomprehensible rationally and which are considered annoying on account of their very inaccessibility to ordinary reasoning. All the rest is nothing but dialectical scaffolding, ingenious or “brilliant” if you wish, but contrary to truth. What is crucial in Kantianism is not its *pro domo* logic and its few very limited lucidities, but the predominantly “irrational” desire to limit the intelligence which it voices; this results in a dehumanization of intelligence and opens the door to all the inhuman aberrations of our century.⁶⁶ In short, if the state of man earns the possibility of surpassing oneself intellectually, Kantianism is the negation of all that is essentially and integrally human.⁶⁷ Formerly people spoke childishly of intelligent matters; in our time they excel in speaking intelligently of stupidities. In those days they made mistakes on contingent matters, when they did make mistakes, and not on essentials; in our era it is on the essential that people are mistaken, while holding positive opinions on contingent things.A characteristic tendency of our times– due to the fact that “the gods” have been eliminated– is that everything is crystallized in philosophy; everything becomes an article of faith, even the most innocuous things, even any kind of sentimental reaction or infirmity of the intelligence or will. It is as if one’s legs, tired of being what they are by nature, began to think according to their own perspective and assumed for themselves, by the mere fact that they thought, a total and central character.By a similar train of thought, not to follow the extravagancies of the day, be it in philosophy,

literature, art, or simply in one’s manner of living, is called to “desert our own times.” But what people forget is that our own times desert truth and all real values. We are told that nothing can or should be out of step with our times, as if they were not out of step with God, and as if it were possible to be out of step indefinitely with God, truth and the nature of things, all three.....Throughout the ages religions have inculcated in man the consciousness of what he really is, of his fundamental majesty, coupled with his actual imperfection and impotence; man accepted this message because he still possessed a natural intuition of his situation in the universe. Now the peculiarity of man desirous of embodying our times is the need to feel at ease in an imperfection that has become for him practically a perfection of its own..... From the standpoint of eschatological realities, to which nothing can remain immune in the final reckoning, all this rationalist-sentimentalist controversy would seem like a sort of literary game doomed to instantaneous evaporation in the abysses that lie beyond the grave.

Later on his fundamental critique of the Kantian paradigm appeared in his “Rationalism Real and Apparent”⁶⁸ where he elaborated upon this extremely important issue of epistemology.

This crucial issue has been dealt extensively in *The Reconstruction* but the essence of his argument against Kant is summed up in this sentence:⁶⁹

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

What Iqbal means by ‘religious experts’ is clearly the mystics of the different religions,⁷⁰ to which he refers as providers of the most important type of evidence which can refute Kant. Here we see a clear sign of his ecumenism, his recognition of the equivalence of the mystics of all faiths, united in their affirmation of a unique

absolute, Reality, accessible not through reason unaided, but through spiritual intuition and mystical disclosure.

As M. Mir has noted, “The Ultimate Reality reveals its symbols both in the external world and in man’s inner self and may, therefore, be called the immanent Infinite. Reflective observation of nature is an indirect, rational mode of reaching that Reality; intuition is a direct, non-rational mode of reaching it. The latter mode, whose validity is attested by the world’s revealed and mystic literature, is no less natural and genuine and no less effective in yielding objective, concrete, and real knowledge. The two types of knowledge must, however, supplement each other to make a complete vision of Reality possible.”⁷¹

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

Let us also look at a representative verse with regard to epistemology:⁷²

سے ذوقِ تجلی بھی اسی خاک میں پہاں
غافل! تو نرا صاحبِ ادراک نہیں ہے

The taste for (receiving the) self-disclosure is also inherent in this dust

O heedless soul, you possess much more than mere rationality

That is certainly not Avicennian, or post-Avicennian epistemology. It does not belong squarely to the transcendent theosophical synthesis worked out by Mulla

Ṣadrā. If this is out of the pale of the philosophic discourse it does not, for the same token, fit in the Sunni and Shi’ite Kalām narratives. It, obviously, comes from the Islamic wisdom tradition, more specifically, through its rich and illustrious tradition of wisdom poetry (often termed as Rational-Spirituality/ trans-Rational Sufi metaphysics). As S. H. Nasr has observed, “The most profound metaphysics in Islam is to be found in the writings of the Sufi masters, especially those who have chosen to deal with the theoretical aspects of the spiritual way, or with that *scientia sacra* called gnosis (*al-‘irfān*). A more general treatment of the meaning of philosophy in Islam would have to include Sufism, kalām, *uṣūl* and some of the other Islamic sciences as well.”⁷³

In the perspective of Sufi metaphysics, the main source of Iqbal’s inspiration, the phenomenon of consciousness, discerned in the world in a hierarchical manner, is a manifestation of the Divine Consciousness. The most central and total manifestation of the Divine Consciousness, a self-disclosure (*tajallī*) of the Divine Attribute of Knowledge (*‘ilm*), is the human intelligence. In the same way, it is only man, which has the gift of speech because he alone among earthly creatures is made in the image of God⁷⁴ in a direct and integral manner. It is the summit and perfection of human intelligence and, therefore, of human consciousness. Speech is as it were the immaterial, though sensory, body of our will and our understanding.⁷⁵

The significant and noteworthy point here is that the crux of Iqbal’s argument developed in refutation of Kant is that he is expanding the frontiers of the realm of consciousness and emphasized the fact that consciousness should not be reduced to rationality alone i.e. discursive thought⁷⁶ or reason severed from its transcendent noetic roots,⁷⁷ since, to borrow the words of Iqbal, “The Total reality.....has other ways of invading our consciousness”;⁷⁸ there are “non-rational modes of consciousness”;⁷⁹ “there is the possibility of unknown levels of consciousness”.⁸⁰

In this regard we would like to draw the attention of our readers to what we had occasion to mention with regard to Iqbal's view on the sectional nature of science. It would not be a surprise to note that here, as in other cases, Iqbal closely follows Rūmī in what he had to say on the sectional nature of science. Not only the content of the argument but also the image of the vulture employed to portray the limitations of scientific/modern epistemology—“sectional views of Reality”— is unmistakably borrowed from Rūmī. I would like to draw the attention of the readers to the following lines from the *Mathnawī*.⁸¹

عقل جزوی کرگس آمد ای مُتعل
 پَرِّ او با جیفه خواری مُتصل
 نقل ابدالان چو پَرِّ جبرئیل
 می پرد تا ظل سدره میل میل

*The partial intellect is a vulture, you poor wretch.
 Its wings are tied up with carrion eating.
 The intellect of the saints is like Gabriel's wing,
 it flies, mile by mile, to the shadow of the Lote Tree.*

In the sphere of Mars of his magnum opus *Javīd Nāma*, Iqbal has addressed this question of epistemology through an interesting extended metaphor.⁸²

خاکیان را دل به بندِ آب و گل	اندرین عالم بدن در بندِ دل
چون دلی در آب و گل منزل کند	هر چه می خواهد به آب و گل کند
مستی و ذوق و سُرور از حکم جان	سم را غیب و حضور از حکم جان
در جهانِ ما دو تا آمد وجود	جان و تن آن بی نمود آن با نمود
خاکیان را جان و تن مرغ و قفس	کرِ مرغی یک اندیش است و بس
چون کسی را میرسد روزِ فراق	چست ترمی گردد از سوزِ فراق
یک دو روزی پیشتر از آن مرگ	می کند پیش کسان اعلانِ مرگ
جانان پرورده اندام نیست	لا جرم خو کرده اندام نیست
تن بخویش اندر کشیدن مردن است	از جهان در خود رمیدن مردن است

برتر از فکر تو آمد این سخن زانکه جان تست محکوم بدن

*Earth’s dwellers– their hearts are bound to water and clay;
in this world, body is in bondage to heart.*

*When a heart makes its lodging in water and clay,
with water and clay it makes what it wills;
intoxication, joy, happiness are at the disposal of the soul,
the soul determines the body’s absence and presence.*

***In our world, existence is a duality,
soul and body, the one invisible, the other visible;
for terrestrials, soul and body are bird and cage,
whereas the thought of Martians is unitive.***⁸³

*When the day of separation arrives for any,
he becomes livelier from the flame of separation;
a day or two before the day of death
he proclaims his decease to his fellows.*

*Their soul is not nourished by the body,
therefore it has not become habituated to the body.*

*Death is to draw in the body,
death is to flee from the world into one’s self.*

Read the foregoing verses with these lines from F. Schuon’s *Gnosis– Divine Wisdom* and this is only a representative sample from his recurrent themes.

The formal world being made up of dualities, the Intellect, once it has been projected by virtue of its ‘fall’ into material and psychic substances, is split into two poles, the one intellectual and the other existential; it is divided into intelligence and existence, into brain and body. In the Intellect, intelligence is existence, and inversely; distinction of aspects does not in itself imply a scission. Scission occurs only in the world of forms.....The brain is to the body what the heart is to brain and body taken together. The body and the brain are as it were projected into the current of forms; the heart is as it were immersed in the immutability of Being. Body and brain are so to speak the heart exteriorized; their bipolarization is explained by the fact of their exteriorization.”⁸⁴

The foregoing related to the question of epistemology. Let us now look at a representative sample for ontology.

نگہ پیدا کر اے غافل تجلی عین فطرت ہے
کہ اپنی موج سے بیگانہ رہ سکتا نہیں دریا

*Secure some insight, O heedless soul, self-disclosure (or manifestation) rises from the depths of the Divine Nature Because the sea can not remain indifferent to its waves*⁸⁵

The metaphor of sea/river/mountain stream and its waves/drops/dispersal is typical of Sufi metaphysical discourse which Iqbal used frequently in a variety of manners. For a change, I quote here from his private conversation that has recently been unearthed from the old journal of memoir of his closest friend Ch. Muhammad Hussain. It leaves us in no doubt as to where his formulations should be placed. The two friends are discussing various poems and the conversation turns to the subject of the Principle and its manifestations. “The second last stanza of the poem “Falsafa i Gham”,⁸⁶ which is an exposition of the philosophy of death, nicely portrays the matter of ‘individualization’ using the analogy of a mountain stream. Unity manifests Itself in multiplicity of individualities and then, metaphorically speaking, “returns” to Its state,⁸⁷ this is beautifully represented in (our) poetic imagery.” Then Iqbal remarked that ‘the same theme was presented at other places as in the poem “Payām”⁸⁸ in *Payām i Mashriq* as well as in “Wālida Marhūma kī Yād Maen”⁸⁹ in *Bāng i Darā*.”⁹⁰

جہان از خود بدون آوردہ کیست؟
جہان جس جلوہ ی بی پردہ کیست؟
مرا گوئی کہ از شیطان حذر کن
گو با یقین کہ او پروردہ کیست؟⁹¹

*Who created the world out of his own self?
Whose unveiled glory does its beauty represent?
You say to me, ‘Beware of Satan!’
But tell me: Who nurtured him.*⁹²

خودى را از وجود حق وجودے
 خودى را از نمود حق نمودے
 كجا دانم كه اين تابنده گویہ
 بودى اگر دريا نبودى⁹³

*God is the ground of Khudi’s Existence
 Khudi’s own manifestation is due to God’s.
 Where would this luminous pearl have been
 Had no ocean existed?*⁹⁴

The reason that this sounds like Ibn Sīnā’s emanationist ontology (*ibtihāj al-nafs*) is not that it is any closer to the perspectives of the philosophers of the Kalām authorities. The reason was that not only the “opposition” of Kalām to *falsafah*, far from destroying *falsafah*, influenced its later course and in much of the Sunni world absorbed it into itself after the 7th/13th century, with the result that such a figure as Ibn Khaldūn was to call this late Kalām a form of philosophy. Ibn Khaldūn had remarked that it was almost impossible to distinguish between *falsafah* (philosophy) and *kalām al-muta’akhhirīn* (the later day theological discourse).⁹⁵ In the words of S. H. Nasr, “*Falsafah* in Islam satisfied a certain need for causality among certain types of men, provided the necessary logical and rational tools for the cultivation and development of many of the arts and sciences, enabled Muslims to encounter and assimilate the learning of many other cultures, in its interactions with Kalām left a deep effect upon the latter’s future course, and finally became a handmaid to illumination and gnosis, thus creating a bridge between the rigour of logic and the ecstasy of spiritual union.”⁹⁶

To come back to our main inquiry, Iqbal’s ontology is also squarely rooted in the Islamic wisdom tradition or Sufi metaphysics. In F. Schuon’s succinct phrases:

God radiates. It is in the nature of the Good to wish to communicate itself, and it is for this reason that God created the world and man; this is the whole mystery of *Maya*.⁹⁷

نگہ پیدا کر اے غافل تجلی عین فطرت ہے

Here is a representative reference from *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* that corroborates the verse mentioned earlier.

I have conceived the Ultimate Reality as an Ego; and I must add now that from the Ultimate Ego only egos proceed. The creative energy of the Ultimate Ego, in whom deed and thought are identical, functions as ego-unities. The world, in all its details, from the mechanical movement of what we call the atom of matter to the free movement of thought in the human ego, is the self-revelation of the ‘Great I am’.⁹⁸ Every atom of Divine energy, however low in the scale of existence, is an ego. But there are degrees in the expression of egohood. Throughout the entire gamut of being runs the gradually rising note of egohood until it reaches its perfection in man. That is why the Qur’ān declares the Ultimate Ego to be nearer to man than his own neck-vein.⁹⁹ Like pearls do we live and move and have our being in the perpetual flow of Divine life.¹⁰⁰

The true Infinite does not exclude the finite; it embraces the finite without effacing its finitude, and explains and justifies its being.¹⁰¹

Keeping in view the above mentioned “the self-revelation of the ‘Great I am’”, (*Innī ana Allāh*) which is but one representative quote from Iqbal’s ontological formulations, the readers are invited to read the following lines from René Guènon:¹⁰²

If we now consider Universal Being, which is represented by the principal point in its indivisible unity, and of which all beings in so far as they are manifested in Existence are really no more than “participations”, it can be said to polarize into subject and attribute without having its unity affected thereby. The proposition of which it is at once subject and attribute then takes the form: “Being is Being”. This is the actual enunciation of what logicians call the “principle of identity”; but, in this form, its real scope clearly transcends the domain of logic, and is properly and primarily an ontological proposition, whatever applications in different orders may be extracted from it. It may also be said to express the relation of Being as subject (That which is) to Being as attribute (That which It is), and further, since

Being-subject is the Knower and Being-attribute (or object) is the Known, this relation is Knowledge itself ; but, at the same time, it is a relation of identity; absolute Knowledge is therefore actual identity, and all true knowledge, being a participation therein, also implies identity in so far as it is effective. It should be added that as the relation draws its reality solely from the two terms it connects, and as these two are in fact only one, it follows that all three elements (Knower, Known and Knowledge) are truly one only;¹⁰³ this can be expressed by saying that “Being knows Itself by Itself”. The traditional value of the formula that has just been expressed appears clearly from the fact that it is found in the Hebrew Bible, in the account of God’s manifestation to Moses in the Burning Bush. ‘When Moses asks what is His Name, He replies: *Eheieh asher Eheieh*, which is usually translated “I am Who I am” (or “I am That I am”), but the most exact rendering of which is “Being is Being”.

M. Mir has very pertinently observed that, “It is my impression that *The Reconstruction*, in its entirety, represents the detailed working out of a single master idea, tersely expressed by Iqbal in the phrase ‘the immanent Infinite’ (I. 5).”¹⁰⁴ And who, above all, owns the idea of the ‘the immanent Infinite’; the Sufi metaphysicians!

کرا جوئی چرا در پیچ و تابی
کہ او پیدا است تو زیر نقابی
تلاش او کنی جز خود بینی
تلاش خود کنی جز او نیابی¹⁰⁵

The basic question is “What does it mean to be human?” What is a human being? A body? Certainly, but anything else? A personality that includes mind, memories, and propensities that have derived from a unique trajectory of life-experiences? This, too, but anything more? Some say no, but Iqbal, in the vein of all spiritualities, disagrees. Underlying the human self and animating it is a reservoir of being that never dies, is never exhausted, and is unrestricted in consciousness and bliss. This infinite center of every life, this hidden self, is no less than the Godhead. Body, personality, and this infinite center– a human self is not completely accounted for until

all three are noted. That was not only Iqbal’s fundamental position, as reflected in this quatrain, but the shared “anthropocosmic” vision of all wisdom traditions of the world.¹⁰⁶

Iqbal recognized that this hidden self, the Infinite within, is called by many names but all point to a single Reality. Hindus call it Brahman that is “End of all love-longing.”¹⁰⁷ vouchsafing the “unshakeable deliverance of the heart”¹⁰⁸ in Buddhism which Christianity terms as “Beauty so ancient and so new,”¹⁰⁹ For the Jews it is “Eternal”¹¹⁰ which, in Islam, is “closer to us than our jugular veins,”¹¹¹

Question could be asked that if this is true and we really are infinite in our being, why is this not apparent? Why do we not act accordingly? The answer, Iqbal would say, lies in the depth at which the Eternal is buried under the almost impenetrable mass of distractions, false assumptions, and self-regarding instincts that comprise our surface selves and prevent us from realizing true universality. A lamp can be covered with dust and dirt to the point of obscuring its light completely. The problem life poses for the human self is to cleanse the dross of its being to the point where its infinite center can shine forth in full display and transcendence comes into sharp focus.

And this leads us to psychology but I would venture into it here. I will allow M. Mir to make the point here. “Surprisingly, however, consciousness, which is central to human personality, never became a serious subject with Muslim scholastics. Devotional Sufism alone approached the unity of inner experience, recognized by the Qur’an as one of the three sources of knowledge— history and nature being the other two. The mystic Hallaj’s statement ‘I am the creative truth’, when properly interpreted, signifies not the drop’s merging into the ocean, but the subsistence of the finite human ego in a profounder being.”¹¹² The actual quotation of *The Reconstruction* is as follows.

Devotional Sufism alone tried to understand the meaning of the unity of inner experience which the Qur’an declares to be one of the three sources of knowledge,¹¹³ the other two being History and Nature. The development of this

experience in the religious life of Islam reached its culmination in the well-known words of Ḥallāj— ‘I am the creative truth.’ The true interpretation of his experience, therefore, is not the drop slipping into the sea, but the realization and bold affirmation in an undying phrase of the reality and permanence of the human ego in a profounder personality. The phrase of Ḥallāj seems almost a challenge flung against the *Mutakallimūn*. The difficulty of modern students of religion, however, is that this type of experience, though perhaps perfectly normal in its beginnings, points, in its maturity, to unknown levels of consciousness. Ibn Khaldūn, long ago, felt the necessity of an effective scientific method to investigate these levels.¹¹⁴ Modern psychology has only recently realized the necessity of such a method, but has not yet been able to go beyond the discovery of the characteristic features of the mystic levels of consciousness.¹¹⁵ Not being yet in possession of a scientific method to deal with the type of experience on which such judgements as that of Ḥallāj are based, we cannot avail ourselves of its possible capacity as a knowledge-yielding experience. Nor can the concepts of theological systems, draped in the terminology of a practically dead metaphysics, be of any help to those who happen to possess a different intellectual background.¹¹⁶

In the higher Sufism of Islam unitive experience is not the finite ego effacing its own identity by some sort of absorption into the Infinite Ego; it is rather the Infinite passing into the loving embrace of the finite.¹¹⁷ As Rūmī says:

Divine knowledge is lost in the knowledge of the saint! And how is it possible for people to believe in such a thing?¹¹⁸

One can continue showing Iqbal’s perspective, that was rooted in Sufism, on eschatology, soteriology, ethics and so on but that would be beyond the confines of this article. The upshot of the argument is as follows. “*The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Iqbal’s philosophical *magnum opus*, bears the mark of a brilliant intellect that is seriously engaged with the vast and diverse Western and Islamic philosophical and literary traditions, offering a keen analysis of issues and often

presenting an original synthesis of ideas.... Iqbal’s aim in the book is to meet ‘the demand for a scientific form of religious knowledge... by attempting to reconstruct Muslim religious philosophy with due regard to the philosophical tradition of Islam and the more recent developments in the various domains of human knowledge’. (pp. xxi-ii) In his view, the modern mind, with its ‘habits of concrete thought’, is unable to re-live ‘that special type of inner experience on which religious faith ultimately rests’ (p. xxi), and so it needs to be approached on terms that are familiar to it. Furthermore, Muslims ought to take a positive, if critical, attitude towards modern developments in the field of knowledge (p. xxii). Sufism once did ‘good work in shaping and directing the evolution of religious experience in Islam’, but its ‘later-day representatives, owing to their ignorance of the modern mind, have become absolutely incapable of receiving any fresh inspiration from modern thought and experience’, and are consequently unable to offer a method suited to the modern mind (p. xxi). **It is this deficiency that Iqbal hopes to supply to some extent.**

There is a long and surprising list of striking parallels between Iqbal and the traditionalist writers but that makes the subject of a similar but separate article. I would present a few of these here and then end on a personal note, not unrelated to the question of Sufism, Iqbal and his affinities with the traditionalist school.

F. Schuon:

All civilizations are in decline, but in different ways; the decline of the East is passive and that of the West is active. The fault of the East in decline is that it no longer thinks; that of the West is that it thinks too much and thinks wrongly. The East is sleeping over truths; the West is living in errors.¹¹⁹

نہ دیر میں نہ حرم میں خودی کی بیداری
کہ خاوراں میں ہے قوموں کی رُوح تریاکی¹²⁰

ضمیرِ مغرب ہے تاجرانہ، ضمیرِ مشرق ہے راہبانہ
وہاں دگرگوں ہے لحظہ لحظہ، یہاں بدلتا نہیں زمانہ¹²¹

F. Schuon:

In a certain, external, sense the great social and political evil of the West is mechanization; it is the machine which most directly engenders the great evils from which the world today is suffering. The machine is characterized, broadly speaking, by the use of iron, of fire and of invisible forces. Nothing is more chimerical than to speak of the wise use of machines, of their serving the human spirit, for it is in the very nature of mechanization to reduce men to slavery and to devour them entirely, leaving them with nothing human, nothing beyond the animal, nothing beyond the collective. The reign of the machine has succeeded that of iron or rather it has given to it its most sinister expression. **Man, who created the machine, ends by becoming its creature.**¹²²

ہے دل کے لیے موت مشینوں کی حکومت
احساسِ مرّت کو کچل دیتے ہیں آلات¹²³

بر طبعیت دیو ماشین چہرہ نیست
آسمانہا از دھاخا تیرہ نیست¹²⁴

دانی از افرنک و از کار فرنگ	تا کجا در قید زئار فرنگ
زخم از و ، نشتر ازو ، سوزن ازو	ما و جوی خون و امید زفو
خود بدانی پادشاہی ، قاہری است	اہری در عصر ما سوداگری است
تنہ دکان شریک تخت و تاج	از تجارت نفع و از شاہی خراج
آن جہانبانی کہ ہم سوداگر است	بر زبانش خیر و اندر دل شر است
گر تو میدانی حسابش را درست	از حریرش نرم تر کپاس تست
بی نیاز از کارگاہ او گذر	در زمستان پوستین او مخر
کشتن بی حرب و ضرب آئین اوست	مرگہا در گردش ماشین اوست ¹²⁵

Iqbal:

Thus, wholly overshadowed by the results of his intellectual activity, the modern man has ceased to live soulfully, i.e. from within. In the domain of thought he is living in open conflict with himself; and in the domain of economic and political life he is living in open conflict with others. He finds himself unable to control his ruthless egoism and his infinite gold-hunger which is gradually killing all higher striving in him and bringing him nothing but life-weariness. Absorbed in the ‘fact’, that is to say, the optically present source of sensation, he is entirely cut off from the unplumbed depths of his own being.¹²⁶

The list can be greatly expanded but I would conclude here by recording a personal incident that is revealing for the theme that we have discussed so far. A couple of months back I received a message from a relation who had harboured certain misgivings about the traditionalist school and the practices and method of Sufism. The gentleman quoted the following verse¹²⁷ from Iqbal, with an obvious malicious glee, and then insinuated that, according to the Iqbalian lights all that you Sufis do is an exercise in futility unless.....

یہ ذکرِ نیم شبی، یہ مراستے، یہ سُرور
تری خودی کے نگہاں یہ نہیں تو کچھ بھی نہیں

Here is what I wrote in response and that would also be my concluding remark.

In this verse Iqbal is addressing a perennial question of all spirituality, not just Sufism, namely, relationship of spiritual practice to character and activity. If one ponders well and makes sufficient effort, a beautiful account is given in the text of Frithjof Schuon (Shaikh ‘Isā Nūr al-Dīn). It is included in Some Texts of First Magnitude. Iqbal is here, as on other numerous places in his poetically mediated thought, addresses a perennial question of all spirituality, not just Sufism, though it serves as his immediate intellectual paradigm. In poetry one proceeds and works with the resources and medium of a specific tradition, both

literary and wisdom tradition, and then, if one is a really great poet, rises to a level of universality that is a requirement of all great poetry and art and addresses basic human— not Hindu/Muslim or Pakistani/non-Pakistani— questions that are shared by all humans. Poetry of first magnitude or great poetry itself works as a bridge and with inevitable particularities always carries an aspect of universality. It brings you face to face with questions that are truly perennial human questions and not just Muslim or Christian or Hindu questions; who am I? What does it mean to be human? Where have I come from? Where am I going? What is this universe and how am I related to it? Great poetry may seem grounded in a certain particular idiom or a specific universe of discourse but it always opens out onto the universal. Let me illustrate it with reference to T. S. Eliot whom I have just mentioned. *Ash Wednesday* derives its title from the Catholic ritual of the same name— a ritual that devout Catholics still do in Pakistan as well as some of their counterparts among the Muslim ascetics. But the poem speaks to a universal human question, the essential question of the transience of human life and its destiny beyond the grave.

Simply put, Iqbal is saying the same thing in his poetic style that Shaikh ʿĪsā Nūr al-Dīn, and other spiritual Masters before and after him, have always emphasized that *dhikr* and virtue are intertwined. Invocation has its extension in right Activity and it has to have its prolongation in character by building up virtue. Shaikh ʿĪsā Nūr al-Dīn is much more austere and uncompromising as compared to Iqbal when he says that one without the other is hypocrisy or that one without the other is heresy! Here is the Text:¹²⁸

Truth is what one must absolutely accept. And when it is a question of the total Truth, one must accept it totally, that is with all that we are: with the intelligence, with the will, with love. Certitude, initiative, happiness.

Now this total acceptance of the Truth is Faith. To say that an acceptance is total is to say that it takes place in our Heart, on which depend our other faculties. And to say that

an acceptance engages our Heart is to say, precisely, that it engages all that we are, thus our activity and our character. Consequently it is impossible to have Faith without acting in consequence or without possessing the qualities that conform to Faith, thus to the Truth that determines it. "Be ye perfectas your Father in Heaven is perfect."

Among all possible actions, the one which depends most directly on the Truth, and which by that fact manifests Faith most immediately, is Prayer, and the essence of Prayer is the Name of God, hence the Invocation. To accept the Truth is to have Faith, and to have Faith is to invoke God for man alone is endowed with an intelligence capable of absoluteness or of transcendence, and it is this which the gift of speech manifests.

But the Heart is not prolonged only in our activity, it is also prolonged in our character; and if Truth and Faith compel our activity to spiritual and saving Work, they equally compel our character to spiritual and sanctifying Virtue. For Work is nothing without Virtue, or without the intention of Virtue, just as Truth, without our Faith, remains a dead letter. Conversely, Faith is nothing without Truth, and Virtue is nothing without Work; the sufficient reason for Faith is evidently Truth, and the inseparable complement of Virtue is the Work of Truth. Faith without Truth is heresy; Knowledge without Faith is hypocrisy. Work without Virtue is pride, and Virtue without Work is vanity; for sincerity of Virtue calls forth Work, and perfection of Work calls forth Virtue.

I have divined what underlies your remarks but I am doubtful whether you fully understand what Iqbal is really referring to. *Khudī*, Iqbal’s specific metaphor to describe the human condition, is of crucial importance here, and there is the catch. People have all sorts of weird notions about it and I am tired of explaining it in emails. Just keep in mind that here Iqbal is using it in the sense that Dr. Martin Lings (Shaikh Abū Bakr Sirāj al-Dīn) had used in his books. A representative quote, relatively easier to assimilate is given from his brief book *Mecca*¹²⁹ where he speaks of the Arabs forgetting that all human character traits are rooted in God, hence ignoring transcendence:

No socio-cultural environment in the pre-Modern times had turned its back on Transcendence in the systematic way that characterized Modernity. The Arabs of the times of the Prophet had many dormant virtues and they had principles. Their principles were lacking in height, confined to the horizontal plane, without any consciousness of the relationship between human virtues and the Divine Qualities of which they are the reflections. None the less, human virtues cannot exist without their archetypes, which is another way of saying that in these men the apparently missing link was not absent but dormant; and inevitably the degree of dormancy varied from man to man. The prophetic witness triggered its awakening.

I would also suggest that you read the few relevant pages from W. C. Chitticks’s *Vision of Islam* which is the best commentary on Iqbal’s key concepts.

There is a widespread misunderstanding that Iqbal was hostile, or at least ambivalent, toward Sufism and, on a different plane, his perspective is at the antipodes of the traditionalist writers. It has been the burden of my remarks that this is not the case.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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- ¹ A. J. Arberry, *Aspects of Islamic Civilization– As Depicted in the Original Texts*, Suhail Academy, Lahore, 2005, p.
- ² Some of the contemporary scholars have even tried to see in Rūmi a kind of a political savior also, sent to rescue the Muslim society from its defeat and decadence in the aftermath of the Mongol invasion. See, for example, Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī Nadawī, *Tārīkh i Da’wat o ‘Azīmat*, Lahore.
- ³ The verses of the *Mathnawi* represent a highly accomplished spiritualization of Sufism while remaining completely true to Islamic orthodoxy. Their persistent themes are the longing for the eternal, the reuniting with Allah, enlightenment through love, and the merging of one’s self with the universal spirit of the world:
- The senses and thoughts are like weeds on the clear water’s surface.*
- The hand of the heart sweeps the weeds aside: then the water is revealed to the heart.*
- Unless Allah loose the hand of the heart, the weeds on our water are increased by worldly desires.*
- When piety has chained the hands of desire, Allah looses the hands of the heart.*
- ⁴ Distinguished Sufi Master of the 13th century whose Persian poetry was one of Iqbal’s chief inspirations.
- ⁵ *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Persian, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 803/51.
- ⁶ Iqbal wrote this letter to R. A. Nicholson regarding the ‘Introduction’ and some of the reviews on the *Secrets of the Self*. It was published in *The Quest*, London, October 1920-July 1921, Volume XII, pp. 484-492. See, B. A. Dar, *Letters of Iqbal*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1978, p. 147. Also see Riffat Hassan, (Ed.), *The Sword and the Scepter*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1977.
- ⁷ *Gaflah* is the Qur’anic term indicating the centrifugal tendencies that draw people away from God towards an excessive concern with the affairs of the here-below as against the here-after.

- ⁸ One is reminded of the sub title of his one of the later major Urdu works, *Zarb i Kalīm*, which if translated into Urdu reads as “taking up the challenge posed by the modern age of secular modernity”.

ضرب کلیم
یعنی

اعلان جنگ، دور حاضر کے خلاف

- ⁹ *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Persian, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 800/48.
- ¹⁰ *I took ... trap*: Modern learning failed to ensnare me: like a clever bird I made away with the bait from under the trap without being caught. (M. Mir)
- ¹¹ *God knows ... fire!* A reference to Qur’an 21:68-69, where God causes the fire into which Abraham is thrown by his ruthless opponents to become ‘cool and safe’ for him. Iqbal says that he faced an ordeal similar to Abraham’s: he was thrown into the ‘fire’ of modern learning (Iqbal was educated at some of the finest educational institutions of Europe), but was unharmed by it; like Abraham, he was saved from being ‘burnt’ because, like Abraham, he had strong faith. (M. Mir)
- ¹² ‘Ataullah, *Iqbāl Nāmāh*, Sh. M. Ashraf, Lahore, 1946, Vol. I. p. 78. (Image of the Urdu text/mss. at th end). Revised one volume edition, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 2007, p. 112.
- ¹³ Original letter preserved in manuscript in Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad (Department of Iqbal Studies); *Iqbal’s letter to Sayyid Sulayman Nadavi*, 13 Nov, 1917.
- ¹⁴ For a concise statement of how Iqbal evaluated the genius of the ‘*Ajam* and gave it a pride of place in the Islamic civilization, see, M. S. Umar, “The Pressing of My Soul” (Some Observations on Iqbal’s Concept of the ‘*Ajam*).
- ¹⁵ *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Urdu, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 451.
- ¹⁶ *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Persian, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 235/59.
- ¹⁷ ‘*Ajam*: Persia; but the wider meaning of ‘the non-Arab world’ is intended here..
- ¹⁸ *My frenzy... wares*: Iqbal’s passionate, by which he sought to reawaken ‘*Ajam*, raised the price of ‘*Ajam*’s wares– that is, gave new importance to ‘*Ajam* in the world.
- ¹⁹ ‘Ataullah, *Iqbāl Nāmāh*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 2007, p. 474-75.

- ²⁰ Haq Nawāz, *Iqbal aur Lazzat i Paykār*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1984.
- ²¹ See Massignon, *La Passion d 'Al-Hallaj*, p. 480; Martin Lings, “The Origins of Sufism”, in *A Sufi Saint of the 20th Century*, Suhail Academy, Lahore, 1984, p. 34; “Abū Bakr Sirāj ad-Dīn “The Origins of Sufism,” *Islamic Quarterly*, Vol. III, No.1, p. 53; also see by the same author, *What is Sufism*, Suhail Academy, Lahore, 1983, chaps.1&2; V. Danner, *Islamic Tradition*, I. I. C., Lahore, 1991, chap. IV; G. Maqdisi, “Ibn Taimiyah: A Sufi of the Qadiriyah Order,” in *The American Journal of Arabic Studies*, Leiden, 1-1973, p.118.
- ²² See B.A. Dar, *Letters of Iqbal*, op. cit., p. 146-7, (Ibn ‘Arabī and Sufism); Mu‘īnī, op. cit., p. 155 (Ibn ‘Arabī), p 161 (Sufism), p. 164 (Sufism); B. A. Dar, *Anwār-i-Iqbāl* op. cit., p. 268 (Sufism); Hāshmi, *Khuṭūṭ-i-Iqbāl*, op. cit., p. 117 (Ibn ‘Arabī); Sabir Kalurvi, *Tarīkh-i-Taṣawwuf*, op. cit., p. 31 (Sufism); ‘Atāullah, *Iqbāl Nāmāh*, op. cit., p. 53-54 (Sufism); Niāzī, *Maktūbāt-i-Iqbāl*, I.A.P. Karachi, 1957, p. 10 (Sufism); *Sahīfā*, op. cit., p. 165 (Sufism) p. 182 (Sufism). The list could be expanded considerably. Addition of references from his poetic works would prove our point and furnish further evidence. This is being left out at the moment.
- ²³ See Bibliography.
- ²⁴ S. M. H. Barnī, *Kulliyāt i Makātīb Iqbāl*, Delhi, 1999, Vol. II, p. 282, 286. The same information could be seen in the letter we referred to earlier: I have a Qādirī initiatic chain..... (see Note 9) ‘Atāullah, *Iqbāl Nāmāh*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 2007, p. 112.
- ²⁵ Ibn‘Arabī, *Rūḥ al-Quds*, Damascus, 1970, p. 21. For an English translation see *Sufis of Andalusia*, reprinted, Suhail Academy, Lahore, 1984.
- ²⁶ To be absolutely fair, Ibn ‘Arabī’s opinion of Eastern Sufism was a good deal less cut and dried than these two references, taken out of context, would suggest. He himself, in the same pages, owns that authentic gnostics are also encountered in the East, and he did not, finally, hesitate, once settled in the region, to adopt the practices appropriate to Eastern *taṣawwuf* whenever he judged this to be necessary or advisable. We are in fact dealing, at bottom, with a misunderstanding which was to evaporate as his acquaintance with Eastern Sufism deepened. Initially, nevertheless, he very naturally judged the Cairo Sufis on the basis of Sufism as he himself had experienced it in the Muslim

West; and while the two Sufi traditions might have aims and doctrinal bases in common, they exhibited wide differences with regard to form and methods.

It should be made clear that Ibn ‘Arabī was neither the first nor the last Andalusī to express disapproval of the sometimes rather ostentatious religious bearing of Easterners. We might, for instance, recall the biting irony with which his contemporary Ibn Jubayr, in his *rihla*, denounces the Eastern ‘ulamā’s taste for solemn procedure, and the pretension displayed in their clothes and in the pompous appellations they assume. *Journeys*, trans. M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, Paris, 1949, p. 344.

²⁷ ‘Alī Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, ch. 3.

²⁸ *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Urdu, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 393.

²⁹ M. Mir, *Iqbal*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1989, p. 80-81.

³⁰ Dr. Manzūr Aḥmad, “Iqbal Awr Taṣawwuf”, in *Iqbal Review*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, Vol. I, No. 2, July, 1960; also see *Muntakhab Maqālāt: Iqbal Review*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1983, p. 35.

³¹ Sa‘īd Nafīsī, “Mysticism in Iqbal’s Poetry”, *Iqbal Review*, Vol. I, No. 1, April 1960, p. 5-9.

“Iqbal, like other great mystics of Iran and Pakistan, believes that the realisation of the self has to be followed by “resignation of the self.” This is the same as the philosophy of ‘separation and annihilation’ propounded by the Sufis. The first step is ‘Self’ and the last “resignation of the Self”.... “And there is no doubt that it is his teachings that have brought into being the independent state of Pakistan. Pakistan, in my view, is one of the miracles of Iqbal’s mystic thought.... “Iqbal, better than anybody else, realised this drawback of this style and once again brought back to poetry the form, simplicity and flow of the symbolic school. For Iqbal was now addressing his message to the people of the East and the Muslims—old and young, educated and uneducated. That is why Iqbal’s poetry in the first instance awakened the people of the sub-continent and then gave a new thrill to the Iranians. And now its influence is gradually growing even among those people who do not understand the Persian language.”

³² Robert Whittemore, “Iqbal’s Panentheism”.

³³ In addition to a direct response to Goethe’s *Divan* (in the form of *Payam-e-Mashriq*) and direct dialogue with McTaggart, Iqbal appropriated the ideas of thinkers like Bergson, Whitehead, James,

Dewey (and others). He combined their insights with Muslim thinkers like Rūmī, Ibn Khaldun, Ibn ‘Arabi, Shatibi (and others) to offer a proposal for the “reconstruction of religious thought in Islam.” If read carefully this proposal is a response to not only a particular condition in the Islamic tradition, it also speaks to a crisis within the modern Western philosophical tradition.

³⁴ This important point is not generally recognized, so I shall spell it out. The death-knell to modernity, which had science as its source and hope, was sounded with the realization that despite its power in limited regions, six things slip through its controlled experiments in the way sea slips through the nets of fishermen:

1. *Values.* Science can deal with descriptive and instrumental values, but not with intrinsic and normative ones.

2. *Meanings.* Science can work with cognitive meanings, but not with existential meanings (Is X meaningful?), or ultimate ones (What is the meaning of life?).

3. *Purposes.* Science can handle teleonomy– purposiveness in organisms– but not teleology, final causes.

4. *Qualities.* Quantities science is good at, but not qualities.

5. *The invisible and the immaterial.* It can work with invisibles that are rigorously entailed by matter’s behaviour (the movements of iron filings that require magnetic fields to account for them, e.g.) but not with others.

6. *Our superiors, if such exist.* This limitation does not prove that beings greater than ourselves exist, but it does leave the question open, for “absence of evidence is not evidence of absence”.

³⁵ Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, (referred to as *Reconstruction*, here after), Iqbal Academy Pakistan/Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore, 1989, p. 26.

³⁶ Ernest Gellner defines Postmodernism as relativism–“*relativismus über Alles*” (*Postmodernism, Reason and Religion*)– but relativism is not an easy position to defend, so postmoderns do everything they can to avoid that label; Clifford Geertz’s “anti-antirelativism” is a case in point. The T-shirts that blossomed on the final day of a six-week, 1987 NEH Institute probably tell the story. Superimposed on a slashed circle, their logo read, “No cheap relativism”. By squirming, postmoderns can parry crude relativisms, but sophisticated relativism is still relativism. Postmoderns resist that conclusion, however, so I shall stay with their own self-characterization.

- ³⁷ Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, Minneapolis, Minnesota University Press, 1984, pp. xxiv, 3ff.
- ³⁸ Alan Wallace, *Choosing Reality*, Boston and Shaftsbury, Shambala, 1989.
- ³⁹ No textbook in science has ever included things that are intrinsically greater than human beings. Bigger, of course, and wielding more physical power, but not superior in the full sense of that term which includes virtues, such as intelligence, compassion, and bliss.
- ⁴⁰ “Shaykh i Maktab” *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Urdu, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 494
- ⁴¹ *Zubūr i ‘Ajām* in *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Persian, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 387/43.
- ⁴² **I am... kind.** By “the crescent and the cross” is meant the historic confrontation between Islam and Christianity that took the form of the Crusades in the Middle Ages. Iqbal is saying that, unlike many other Muslims, who remain mentally imprisoned in the past, allowing their thought and action to be determined by certain crucial events of former times, he is more concerned about the momentous developments taking place in the present age. Iqbal does not specify what he means by “an ordeal of a different kind” (*fitnah-i digarī*)— whether he means a particular major development, like communism, or whether he uses the singular “ordeal” in a generic sense to refer to several major and decisive developments taking place on the world stage. The main point of the verse, in any case, is that the issues of the present and the future have greater claim on one’s attention than issues belonging to a past that may have no more than historical or academic importance. In the second hemistich, “the womb of time” is a translation of *damīr-i ayyām*, which literally means “in the insides of time.” See M. Mir, (ed.), *Iqbāl-Nāmāh*, Vol. 5, No. 3-4, Summer and Fall, 2005, p. 3-6.
- ⁴³ *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Persian, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 830/78.
- ⁴⁴ *It has... moisture*: It has robbed human beings of their dignity and honour.
- ⁴⁵ *Bihzād*: One of the greatest painters of Iran (d. after 1514). The Choice of Bihzād is significant, since he broke with tradition and popularized a new style of painting. Modernity, likewise, has broken with tradition— but the new world view, lifestyle and culture introduced by its Bihzād has serious shortcomings. (M. Mir)
- ⁴⁶ “Is Religion Possible”, *Reconstruction*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan/Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore, 1989, pp. 147.

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- ⁴⁷ F. Schuon, *Understanding Islam*, reprinted, Suhail Academy, Lahore, 2004, pp. 26.
- ⁴⁸ *Armaghān i Hijāz*, in *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Persian, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 860/108.
- ⁴⁹ “Dard i ‘Ishq”, *Bāng i Darā*, in *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Urdu, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 82-83.
- ⁵⁰ “Shikwā”, *Bāng i Darā*, in *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Urdu, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 234/218.
- ⁵¹ “Sham‘ o Shā‘ir”, *Bāng i Darā*, in *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Urdu, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 216/200.
- ⁵² *Faith, like ... fire*: A reference to Qur’ān 21: 68-71, according to which Abraham was thrown into a fire by his disbelieving people, but God came to his rescue, commanding the fire to ‘become cool’ for him. The line means that true faith or conviction (the word used in the original is *yaqīn*) would not shrink from being put to the test.
- ⁵³ *To have faith, ... oneself*: It is being suggested that there is no contradiction between ‘being drawn into God’ and ‘being oneself, for affirmation of one’s selfhood (*khudī*) will lead one to affirmation of God, and *vice versa*.
- ⁵⁴ *Bāl i Jibrīl*, in *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Urdu, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 406.
- ⁵⁵ *Zubūr i ‘Ajām*, in *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Persian, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 376/32
- ⁵⁶ For the present discussion I have left out the beyond-Postmodern paradigm and its conceptual shift.
- ⁵⁷ Which extended from human beginnings up to the rise of modern science.
- ⁵⁸ Which took over from there and continued through the first half of the twentieth century
- ⁵⁹ Which Nietzsche anticipated, but which waited for the second half of the twentieth century to take hold.
- ⁶⁰ It continues to be refined, but because modernity laid the foundations for the scientific understanding of it, it deserves credit for the discovery.
- ⁶¹ The just entered distinction between cosmology and metaphysics is important here, so I shall expand it slightly. *Cosmology* is the study of the physical universe– or the world of nature as science conceives of it– and is the domain of science. *Metaphysics*, on the other hand, deals with all there is. (The terms *worldview* and *Big Picture* are used interchangeably with *metaphysics* in this presentation.) In the

worldview that holds that nature is all there is, metaphysics coincides with cosmology. That metaphysics is named *naturalism*.

- ⁶² “The Sanskrit terms for ‘mind’ and ‘intellect’ are ‘*manas*’ and ‘*buddhi*’ respectively, and the two are considered to belong to different levels of reality and to operate in different fields. It is through ‘*manas*’ that human reason and discursive thought operate; it is a purely individual faculty, subject to all the limitations of the individual, and the material upon which it works is derived from the senses. ‘*Buddhi*’, on the other hand, may be likened to a direct ray of light which strikes the human mind from without; it is not an individual faculty, but much rather a universal light in which the individual participates to a greater or lesser extent, according to his degree of awareness.

‘*Manas*’ is, then, the middle term, set between the senses, which connect the human being with the world around him, and the intellect, which connects him with the eternal principles. Western science and philosophy, in modern times, have claimed supremacy for this middle term, maintaining that truth is only to be reached through the theories which the mind builds upon the evidence supplied by the senses.” Gai Eaton, *The Richest Vein*, p. 32-33.

- ⁶³ This point has been well expressed in the study made by John Haywood. See John A. Haywood, “The Wisdom of Muhammad Iqbal– Some Considerations of Form and Content”, in *The Sword and the Sceptre*, ed. Dr. Riffat Hasan, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1977, pp. 162-175. “Iqbal is in the long line of Classical Islamic poets (and I do not use the term “Islamic” in the narrow religious sense). Indeed, he is perhaps the last great Classical Islamic poet.... The scholar familiar with the poetical classics of Arabic and Persian has the feeling, after reading Iqbal, that he is very much in the same tradition. Indeed, the last way to think of Iqbal is as a Pakistani poet. Rather does he speak for Islam universally and for the common ground between Islam and the other major world religions... (*Ibid.* p.162).... ...a large proportion of the verses in his work is truly gnomic poetry–”*Hikmah*” wisdom in the highest sense of the word. Moreover, they are not wisdom only to Muslims, or to Orientals, but to men of every creed and race. This is one of Iqbal’s great achievements that he bridged the gap between East and West, and gave utterance to the common ground in the great religious and philosophical systems of the world. (*Ibid.* p.172-73).

- ⁶⁴ And to a lesser degree, for Max Muller, with reference to the Hindu texts and their misinterpretations.

- ⁶⁵ F. Schuon, “Reflections on Ideological Sentimentalism”, reprinted in *Iqbal Review*, Volume: 47, Number: 2, April, 2006, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, pp. 2-15.
- ⁶⁶ This article was written in 1964. (Ed.)
- ⁶⁷ German Kantianists of the 19th century called their philosopher the “universal nullifier”; they little knew what truth they spoke. In fact what was nullified was intelligence through its’ replacement by academic quibbles, if one may be permitted to express oneself so.
- ⁶⁸ F. Schuon, “Rationalism Real and Apparent”, in *Logic and Transcendence*, reprinted, Lahore, 2004, pp. 33-55.
- ⁶⁹ M. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam*, IAP, Lahore, 1987, pp. 146.
- ⁷⁰ Here we are invited to bear in mind his earlier assertion too, “speculation of old Muslim Sufis and thinkers”.
- ⁷¹ M. Mir, *Iqbal*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1989, p. 84.
- ⁷² *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Urdu, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 369/45.
- ⁷³ See S. H. Nasr, “The Meaning and Role of Philosophy in Islam”, *Studia Islamica*, (36) 1973, pp. 57-80.
- ⁷⁴ The Biblical expression says “in the image of God”. In the Islamic tradition it appears in the following Hadith report “*khalāq Allahu ‘l-Ādama ‘alā Ṣūratihī*”. See Bukhārī, *Al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, “Istīdhān”, 1; Muslim, *Al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, “Birr”, 115, “Jannah”, 28; Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, Vol. II, 244, 251, 315, 323. Also see Ibn ‘Arabī, *Al-Futūḥāt al Makkīyyah*, Dār Ṣādir, Beirut, n. d., Vol. II, p. 124, p. 490. For an illuminating exposition of the implications of the statement in terms of the Divine Attributes see Murata and Chittick, *The Vision of Islam*, reprinted, Suhail Academy, Lahore, 2000, p. 120.
- ⁷⁵ It may, however, be remembered that speech is not necessarily exteriorised, the articulated thought also involves language.
- ⁷⁶ Which is, as if, a reflection of the Intellect on the mental plane.
- ⁷⁷ In the words of Rūmī, “*‘aql i juz’ī ‘aql rā badnām kard*”, *Mathnawī*, (ed. Nicholson) Vol. III, p. 31, line, 8. Also see Vol. II, p. 352, line, 11, Vol. I, p. 130, line, 4.
- ⁷⁸ Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan/Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore, 1989, p. 13.
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.* p. 14.
- ⁸⁰ *Ibid.* p. 37.
- ⁸¹ *Mathnawī*, VI 4138-39.

- ⁸² *Javīd Nāma*, in *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Persian, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 574/102-575/103.
- ⁸³ Emphasis added.
- ⁸⁴ “Human life unfolds on three planes simultaneously, or rather, the *ego* is subject to three centres of attraction to which it responds in different ways, according to its own nature or value. We live at the same time in the body, the head and the heart, so that we may sometimes ask ourselves where the genuine is situated; in fact, the *ego*, properly speaking, the empirical ‘I’, has its sensory seat in the brain, but it gravitates towards the body and tends to identify itself with it, while the heart is symbolically the seat of the Self, of which we may be conscious or ignorant, but which is our true existential, intellectual, and so universal centre. It is, in a sense, the old triad *anima, animus, Spiritus*, with the difference however that *anima*—the ‘spouse’ of *animus*—is rather the vegetative and animal psychic entity than the body itself; but there is no clear line of demarcation here, since the body cannot be dissociated from its sensations, which in fact constitute our lower and de-centralized *ego*, with its downward drag and dispersive tendency.” F. Schuon, *Gnosis— Divine Wisdom*, reprinted, Suhail Academy, Lahore, 2004, pp. 24.
- ⁸⁵ Muhammad Iqbal, *Bāl i Jibrīl*, in *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Urdu, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 359/35.
- ⁸⁶ Muhammad Iqbal, *Bāng i Darā*, in *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Urdu, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 184/168.
- ⁸⁷ Infact It never leaves its state of immutability and manifestations in no way effect the Essence.
- ⁸⁸ *Payām i Mashriq*, in *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Persian, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 321-325.
- ⁸⁹ Muhammad Iqbal, *Bāng i Darā*, in *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Urdu, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 245/238.
- ⁹⁰ Dr. Saqif Nafis, Chawdhary Muḥammad Ḥusayn Marḥūm kī Diary Kay Chand Awrāq”, in *Iqbal*, Vol. 56, Nos. 1-4, p. 14.
- ⁹¹ *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Persian, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 772.
- ⁹² *You say ... him?* These lines raise the issue of the existence of evil. God commands human beings to be on their guard against Satan, but is it not true that God Himself created and nurtured Satan?
- ⁹³ *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Persian, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 850.
- ⁹⁴ *Where would ... existed?* Iqbal likens human *khudī* to a pearl and God to an ocean.

- ⁹⁵ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, trans. by F. Rosenthal, vol. 3, New York, 1958, pp. 52 ff., considered the later school of Kalām as philosophy. Many contemporary Arab authors have emphasised the importance of Kalām and also Sufism as forms of “Islamic philosophy”. See for example Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Rāziq, *Tamhīd li-ta’rīkh al-falsafāt al-islāmiyyah*, Cairo, 1959.
- ⁹⁶ S. H. Nasr, “The Meaning and Role of Philosophy in Islam”, *op. cit.* p. 79.
- ⁹⁷ F. Schuon, unpublished text.
- ⁹⁸ This is reference to Qur’ān, 20:14.
- ⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 50:16.
- ¹⁰⁰ M. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam*, IAP, Lahore, 1987, pp. 57-58.
- ¹⁰¹ Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam*, IAP, Lahore, 1987, pp. 23.
- ¹⁰² Rene Guenon, *Symbolism of the Cross*, reprinted, Suhail Academy, Lahore, 2006, pp. 81-2.
- ¹⁰³ See what is said about the ternary Sat-chit-ananda in *Man and his Becoming*, ch. XIV. (Guènon’s Note).
- ¹⁰⁴ M. Mir, *Iqbal*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1989, p. 98.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Payām i Mashriq*, in *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Persian, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 223/47.
- ¹⁰⁶ For further references on the point see Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam*, IAP, *op. cit.*; Created Order as the infinite wealth of God’s Being/ Countless Variety of Living Forms, pp. 70; thought and deed, the act of knowing and the act of creating, are identical in, pp. 62; universe only a partial expression of the infinite creative activity of, pp. 52.
- ¹⁰⁷ Hinduism (Upanishads).
- ¹⁰⁸ Buddhism.
- ¹⁰⁹ Christianity (Augustine).
- ¹¹⁰ Judaism.
- ¹¹¹ Islam (Qur’an).
- ¹¹² M. Mir, *Iqbal*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1989, p. 88.
- ¹¹³ Cf. the Quranic verses 41:53 and 51:20-21, which make it incumbent on men to study signs of God in themselves as much as those in the world around them.
- ¹¹⁴ Cf. *The Muqaddimah*, trans. F. Rosenthal, II, 76-103.
- ¹¹⁵ Note Iqbal’s significant observation that “:modern psychology has not yet touched even the outer fringe of religious life and is still far from

- the richness and variety of what is called religious experience.” (Lecture VII, p. 152).
- ¹¹⁶ M. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam*, IAP, Lahore, 1987, pp. 77, 88.
- ¹¹⁷ Cf. Introduction to *The Secrets of the Self (English translation of Allama Iqbal's 'philosophical poem': Asrār-i Khudī)*, pp. xviii-xix.
- ¹¹⁸ M. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam*, IAP, Lahore, 1987, pp. 88.
- ¹¹⁹ F. Schuon, *Spiritual Perspectives and Human Facts*, reprinted, Suhail Academy, Lahore, 2006, pp. 22-23.
- ¹²⁰ *Zarb i Kalīm*, in *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Urdu, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 523.
- ¹²¹ *Armaghān i Hijāz*, in *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Urdu, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 749/57; also see *Kulliyat* Per. 356/12; 376/32; 536/64; 128/112.
- ¹²² F. Schuon, *Spiritual Perspectives and Human Facts*, reprinted, Suhail Academy, Lahore, 2006, p. 22 ff.
- ¹²³ *Bāl i Jibrīl*, in *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Urdu, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 435.
- ¹²⁴ *Jāvid Nāma* in *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Persian, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 579.
- ¹²⁵ *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Persian, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 717/41.
- ¹²⁶ M. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam*, IAP, Lahore, 1987, pp. 148.
- ¹²⁷ *Zarb i Kalīm*, in *Kulliyāt i Iqbāl*, Urdu, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1994, p. 547/47.
- ¹²⁸ Unpublished Text “Truth and Faith, Work and Virtue” 605/para 3-4.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Truth and Faith, Work and Virtue

Truth is what one must absolutely accept. And when it is a question of the total Truth, one must accept it totally, that is with all that we are: with the intelligence, with the will, with love. Certitude, initiative, happiness.

Now this total acceptance of the Truth is Faith. To say that an acceptance is total is to say that it takes place in our Heart, on which depend our other faculties. And to say that an acceptance engages our Heart is to say, precisely, that it engages all that we are, thus our activity and our character.

Consequently it is impossible to have Faith without acting in consequence or without possessing the qualities that conform to Faith, thus to the Truth that determines it. "Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect."

Among all possible actions, the one which depends most directly on the Truth, and which by that fact manifests Faith most immediately, is Prayer, and the essence of Prayer is the Name of God, hence the Invocation. To accept the Truth is to have Faith, and to have Faith is to invoke God for man alone is endowed with an intelligence capable of absoluteness or of transcendence, and it is this which the gift of speech manifests.

But the Heart is not prolonged only in our activity, it is also prolonged in our character; and if Truth and Faith compel our activity to spiritual and saving Work, they equally compel our character to spiritual and sanctifying Virtue. For Work is nothing without Virtue, or without the intention of Virtue, just as Truth, without our Faith, remains a dead letter. Conversely, Faith is nothing without Truth, and Virtue is nothing without Work; the sufficient reason for Faith is evidently Truth, and the inseparable complement of Virtue is the Work of Truth. Faith without Truth is heresy; Knowledge without Faith is hypocrisy. Work without Virtue is pride, and Virtue without Work is vanity; for sincerity of Virtue calls forth Work, and perfection of Work calls forth Virtue.

Truth has no need of us; it is we who have need of Truth. If we did not exist— that is, if we were not intelligent and free consciousnesses— Truth would demand nothing of us; but we exist, and in consequence— given what we are— Truth concerns us and compels us to Faith, Faith is thus synonymous with human existence.

If we were not free and active creatures, spiritual Work would not impose itself upon us; but as we live by liberty and activity, we are in fact compelled to integrate them into our Faith and to act freely according to Truth.

If we were not feeling souls, in search of happiness, Virtue— independently of social Law— would not impose itself upon us; since we possess a moral character, we are in fact compelled to integrate it into our Faith and to conform it to the Truth.

The intelligence, the will and the sensibility of man are proportioned to the Absolute, or to the Infinite; it is only by this transcendent content that he is really man.

To say Truth is to say Discernment between the Real and the illusory; to say Faith is to say Concentration upon the Self, which is the immanent Real; to say Work is to say Manifestation of the Principle on the plane of our activity, hence Invocation; to say Virtue is to say Reduction to the Substance on the plane of our soul,, hence Poverty, Effacement, Purity, Peace and Beauty.

والحمد لله وحده وبه نستعين

¹²⁹ Martin Lings, *Mecca, from Before Genesis until Now*, Archetype, Cambridge, UK, 2004.

کلیات مکاتیب اقبال - ۱

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مخدوم ہاشم

ایک لوار نہ تھی تھی سے اندر اچھا تھا ہے
میرا کیت سے ملتا اندر خود مگر ملتا ہے
ایسی ہے جو ہم آج کے ہیں مگر وہ اندر ہے
مگر وہ ملتا ہے مگر - مگر ذرا مگر کتنے تو خود مگر کتنے
ایک اجنبی بود ہے جسے مگر وہ وہاں ہے اور وہاں ہے
ایک مگر وہ تو وہاں ہے وہاں ہے وہاں ہے

مگر ذرا مگر کتنے تو خود مگر کتنے
ایک اجنبی بود ہے جسے مگر وہ وہاں ہے اور وہاں ہے

مگر وہ تو وہاں ہے وہاں ہے وہاں ہے
مگر وہ تو وہاں ہے وہاں ہے وہاں ہے
مگر وہ تو وہاں ہے وہاں ہے وہاں ہے

مگر وہ تو وہاں ہے وہاں ہے وہاں ہے
مگر وہ تو وہاں ہے وہاں ہے وہاں ہے
مگر وہ تو وہاں ہے وہاں ہے وہاں ہے

مخدوم ہاشم